

Fred W. Brush

Was born at East Constable, Franklin County, New York, January 5, 1853. After receiving an education in the common schools and academy, he became a clerk in a store, which vocation he followed for ten years; during this period, he was also employed as a telegrapher. Then, feeling the lure of Colorado's frontier, he started west; arriving in Canon City, aboard a Santa Fe passenger train on May Day, 1879. That summer he came on to Cleora with a freighting outfit by the way of Grape Creek.

There he entered the employ of "Old Uncle Billy" Bales, installing partitions in his hotel. (This building was razed by Sterling Jones, whose residence now occupies the same spot.) At that time, according to Mr. Brush, Cleora's population was about five or six hundred people. Due to the fact that it was a supply point for the newly discovered mining camps at the headwaters of the South Arkansas River, and the Tomichi District; Cleora grew rapidly during '79.

After working a few months in Cleora, our subject returned to Canon City. Later, that same fall of '79, he went to Leadville, traveling by the way of Current Creek, Chubb's Cut-off to the Arkansas Valley above Buena Vista. The trip required four days.

During the few months he was in Leadville, he was employed as a carpenter erecting residences. In February, 1880, he went to Buena Vista. At that time, neither the D&RG or the South Park, had reached the town. The South Park, however, was at Free Gold; held up there, awaiting bridge materials necessary to span the Arkansas.

Mr. Brush tarried but a short time in Buena Vista, but went on to the town of Alpine. It was thriving then, and a small smelter--owned

by a Mr. Huggins--was in operation; the population was about 1,000; there were two hotels; (One, the Judson House) and a large general store owned by Land Brothers. During the summer of 1880, Mr. Brush constructed a hotel for a Mr. Brittenstien, who discovered the Virginus Mine in Grizzly Gulch.

In the fall of 1880, Forrest City was located and laid out by the St. Elmo Town Co. Three of the men interested in this company were, Griffith Evans, C.E. Seitz, and John Evans. A Post Office was applied for, but permission for its installation was withheld on account of the name of the town; the name was changed to St. Elmo, and later in the same year the Post Office was granted.

That same year, Howard Russell started a newspaper which was later published as The St. Elmo Mountaineer. Also, The Mary Murphy, Pioneer, Stanley Tunnel, Tressa C, Iron Chest, and Quincy mines were discovered; causing a wild scramble to this locality. The population amounted to at least 1,500.

After finishing the hotel, Mr. Brush continued his contract construction work erecting a store building for Campbell, Raymond, and Stahl Hardware Co.; the Commercial Hotel building; the Griffith Evans, and Francis Brothers store buildings. Lumber prices ranged from \$12 to \$60 per thousand feet; carpenters were paid \$4, and laborers \$3.50 per day.

After that, Mr. Brush was employed at the Mary Murphy mine as boss carpenter. Then it was necessary to haul the ore to Alpine by wagon; later a tram was installed from the mine to Romley a mile distant. At this time there was considerable excitement at Hancock which lasted two or three years; the town acquiring a population of several hundred souls. During the construction of the Alpine tunnel,--1,800 ft.--the town was the end of the rails, and a transfer point for the freighters from there to Annison.

35

The Western Stage Line operated from St Elmo, via the North Fork of Chalk Creek, Tin Cup Pass, Taylor Park, Ashcroft, to Aspen. (Ashcroft, about a day's drive from St Elmo, is another ghost town)

In 1885, Messrs Brush and Scofield, operating under the title of Brush & Co., purchased a drug and notions store from A.C. Merrill. Mr. Brush later bought out his partner's interest, and operated the business himself until 1890. In this year the big fire occurred, consuming two complete business blocks, including Mr. Brush's store. During this period, he was Postmaster, being the fourth, and serving from '86 until '90 (C.E. Seitz was the first)

During the intervening time from '80 to '90, Mr. Brush also served as City Clerk & Recorder, Trustee, and Mayor. As City Clerk, he issued, each year, 12 saloon, and 2 dancehall licenses; and, though he failed to remember the city fee, the government license cost \$25 for a saloon.

On Dec. 4, 1889, he married Margeret Ann Richards, daughter of John P. Richards, an employee of the Mary Murphy Mine. In 1890, he resigned as Mayor of St. Elmo and departed for Salida, where he purchased an interest in a real estate business; and transacted business under the name, Wallace & Brush

From '96 to '1900 he served as Postmaster at Salida; and as County Assessor, 1900 to 1911. He then re-engaged in the real estate business. A daughter, Freda Thelma, was born in 1895, who is now married and resides in Denver. Another daughter, Margeret Frances, was born in 1900; and is now teaching high school at Sterling.

At the time of this writing (1933) Mr. and Mrs Brush still make Salida their home; where Mr. Brush, yet active and in good health, carries on in the real estate business.

*W. Brush*  
123 W. Fifth  
Salida, Colo.