

### Henry Weber

Among the very earliest of the pioneers to settle in or about Omaha Nebraska were Henry Weber Sr. and his wife, Katharine, both of German ancestry, who emigrated to the western plains country in 1855, and homesteaded a 160 acre ranch, which is now included in the townsite of that city. Here the subject of this story was born on May, 24th, 1857.

Dissatisfied with the country, and feeling the lure of Colorado, Henry Weber Sr. joined an emigrant train, and seeking a new location, went to Canon City in 1860. His family, traveling by stage via Denver, joined him the following year. About the only incident young Henry could remember of the entire trip was that once the stage tarried to allow them to view a large herd of buffalo.

At Canon City Mr. Weber Sr. engaged in various occupations. In 1861 he "carried the mail" between Canon City and Colorado Springs, traveling on horseback, the trip requiring two days. In '62 he erected the first two log cabins on Main Street; later installing a restaurant in one of them--shortly afterwards it was raided by some Union troops. Mr. Weber Sr. was a stonemason, and helped to erect the Draper building, which was the first stone structure in the town. (Later known as the Rockefeller Building)

In the spring of '64 the family moved to the mining town of Montgomery twelve miles above Fairplay. Montgomery, now a ghost town, was then a town of 1,200, with a stamp mill, two general stores, and two saloons. Here the Webers met and became friends of the Tabor family. Mr. Tabor was operating one of the stores.

From Montgomery the Webers moved to Buckskin two miles distant; the Tabor family following them shortly after. Here Henry and Maxie, who were about the same age, attended school together. In the spring of '65 the two men went to Breckenridge, where, under the name of Tabor and Weber, they conducted a general store until Xmas of the same year. Due to the heavy snow, which was from four to six feet in depth, travel in that vicinity ceased; and subsequently trade at the store, which the two partners closed.

In the spring of '66 the two families reluctantly separated; the Webers returning to Canon City; the Tabors to California Gulch. This parting was a rather gloomy occasion. The two families had become true friends; each being very generous and warm-hearted to the other.

The Webers did not locate in Canon City but traveled on down the Arkansas; and just below the present site of Florence they homesteaded a ranch. In August of the same the Arkansas went on a rampage, destroying everything before it, and leaving the Weber ranch worthless. The Webers found it necessary to move once more.

So early in '66 the family set out for the South Arkansas River. (Little River) They traveled in two covered wagons, <sup>each</sup> drawn by four oxen, and they carried all of their possessions with them. The second wagon was driven by a hired man. They headed up Carrant Creek, and on the third night camped at 39 Mile Station in the south-eastern part of South Park. Then on they came, up thru the Park to the salt works, and to Trout Creek, where they spent one night. (Henry Weber Sr. helped to erect the stone stack of the salt works) Trout Creek then teemed with fish, and on its fast course to the Arkansas, tinkled thru a series of small beautiful parks. Ten days after departing from Canon City the travelers arrived at their de-

stination on the South Arkansas near the present site of Salida.

Here the family located on John Tennessee's (or Tenasy) ranch, which they farmed on shares. This was the first ranch located and homesteaded on the South Arkansas River or in that vicinity: John Tennessee, an Italian, having settled there in 1863. He also brought the first cattle to that country. They were of exceptionally good cattle for that period, nearly all of them being purebred shorthorns.

To the best of Mr. Weber's knowledge Tennessee had no trouble with the Utes; nor was he ordered to leave the country, as some people think; to the contrary he was on excellent terms with Chief Colorow as the following incident will prove:

One day the Arapahoes visited the valley and stole Tennessee's favorite saddle horse. Shortly afterwards Colorow and his band of Utes, camped in the valley, on their way to the plains--probably for a buffalo hunt or a raid on their enemies. Tennessee promised Colorow that if he recovered the horse he would reward him with a fat beef. Six weeks, or so, later, the Utes returned. With them came the stolen horse; and Colorow received the promised beef.

Tennessee's ranch numbered 160 acres, about 35 of them under cultivation. (He later sold it to Noah Baer) Other ranches in the vicinity at that time were, Christison's, their nearest neighbors--now the Hutchinson place; Nat Rich's ranch at Poncha; above it was John Burnett's; and later that same year John Vaught homesteaded a ranch below Tennessee's.

The Webers spent a year on the Tennessee Ranch. They found ranching, at that time, unprofitable, owing to the lack of a close market and poor roads to the distant ones. Supplies, which were freighted in from Canon City, were expensive, with flour \$60 to \$70 a barrel, Salt Pork fifty to seventy five cents per pound, coffee \$1 per pound, and tobacco the same; The was almost impossible to purchase clothing, so the men

wore, mainly, buckskin for which they traded from the Utes.

The following year found the family living on a ranch, which Mr. Weber Sr. homesteaded, one mile North of the present site of Poncha. (Now known as the Dickman ranch) While they were living there Henry's father, Nat Rich, <sup>and</sup> John Burnett decided to utilize the waters of Poncha's hot springs, so they excavated a hole 8 feet square by 6 feet deep, walled it with logs, and thus had a bathing pool for the community. Meanwhile, Henry lived with the Berteneys and attended school at Brown's Creek. About the only amusement, excepting dancing parties which were staged at the different ranch houses, was the weekly debates and spelling schools, which were held in the school house.

(That same year the Webers moved again, this time to the town of Cache Creek, where they operated the Mater Hotel for Charles Mater. There were about 300 people living there then; and there were two general stores, one saloon, a blacksmith shop, and, of course, the hotel. There was no school or church.)

(The old road from the east left the Arkansas, crossed over Georgia Bar Hill, and dropped into Cache Creek. A much easier route was up the Arkansas, and when the news reached Cache Creek that a new road was to be constructed up the river the populace did the only logical thing; they began moving. Thus Granite was founded; Charles Mater and Charles Whitson being the first to locate there.)

(Prior to '68 there was not a saw mill in Lake County. (which then included Chaffee) That year Tom Cameron brought in the necessary equipment and installed a mill on Lake Creek below Twin Lakes. The timber was cut above the lake, to where it was taken, made into small rafts, and towed by oxen to the lower end. Cameron engaged young Henry to drive the oxen. The mill was operated by water power, and used the old style penstock wheels. The saws were of the old sash variety, or an upright saw operated in Henry went to Canon City and attended school; one of his schoolmates was

a frame about 4' X 6'. It required almost a half hour to saw a single board; and the better part of a week to saw a wagon load. Lumber brought about \$60 per thousand feet at the mill.

(From Cache Creek the Webers moved to Low Pass, a small mining camp, located on Pass Creek about three miles from the Arkansas and four miles from Granite. Here they managed R. B. (Chubb) Newitt's hotel. There were about fifty people in the camp, and no stores, etc. The miners were engaged in both placer and lode mining; the latter being unsuccessful.)

(Then Hawkins discovered the Yankee Blade a short distance from Low Pass. A mining camp sprang up there, and was named Hawkinsville in honor of the discoverer of the Yankee Blade, which gave promise of being a rich producer, as also did the Amazette. The future of this new camp seemed promising, so the Webers moved there in '69 and engaged in the operation of the Weber Hotel. Their supplies were freighted in by wagon and oxen. The ore produced at the mines was hauled to Granite, and there reduced in a "Raster" mill. Later that same year a stamp mill was put into operation at Granite.)

(The following spring (1870) the family moved to Brown's Creek, where they purchased the Matt Johnson Ranch (Now the Evans Ranch) of 160 acres, forty of them under cultivation. Crops raised here were wheat, oats, peas, and potatoes. Henry peddled the potatoes in the mining camps of the region; three cents a pound was considered a good price for them.)

(There was a grove of cottonwood trees on their land, a short distance above the ranch house, which was a favorite camping place of Colorow and his Utes, who sojourned there often on their way to and from South Park and the plains. When the teepees of the Indians were pitched about the cottonwood grove it was assured that Henry could be found somewhere amongst them. They were all his friends, particularly Colorow and his daughter.)

On one occasion the Utes had returned from the plains country and had camped, unusual, at the cottonwoods. Henry, delighted that his friends had returned, went to the camp to greet them. Colorow's daughter-- Henry could not recall her name--told him of their experiences on the trip, including the fact that she had seen her first "iron horse". Being unable to describe it <sup>in a</sup> satisfactory manner, she seized a piece of charcoal, and upon the bark of a cottonwood, drew a locomotive, with much smoke belching from its huge stack, and cars trailing it. The Indian girl's story and drawing fascinated Henry as he had never seen an "iron horse"; and later, when he did gaze upon one for the first time, he recalled what an extremely good likeness Colorow's daughter had drawn.

Colorow was very fond of Henry and when the band made ready to depart for the San Juan and New Mexico country, he asked the boy's father for permission to take him along. Although Henry knew the Indians were not clean, and their habits not all to be desired,--he witnessed many a mother seeking "graybacks" in the hair of her child, and upon finding one, pop it into her mouth with great relish--he was very eager to go. However the boy's mother, wise as most mothers are, said "no", and said it firmly; so a very disappointed boy bade the Utes goodbye, and then busied himself with the task of ~~riding himself~~ getting rid of the lice he always accumulated during the Indians visits.

In 1872 Henry Weber Sr. bought from Mr. Hawker the relinquishment of his 160 acre ranch on Three Mile Creek--that distance east of Brown's Creek. Prior to this they had sold their Brown's Creek Ranch to Evans for \$1,000. About three years later Mr. Weber turned the last acquired ranch over to Henry on pre-emption; and then homesteaded 160 acres <sup>d</sup>joining the lower part of the other ranch. (Now the Bayuk Ranch)

During the winter of that same year (74) Charles Macatrieb, returning from Denver with three wagons loaded with supplies for California Gulch, was caught in a blizzard at the salt works. Macatrieb's cattle (oxen) perished, and there he was marooned with supplies, mostly food, intended for the use of the California Gulch settlers thru the winter. Drifts were so deep that the only way the food could be transported to the Gulch was by men who traveled on snow shoes. Meanwhile in California Gulch food was becoming scarce and the situation serious. All unmarried men were force to leave to seek food and shelter elsewhere. Enough food was brought, in the before described manner, to feed the remaining families, thus averting a tragedy.

(Earlier that year Charles Macatrieb purchased a small herd of cattle from Jack Hall at his ranch near the present site of Villa Grove, and hired Hugh Boone and Henry to trail them to Denver. They drove the cattle thru in seventeen days, going by the way of Ute Trail, South Park, and Turkey Creek.

(There was a band of wild horses running the range, lead by a beautiful and fleet grey stallion. One day Henry and two companions succeeded in trapping these horses in a rocky canon, capturing three of them; including the stallion, which Henry caught for himself. He proved to be the fleetest and most sturdy horse Henry ever possessed. (The progenitors of these wild horses was formerly domesticated stock of the local ranchers)

\* The years '74 and '75 were troublesome ones in that vicinity, the incidents happening therein being referred to as "The Lake County War"; the title obviously being a misnomer. The trouble started with an altercation over water rights between Harrington and Gibbs, both ranchers on Gas Creek. Shortly afterwards Harrington was killed--murdered--and Gibbs, because of the previous trouble between the two, was suspected; tried in Denver, and acquitted. Thereupon a vigilance committee called upon Gibbs

one night for the purpose of lynching him. Gibbs, however, ably defended himself; and in doing so killed two of the vigilance committee, wounded one, and another was killed when a falling gun was discharged. The so called "war" reached a climax when Judge Dyer had some thirty members of the vigilance committee arrested and brought to Granite for trial. The following morning, July 3rd, 1875, the court was called to order, and a few minutes later adjourned, and the prisoners dismissed by Judge Dyer, because the prosecuting witnesses would not testify. When the courtroom had been cleared some persons entered by a rear door and assassinated Judge Dyer. No one was ever tried for the crime.\*

In '73 Mr. Turkey, a wealthy man, who made the Leonhardy Ranch--near Riverside--his headquarters, became possessed with the gold fever, and purchased from two miners their placer claims at the mouth of Clear Creek. Going to the claims the following spring he discovered the two miners busily engaged washing gold. He ordered them off of his property; but when he returned a short time later they were still there. Turkey departed then, but soon returned; and, after giving the men an opportunity to arm and defend themselves, shot them both. One man he killed outright, the other, though badly wounded, recovered and left the country. Turkey, of course, was freed.

Leonhardy then persuaded Turkey to purchase 200 head of cattle. The rancher was to tend to the cattle, and they agreed to divide the increase, each receiving half. As it developed, there was no increase; the rustlers saw to that. In the spring of '76 Turkey, realizing that his loss was mounting, contracted with Henry to have the remainder of his herd rounded up and delivered to him at Denver, not later than April 24th. Henry was to receive \$3 per head.

Hiring two assistants, Tom Walker and Ernest Christison, Henry commenced; and after considerable hard work, gathered 175 head. They then



drove the cattle to Denver, following the same route Hugh Boone and Henry had taken in '72, and reaching "Potato" Clark's ranch, on the outskirts of Denver, April 23rd. Here the cattle were pastured and Henry notified Turkey of their arrival. Turkey wished to sell the cattle at once, and Henry agreed to tend to them until a sale was effected. On the twenty fifth Walker and Christison rode into Denver to "take in the town" while Henry remained with the cattle. About noon a terrific blizzard started and the cattle stampeded with the storm. Henry drove to town and reported the loss to Turkey, who asked him to round up what he could find. Meanwhile the storm continued for two days, and when it finally ended there was four feet of snow on the level.

The following days were terrible for the three riders ploughing thru the deep drifts, searching for the lost cattle. They were scattered for miles, the men finding a small bunch here and a small one there. Christison became snowblind; and one night Walker engaged in an altercation with some Chinese, shot one of them, and was jailed. Henry finally succeeded in rounding up 155 head, which were sold at once. He and Christison departed for home, while Walker languished in jail awaiting trial. He was never tried, however, as a friend from the South Arkansas vicinity went to Denver and, for a cash consideration, induced Walker's victim to leave town.

The following ten years found Henry engaged in various occupations, besides operating his ranch on Three Mile Creek. In '77 he bought hay in San Luis Valley for \$25 per ton and hauled it to Leadville where he sold it for \$100 per ton. During the boring of the Alpine tunnel he engaged in the meat business in St Elmo, and furnished meat, by contract, for the construction crews at ten cents per lb. On one occasion he rec-

ceived a \$500 check in payment, and being unable to cash it there, found it necessary to journey by horseback to Leadville. There he met with difficulty as he was not known at the bank and they refused to honor the check unless he was identified. Henry was at a loss until he happened to recall his old friend, Tabor, whom he located easily. Tabor returned to the bank with Henry and the latter received his money.

The coming up the railroad made a great change in the valley, and in the lives of the ranchers. People came rushing in and towns sprang up overnight, thus creating new markets for the rancher's products. Ranches increased fifty percent in value, later increasing to 100 percent.

There was a great demand for charcoal at the smelters in Leadville and Mr. Weber engaged in the "burning" or manufacturing of it, in Brown's Canon just below Hecla Junction. Pinion and ~~pine~~ woods were used mostly. An oven was filled with wood, which was set afire, the oven closed, and the drafts regulated; the wood was then allowed to burn for five days, when the drafts were closed and the oven was cooled for two days; the charcoal then being ready for shipment to Leadville. A "burning" of each oven produced about 250 bushels.

In '82 Mr. Weber opened a meat market in Salida on F Street, (On the present site of Murdock's) renting the store room from Cameron and paying \$20 per month. Beef brought on an average of about fifteen cents per pound, everything <sup>was</sup> cash, and business was good. He continued in this business for about two years. Prior to this he had engaged in the meat business at Poncha; but the big fire in '82 almost completely destroyed the business section there, including his meat market.

A short time before the "Ninemyer" shooting in Salida Mr. Weber loaned Marshall Baxter Stingely a huge, double case, silver watch. After the fight in which four men were killed and Stingely badly wounded, the Marshall called Mr. Weber to his room to show him the watch. A bullet

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had struck it, and had crashed thru to the last case, which it dented badly. Stingely was carrying the watch in a vest pocket so it was very evident that it had saved his life.

In 185 Mr. Weber located in Aspen where he engaged in the freighting business between that point and Granite, and operating a livery stable in connection with the business in Aspen. He employed two four horse teams and wagons, and received \$1 per hundred pounds for grain, flour, etc., which was the lowest rate; other commodities rating higher, with eggs the highest at \$2 per hundred. He also had half interest in a general store going business under the title of Hollister and Weber.

(In 187 he returned to his Three Mile Ranch where he remained until 192. During this time, or in 191, he operated a sawmill, which was located on the Arkansas, just below and across the river from Hecla Junction. This year the Turret boom started, so Mr. Weber disposed of the greater part of the mill's output there, receiving on an average of \$25 per thousand feet at Turret).

Later he received a contract for, and furnished 175,000 red spruce ties for the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad, which was then being constructed, receiving twenty four cents per tie. He employed from forty to sixty choppers, paying them eight cents for each tie made. He also furnished the ties for the Moffat--Crestone branch in the San Luis Valley.

(From that period on thru the remainder of his business career, Mr. Weber was engaged in the sawmill business at Raspberry Mountain, Chalk Creek District; Four Mile Creek, near Buena Vista; Sand Creek, Mt. Shavano district; Round Hill and Alder, San Luis Valley;--at Alder he furnished 250,000 feet of lumber for Bonanza--Silver Creek and Shirley, both in the Marshall Pass District.)

In 1932 he sold his sawmill at Shirley and retired from active business.

In 1880 he married Ella Wilsey, daughter of Jacob Wilsey, a Chalk

Creek rancher. Three daughters were born to them, Edna and Dora, twins, in 1882; they died not many years later; Dora in 1886, and Edna in 1891. Mrs Weber also passed on April, 26th, 1891. The third daughter, Julia, was born in 1890, and now resides in Salida.

In 1900 Mr. Weber married again, this time to Mrs Jennie Everett of Aspen. There was one daughter, Stella, born to this union in 1903.

Mr. Weber represents the true pioneer type, and is still vigorous and active; For these reasons a moving picture company of California offered him a three year's contract to portray pioneer roles on the screen. Mr. Weber declined, however, as he did not wish to leave his home for that length of time.

He now makes his home in Salida with his daughter, Mrs Stella Churchill.

In conclusion it might be added that Mr. Weber has been in 34 mining camps in this state.

*Henry Weber*