

Hastings Mesa

At the foot of Mt. Hayden
San Miguel County
Colorado



W.H.
978.8
Ber

Glenn Berry



HASTINGS MESA

At the foot of Mount Hayden



The author at "Diamond Jubilee",
Grand Junction, Colorado, 1957.

Dedicated to Joseph Berry III my father that
I was never privileged to know and who settled on
Hastings Mesa in the summer of 1872.

Written by Glenn Berry 1984
Author of Cimarron, Nuggets and others.

Gunnison County Library
307 N. Wisconsin
Gunnison, CO 81230

W. H.
978.8
Ber
1. Colo. - Hist. - San Miguel
County

PREFACE

Those pioneers that I have written about in this book lived the year around on Hastings Mesa, more than twenty families that I can count lived the four seasons and loved it.

The names of many of these people was never in print until the Obit's and also there has been noted Clergymen, Jurist's, Politicians Contractors, Poets and Authors to name a few who have carved a page in the history of our great Western Colorado.

May we who follow those pioneers so dedicate our lives that the trails they blazed will be consecrated to the principal of Justice, Freedom and Democracy which they so humbly exemplified.

Gift - 2/89 - Author



Captain Joseph Berry who scouted West Colorado in 1842.

Scouted for wagon trains to California gold rush, 1849.

Returned to Hastings Mesa in 1872.

Interpreter when the Utes were moved from West Colorado.

Grandparents of the Author.

Annie (Kise) Berry, daughter of a German immigrant and a Cherokee mother, raised her family in the Indian territory while the captain scouted and fought in the Civil War, in a blue uniform.

CHAPTER 1

At the western side of Mount Hayden sloping west and beginning from the granite shoulder of the 14,000 foot monolith shrouded with a cover of Spruce like the collar of a mink coat on a beautiful lady.

Interspersing the spruce the Aspen takes over where the Spruce leaves off, then groups into families laced with Willow and Alder.

Beautiful parks of bunch grass and wild flowers are flourishing on the open spaces between rolling hills and canyons sloping west and north to Leopard Creek canyon and southwesterly to the San Miguel river with her unnumbered cascades as she defies man and nature in her rush to the confluence of the Delores river.

That is Hastings Mesa bordered on the north and west by Dallas divide and Leopard Creek and on the south by the San Miguel.

My Grandfather Captain Joseph Berry ll must have looked that mesa over in the 1840's when he was scouting for the Army on his way to California. Thirty years later my father Joseph Berry lll came with his little herd of Galloway cattle and settled on the Alder-Leopard peninsula with a Canyon on two sides to hold his cattle and horses.

Grandfather and Grandmother (Annie Kise a part Cherokee

Indian) came with him. My father's home was their home in the log cabin, nestled in the edge of an aspen forest and facing the mountains that the pioneer surveyor used as his main bearing point as he surveyed South Western Colorado.

My cowboy Father and my school teacher Mother (Glen Cora Hummel) put down roots that have clung tenaciously to me for four score years plus.

My earliest memories go back to looking at Mount Hayden with her chimney like a locomotive stack on the North and the timbered saddle of Last Dollar Mountain on the South.

Looking thru a two foot square window (my grandfather wasted little of his Civil War pension on glass) while sitting in my highchair (homemade) I remember looking at Mt. Hayden as I screamed for more ground wheat made into a porridge. How they kept from drowning me with the surplus cats I don't know.

Granddad Hummel (on my Mother's side), John Wesley, was a Civil war vet and homesteaded on the Mesa in 1895. 160 acres, his oldest son, Victor homesteaded just east of him and his 160 acres took in the hill between Alder Creek and Hummel Flats.

Sometime earlier a man by the name of Ward, who ran cattle on the Mesa, homesteaded a 160 just west of the Hummels. Ward's place was a stopping place for cowboys, shady and otherwise, on their way thru the country. I well remember two characters who stopped there over night and each wore a six shooter tied down on their legs and a rifle in their scabbard. Peeking thru the window, I remember they were eating tomatoes out of a tin can with black strap sorghum poured over them. Mr. Ward seldom came to his camp as he had other camps scattered over Horsefly Mesa and Iron Springs Mesa.

In 1907 a distant cousin who was on the dodge and headed for the Blue Mountain country in Utah, told us that the Ward place was an outlaw stopping, and that Mr. Ward kept a little grub there at all times. His cattle were never rustled and spare horses were always in the pasture to be traded. A secluded trail headed west down Skinny Williams draw from the Ward place. This trail went by Dave Fishbacks place, now located on the northslope of Alder creek.

Another family that lived on the Ward place at the south west corner of Hummel flats was Woodhouse.

This progeny is scattered on a large part of west Colorado from Powderhorn south of Gunnison to Grand Junction where a Grand daughter Elsa Parks resides.

Granddad Hummel and Victor, my Uncle ran cattle on the southside of school section mountain and over to where Hummel Flats breaks off into Alder Creek, their brand was JH connected and they both dry farmed there on the flats.

Money for hired help was scarce so come Fall they mounted me on a horse and with Vic driving a four-horse team and wagon loaded with grain he had raised, we headed for the valley south of Montrose. Of course it would be November and snow storms made the trip most miserable. We lived out of a grub box and slept in a refrigerated bed-roll, we slept when we wasn't night herding the cattle to keep them around camp. Four days on the road ganted us and the stock. Our first night was at Noel Siding, two miles west of Dallas Divide where Leopard creek comes in from the south. There was a fair sized building at Noel and the foundation rocks can still be seen. A switch on the Rio Grande Southern R.R. was there also, together with a small stock yard to accomodate livestock shipment for people who didn't have a 7 year old nephew. The people who ran the store at Noel had warm gloves and socks which I well remember to replace my wet ones. Their name I don't recall but it wasn't Noel.

One of the Collins neighbors was a Simmel (Sim) Neel whose father Simmel Neel furnished the name for Neel siding where Leopard creek meets the highway.

Sim had some good horses which he worked on the County road, if they wouldnt work in the harness"he made race horses out of them".

That of course is some of the ribbing that the other race horse men used to give Sim a bad time with.

I had a nice visit with one of Sim's old drivers a Heward Noble who came after I had left the Mesa but

who knows a lot of the old timers and in fact made a little history himself. Howard and his wife Edith live at Cedarodge now during the summer and stay in Mesa Arizona during the winter.

CHAPTER 2

In the later part of the 19th Century from County Mayo, Ireland came one Charles Galleger who with his wife homesteaded on the top of Dallas Divide. The Galleger home still sets back in the aspen looking like a Southern mansion aged as the rest of us and sets on the Dallas Divide. My memories of that home dates back thru fourth of a Century when we corraled our cattle in the railroad stock yard and Mother Galleger sat a cold wet hungry boy up in front of the cook stove oven to thaw him out before she fed him. Jimmy Galleger was about my age and his sister Jane.

Jannie later married Bill Finnegan and moved to the old Finnegan homestead where Alder creek joins Leopard creek and where the R.R. water tank and section house was called Browns Siding.

On the southfork of Leopard creek and under the north shoulder of Mt. Hayden is the Collins Ranch, and has been for close to a Century, Boyd Collins was running the ranch when I was a boy and was one of my special friends made so by giving me a pair of white pigeons which I rode twenty miles to get, carrying them back in a box balanced on my saddle horn. Progeny of that pair of pigeons greeted me when I returned to the home ranch after my experience in world war I.

On the north fork of Hay creek just west over the timbered mountain from Collins was three ranch headquarters and a school house known as the Washburn School. It was located just a couple hundred yards up the road from the Washburn Ranch house and faced west. My Mother taught that one room school one summer, the school terms were from May to October inclusive and was known as Summer school. Eight kids with almost that many grades.

Cal Lewis ranch house dominated the little valley and was located on the west side of the road together with a large barn, corrals and other building. The Lewis house still stands and was the locale for the motion picture "True Grit", which starred John Wayne and Debbie Reynolds.

Roy and Ray Lewis attended the school there and kept the wood box full, later they ranched out of Ridgway raising cattle. Mother and I lived in the George Hevern house which sat up the draw from Lewis on the road heading south, and where not two boards are together now gooseberries in the willows by the spring was our desert during the season, and Mothers salary was twenty dollars a month and a place to live. We were rich.

On the north side of the mesa Mont Robinson had a homestead and raised grain.

He had a threshing machine and done custom threshing for the people on the Mesa, for some reason he quit doing the neighbors threshing in about 1908.

West of Lewis on the main fork of Hay creek was the Eleck Calhoun ranch where he raised grain, hay and a large family. Well I recall when my brother was threshing his grain and in those days competition was keen among the ranch women as to who fed the threshing crew the best. Pies and cakes were fed when the table hadn't seen any since last threshing time. Mother Calhoun served pumpkin pie that we all remembered. The Calhoun family consisted of 1 girl and 5 boys. Eleck was in partnership with a man by the name of Gault who ran a butcher shop in Telluride and was the outlet for the beef that Eleck raised. The Calhouns bought the Club ranch at the forks of the San Miguel and Dolores River, where Uravan is now located. Among my bread and butter money was breaking out a few horses on the Club ranch after WWI. Eleck moved to Ouray after he sold the Club in 1915 and then to Delta the next year. "Salt of the Earth" the Calhouns.

8

CHAPTER 3

Up Hay Creek a couple miles from Calnouns was the Jenkins cabin which was vacated before my time. Jenkins was married to my father's older sister and they had a son Claude who later stayed at our ranch a number of times. He later moved to Washington State and raised a family. My memory of him is whetted by the time he taught me a cowboy song if I gave him my new pocket knife, I did, and the song has lasted much longer than the pocket knife. Here it is:

I that one Summer just for fun;
I'd try cow punching, see how it was done
So when the roundup time begun,
I hit the cattle king,
Says he my forman down in town
He's at the plaza his name is Brown.
If you'll go see him, He'll take you down
That's just the thing says I
The very next morning we left for the ranch
Brown argued all the way
There's nothin to do but a horse to ride
And drift along, along with the tide
The SOB oh how he lied
Now didn't he have his gaul?
To put me in charge of the cavy all
And tell me not to work to hard.

There's nothin to do but the horses to guard
And keep them from straying away.
Across the prairie a horse would take
As if he was running for a stake
And I couldn't head him at all
Then again my horse would fall
And I would shoot like a cannon ball
And I would shoot like a cannon ball
The earth it rolled under my way

Well they roped me out an old grey hack
Put all my blankets on his back
Till all my bedding was on
And when I got on him he left the ground
Went into the Air and spun around
And when he came down I hit the ground
Oh say twas a fearful fall.

Well they picked me up and carried me in
And rubbed me down with a rollin pin
That's the way we all begin
"Your doing fine," says Brown
And in the morning if you don't die
We'll give you another horse to try
"Oh, let me walk, yes walk," says I
Says he, "Yes, back to town."

Well I've traveled up and I've traveled down
 I've traveled this wide world round and round
 I've lived in cities, I've lived in town
 But I've just got this to say
 Before you try the cow punchin life
 Get a heavy insurance on your life
 And cut your throat with a butcher knife
 And you'll find it's the easiest way.

Author Unknown

I don't think the moral to the story ever impressed me much because I had my share of punchin cows and riding wild horses.

Above the road from the Jenkins cabin the settlers had built a log dance hall. Thinking back it must have been 30x50 with a stage on the north end. Lives, careers, fights, love affairs, and families were started at the log hall or in it's vicinity.

Festivities usually started with a big Halloween dance which settled most of the summers feuding and changed some features. A school program was always put on to wind up the summer term of school, songs and recitation were looked

on with pride by the parents, until a big kid would be pushed out to the middle of the stage and start bawling. Many a recluse was made that way. Log hall had two large barrell type heaters, one in each end and wood was part of the bobsled load each dance night. Frank Davis would keep the fires going during the dance and his wife May (Finnegan) would teach us little guys how to dance when she wasn't riding herd on the weiner pen which occupied a corner away from the music. May knew who all the kids belonged to and would cut the right mom out of the bunch to care for a bawling youngster. A special place in the hereafter must be provided for people like May, all 200 lbs. of her.

West of the south fork of Hay creek was a German family who seldom left the ranch and raised or made every thing they needed. Neighbors planted crops, weined calves, castrated hogs and planted garden when and as the walze folks did. Vic Hummel bought their place when the last of the old folks died.

CHAPTER 4

North of Walze and Currys was Willow creek which was a gulch covered with red spruce and engelmann spruce. The whole gulch probably 2 miles long and a half mile wide. Commodore Wolfe had a timber claim in the middle of it and hacked ties for the railroad. He had a cabin and barns for his stock together with a well fenced pasture. Commie as we called him worked hard and found a bread market for his hand hewed ties. Emma his wife skidded the ties to the loading ramps besides doing the home work and caring for the family.

While riding for cattle one day I came down Willow creek and stopped at Wolfe's to visit their boy my age. Noone, not even the dog, met me, and I heard a scream in the cabin. Few 9 year old boys ever helped deliver a baby and none were ever as scared as I. Commie and the other children had gone to Leonard with a load of ties and waited for the inspector. Well that's the way life came in 1910.

Joining, Walze on the west was John Curry who raised horses, hacked a few ties and lived off the land. His son John and daughter Alice went to the old Pritchard school when I did. Alice grew up on a horse and there was a rivalry between her and myself as to who had the best horses. My "Tiny" mare could out run any of Alice's horses, until one day Alice showed up with a long gangling rough horse

who she said was one of her dad's work horses. As the day wore on she dared me for a race, we bet our lunch pie for a week and our lariat rope together with the sweeping of the school floor. I felt sorry for Alice knowing that I was going to run off and leave the work horse which she was exercising during recess. School let out and we made a run for the horse shed where we tied our horses. About that time Lew Nielson, a cow man from over south, came along and offered to start the race. I thought that was nice of him and right neighborly. Our race track was on the road that ran in front of the school house and down past Pritchard gate. Lew lined us up in front of the school house and hollered "Go". My Tiny mare of course had stood in the shed since noon and was not exactly in trim, however she out started the work horse and I didn't look back knowing I would run off and leave her. Halfway to Pritchard gate which was our finish line I heard hoofs coming up behind and glancing back I saw Alice closing in on me, poor Tiny was doing her best but the big work horse went by us like a passenger does a tramp. On the way back to the school house Alice poured it on about lunch pies and reached over and unbuckled my rope strap. Back at the school house Lew Nielson stood holding the horse Alice always rode and traded saddles with Alice. Come to find out the old work horse was Lews race horse. The moral is "always look for collar marks on a workhorse."

Ben Flohr had a homestead on the walze flat area and was a son-in-law of Curry's.

Ben was a tall good natured man who lived off the land and had few enemies, just the opposite from his brother, Sam, who ranched on the cimarron and ended up killing a neighbor for driving his cows across Sam's place.

On the south of walze and Flohr was the school section hill which was covered with aspen and willows on the north slope. My mother's big deal of the year was when we would (my kid sister, Beula and myself and Mother) ride over to the school ^{section} and gather gooseberries. We would come back with four, five gallon kerosene cans with the tops cut out. These cans washed and cleaned would fit 2 in a pannier which made a load for our pack horse. The jelly and jam besides the whole berries for pies kept Mother busy for several days.

At the west foot of school section hill was the Scott homestead, nestled in a draw with a cold spring, it holds a special place in my earliest memory. My Mother and Father were friends of the Scotts (as well as everyone else) and the farthest back memory I have is of my Father driving the buggy team while I sat on Mother's lap pulling into Scotts yard. Those Scott's I believe were folks of Marie Scott who ranched on the Dallas and thru hard work and a

good business head owned a large portion of San Miguel and Curay counties. Her generosity and kind deeds are well remembered by those who are not jealous of her accomplishments of which I am sorry to say there are some.

Many successful business men and women, politicians, Jurists, ranchers and authors trace their roots back to Hasting Mesa, and well they should as there was no room for the weak or lazy on the west foot of Mt. Heyden.



Former students at Pritchard School.
Taken August, 1983.

CHAPTER 6

In 1895 a Civil war Veteran from Abilene, Kansas together with his wife and family, drove his teams and wagons into the Uncompaghe Valley and wintered west of the river at Montrose, on the Frost Ranch.

In the spring, John Hummel and his son Victor, homesteaded on Hastings Mesa on what is known now as Hummel Flats surrounded by Alder creek on the west, school section mountain on the north and Hummel mountain on the east and south. Sage crush gave way to the walking plows and John's march to the sea with Sherman, put him in shape for the hundreds of miles he walked behind the plow. When the crops were in (planted) the pine and aspen forest on the west side, furnished the timber for the barn cabin and grainery and in that order. Beside one door with a one foot square glass in it, the other windows were 2 foot square. Logs hewn to perfection were the walls and chinking on the outside between the logs was well mortared in to keep the winter cold out. Not one piece of furniture was store bought that I remember. Grandad (pap) they called him' was an artist with his chisles, plane, saws and pegs (not nails). Big day it was when my highchair was finished. Always before anything for the people was built, there was shelter for the cows, horses and pigs. I well remember the time a skunk crawled into the hen house and killed a couple of Grandma's hens. The next day a mouse couldn't have got in the chicken house.



Hummel Flats
White spot right center is where
Sargeant John Hummel built his barn,
house and grainery, and in that order,
in 1895.

Victor bought out Granddad when his "roomatics" and "arth-uritus" caused him to move to California.

Vic dry farmed several hundred acres by himself. A Reeves steam tractor pulled 8 plows, he burned wood in the tractor. It was his and Granddad's cattle I mentioned earlier. His sister, Cora(my mother) taught the one room school on the north fork of Alder creek just over Hummel Mountain from the flats. Walking over Hummel Mt. each morning and night from Granddads to the school and back with my older brother Charlie, another 20 a month job for Mother.

Clyde the 3rd son of John, filed on a homestead just west of Granddads place and later sold it to his brother Victor. After spending several years there with his wife and three boys, the Lord must have provided or he got more out of the store he had in Telluride than I guessed. He became converted and was later an ordained minister preaching in Chico, California and in Hawaii. His oldest son died in Montrose and his second son made the US Navy a career. His youngest "Wesley" still lives in California and has followed the teaching profession.

One of my happiest times as a boy was the winter I stayed with Clyde and his family.

At the head of the north fork of Alder creek where the Last Dollar Mountain road crosses the creek is the remains of a log house, barn and corrals. That was the Sockrider place and has been deserted since Sockrider was killed by lightning on the north side of Alder creek below Hummel Flats.

The pine tree that Sockrider was killed under still stands and has the scar on it yet, we used it as a location "½ mile from Sockrider tree up or down".

My saddle I had inherited somehow had a broken tree. Snooping around in the Sockrider barn I found a good rawhide covered tree to fit my saddle, taking the leather off the broken tree and putting it on the Sockrider tree didn't take long and was my pride and joy till I enlisted in WW1 South from the Sockrider place at the head of Alder Creek is the Heath homestead. It was ranged by Harold's father. Harold Heath and myself made a prospecting trip to within a ¼ mile of the peak of Mt. Hayden.

We found the ore body beautiful and well defined. We also found the stakes where a Nucla man had staked and filed on it. That was one of the many fortunes I had missed, but poor Harold still can't get a good belly laugh about it. The horse and hospitality he provided for me was and is among my choice memories.

West of Sockrider's place where the present road bends around the hay meadow was the Oscar Nielson homestead he had a nice 2 story house and good out buildings. He dry farmed and had some milk stock along with other cattle. Oscar was a brother of Lew, the race horse man. Oscar and his wife were good friends of Clyde and Grace Hummel and would visit back and forth. Leonard was the only son I remember of and Lyda the only daughter I know of. Leonard lives in Utah and Lyda in Grand Junction. Absolutely nothing remains to show where the Oscar Nielson place was.

South on the Last Dollar road from the Sockrider crossing on the west side down Alder creek is the Chas Byfield and wife Hattie place, old time settlers, had a son Arthur who was a man when I was a small boy. He married Pearl Woods. I remember he was well put together and could take care of himself. He had a sister Addy, who later married a Leonard Koker, who ran the ranch until they all passed on or retired. The Byfield place put up lots of good Timothy hay and thousands of tons from that ranch and Hastings ranch went to Telluride for the freight teams and livery stable. In fact the Last Dollar mountain road was built to haul supplies into Telluride from the lower valleys and from Hastings Mesa. I rode a wagon load of potatoes over Last Dollar with my Uncle once, four head of horses and they all had to pull up the Last Dollar road south from Alder creek about a mile and a half, a man by the name of Allen had a homestead. As a boy on my way to Telluride I stopped at his place and he told me of the Walsenburg strike, which ended in some miners and state National Guardsmen (of which he was one) being killed. His stories caused me to ride half way to Telluride in the dark.

Up on Last Dollar in the heavy timber was th saw mill, changing hands many times but always a source of lumber for the ranchers on the mesa.



Last Dollar Pass and Mountain Center--
the first irrigated field on Hastings
Mesa. Put in by George Hastings.

My brother, Charlie and I went up there for some lumber and slabs and bucked snow 3 feet deep to get there. We had taken hay grain and four head of horses to the bobsled, after a heart breaking trip we got to the mill at sundown, there was a good tight stable there for the horses and the cabin was warm, we fed man and beast and made ourselves at home, noone was living there. During the night I heard a woman scream, elbowing Charlie, we listened and sure enough another scream close by, about that time a mountain lion looked in the window on the uphill side, it was a bright moon lite night and there it was, we had a rifle with us, but we were both to scared to get out of bed and get it. We found out why the barn was so tight. After seeing the lion tracks go round and round the stable the next morning our dog stayed in the barn with the horses and probably helped scare the cat away. Relating the story to an old former owner of the sawmill, he said that had we opened the door the cat would have come in. That they had a pet lion there at one time.



Homer Hastings, wife Mary, daughters
Minnie and Mary.

CHAPTER 8

Where the main Sawpit road crosses Alder creek and back in the spruce did set a cottage where George Hastings, with his wife Mary Lane (from Michigan) settled when the Ute's were still using Hastings Mesa for one of their summer hunting grounds. Their son, Homer flipped a dollar, with my Father to decide what the mesa would be called. My father lost the toss. Homer stayed to develop a fine ranch covered with hay meadows and watered by Alder creek, his wife Anna(Farness) presented him with two fine daughters. Minnie, who married a Porterfield, who was well established in Telluride. Their son, Claude later became Sheriff of Gunnison county, a fine individual.

Mary, who married Murray McDonald, who worked at the mines. They were blessed with a son, Malcolm and a daughter Marilyn. Mary was a "number please" girl for the phone company for many years, retired and along with minnie they live in Telluride.

The old Hastings homestead has been a center piece of the Mesa for over a century and is now owned and resided on by Richard and Margarette Lyons, who have built and improved, which helps put life back into a land that had gone to seed.

Bill Fritchard owned the ranch across the road from the school house. The school house used to be $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of Hastings home at the foot of Hummel Knob where the north fork of Alder creek crosses the road and was known as the Hastings school, having been built by George and Homer Hastings and the help of Joe Berry, my Father. As the kid population increased on the south-end of the Mesa and decreased in the center, they decided to move the school to the Fritchard place and was renamed the "Fritchard School".

Bill Fritchard had 11 kids: Ester, Madalyn, Evelyn, Harold, Kenneth, Howard, Thomas and Arnold were twins. Ester, I think the oldest, her freckled nose and cute little dimples had me hooked, tho all unknown to her as I was spooked of girls. Bill had a brother John Fritchard who was a Forest Ranger and lived off the Mesa.

Those Fritchard school days were among my most pleasant memories and ended in my most tragic, when Vern Proper and myself upset the girls toilet on Halloween evening after school, not knowing that the teacher was in it.

The next day when Homer Hastings and Bill Fritchard came riding over to our ranch as school board members I spotted them a mile away. Mounting my waiting horse with my extra pair of socks and shirt tied on my saddle, I didn't stop till I had put 50 miles behind me to end the trip at my Aunt Ida's place in Colona. Thru the years I have repented many times for that prank and I still question if I have been forgiven. It's a cinch I would never go to that school teacher to find out.



Bill Fritchard house. Now owned by Alan Bradbury and Rita Robinson. The annual Hastings Mesa Picnic is in session.



L to R Minnie (Hastings) Porterfield
Lyda (Neilson) Whitford
Norva Berry (Mrs. Glenn)

CHAPTER 9

South of Pritchard and east of the Sawpit road lived the Propers hard working and honest, they were the most self-sustaining of our neighbors and raised a family who mostly have resided in San Miguel county and have contributed to the communities in which they reside. Vern who was christened "Le Vern" later took the name Lee, has spent a large part of his life in the mines which is typical of Hastings Mesa kids, then Lilly, Morris, Grace and Agnes.

Their ranch located on the west slope of last Dollar Mountain produced a good living with lots of hard work of course.

Down the draw from Propers and on the west side of the Sawpit road was Lew Neilson, Lew was a cowman and sold beef to the market in Telluride. He bought Mexican cattle down by Silver City, New Mexico and trailed them to Hastings Mesa where on the abundant grass and water, those Mexican cattle put on the tallow. Lew also as I have mentioned owned some good horses which I tasted defeat from with my little "Tiny" mare a time or two, but I also won a few.

Clarence was the oldest son and was in the mining business all his life. Nate, was with the State Highway and Elser was also a rancher and in mining. All of those have passed on.

At the head of the draw, north of Neilson was the Lee Benson ranch. My Mother was a great friend of Grandma Benson and rode many times to visit her. They had a nice home and kept a good ranch. Their son Ernest was one of my buddies and we rode to and from school together. Ernest has lived in Montrose most of his life and our trails have crossed very few times since boyhood.

Joining Benson on the north was Billie Smith an old cowboy from the Indian Territory who came to Hastings Mesa in the 70's, shortly after my Father and Grandparents came.

Billie and my Father rode for the same big outfit in the territory, the St. Louis Cattle Company. Billie was a small wiry man, tough as a boot and always wore a red bandana around his neck and a Levi jumper, winter and summer. He built a nice frame house to add to the log homestead cabin and of course ran cattle. I don't recall his wife's name but well remember the long clothes line full of kids clothes as I rode by to school. Thanks to Mary (Hastings) McDonald I have the Smith kids names, Hilbert, Chester, Frank, Ruth, Lloyd, George, Ralph, Francis, and Donald. In the early teens they were small children then, that is the oldest of them. Billie always traded work at threshing time with the neighbors but I never remember of the Smith's attending the dances.

CHAPTER 10

Billie's sister, Ruth married Orlie Imes who lived up south and west on the old Ward and Brown place, they were two of the hardest working people I ever knew. Ruth done every thing a man did from plowing to branding calves. In fact I think Ruth out worked Orlie, theirs was one of the few ranches that was pushed to the limit for production. Their children, Orlie Jr. Wilma and Arleen were younger than me and so I didn't get acquainted, kidwise. Mrs. Imes took up a homestead on Alder creek and joined her sister Minnie's homestead on the east. Among my earliest memories was my Mothers visits to Minnie Smith cabin, they were both school teachers and had a lot in common.

Minnie Smith creek is where the county road leaves Alder creek heading south. Ruth (pardon my familiarity but everyone called her Ruth) fenced her homestead much to my disgust as I hated gates, her land went across Minnie Smith creek and there she put up a gate. As a kid of 8 years I couldn't open or close that gate without a lot of manipulation so I left it open, that happened a couple times and then one day as I left it open someone up on the canyon side planted a 30-30 bullet in the bank not to far from me. You'd be surprised how that induced me to close the gate. I am sure it must have been some poacher hunting game as Ruth was a better shot than that.

Ruth's daughter, Arleen bought up all that part of the peninsula including our old home ranch, after many years she sold the whole area to a Texas outfit.

CHAPTER 11

In 1871 my father Joseph Berry III and my grandfather Joseph Berry II together with grandmother Berry moved their cattle and belongings from the Indian territory thru Trinidad, San Luis Valley over Cochetopa Pass to Gunnison and on down to where Sapinero was later a town. There they cut wild hay for their cattle and horses and spent the winter there at the mouth of Black Canyon. In the spring they went up over Sapinero Mesa to the gate of the Lake Fork of the Gunnison and forded the river to the Blue Mesa side then over Blue Mesa to Cimarron Valley (then called Butte Valley) and crossed below Butte Lake to the Uncompag-hre Valley where Colona now stands and where Fort Crawford was later built. You might wonder why they would pass up the Colona area, Ridgway area and end up on Hastings Mesa. The answer simply was grass and they were cattle people. So they homesteaded the northend of the peninsula. Shortly thereafter, George Hastings and son, Homer homesteaded and Billie Smith who came with the Berry's, settled as I have described.

This was still Ute country and these settlers were tolerated only because my Grandfather Berry knew and could speak Ute and several other Indian dialects, having been a scout in the Army and had scouted this area and in fact scouted for wagon trains all the way to the Pacific.



All that remains of the Joe Berry homestead buildings, the old barn in back and the grainery to the right.

He took in the 49 gold rush as a scout not a prospector, his life and my Father's life compose most of another book I have written called "Buckskin".

Their first cabin on Hastings was a one room with a fireplace and all hand hewed doors and frames. Those were the days when you made what you used, it was several years before a sawmill came into the country, and was one of the reasons for the road being built down the San Miguel Canyon side to Sawpit. My father was the contractor to build that road and spent a year doing it. I think it cost the County \$1,000.00 dollars. You couldn't get the job advertised for that now, and not moving a pound of rock.

My father Joe Berry was also on the school board and hired my mother to teach the first term of school at the old Hastings school. School teachers were hard to find in those days, I suppose my father figured it was cheaper to marry one, he got a beautiful blue eyed half German and half Swiss young woman who never knew what defeat was and I never remember of my mother being afraid of anything or anybody. She was the first Humane Officer in West Colorado and gained notoriety by taking an abused horse away from a drunk cowboy in Placerville one day. When asked how she could do such things, her reply was, "there was no one else to do it."

One day while the men were back in the timber, my grandmother went to the door to see what the dogs were concerned about, an Indian hidden in the oaks shot an arrow and it lodged in the door frame not a foot from grandmother. She put him to flight with a few well placed shots and that was the last Indian trouble.

As a boy I got my kicks out of sticking my knife blade in the hole where the arrow head had broken off. The cabin was later replaced with a sawed log two story house where I was born. 29 years after they settled there, the original cabin was the Blacksmith shop. While riding a bucking destroyer in WNL my "America" was Hastings Mesa.

My Grandmother was another one who could use a gun and defend her family.

After the death of my Father, Mother taught school and kept the wolf from the door for the next six years after which she met a Connecticut Yankee, who was a cook and a nice guy. They were married in Los Angeles and Mother was Mrs. Henry Bates. A year later Mother presented him with a baby girl "Beula". Bates gave up the restaurant and hotel cooking and filed on a homestead joining our old ranch. He built a cabin which still stands on the southside of Crazy Man hill named after an early prospector who went off his rocker. Bates bought the old ringboned buckskin horse that my brother Charlie had and another to go with him. His "Whoa Buck" could be heard all over the peninsula as he dry farmed the field in the saddle between his cabin and our horse pasture. A few winters with 4 or 5 feet of snow sent Henry back to California to the kitchens. He later settled in Ontario, California where he spent his last years.

His daughter, Beula followed her Mothers profession and retired as a school teacher after she married Tasker Edmiston, a cannery engineer. Their son Joseph studied Law and is now with the State.



Henry Bates cabin still standing on Berry peninsula.
Genn Berry and sister Beula (Bates) Edmiston in front

KID DAYS

As you're settin', kinda coastin' and free wheelin', so to speak, and your kid days start unfoldin; life up on old Alder Creek. Don't seem possible that over half a century has fled since you stopped at Mother Finnegan's and smelled that good, hot bread. She was wise to boys that lingered on their errands to the store. And had played beyond the meal time - yes - and sometimes much, much, more. As you rode your blue mare, Tiny, up the canyon, bread in hand, and the jam she had put on it, small boys, angels understand. Every rock and bush and corner had a "bugger" there within. And old Tiny saw them all, and would jump out of her skin. Up past Imes's homestead cabin; and up Minnie Smith Ravine 'til on top, Mom's lamp, in window, could most easily be seen. 'Twas then your conscience started workin' cause you know you're plenty late, and you hoped your brother, Charlie, had gone girlin' on a date. 'Cause those overdue arrivals had in times past, painful been and the tardy, late and hungry, you must take it on the chin. Now the door was opened widely, and mother's figure, framed with light, showed my little sister tugging, at her skirt in fond delight. For a brother who would venture over flats and canyons dim and not bring home some candy, would comit the worstest sin. As I said, a half century and More of years have flown. But I can still feel those sweet kisses mother gave to welcome home. How I hope that I might live that when I top that last divide and look on that heavenly mesa, Mom's lamp will be there to guide.

My father's brother, Rufus Berry, homesteaded south of my father's place and later sold to Ward and Brown. He also was riding in the Territory with my father and came to Hastings Mesa, his old house has been weathered down long ago, but stood a 1/4 mile so of where the developers-reservoir now is located. Ruff ended up on the Cimarron, which he helped the DRG surveyor name, Cimarron.

West of Ruff and north of the school section was Bill Johnson's homestead. Bill was a freighter and hauled ore from the Paradox to Placerville. He was without a doubt the most skilled longline skinner in the country and never drove less than 8 head of horses, pulling two wagons. While the major part of the freighters drove 4 horses. They of course had large draft stock, while Bill would seldom have a horse weighing over 1200 lbs. He would take a wild bronc and hitch it beside a gentle horse and head for Paradox, when he got back it was a broke horse. He fed his stock well and cared for them, they made a living for his family. After many hard winters on the ranch on Hastings Mesa, Bill moved his family to Leonard where the kids could go to school. I am sure his children of whom he had plenty, will never realize the storms and hundred of miles old Bill drove through, setting on a spring seat with a long long whip in the socket and eight lines between the fingers

of his hands. Very few people today remember him but in my book he ranked 1st as a longline skinner.

My Father died in 1903 and my Mother taught school to keep the wrinkles out of our stomachs and clothes on our backs. The Washburn school, the Hastings school and several more all these were summer school on Hastings and Horsefly Mesa.

Charlie Hollenbeck was in reality my half brother being from my Mother's first marriage, which went on the rocks.

Charlie was 8 years my senior and more or less took the place of my father, we were real brothers and Charlie with Mother's help took over the running of the home ranch in 1908. When he was 15 years old, chronologically, but a full grown man as far as himself and mother were concerned, I sometimes agreed. He had a little blue mare called "Tiny" that I later claimed for my own then he bought a bawky mare and an old ring-boned buckskin gelding that is what he put in his first crop of mountain oats with. We ran steers on our range for a portion of the gain and mother taught the Leonard school when the crop was in. Tiny and I kept the steers where they belonged and Charlie helped my Uncle for a few dollars and the use of his binder. I could fill a book with Charlie Hollenbeck's life (and will some day). Later he bought (on time) a threshing machine to thresh his own, and all the neighbors grain.

He ran a Meat Market in Telluride. He furnished meat and hauled ore back from what is now Uravan. He became a leading road contractor in Colorado. He had ranches and cattle all over Western Colorado. He died with an estate well into seven figures and he started on Hastings Mesa.

CHAPTER 14

Among some of my best kid friends were the Williams kids.

Everett Williams (who had to stand twice to make a shadow) homesteaded a $\frac{1}{2}$ section on Alder creek a half mile up from Minnie Smith creek, a small creek came down from Hummel flats and was dry most of the year, Skinny as we called him had about 5 acres up on a flat joining Williams creek and he raised potatoes and turnips which he packed down to his cellar at the Alder Creek house, his fishing pole, his 22 Rifle and his spuds and turnips were the main source of living for the Williams family. Mrs. Williams had two daughters from a former marriage, their names were Cowhick, Retta the oldest about 17, worked out at the Naturita Hotel for years and her paychecks kept clothes on the family. Mary about 14, later worked at Montrose, Everett and Mrs. Williams had Allen, who was my age and Paul then Evelyn. I would run down off the Mesa to get with the Williams kids and walk up Alder creek to the Pritchard school we tarried not on the way to school but when school was out we had fish fries on bonfire coals, prospected and hunted berries all the way home, of course the older girls payed little attention to us brats but when we caught trout on a bent pin and grasshoppers, they were there to help roast and eat them.

see of grandsons saw out a no back ybain qeejs a

Skinny worked for the neighbors some but a large part of his time was spent in a well locked cabin beside the creek where he worked on a "dad blamed" invention. Us kids were never allowed to ever look at. Once when Allen wanted a marble I had, he told me the secret for the marble, it was a boat. Well I figured if Skinny had a boat that would run on Alder creek he really had an invention, as Alder creek could have been dipped dry with a milk bucket a few times I remember.

Mrs. Williams was a school teacher and with a college education, her children knew more from her homesteading than they ever got out of public school.

About $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up Alder creek from where it empties into Leopard creek, is the Finnagen ranch, homesteaded in the 1880's by a wiry little Irishman who helped build the Railroad thru Leopard Creek Canyon. There he built a cabin and planted his garden, Alder Creek was clean and pure while Leopard Creek was polluted by horse corrals, at the grade crew camps up the road to Dallas Divide.

The Finnegan family has carved their nick in San Miguel County history, John the oldest was Sheriff at one time, May who was married to Frank Davis the road overseer. Ed ran the ranch and ran cattle, he was my hero when I was small. How he could set on the corner of a bundle rack and drive 4 head of horses to a bobsled full of sleepy dancers a steep windy road on a run was something to see.

He had a sister in Salida, married to a railroader but who I never met. Bill was a railroader and kept the taxes paid with his paychecks. He later took over the ranch and became a County Commissioner for San Miguel County. Bill married Jane Galligar as I mentioned before.

Ollie the youngest daughter married my brother Charlie Hollenbeck. No Historian has to my knowledge ever recorded the years of hard labor the father of the Finnegan clan put in on a ditch which he started a mile down Alder Creek from Hastings and which when finished would have put water on Finnegan Flats on the north side of Alder Creek Canyon near Leonard, a good $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of ditch mostly along the side of the canyon. How he would cut the oak and serviceberry, grub out the roots, pick and shovel the dirt and rocks, day after day, year after year and never seen a drop of water out of Alder Creek go down his ditch. Time caught up with him, but on the north side of Alder Creek Canyon still can be seen the dim mark of the little Irishman's ditch. Why someone hasn't finished that project I don't know. A few years back, Dave Fishback built a house on the ditch and didn't know it.

Browns Siding on Leopard creek, where Alder creek comes in from the east was the sight for a railroad water tank and a switch where ties were loaded on a flat car. By the track was a Section house which was always of great interest to me as the Italian woman would bake bread in a big ball shaped oven out in the yard, would pinch off small pieces of dough and bake them along with the loaves. Those were what I would trade a couple trout for. She could not talk English nor Italian, but we could sure trade.

Beside the Section house was Woolverton's store which to me was the "Sears" of that age. Mr. Woolverton had moved there from Bedrock, down in the Paradox Valley, where all his merchandise had to be hauled in by wagons and teams. He built this store where the railroad could do his hauling. His shelves were full of clothes, working clothes mostly and as I remember a glass case had some things the women folk wore that had lace and stuff on them, that case was out of bounds for us men. The most popular item was the Cracker barrel which set in the middle of the floor and Mr. Woolverton would take handfuls and put in a paper sack for who ever wanted crackers. Of course the men (and women) would be unconcerned as they would reach in the barrel and get a cracker while Mr. Woolverton filled their order for groceries.



The first American Legion Post home in West Cole. Built in 1919 at Leonard Cole. where Alder Creek meets Leopard Creek, by WWI vets from Iron Springs, Horsefly and Hastings Mesa. Sawpit and Placerville vets also worked on it.

I packed wood, found lost cows and many more chores for the tin stars and horseshoes that came on the plugs of chewing tobacco, that Mr. Woolverton had ricked up in a showcase like stovewood. Mr. Woolverton was one of his own best customers for the chewing tobacco. He had a large bucket of ashes setting by the potbellied stove that he would aim at and once in awhile he'd hit it. He had a beard and always wore a vest which caught the most of what didn't stay in his beard when he aimed at the ash bucket, the same with most of the other men who in winter days would set on blocks of wood around the stove. There, Presidents were elected and whole nations were taken apart and put together with no apparent changes.

Butter and eggs were traded for groceries and Levi's, and several times a week Mr. Woolverton would load a big box of butter and eggs on the train for Telluride. Some of the butter in Summertime would have to be hogtied to keep it in a box.

Mr. Woolverton had a son, Ferman, who was five or six years older than I, but we were very good friends, I seen to that, as he had access to the cookie barrel. He was alright till he started talking girl, then our friendship was strained to the breaking point.

Next to Woolverton's store was the dance hall and there was held political meetings, election day voting and of course after the crops were in and the cattle rounded up, there were weekly dances which were patronized mostly by Placerville and Sawpit people. Oh, we went and many of the Iron Springs Mesa people would come. There was twobands who kinda took turn about, they were the Price family from up above Sams Spur on Leopard creek and then there was the Barlow family from over on Horsefly. Of course to me the Price family was very popular in later years as they had a daughter, Alice who played the guitar. A full sized volume could be written about the dances on Horsefly, Hastings, Placerville and Sawpit, I mean a real salty volume. Behind the dance hall was the wood shed where the local bootleggers hid their bottles and jugs and arguments were settled on the platform between the woodshed and the two establishments marked "Pointers" and "Setters". Surprisingly all was quiet when a woman headed out back, until some wife would clobber a husband who was partaking of moonshine.

Up the creek a half mile where Haskell creek comes down to meet Leopard, was the original town of Leonard. Woolverton had a small store there beside the railroad track and later expanded to the larger store at Brown. Grandma Impson was the Post mistress as well as being the Godmother to

half the population in that end of the County, including me.

Suggies or sleds would come dashing up the hill under the large Railroad tressel and Grandma's bag was always ready to crawl aboard and wear out a couple horses getting to a Mother in labor. Maybe there is another name for that kind of person, but she was awful close to God as far as those mountain women were concerned. Brown or Leonard really didn't belong to Hastings Mesa as they were on the Iron Springs side of the creek but we never split straws that close, we lived on Hastings and got our mail at Leonard.

Old Leonard had a one room school with a flat roof, Mother taught it and some place in my family is a picture of all the kids standing on the roof of the school house. Furman Woolverton was Mother's only 8th grader and he was full grown. Ollie Finnigan, my brother's wife to be was in pigtails and I was someplace in the shuffle that I wasn't suppose to be.

We lived in a cabin at Frank and May Davis place located at the foot of Curry Gulch. There was a bunch of the Davis's and Mother and us two kids all sharing one very popular 3 holer that sat a respectful distance away from the Davis house towards the creek. It was customary to "YooHoo" before leaving the residential area and heading down the trail to that institution, a muffled "Yoo Hoo" from the end of the trail meant hold it.

After Woolverton moved his store to Brown siding, a traveling man by the name of Grawl built a store at the foot of the hill and put in a nice supply of civilized merchandise together with a spotless place of business. Well that was nice and few of the women would stop there, but there was no cracker barrel, no rick of plug tobacco, no pot bellied stove and the floor was so you could tell it was made of native yellow pine. Needless to say there was not enough people who liked to clean their boots before entering and later it closed. Also the Post Office was moved to Brown and Brown was Leonard from then on.

Haskel Hill road that came down thru Leonard was originally built jointly by two men, who built it for a toll road and was to be a short cut to Montrose in competition with Dave Wood. That is one story that seemed close enough for me.

Sams Spur, another switch put in for the convenience of the grade crews who built the railroad. Sam was a railroad merchant and settled at the first wide spot below Noel Springs, his ability as a colonizer was not what you would call outstanding as four buildings is all I can ever remember, the County did build a good one room school house a half mile up the road and it was noted for it's social people and of course the Price band lived just a mile up the canyon from the school. Every locality has a Historical marker, rather it is of granite or word of mouth. Sams was where Jess Taylor was shot. Seems they were shipping cattle from Sams and some cow showed up with a calf of a different brand. Who was right or who was wrong I don't know, but to this day I point out the old switch yard where Jesse Taylor came out second best in a shootout that was credited to Horsefly Mesa and a marker for Sams Spur.

In my 4 score plus years I never knew of a killing on Hastings Mesa. Some came near starving to death, but the big white jack rabbits and grouse saved the day, and of course livestock flourished on the Mesa's abundant forage.

In the early 1900's there were very few elk and deer as they had been killed for market up until 1890 and were almost exterminated. My father raised hell and put a chunk under it when his brother-in-law killed 4 deer in our back



R to L Alan Bradbury, Rita Robinson
Norva Berry, Glenn Berry
1983 Picnic.

pasture, in fact it started a family feud which lasted until two generations past out of the picture.

Placerville and Sawpit always was town to Hastings Mesa and composed a part of a book that I am writing, but for now and for this addition we will save those two history jammed wide places for another addition.

I am indebted to so many for help like Minnie and Mary (Hastings) and Vern (Lee Vern) Proper, together with our Host and Hostess, Allen and Reda who have made their home (the old Bill Pritchard place) available for our annual Hastings Mesa picnics. Dave and Denise Greever who are building a beautiful addition to the Bill Finnegan place, furnished my parking spot for my bank house (motor home) where I park to visit my old haunts. To them, and Jim and Virginia Drew who built a nice home on the old Finnegan spud patch, I complement, they built and didn't tear down.

To those who I have not mentioned in this humble effort I extend my apology.

I am sure that the majority of the people I have mentioned attend these annual picnics in spirit and if you think we tell some tall ones you should (and will some day) listen to those old pioneers who had guts enough to settle at the foot of Mt. Hayden.

THE END

You and your family are
cordially invited to
THE HASTINGS MESA REUNION
for Old-Timers and Friends
Sunday, August 22, 1982

Gathering begins at Noon - Potluck at 1:00 p.m.
at the old Pritchard/Proper Homestead
(now the home of Alan Bradbury and Rita Robinson)

Please bring place setting and chairs or blanket,
and old pictures, stories, etc.

NOTE: This is the Second and most likely the last Reunion
so please pass the word so no one will be missed!

Typical Invitation
You are now at the 4th, and no end in
sight yet.

W.H.
978.8 Berry, Glenn
Ber Hastings Mesa

W.H.
978.8
Ber Berry, Glenn
Hastings Mesa

161330	176		

Gunnison County Library
307 N. Wisconsin
Gunnison, CO 81230