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EARLY DAYS IN CHAFFEE COUNTY

Statement by T.J.Thompson

Haywood Springs above Salida were first discovered in the early 70's by Romer, a freighter engaged in transporting the mail from Dayton City to Antonito, Colorado. He camped one night at the mouth of the gulch in which these springs were located. During the night something frightened his horses and they stampeded up the canyon. In searching for them the following morning, he happened upon these springs above the present Hortense Springs, and they were afterwards given the name of Haywood Springs from an old settler of that name who afterwards acquired title to them.

Mr. Thompson stated that Mayal was one of the first settlers in Chaffee County and took out the first irrigation ditch. It was from Cottonwood Creek; the stream flows through the present town of Buena Vista. Within about a year, however, a second ditch was taken out by Tennassee from the Arkansas near Salida.

The first Roman Catholic priest to visit Chaffee County was Father Carrigan, a young man who came to this part of the country from Philadelphia in 1872. He stopped some time at the Bond ranch near Buena Vista. To help him get acquainted in the country, the Bond boys decided to take him on a trip to the Humboldt Mine near Fairplay, Colorado, which at that time employed a large number of men. Father Carrigan had spent his entire life in the eastern cities and had never so much as been on a horse's back, but they were able to procure for him an old gentle cow pony, which it was thought would be absolutely safe for the trip. They made the trip to the Humboldt mine without mishap. Father Carrigan gave the men a talk at the mine. He was well received and they raised \$85 to help him along with his work. On the return trip, it was necessary to dismount and lead the horses down a steep mountain slope. When they reached the bottom, the Bond boys helped Father Carrigan back on his horse, but before they themselves could remount, a bunch of loose horses owned by Mayal crossed the trail directly in front of Father Carrigan's horse and dashed off into a dense aspen thicket. While Father Carrigan's horse was absolutely gentle and in most things trustworthy, it was also well trained in chasing cattle and horses on the range. When the loose horses dashed across the trail, it immediately conceived the idea of heading them and took after them at full speed through the aspen brush, Father Carrigan holding on to the saddle horn with both hands. The Bond boys hastily mounted their own horses, but by the

time they were able to overhaul Father Carrigan and stop the wild chase, the latter was somewhat the worse for the encounter. Much of his clothing had been left in shreds on the brush, the string of beads had been torn from his neck, and the money ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ received at the Humboldt Mine scattered along the route of travel. The Bond boys succeeded in gathering up the money and other belongings and all finally reached the Bond ranch. The incident gave the young priest a rather precipitous introduction to conditions as they then existed in the West, and it is said in later days he often recounted his adventure with a great deal of amusement.

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