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Lantern
Colo.

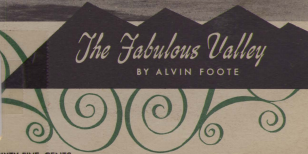


The Fabulous Valley

BY ALVIN FOOTE

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"PICTURED ON THE COVER IS THE

Redstone Inn

AT REDSTONE, COLORADO."

ABOUT THE
COLORADO

NY, INC.



The Crystal River Valley

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THE VILLAGE OF REDSTONE, COLORADO



1.

The Peaceful Village

A fabulous valley, little publicized and little known, lies in the heart of the Elk Mountains on the western slope of Colorado. It is drained by a river of singular clearness, and the river is appropriately called the Crystal. The shining stream moves serenely in the late summer months from a ghost town, high in the mountains, to Carbondale where it loses itself in the more famous Roaring Fork. Then its remnants, all identity lost, are carried to the great Colorado at Glenwood Springs.

In the early spring the Crystal is a torrent, lusty with melted snows, swollen with waters which have plunged from the steep sides of the Elk Range.

In winter it almost sleeps.

But, always, it is a strange river, and the history of man on its banks has been filled with promises, dreams, and disillusion.

There is a town in the valley which, once seen, can never be forgotten. It is called Redstone, situated south of Carbondale and north of Marble, and it might be called an incredible fantasy were it not for certain visible proofs of its reality. Fabulous in origin and setting, its buildings were so well constructed and its site is so sheltered that neither nature nor man's depredations have destroyed it. The Redstone Inn, at

the southern end of the village, cannot be called a monument to the corpse of a dream, because the building retains all its original gracious splendor—and more. Today it is a completely modernized hotel, but it has lost nothing of its charm and its old-world quietness.

Redstone is eighteen miles south of Carbondale and can be reached by a good highway. Its altitude is a little over seven thousand feet. In 1941 it had a population of twelve, but since then the population has grown, and the village is now a secluded, though easily accessible resort. The Inn is a headquarters for deer and elk hunters during open seasons, and is a mecca for the fisherman who tries his luck in the waters of the Crystal within two hundred yards of the Inn's front door. Visitors who would rest find ineffable peace in both the tradition and the scenic beauty of the vicinity.

Redstone is a sportsman's goal. Elk, deer, and trout abound. It is possible to find bear in the surrounding hills. Once rocky mountain sheep climbed in the surrounding red cliffs. They have disappeared, of course, but as late as 1912 trappers found a wild ram's carcass which had been eaten by coyotes. According to newspaper accounts of the find: "Careful measurements showed the horns to be sixteen inches in circumference at the base, eighteen inches from point to point, and each horn is thirty-two inches in length."

Redstone's history is amazing. It was founded at the beginning of the century by John C. Osgood, one of the strangest of builders, and a man whose life remains shrouded in mystery. From newspaper items, published in modern times, one can glean some more or less authentic information about the town, the Inn, and Cleveholm, Osgood's own mansion:

... Announcement is made of the sale of Cleveholm and 350 of its baronial acres at a reported price of \$100,000.00, "a small fraction of two and one half million poured into the historic Western Slope estate shortly after the turn of the century."

... Redstone is the show place of Colorado built between 1900 and 1903 as the barony and home of J. C. Osgood.

... The original estate of J. C. Osgood included a forty-two room tudor manor house, a village, a forty room inn, an entire mountain basin rich with coal, a railroad, and 4200 acres.

... Fabulous Cleveholm, Rockefeller and Morgan dined there. The sixty pastel colored cottages were sold several years ago to private individuals.

... The Osgood estate was built during a titanic struggle with Rockefeller interests over control of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company.

... The forty room Redstone Inn is a copy of a Dutch tavern.

... Italian artists were brought across the ocean to hand-stencil oak paneled walls. The walls of Cleveholm library were covered with hand-tooled green leather. Green silk brocade on walls of music room. Dining room walls were covered with ruby velvet. Woodwork solid mahogany. Gold leaf covers ceilings of many rooms. Fireplace of hand-cut stone. Sweeping paved courtyards in tudor manner. Expensive stables paneled in oak.

... The famous Redstone Inn is a frame and sandstone structure of Dutch design, with a high square clock tower and a magnificent cut-stone fireplace.

It should not be forgotten that these things were done almost fifty years ago in wild mountains, in a region scarcely yet civilized, and almost 400 miles from Denver by rail. And such stories, in newspaper features and magazine articles, will continue to appear from time to time. The interest in Redstone is intense, its magnificence unbelievable, and its structures incredible.

A Man

But what of this man named Osgood who, in 1882, first dreamed of these things? The story is told that two prospectors, Griffith and Parry, hunting for gold twelve miles from the present site of Redstone, saw a tremendous snow-slide in 1881. To their amazement the slide uncovered a huge vein of coal where they had expected to find gold. They were true prospectors, not coal-men. They were looking for gold, or lead, or silver, or zinc. They sold their claim to one Osgood for \$500. It is further related that Osgood could pay only half at the time of the sale, and the two men walked with him to Crested Butte, over the top of the Elk Range, in order that he could obtain the other half of the purchase price from his partner, one Kebler, who was to be Osgood's right-hand man almost until the end of the dream.

Perhaps that was the beginning. In 1902 the *New York Times** carried a story:

"THE NEWEST FIGURE IN FINANCE"

"Remarkable Career of J. C. Osgood, Who Has Defeated John W. Gates. A Brooklyn Lad Who Started The Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. with One Room and

**New York Times*, September 7, 1902.

a Boy—Now Controls Giant Industries—Model Town of Swiss Chalets and an "Old English Inn." He Has Established in The Rockies—Workingmen Who Dress for Dinner and a Club Where No Treating Is Allowed.

"Within the past ten days the sharp eyes of Wall Street have been raised for a few moments to contemplate a new figure in the world of control—John Cleveland Osgood of Redstone, Colorado who enjoys the proud distinction of having whipped celebrated Chicago plunger, John W. Gates, in a desperate battle for the control of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co."

This part of the *TIMES* story refers to the historic battle waged by John W. Gates against the two giants, Rockefeller and Morgan, in 1901 and 1902. Gates was notoriously an opponent of the growing financial monopolies. According to Wendt and Kogan, in their recent biography of Gates*, he technically got control of CF&I by acquiring 191,609 shares of the 259,178 available. Osgood, acting for the Rockefeller interests, refused to yield control of the company even though the stocks were listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He maintained that any transfer without his approval and signature was invalid. He refused to allow the new owners to attend a stockholders' meeting, and managed to get an injunction from Circuit Judge John Mullens of Denver prohibiting Gates' attendance. The war included threats of violence, and Gates started suits in the Federal Courts, Stocks dropped and Gates lost \$3,000,000 in two months, according to Gates' biographers. Finally he sold to George J. Gould, the son of Jay Gould, and the Rockefellers had complete control.

By 1903 the Rockefeller-Osgood combination had split apart, but that is another story.

The *Times* story goes on to ask: "WHO IS HE?"

"Who is this Coloradoan who has so suddenly upset one of the most daring and persistent operators seen on the New York Stock Exchange? His fame in Colorado does not rest on his defeat of John W. Gates, though that has added lustre to his name, but to the manner in which he has built up an industry. . . .

"Even some of Osgood's best friends in Colorado are under the impression that he is an Englishman by birth. But this is an error. He is an American of the true type for many generations back.

"He was born in Brooklyn on March 6, 1851, and has consequently but recently passed his fifty-first birthday. His father was in the wholesale drug trade, but became infected with Western fever and in 1857 removed to Iowa, settling with his son at Burlington. The death of his father two years later caused the

boy to return to the East, and he lived with relatives at Providence, R. I. where he attended school until he was fourteen.

"It was at this age that young Osgood was thrown on the world to earn his own living, and he left the roof of his Quaker relatives to become an office boy in a Providence cotton mill. Business aptitude was not wanting, and two years later he went to New York City as a clerk for a Produce Exchange Commission firm. Three years of this training, and then Iowa once more, and at nineteen he was the cashier of a coal mining company, which is not in his control, the White Breast Fuel Co., with offices at Orem, Utah. The upward path was plainly marked now, and his twenty-third year found young Osgood the cashier of the First National Bank of Burlington, Iowa. Until 1876 he remained with the bank, and then assumed the control of the White Breast Company."

In less elaborate tones the facts are these: John Cleveland Osgood was born in Brooklyn, New York, March 6, 1851. He was the son of Samuel Warburton Osgood and Mary Hill (Cleveland) Osgood. The Osgood ancestors came from England in 1630 and founded the town of Andover, Massachusetts. The Cleveland ancestors came to Massachusetts from England about the same time, and settled the towns of Salisbury and Thompson, Connecticut, on lands bought from Indians. Osgood's great uncle, General Moses Cleveland, founded the city of Cleveland, Ohio. John Cleveland Osgood was educated in public schools of Davenport, Iowa, and Brooklyn, N. Y., and in the Friends Boarding School, Providence, Rhode Island. The jobs he held were accurately given by the *TIMES* article. He first visited Colorado in 1882, and is supposed to have visited every coal mine open at that time in the state. He located in Colorado and organized the Colorado Fuel Company which acquired the Colorado Coal and Iron Company (organized in 1880 by General W. J. Palmer and others). The new corporation was called the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. He secured the investment of over forty million dollars in the coal and iron business in the state. He broke with the CF&I in 1903. His second wife, known as "Lady Bountiful" to Redstone citizens, died some time after this break. He married again, just three years before his own death in Redstone. His ashes are said to have been scattered in the valley he loved. His principal lieutenants were J. A. Kebler, A. C. Cass, John L. Jerome, and others. Osgood, Kebler, Cass, and Jerome were known as the "Iowa Crowd," and received much publicity in 1903 as having been the last "independents" opposing the Rockefeller and Gould interests. However the *Denver Times*, in its issue of November 23, 1903, ran a remarkable editorial:

"A sensational story in connection with the fight for control of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company was given out this forenoon by a man who is in a position to know.

*Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *BET A MILLION, Bobbs, Merrill, 1948, pp. 247-279.*

"At the conclusion of the meeting which resulted in the surrender of the Colorado owners to Rockefeller and Gould, Cass, Kebler and Jerome found themselves losers to an unexpected extent. They had stood loyally by Osgood, relying on his ability to steer the company through the dangerous places, as he had done once before. After control passed to Gould and Rockefeller the three, Cass, Kebler, and Jerome made an inventory, and with information which they possessed they came to the conclusion that they had been betrayed by Osgood. They joined forces and were preparing a suit against their former partner. Whether they had just ground for action against Osgood is not known, but that they believed themselves to have been betrayed is a fact, and they were determined to recover by legal proceedings. Not only did these men come out of the CP&I fight with lessened fortunes, but their health was seriously impaired."

At the time of the appearance of this editorial the three men were dead.

The truth of many conjectures about the short term of Osgood's supremacy in the company cannot be discussed here. Too many men "should be in a position to know." Too little is really known, and nothing should be taken for granted. But it is known that Redstone operated only a short time, about four years (1899 to 1903) under Osgood's reign, and that he, after he left the company, retained ownership of the town of Redstone, his mansion, the Redstone Inn, the Club House, the School House, and hundreds of acres of land unmatched for scenic beauty in the state. He died at Cleveholm, but visited there only occasionally between 1903 and 1926.

People

The truth of Osgood's town remains; the beauty of the Redstone Inn, and a few of the workers' cottages, no two built alike, no two painted alike. The school house is gone, the club house is gone, Big Horn Lodge is gone, but men live in the valley who recall the care he took of his men, both in the village where the coke ovens were built and in the mining camp, Coal Basin, twelve miles away. These men also remember the school and the club. The ruins of the hunting lodge stand (the building was torn down for sale), and one can visit the mining camp by horseback or jeep.

A New York TIMES reporter wrote, in 1902: "Redstone, 'the Ruby of the Rockies,' is a town to rave over from the standpoint of both beauty and philanthropy. Fifteen months ago Redstone consisted of little outside of some rude huts or 'digouts,' to use the more expressive Western vernacular. Today it is

the most beautiful town in Colorado, a thriving little village of 250 to 300, connected with the outside world by the Crystal River Railroad, a company possession, with a hive of industry at its very doors, one of the company's big coking plants, and with the source of supplies but twelve miles up to the mountains at Coal Basin.

"A perfect picture of color it is, well built, harmonious with its surroundings, and prosperous, if not opulent, in appearance. On the side of the station are the coke ovens; across the river lies the town. There is practically but one thoroughfare. More than 100 frame cottages line the shaded street, and every one differs from the rest. A special architect is engaged in the work and he is partial to the Swiss chalet effect, not inappropriate in a mountain town. But each residence is gaily, though moderately, painted in different colors, and the architectural style differs always in the same manner.

"In these cottages dwell the employees of the company at the coke ovens, the miners having a town of their own up in the hills. They are appreciative, too, these Italians, Huns, and Austrians, and decorate their homes according to their various tastes

"There is the Redstone Inn, a model little hostelry in old English style." In the club "there are plunge baths and shower baths, for the men when they finish the day's work, with lockers in which they may keep their working clothes, thus effecting a change, for the appearance of the men in the town streets in their grimy garb is not encountered."*

There were reading rooms, filled with newspapers in many languages and the best of the magazines of that date. There was a library with many volumes, including the classics, made available to every worker and to every member of any worker's family. There was a theatre, complete with all stage accouterments. Gambling was barred in the Club, but men played penny-ante poker and ten cent pool. And there was a famous rule which forbade anyone to buy drinks for any other man.

Some of the buildings, including the Club and the School, have been torn down for salvage, but the fine Redstone Inn remains, as well as many of the houses, and Cleveholm, two miles south of the village.

Nine years after the TIMES article, quoted above, appeared, Lord Ogilvy was writing in the Denver POST:

"There is one of the finest mountain automobile roads in the state from Carbonale to Redstone and it was promoted in the first place, like so much else here (Redstone), by J. C. Osgood, who, together with Mrs. Osgood, did so much in the Crystal River Valley. I have seen the Redstone sociological achievement of Mr. Osgood referred to as an experiment, but it was a great deal more than

*New York TIMES, September 7, 1902.

that; it was an achievement, the successful achievement of an idea often promulgated and seldom carried into effect.

"That Redstone is today (1911) a deserted village is simply due to the fact that the coal fields, the source of the industrial being, have passed into the hands and control of those who think Sunday schools more important than sanitation and precept more important than practice—the same kind of people, in fact, as those who when a rare instance occurs of some newly imported laboring man pickling pork in his bath tub think it more important to publish the fact abroad than to teach him the real use of such accessories.

"It is true that this does not represent the ideas of the most successful employers of labor and that only the ignorant persist in thinking that keeping people dirty gets more work out of them, but the idea was quite prevalent at the time when Mr. Osgood introduced a decent sanitary and social system at Pueblo and Redstone and superseded the dog kennel idea in the coke and coal camp. I asked T. M. Gibb of Redstone how the conveniences of shower baths and lockers for their clean clothes to go home in worked at Redstone. 'Why,' said he, 'it took from two to three days for a man who came here dirty to make use of them and take pleasure in going home clean from the dirty occupation of coke burning or coal mining instead of going home dirty and musing up a small house trying to get clean. The idea that seems to have been uppermost in Mr. Osgood's mind was the family one, to keep it intact, and high school instruction was given for the comparatively few children who were able to reach that grade during the six or seven years the camp was in operation and when it was turning out the highest quality of coke, though not sufficient in quantity for the insistent demand from the Salida and Montana smelters.

"The public buildings in Redstone were the Inn, the Club with a theatre upstairs for 300 people; a library, full of technical as well as amusing books. Manual training was given along with technical instruction, so that the young could fit themselves among healthy surroundings for any trade. A great deal was done to encourage gardening, a herd of cows belonging to the workmen was driven for pasturage to the hills by a common herder and returned at night to a common barn, where the owners could milk and care for them, and thus plenty of really good milk was provided for the children."*

Clippings from CAMP AND PLANT, the weekly published at the time by the company in Pueblo, can give some idea of the village life:

... December 14, 1901.—"The Crystal River Mandolin Club meets twice a week and is doing good work...."

"A group of fifty houses in the lower part of the town will shortly be finished and ready for occupation. These cottages, or the greater number of them, will be occupied by the Italians, who are coke or stone workers. They believe that their health will thus be greatly improved. Beauty has been the guiding principle in the building up of our little town. We do not have monotonous rows of box-car houses with battened walls, painted a dreary mineral red, but tasteful little cottages in different styles, prettily ornamented, comfortably arranged internally and painted in every variety of restful color."

... December 20, 1901.—"Arrangements have been completed for quite an elaborate celebration of Christmas in Redstone. The public school is to have its

tree in the Inn, which is nearing completion. Mrs. Wright and Miss Freeman are in charge of the entertainment to which all residents of Redstone have been invited. Mr. and Mrs. Osgood and their guests will be present."

"A night school will be started at once in Redstone. A meeting was held in the school house a week ago last Monday and quite a large number of men have shown interest in the project...."

"The Elk Mountain Inn will shortly be ready for occupation. The opening ceremonies are expected to take place during the midwinter holidays and a large representation of the C&A officials will be in attendance."

"Work on the company's hotel in town is rapidly being pushed, and bachelor employees may soon have comfortable quarters, at present greatly needed."

"The club house is also taking form, and the new school will soon rear its pleasing form on the hill, overlooking the village."

"Our school is progressing steadily under the able and enthusiastic guidance of Mrs. Wright and Miss Freeman. The seventh and eighth grade pupils have become proficient in the use of the reference works in the library."

"... a school library has been founded by Mr. and Mrs. Osgood, and contributed to in lesser degree by other friends of education. There are now 256 volumes in the library, Kipling, Dickens in full sets, the 'Henty Books,' and many valuable reference works.... There are also books of travel and adventure and some technical works on mechanics, engineering and kindred subjects...."

... March 29, 1902.—"A brass band of twenty-nine instruments has been organized at Redstone, under the directorship of Eliseo Jacoe."

"Walter Macher has organized a home dramatic company, and will put on *The Two Orphans* at the opening of the auditorium in the club house."

... April 5, 1902.—"The bottom west of the coke ovens has been entirely vacated, and the huts that once occupied that ground are being removed or destroyed. The land will be cleared up and converted into garden plots for the employees of the company at Redstone."

"The former tenants of the 'Badlands' are now occupying the cosy cottages in North Redstone. The new coke ovens are all about completed, and will be fired up next Sunday. This will bring the total up to 200 ovens."

... November 21, 1902.—"The (Redstone) Club is incorporated for social purposes and is governed by a Board of Directors composed of thirteen active members, who elect a president, vice-president secretary and treasurer. Active members are required to pay an initiation fee of one dollar and six months' dues in advance, at fifty cents a month. The amount is small as compared with the expenses of maintenance of the club, but still the member is made to feel that he is paying for what he gets, and may, therefore enjoy perfect freedom in taking advantage of the privileges."

"All kinds of the best grades of liquors are served at reasonable prices from a well-stocked bar. A 'no treating' rule operates to promote the temperate use of liquors, so that no one may 'drink himself under the table.' If he is seen to be getting too much, he is told quietly that he has had enough, and can buy no more at that time. All 'soft drinks,' as well as sandwiches, hot chocolate and

*Denver Post, May 29, 1911.

cake are served at cost. Copies of house rules are printed in three languages and posted conspicuously. Visitors are admitted when introduced by members, and during their stay are entitled to all the privileges enjoyed by the members.

"Adjoining the lounging room on the north is a large well-lighted billiard room supplied with one convertible and two pool tables. On the south is the reading room, supplied with popular weekly and monthly magazines and daily and weekly newspapers, the latter in English, Italian and Slavonic. A small reference library is found on the shelves. In the basement are numerous shower and tub baths, dressing rooms for women and men

"A much appreciated feature which must not be overlooked is the 'Ladies' Evening' at the Club. Although women are not eligible for membership, they are not barred from the privileges of the club. Wednesday evenings are given over to the wives and daughters and visiting friends of members. Whist and euchre parties, billiards, pool and light refreshments, together with instrumental music, combine to make these evenings pass away all too quickly."

. . . . April 9, 1904.—In mentioning the good things of Redstone, the Inn should not be overlooked. A more complete or better furnished little hotel it would be hard to find and yet its guests are nearly all employees of the company (in 1904). The Inn contains all the conveniences and appliances of a modern hotel, steam heating apparatus, electric lights, hot and cold water, bathrooms, closets, barber shop, laundry, telephone, beautifully furnished lounging and reading room and all the accessories."

A Man's Fame Lives After Him

Vaughn Mechau, a Denver journalist who knew intimately many men who were Osgood's acquaintances, has written: "Despite an orderly mind that grasped and totaled figures with the accuracy of an adding machine, much of Osgood's activity was strictly off the cuff without advice or explanation from anyone. His opinions were not chronicled in the press; he was not a public speaker. From evidence available, he lavished deep affection on both people and things he loved—and greatest of things he loved was Redstone on the Crystal. In 1880 John C. Osgood found the place he wanted for his home—the thing closest to his heart—an opportunity for workers to live decently and the gratification of individual desire."

Whatever Osgood's motives were, whatever might be the mystery of his vast holdings in the valley when he died, it must be said that in Redstone he conducted an amazing experiment in a combination of semi-feudal theory and benevolent industrialism.

Cleveholm, his personal home, is intact today. Some of the houses built for his workers and foremen remain, and the Redstone Inn is a modernized hotel which stands graciously at the southern end of the village, open to anyone who would visit the most remarkable spot in the valley.

But twelve miles from the Inn, by Jeep or any rugged motor-car, one finds the ghost town of Coal Basin, dead now, and filled with the eeriness of unforbidden dreams.



PHOTO JOHN B. SCHUTTE

LOOKING SOUTH FROM AVALANCHE PASS TOWARD TREASURY MT. RANGE, COLO.



2.

Ghosts of Violence

At the southern end of the Crystal River Valley is a cavernous hole in solid rock at the bottom of a canyon which tightly confines the plunging stream. It is called the "Devil's Punch Bowl," and a legend has persisted since the first days of the white man's intrusion. The legend maintains that in the depths of the "Devil's Punch Bowl" rest the remains of a man who fell into it from the trail which winds more than a thousand feet above. It is said that the skeleton of his horse, tied to a tree, was found one spring when the snows melted; and it is believed that the man had dismounted on the trail, perhaps in a flurry of early winter, and somehow had fallen to his death.

The Heart of the Elk Mountains

In the Marble Booster, September 2, 1916, under a heading "Twenty-seven Years Ago," the following item was published.

"In the heart of the Elk Mountains of western Colorado in a little park containing less than 100 acres, closely beset on all sides by gigantic hills, lies a little collection of miners' log houses which the enterprising owners call Crystal. In the summer there are perhaps 200 people in the hamlet, while in winter, when the trails and roads that connect the community with the rest of the world are deeply buried in snow so that only the experienced mountaineer can travel over them, the number dwindles down to fifty or seventy-five. Here is a settlement

that is having almost as hard a struggle for existence as did Silverton from 1873 to 1878, and like Silverton it has only to wait patiently for a few years for its reward. For if there is any one part of this great state which may be said to be particularly well supplied with mineral riches of all kinds, it is the Crystal River Valley. Its length is about fifty miles. It heads in the very center of the Elk Mountains only a few miles north of Crested Butte, and empties into the Roaring Fork about half way between Aspen and Glenwood Springs. At its lower end there are magnificent deposits of coking and anthracite coal. Further up are slate deposits of the finest kind, and vast outcrops of iron ore. Above these are some of the most remarkable ledges of marble that have been discovered in any part of the world. Finally the upper fifteen miles of the valley have been shown by the prospecting of the last two years (1888-89) to contain in its walls a large number of veins, ledges and contacts, rich in gold, silver and lead. With such a heritage the settlers of the Crystal River Valley will not have to wait many years before a railroad will render their natural resources available."

The railroad, as predicted, was to reach Marble in 1906, but was never to cover the remaining six magnificently scenic miles to Crystal. Today (1950) the town is a ghost. Some of its houses and stores, however, having been constructed of sturdy pine, are remarkably well preserved. Its violent and romantic setting, of course, cannot change. It can be reached by automobile—eighteen miles from the Redstone Inn at Redstone.

Three Counties

Crystal is in Gunnison County, as is Marble. The history of the towns is linked with the history of the development of Gunnison County. Early exploration did not move north, from Carbondale, but south, from Crested Butte, through Schofield, over Schofield Pass into Crystal, and down the Crystal River to Marble.

Gunnison County was first penetrated by prospectors in the early sixties. The county seat, Gunnison, was surveyed in 1872 and founded in 1874. In 1877 the county was set off from Lake County. One of the first important silver discoveries in the state was made in the Forest Queen Mine west of Crested Butte. A few days after the discovery one half interest in the mine was sold for \$100,000. The railroad was extended to Crested Butte, from Gunnison, in 1881. The county was named in honor of John W. Gunnison who led an expedition into the region in 1853 to find a feasible route for a railroad to extend from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Gunnison traveled up the Arkansas River to Bent's Fort, then southwest through Sangre de Cristo Pass into

San Luis Park, and through Cochetopa Pass to what is now Gunnison County.

The Crystal River Valley is located in three counties. Its upper end, Crystal and Marble, lies in Gunnison County. Placita and Redstone lie within the boundaries of Pitkin County, and its lower, or northern, end at Carbondale, lies in Garfield County.

Pitkin County was set apart from Gunnison in 1881 and named in honor of Frederick W. Pitkin, then governor of the state. Aspen is the county seat. Pioneer settlers arrived about 1879, an overflow from the booming camp of Leadville. In the same year Ute Indians frightened these early prospectors from their camp, and they fled over the range to Tincup and into Gunnison County. In 1880 B. Clark Wheeler and others were on the ground again, but development of the famous Aspen silver mines was retarded until the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad reached the town in 1887. The Midland line (now abandoned) reached Aspen in 1888, and by 1890 the county had a population of 8,929. Aspen steadily declined after the devaluation of silver in 1893 and the closing of the Indian mints, but today it is one of the most famous ski resorts in America. By 1900 the population was reduced to 7,020, and Aspen itself had declined to 1,834 by 1910. The town, built at the confluence of Castle, Hunter, and Maroon Creeks with the Roaring Fork River, was a great mining camp for approximately ten years—from 1899 to 1908. In those years the county produced \$15,800,000 in silver, \$10,120,000 in lead, \$14,000 in copper, and a negligible amount of gold.

Schofield and Crystal

A white mule is supposed to have carried General Grant into Schofield when the president made his roaring trip into the west. Not to be outdone by the wet and vociferous hospitality of other camps, Schofield's welcome was unparalleled. The story is told that one E. E. Riland, a civil war veteran, magically furnished the whiskey out of one suitcase which contained plugs of chewing tobacco and a few bottles of some mysterious "extract." Wilfred Parry, who was born in Marble in 1888 and lives there today, had the story from his father, W. D. Parry, one of the earliest prospectors in the district. Apparently the ingenious Riland

died with the secret in his breast, and the nature of the "extract" was lost to posterity.

Today it is not possible to drive from Schofield to Crystal. The old wagon road over the pass was never secure. However, for the traveler who likes to walk or to ride a horse, it is possible to make the journey through some of the most magnificent and rugged country in America.

By 1892 Schofield was gone and Crystal had passed its peak. In 1892 Marble had seven saloons and the stories told of the Schofield district had become legend. One such story reveals that a woman known only as "Old Lady Jack," a niece of Jim Bridger, famous Indian scout, lived in Schofield in the '90s. She liked to place old boards on top of the ten foot snow in the month of May in order that she might rock herself in an old rocking-chair in the sun. According to Parry, who is a mine of information and legend, she always wore a gunny sack draped over huge shoulders on such occasions to keep herself warm. She insisted upon washing her firewood before burning it—not being willing to get her hands dirty; and when she washed her vast colony of cats she hung them by the napes of their necks in the warm sun to dry. And there was Jim Lambert, a veteran of the Blue, with bullets in his legs, who was known throughout the upper valley as "Boilbeef Jim" because, being a cook by profession, boiled beef was the only thing he ever prepared for his clients.

The mineral resources of the southern end of the Crystal were recognized almost from the beginning. One of the first geologists to enter the region, John K. Hallowell, whose report on his findings and surmises was published in 1883,* wrote that he started at the head of Slate River in Gunnison County, crossed over the divide to the head of Rock Creek, passed around Galena Mountain, and descended into Crystal Basin at the foot of Treasury Mountain. Every few hundred feet he found veins of ore—iron, zinc, galena, and copper sulphides. "While this Rock Creek section," he added, "has not been to this date (1882) ranked as an ore producer in any sense of the term, except perhaps the Eureka mines . . . the wagon road finished into Crystal Basin this fall should bring this territory to the front at once on the opening of another season."

*John K. Hallowell, GUNNISON, COLORADO'S BONANZA COUNTY, Denver, Colorado Museum of Applied Geology and Mineralogy (Subscription edition), 1883.

Crystal had a population of 500 as early as 1880, and a newspaper, the Crystal River CURRENT. Its most famous mines were the Black Queen, Lead King, Catalpa, Black Eagle, Inez, Harrison Farley, and the Sheep Mountain Tunnel. Ore from the most consistent producers was hauled by mule team to Carbondale for shipment.

Col. Dean A. Burgess, in the Pueblo STAR-JOURNAL, July 15, 1916, wrote:

"Crystal, Colo., June 24.—Six miles (from Marble) up the ever glistening and slashing waters of the Crystal River, but one of the most beautiful scenic sections in Colorado, guarded on the east by Mt. Sopris, the sure enough mountain, on the west by Snowmass, White House Peak and the San Juan Range* lies the old silver record producing camp of Crystal. The camp is strictly a silver-lead, zinc producer, with some percentage of copper as a by-product. Gold occurs associated with copper ores, but is not a prime factor in the camp. The Sheep Mountain Tunnel (in 1949 the highway from the Redstone Inn to Crystal crosses the old dump of this tunnel) is now 2,700 feet in and is being cleaned and put in condition for systematic handling of the large bodies of ore reserves existing in it and the Black Queen. The product has a past history of very high values. It is a lead-silver ore and an immense tonnage of zinc can be handled besides from the properties."

In 1915 the population of Crystal was eight. In July, 1916, it was seventy-five, and the town boasted two hotels, a small general store, and a barber-shop-pool-hall. It is obvious that its fortunes were typical of other mining camps, its population always more or less transient.

It was from Schofield, through Crystal, that the early Marble pioneers, W. F. Mason, William Woods, W. D. Parry, John Mobley, and others came when they first settled near the mouth of Yule Creek, at the present site of Marble, before 1880.

Marble

In the late 70's prospectors poured into the Crystal River Valley in search of gold. "Editor" Adams, of Montrose, writing in the Marble BOOSTER, July 15, 1916, said:

"The towns of Marble and Crystal were only about five miles apart, the latter being farther up Rock Creek,† right in a crevice on the mountains. They were

*Burgess' boundaries are both inaccurate and hazy.

†Rock Creek is now known as the Crystal River, as far as Crystal.

rival mining camps in the early days. Each had a newspaper and each boosted its particular section to a frazzle. But silver went down in price, the mines did not pan out as they had hoped, and both became deserted, inhabited only by a few optimistic prospectors who were ever and anon making strikes and telling about what a great mining camp that country was going to make. If you never saw an optimist in your life, go into one of these mining camps and you will find him in all his radiance in the prospector who has been pegging away at a number of claims for lo, these many years, and is just on the verge of striking it rich. Frequently he hasn't a dollar, but he manages to live by taking odd jobs at working assessments, then lays in a supply of grub and tobacco, and he's fixed for another year. They are happy fellows, whole-souled and generous to the last pinch of flour and bacon rind. I love those fellows, the prospectors. "Marble has all the 'comforts of home.' The streets and homes are all electrically lighted and supplied with city water of the purest mountain sweetness. It is an incorporated town with wide-awake people, who have good churches, a good high school and is modern in every particular. And it is some size, about 1,500 population, I believe. That Saturday night it was lively. The moving picture show was running in full blast and knots and crowds of men and women everywhere. Both young and old paraded the streets there and do the same things as we in Montrose, or elsewhere."

Marble had had its short boom as a mineral camp, but its resurrection and its subsequent life depended upon the white purity of the stone for which it was named. Deposits of marble were discovered near the present site of Marble by W. D. Parry and William Woods in 1882. These deposits were later developed by the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, J. C. Osgood, who built Redstone, quarried a piece of this marble for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1892. This single piece is said to have cost \$1,700 to quarry. Some rough marble was quarried in 1895-96 and hauled to Carbondale in sleighs to be shipped. In 1906-07 the railroad was built from Placita to Marble, a large mill was constructed, and marble was trammed from the quarries to be finished at the mill.

The Montrose editor, Adams, speaking of the mill, wrote:

"The machinery was as big as all outdoors. I never before saw such a massive plant. Machinery until you could not rest. Such a noise and hum you could scarcely hear yourself think. Great cranes were carrying great blocks of marble as easily as though they were pebbles. There were giant saws cutting huge blocks in two, and every machine conceivable to cut and trim marble into the shape desired. The saws and planers run in water to keep them cool and at the same time soften the stone a trifle. Great blocks of marble are brought in at one end of the building and when they go out at the other they are finished and polished and carved and crated or boxed ready to be loaded upon the cars. "You would be interested," Adams continues, "to watch the machines and men polishing that marble—you would be interested in everything. It does not seem possible to see a huge block of marble come into one door of this immense

building, all in the rough, and see it go through the various evolutions that make it beautiful.

"There were a bunch of Italian expert stone cutters, high priced workmen, I should judge, doing the designing and carving, and the way they chisel out any old design is simply marvelous. On those big blocks of stone it would look like it would take an age to saw a block in two, but it does not—it is like a drop of water constantly falling on one spot on a rock, it wears a hole after awhile. In one part of the building they have what they call a 'barrel' saw, and it cuts in a circle so that blocks are sawed out round.

"Before many of the blocks are brought into the building they are laid side by side and sawed in two by an endless wire that runs around grooved wheels at either end. The wire is kept cooled by water.

"As in the temple of Solomon of old, at this mill, every stone is cut and shaped and fitted right there, so that when it goes to the place where the building or structure is going up, it can be laid in place and cemented without the stroke of a finishing hammer. These expert workmen have the design and plan and they can produce it a thousand miles away from where it is to be finally used.

"Another piece of construction that was under way were the forty massive columns, thirty feet high, for the Lincoln Memorial Monument in Washington, for which the company had received the contract not long before. The blocks that comprise each column are about five feet in height and must have been eight or ten feet in diameter. Each block is trued and fitted so that it makes a perfect joint before it leaves the works, and is then ready to be set in place for the monument. If I ever go to Washington on a pleasure trip I shall look at that great monument of Colorado's superior industry and may have the pleasure of gazing upon the very piece of marble in one of those columns that I had my hands upon when it was in the first stages of development...."

The Denver REPUBLICAN, issue of January 1, 1907, announced that:

"Marble beds large enough to supply the entire nation for all time are being opened up at Marble City. The quantity is practically inexhaustible and the quality rivals the pure white Italian sculpture marble. The town of Marble is situated in a canon much like Ouray, two towering mountains on either side. Some convulsion of nature snapped the marble beds in the middle and now, high up on the mountains, on either side of the city, the beds are to be seen running into the cliffs at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The existence of the beds has been known for twenty years, and the discoverer is now working on the beds as a laborer because he could not obtain capital to work the mine. A railroad has been built at great expense, connecting with the C&A railroad at Redstone, and three switchbacks were necessary to take the marble trains up the steep mountain sides to the beds. The work is still being done on the road on the mountain side. A mill is being built in the canon.

"The beds cover 250 acres on each side of the mountain and are 240 feet in thickness. The valuable stone is cut from the mountain with saws no blasting being allowed because of flaws made by explosives. Ledges for the cutting machines had to be cut out of the solid rock high up in the air, and the marble vein will be worked on the west side of the canon as a gold mine, the vein being followed into the hillside."

It is interesting to note that at one time there were two towns on the present site of Marble. One was called Clarence, the other Marble. Clar-

ence was located in the fall of 1880 by John Mobley and the Clarence Townsite Corporation; and Marble was founded in 1882 or 1883 by William Woods, whose son now lives at Lily Lake, near Redstone. The story is told that Woods sold one half his townsite to a Dr. Kline, who happened to be a friend of John Wanamaker, then Postmaster General. When the time came for the establishment of a post office in the region, a dispute arose, but the Woods-Kline site, naturally, was awarded the honor. Later Clarence became a part of Marble.

In the first years of development marble was not considered an important treasure in the vicinity. The early prospectors were looking for minerals. It is said that a Frenchman, LaGier (or La Gaeier), once, while walking from Schofield to the present site of Marble, carved a ball and chain from the white rock which was later to make the town famous. Prospectors then located their claims on White House and Treasury Mountains.

A smelter was in operation in the town in 1897, processing the zinc and lead ores which had been found in the region. It was not until the highway to Carbondale was completed in 1907 that Marble boomed.

The sons of the pioneers, Woods and Parry, tell the story that Parry's father and G. D. Griffith, another pioneer, were working at the foot of Daly Mountain on Carbonate Creek in the fall of 1880 when John Mobley came over the pass from Schofield with his wife and two children, Nellie and Chet Mobley. The children were tied in the panniers on a burro. Mobley had been an Indian scout and came into the country with fifty sacks of flour, no salt, one bar of soap, and a box of matches—besides his family. He built a cabin around the flour, put his family in the cabin, and wintered his burros on willow tops. Nellie Mobley was the first white girl in Marble, and now lives in Carbondale. Woods and Parry tell how the two children, that first spring, tramped on the snow crust in their bare feet to beg salt from Griffith and Parry at their mining claim up Carbonate Creek. The two miners were astonished to see the children wolf the salt like candy.

Probably it can never be known who the first white men were who entered the valley. Bill Gant, who died a few years ago near New Castle, according to Parry, maintained that he had come through the country, trapping for beaver, in 1859, on his way to Fort Garland. Gant

did not claim, however, to have been the first white man on the river—because he said he found an old rusted gold pan near Prospect, a few miles above the present site of Redstone. It might be assumed that the 49ers, on their way to California by whatever route happened to be in front of them, panned down all the streams on the Continental Divide.

Parry's father mined the first ore to come from the famous Black Queen mine. It was packed on burros to Crested Butte, where it brought one dollar a pound. Parry and his partners were frozen out of the mine in 1892 by law suits. The mine was first opened in 1886, and has produced ore until recently.

But it was in marble that the future of the town lay, and the quarries were operated through a disastrous series of fires and snow slides for many years. The final disastrous blow fell in August of 1941 when a cloudburst, starting somewhere near the head of Carbonate Creek, practically wiped out the entire business and residential districts. The mills and the Yule quarry were closed a few months after the flood, and have never been reopened. The flood, however, cannot be blamed entirely for the final shut-downs. Substitutes for marble, and marble veneers, had long been encroaching on the profitable operation of the quarries.

Colorado-Yule marble is known as the finest marble in the world. It was used in the construction of such buildings as the Lincoln Memorial, Washington; U. S. Customs Building, Denver; Colorado National Bank Building, Denver; municipal buildings in New York and San Francisco; the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington; and for many other tombs, monuments, and buildings. A one hundred ton block of marble was carved from the quarry for the Unknown Soldier's tomb. This was reduced to fifty-six tons at the mill, and shipped to Vermont for final processing. It is said to have been the largest block of marble ever taken from a quarry, its only rival being one weighing fifty tons, carved from a German quarry.

The deserted quarries can be visited today—vast, awesome holes in the mountain side. The outcropping cliffs of pure white and serpentine marble can be seen nearby.

In 1913 Marble had a population of 1,500, two newspapers, and a town band. The quarries were shut down during the First World War,

but resumed operation about 1920. At the time of the first great fire, in 1926, the mill was the largest single marble finishing plant in the world. The quality of the stone and the extent of the deposits are unsurpassed. One cliff of marble is said to rise 240 feet vertically, and extends over 300 acres. At the upper end of Yule Creek is an exposed cliff, 800 feet of marble, most of it pure white, and some of it pink, blue, and serpentine.

Mrs. Everette Murphy, of Marble, writing in the NEWS-CHAMPION of Gunnison, Colorado, July 16, 1936, said:

"The greatest marble deposit in the world lies three and one half miles from the town of Marble in Gunnison County at an elevation of 10,000 feet. How far it carries into the mountains has been estimated at one to five miles by geologists. Core drillings at various points show sixty per cent lightly colored marble, and forty per cent pure white, without any coloring whatsoever.

"Mention should be made of underlying beds of limestone which at horizons varying from 100 to 200 feet above the basal quartzite, have become impregnated with serpentinous matter, giving rise to veins, streaks and blotches of yellow and a green color forming thus an attractive marble called serpentine marble. On the northeast slope of White House Mountain, almost directly east of the company's mills, there occurs a bed of compact crystalline limestone some sixty feet thick, which has been located as a black marble."

The process of quarrying is described by Mrs. Murphy:

"The canon sides, rising more than 1000 feet perpendicularly, have been pierced near the tops and openings driven in on the deposit of white marble where there have been placed electric air channeling machines which cut out the blocks to the dimensions required. After being raised from their beds by leathers and wedges they are lifted by immense steel derricks and placed under a three inch cable on which runs a hoist and carriage which picks up the blocks and carries them 1000 feet down to the electric cars on which they are loaded and taken over a maximum grade of 15% to the mills and shops at Marble. There the blocks are again picked up by traveling cranes, transported to the gang saws, and sawed to dimensions for their later fabrication into columns, architraves, cornices, entablatures, etc."

According to Mrs. Murphy the buildings of the Colorado-Yule mills were 1700 feet long and had an average depth of 100 and 150 feet wide, being equipped with the finest machinery and every facility for handling work promptly and perfectly. At that time the quarries were being operated by the Vermont Marble Company of Vermont.

Something of the drama attendant upon quarry and mill operations can be found in three stories published in a single year, 1912, by the Marble BOOSTER.

On March 9, 1912, the following story appeared:

DEATH IN A SLIDE David Davis, Timekeeper at the Quarry, Was Victim

"David Davis, timekeeper at the Colorado-Yule quarry, lost his life in a snow slide at the quarry last Sunday. His body was recovered Monday morning after workmen had removed tons of snow from the path of the slide.

"The story of the tragedy was . . . apparent. Davis had started for lunch. It was storming and the wind was blowing a gale. He was going toward the boarding house with his head down to avoid the blast. The slide came down a gulch about forty feet wide and tumbled over a cliff onto him without warning. He was swept from his feet like a grain of chaff in a storm and carried irresistibly along with the slide and over a cliff, a drop of 120 feet to the electric line tracks below where he lay smothered and buried beneath a mass of snow.

"A particularly sad feature in connection with the death of Davis lies in the fact that his brother, the Rev. H. Davis, a Presbyterian minister at Pueblo, arrived here Wednesday to take charge of the body but at the time the BOOSTER goes to press (Saturday) he has been unable to reach the quarry and neither could the body be brought down to Marble, owing to a storm which has prevailed nearly all this week . . ."

The next Saturday, March 16, the sad sequel to the Davis story appeared in the paper:

A CURIOUS SIGHT Was the Bringing Down of The Body of David Davis

"Just as the BOOSTER was being printed last Friday morning, a line of men appeared on the high line above the town, sharply silhouetted against the snow and moving slowly toward the town along the trolley line. First there appeared about ten men in single file and people in the town below could see how hard it was for them to get through the deep snow. Then there was a space of twenty-five yards and another line of thirty men, also in single file. At the end of the line were four men—two of them about twenty feet back. The space between these men never varied and the watchers in the town below were presently able to observe that the forward two were pulling upon a rope.

"The word spread through the town:

"They are bringing down the body of David Davis."

"The line of men were from the quarry. They had been shut in there by the storms for nearly a week with the dead body of their companion David Davis, timekeeper, who had been killed the previous Sunday by being caught in a snow slide. Provisions were running short at the quarry and they knew, too, that it was urgent that the body should be gotten to town. They decided, then, to take chances on getting caught in slides along the way down.

"The body of Davis was wrapped in canvas and securely lashed to a pair of

skis, with a rope attached with which to pull it. The entire force at the quarry went ahead to break trail. It was (a) sight to be remembered—those men coming single file down the mountain."

Perhaps the most tragic of the three stories appeared in the September 14th issue of the paper:

BAD SMASH ON TROLLEY Four Persons Meet Death as Result of Runaway Train on the High Line

"Four persons met death as the result of an accident on the trolley line here last Friday, a few minutes before noon. The dead:

GEORGE HEALY, motorman of the train.
ROBERT P. LYTLE, brakeman.
ATANSIO NEGRETE, a passenger.
MARY TONKO, a girl.

"In some manner Healy, the motorman, lost control of a heavily loaded train at a point on the line near the old smelter, half a mile from the yards at the mill. Doubtless the air brakes failed to work. Before the hand brakes could be set the train attained a frightful speed. W. C. Goodwin, a mill employee who was riding on the train, jumped and landed without a scratch. The others stayed on the train.

"Just before reaching the bridge over the Crystal River two of the cars in the train left the track and smashed into a rock cliff at the side of the track. Lytle, the brakeman, was on one of these cars. He was thrown with terrible force into the face of the cliff and death was mercifully quick.

"Healy, the motorman, stayed with the balance of the train, as did Negrete and the little girl. The runaway cars held the track until the turn at the loading platform in the yards, when everything turned over on the curve and smashed to splinters. Healy was caught beneath an immense block of marble and crushed to death . . . Negrete was slammed onto the ground with such force that death was instantaneous. The little girl, 8 years old, was alive when rescuers reached the scene and she was hurried to the hospital. She died at 5 o'clock that evening.

"The accident took place in plain view of scores of persons working around the yards of the Colorado-Yule company. Rush Lytle, a son of the brakeman who was killed, saw his father meet his death. He was working on the bank of the river when the cars smashed into the cliff across from him and he ran across the bridge in time to hold his father in his arms as the elder Lytle breathed his last. Rush said his father spoke to him and gave him word to carry to Mrs. Lytle before the end came.

" . . . witnesses said that Healy (the motorman) started from one side of the car to the other just as the final smash came. There was a huge block of marble just back of the trolley cab and Healy put up one hand to steady himself on this block just as the car turned over. The block caught him and fell squarely on top of him. A young man employed at the mill by the name of McCann was only a few feet away when the smash came and he ran to the spot. He saw one of Healy's hands sticking out from beneath the block of marble and in the excitement of the moment he took hold of it. He said the hand grasped

his firmly and then relaxed. He then saw the blood trickling out from under the rock and he knew it was all up for poor Healy.

"It was necessary to employ a railway engine and a wire cable to lift the rock that held Healy . . ."

The valley has not been without its tragedies. Marble was born in the gaiety of laughing prospectors who always looked, in their loneliness, over the hill to what they hoped would be beyond. Few of them found what they were looking for; and those who did were probably not content with what they found. Then came the exploiters who sought, sagaciously and shrewdly, something more—something that could be had through the hands of others. The great Colorado-Yule Marble Company brought temporary security and regular working hours to the town's citizens; strangers moved in; skilled workmen came from Italy; stores bartered with workers; and the little happinesses and tragedies of "little men" happened in a beautiful valley caught between high mountains which, at times, showed no mercy. Then the company, perhaps through loss of markets, perhaps through losses suffered from flood and fire, closed its quarries and its mill. And, in the end, the great flood of 1941 destroyed the town. That flood may have been an act of nature, but some former residents believe that the statue of a sheep should be placed on the barren piles of rock and debris which cover the town. The statute, they say, would forever be a monument to over-gazing; it could be a reminder to later generations that Marble, and perhaps other portions of a scarred West, had once been lush and green and strong.

THE LARGEST SINGLE BLOCK OF MARBLE EVER QUARRIED.
USED FOR THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER AT ARLINGTON.





CHAIR MOUNTAIN AND THE CRYSTAL RIVER,
LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE REDSTONE INN.

PHOTO G. BOACH



3.

In the Beginning

EARLY EXPLORATION

Spanish explorers may have touched the Crystal Valley in their wanderings through the west. It is known that Coronado reached the southeastern limits of the state in 1541. It is known that Juan Maria Rivera penetrated the territory as far as the Gunnison River in 1761. In 1776 two Spaniards, Escalante and Dominguez, reached the San Juan River. But there is no actual evidence that any restless members of these parties investigated the towering peaks of the Elk Range.

Captain John C. Fremont, the American, is known to have been within about twenty-five miles of the present site of Glenwood Springs, in 1845. It is definitely known that John Jacob Astor's fur traders were doing business on the Western Slope as early as 1840.

According to Leonard C. Shoemaker, whose interesting history of the Holy Cross National Forest can be found in manuscript in the archives of the Colorado State Historical Museum in Denver, Mt. Sopris, the aloof and startling peak at the northern extremity of the Crystal River Valley, near Carbondale, was named for Richard Sopris. Shoemaker says that Sopris, with fourteen companions, explored the region in 1860. They left Denver in July, passed through South Park to the present site of Breckenridge, traveled down the Blue River, crossed to

Eagle, then to the Roaring Fork where "they prospected and named Sopris Peak for their leader." Finding nothing of importance, except the magnificent peak, they moved down the Roaring Fork toward the present site of Glenwood Springs. At the hot springs there they inscribed their names with the date July 23, 1860. According to Shoemaker, Sopris believed his to be the first party to discover the springs, but his claim is doubtful.

Shoemaker goes on to say that many small prospecting parties invaded the Elk Mountains before actual permanent settlement began between 1878 and 1880. Benjamin Graham, who had prospected the Gunnison side of the range in 1866, reached the head of Rock Creek by traveling up the Grand River (now known as the Colorado) and turning up the Crystal at the present site of Carbondale. Graham's first party was organized in 1870. In 1872 he established a camp, built a cabin fort, and prospected the area. He discovered galena bearing ores and a coal vein. One of Chief Colorow's Ute bands drove him out and burned all the party's possessions. They made their way one hundred miles on foot to escape with their lives. Shoemaker says that H. C. Pattison, "who later settled at Carbondale, prospected on Avalanche Creek, a few miles north of Redstone, in 1880, and found evidence of earlier prospecting, which he considered had been done twenty-five years previously." Shoemaker thinks this prospecting might have been done by either the Sopris or the Graham parties.

Dr. F. V. Hayden, the government geologist, crossed the valley in 1873-74. In his 1874 report Dr. Hayden wrote that one of his party became ill near Mount Sopris and he was forced to stop there twenty days with the sick man while the rest of his party continued. Hayden described the Elk Mountain Range as being made up of all the mountains along the present Gunnison-Pitkin line, and those as far as Mt. Sopris on the north, and as far as Crested Butte on the south.

The first permanent settlements in the Crystal River Valley were started a little later than those in the Eagle River and Roaring Fork Valleys. The town of Schofield, south of Crystal, was surveyed and platted in 1879 and was the central station for prospectors in the valley. Two men, Gift and Anderson, located claims near Avalanche Creek, north of Redstone, in the same year. Crystal was settled in 1881.

The government opened the agricultural lands for settlement in the 80's. Prior to the government survey, all ranch settlers in the region

held their land under squatters' right. Shoemaker says that many claims were jumped and several men were killed. "The only one recorded is that of Harry Burrows who located on a ranch two miles east of Carbondale. While temporarily absent, Mike Ryan and Dan Fenton took possession of the premises and when Burrows returned he shot and killed both of them upon their refusal to move.

By 1885 most of the ranches and farms now extant in the Crystal River Valley had been claimed by their original owners.

The Indians

There are no rail connections in 1949 between Carbondale and Redstone and Marble and Crystal. The Crystal River Railroad once ran to Placita, a few miles beyond Redstone. The Crystal River & San Juan Railroad ran from Placita to Marble. The CR was the property of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company. The CR&SJ was the property of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company which leased the CR when Redstone's coke ovens shut down. Operations were discontinued completely in 1942 and the whole line was dismantled.

The steam engine and the Indian are extinct in the valley.

It should be remembered that once the Elk Mountains were a favorite hunting ground of the Utes. It is said that Colorow, the great Indian Chief who opposed the conciliatory tactics of Ouray, first achieved fame among his warriors when he distinguished himself in a great battle fought near the present site of Carbondale when his tribe decisively defeated a superior force of Arapahoes on Red Mountain. Legend holds that a small band of Utes, of which the youthful Colorow was a member, was surprised on White Mountain by Arapahoes. The Utes retreated to a barricade on Red Mountain and exterminated the attackers.

The hot springs, now being developed by the Redstone Inn for the use of its guests, were once a favorite camping ground for the tribe on its migrations to the bear and elk grounds on the Big Muddy, southwest of Redstone. These springs were later known as the Penney Hot Springs. There are, at the present time, old settlers living in the valley who can recall the Ute seasonal migrations, and the encampments near the springs.

The Crystal River Valley was a part of the territory claimed from time immemorial by the Utes. Their traditions and their beliefs, their customs and their unrecorded history are all part of the myths of the valley.

Too often, perhaps, the Indian has been used as a mere semi-comic or pseudo-romantic adjunct to the boastings of white men who drove him from his land with superior fire power. Actually the Indian was a man, a liver in an environment, a lover of his woman, a provider for his sons. The Crystal River Valley is not the only valley in which the Ute once dwelt, but when the modern traveler climbs out of his sixty horses to smell the sweetness of the aspen trees near Redstone, he might, if he listens, hear more than the soft wind touching leaves, more than the steps of vanished cokers walking to their homes.

The Utes had their loves. The men married at about 18, the girls from 14 to 16. When a brave wished to woo a girl he killed a deer and took it to the wickiup of his choice. It was the custom for him to enter her home, but to pay no attention to her. If she had decided not to marry him it was her duty to ignore him. If she had decided to become his bride she went to his horse, watered and fed it, unstrapped the deer, cared for the meat and skin, cooked some of the meat, and invited her lover to eat. That was all. They were man and wife, and could be parted only by death or divorce.*

The Utes danced. The Dog Dance, for men only, was a war dance. The Tea Dance, for both sexes, was similar to the Sioux dance called the Ghost Dance. The Lame Horse Dance was for women only. All dancing was done outside in a circular enclosure made of green boughs raked together. The Bear Dance was one of their most important functions. It lasted about four days. Its object was to assist the bears in the mountains to recover from their arduous hibernation, to provide food for living bears and for dead bears in the happy hunting grounds.

The Utes were sometimes cruel. One of their tribal customs was to put to death one of twins born into the tribe. If one was a girl and the other a boy, the boy was allowed to live. If they were of the same sex, the biggest and strongest was allowed to live. They did not actually

*The authority here used is Sidney Jocknick, *EARLY DAYS ON THE WESTERN SLOPE, Denver, The Carson-Harper Co., 1913.*

murder their baby victims, but took them to a secluded spot and allowed them to perish from starvation.

The Utes demanded social responsibility. When the medicine man practiced, he risked his own life. He procured his magic from dead Indians who came to him at night, from eagles, birds, etc. When a man established a reputation as a magician he was implicitly believed, and many fecs of blankets and horses were paid him for his services. But if he failed after having contracted to cure a patient, he paid with his life.

The Utes were religious. All Indians went to the sun when they died. The Great Spirit lived in the sun. Lesser gods were of War, Peace, Thunder and Lightning, and Floods. The lesser gods formed a union and through them the Great Spirit blessed Utes whom he desired should be mighty as hunters and warriors. There was a future life, but no future punishment. There was no new death in the land of fair skies where there were great mountains, limitless forests, grassy plains, and rivers of sweetness which would flow forever; there was no sickness, the women were beautiful, the men were strong, the horses were fleet. It can be easily seen why few Indians were cowards. A believer could not fear death.

By the treaty of 1863 the Utes surrendered parts of mountain country definitely described by topographical features. By the terms, the fabulous valley of the Crystal lay within the reservation they retained. It was part of their rightful domain promised to them "for as long as rivers might run and grasses might grow."

They were exiled in 1881.

But the great red cliffs remember them.

And there is a road now, McClure Pass, to their favorite elk and bear grounds on the Big Muddy. Completed in 1947, starting at Placita, just south of Redstone, it opens up the whole valley of the Gunnison to tourists who drive through the Crystal Valley.



MAJESTIC MT. SOPRIS

PHOTO G. BOACH



4.

The Jinx ?

Writing in the Marble BOOSTER, August 25, 1917, Frank Frost, editor, asked a question:

WHY IS THE JINX?

"The valley of the Crystal River, from Carbondale up through Redstone and Marble to Crystal, is one of the prettiest regions Nature ever created. In all the state of Colorado, famed the world over for its scenic attractiveness, there is no valley quite so pretty as the Crystal River. This statement is made advisedly, for the writer has traveled over most of the state in a motor car and knows personally whereof he writes.

"But there is a 'jinx' of some kind on this valley. At various times during its history since the white men drove the Indians out of it, there have been four thriving towns along the Crystal River. All of these towns failed and are now what are known as 'busted' towns. First there was Crystal, at the head of the river. Crystal, at one time was a mining town of several hundred souls. It was the metropolis for several other smaller mining camps and it had well stocked stores, and, of course, the inevitable half dozen saloons. It had a very good local newspaper,* too, and the future looked bright. Geologists had pronounced the district a veritable treasure house of rich minerals, yet the town went 'busted.' The minerals are still there; there will be many big mines, making big money, up there someday. But will it be in our time?

"Then came Redstone, where millions of dollars were spent to make the prettiest and most ideal coal camp in the world. The railroad and rolling stock, used in the line from the town to Coal Basin, twelve miles up Coal Creek, alone repre-

*Crystal River CURRENT.

sented an investment of nearly half a million. Then there was the town, with its magnificent Inn, library, school building, club house, etc., representing untold thousands more. . . . Redstone is deserted today (1917). Weeds grow in the dooryards of splendid homes and young tree growths have come up in the last ten years through cracks in the rotting walks and porches.

"There was Plácita, at one time a prosperous coal camp of several hundred. There is scarcely a remnant of the town left, although it is once more inhabited by men working at the mine which for so many years lay idle. But it is only a shadow of its former self, after all is said about the present operations.

"Then comes Marble. Twelve millions of dollars are invested here in quarries and the finishing plant of the Colorado-Yule Marble company, besides thousands upon thousands in stores and homes. When the editor of this paper came to Marble, in March, 1911, there was not a house to be had here for love or money. People were living in tents, all houses being full to the limit, and in piano boxes, chicken houses, barns—anywhere that they could find a shelter. Eight hundred men were working for the Colorado-Yule Company. Hundreds of other men were in other lines of business and activity here. Now there are scarcely fifty men in Marble. Our former citizens have scattered to the four points of the compass; some are in Vermont, some in California, some in Canada, some in Texas and Georgia. By the time Winter sets in there will be fewer than 100 persons—men, women and children—left in Marble.

"It is pitiful to contemplate such hard luck. In the case of Marble, for instance, it can be truly stated that no one wanted to leave here. It was not from choice they left; it was because they had to get out where they could earn a living, the company here being shut down. The former workmen of the Colorado-Yule Company are now scattered all over the United States, many of them with good jobs, no doubt, but this paper has no doubt that if the word was passed tomorrow that the company here was ready for them to come back again, that within a week our train could not carry the people who would be rushing back here.

"Some day this valley will come into its own. Nature certainly was bountiful in the distribution of resources up and down the Crystal River, but man has been lame, mighty lame, in developing the same. The right man may yet come along. Speed the day, is our fervent wish."

The Marble editor, faced with bankruptcy, apparently was discouraged when he wrote the above in 1917. Today, in 1949, Marble is almost deserted, the Crystal mines are not open—but Redstone is a mecca for tourists. Although man may have failed over the years to extract the wealth he sought in the great quarries, in the mines of the mineral belt, in the coal beds of Redstone, the valley has not changed. The cleanness of the Crystal River has not been dirtied, the autumn colors of the trees and hills perennially return in splendor; and the red cliffs near Redstone, opening and closing on the valley like patterned sculpture, remain the same. Man has failed to exploit the valley, but by his failure he has preserved something of the varying quiet and tremendous power of

the valley. Man finds there the peace of great scenic poetry. The wealth, as Frost said, is there—hidden in Sheep Mountain and in Coal Basin and in Treasury Mountain, and man may one day dig for it. In the meantime the Redstone Inn and other hotels afford the tourist, hunter, and visitor modern and comfortable headquarters from which to personally investigate the valley.

The turbulent history of the river has become a story now, difficult to uncover from myths and legends grown up to hide the truth. But the Crystal is there, now peaceful, now stormy and magnificent. Though the complete story may never be told of man's failure, the fabulous valley will remain—

"for as long as rivers might run and grasses might grow."

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