

Richard Carroll
Salida, Colorado.

Hollis D. Spencer

Though he sprang from old New England stock, Spencer was born in Fillmore County, Minnesota, Dec. 12, 1862. When he was two years old the awful massacre--by the Souix Indians--of Ulm occured. Deciding that the country was unsafe, the Spencers departed for Wisconsin. Young Hollis lived there until he was fourteen and then went to North Dakota. He spent four or five years there and in Canada. He and a friend going to Canada with the intention of joining the Mounted Police. Upon learning that it was first necessary to become a subject of the ^{QUEEN'S} (King) they decided against joining and so returned to the U.S.

After returning to Minn., young Spencer then headed for California; taking the D&RG thru Salida and Marshall Pass to Grand Junction. After spending a short time in Stockton he decided to go to Leadville. When he inquired about the fare, he learned that it was \$34 to Leadville, yet only one more dollar to Kansas City, so he purchased a ticket to the latter town.

The main line of the D&RG then was over Marshall Pass, so he found it necessary to come to Salida and there change trains for Leadville. He arrived in Salida, and, having a lay-over between trains, he strolled towards the business section. He saw a rather large smoke stack nearby, denoting some sort of industrial activity, so he headed in that direction; and discovered that it was the planing mill of the Salida Lumber Co. S. M. Jackson, one of the owners;--the other was V.C. Davenport--offered young Spencer a job, and he promptly accepted. Incidentally, he has never, as yet, reached Leadville; and he sold the remainder of his ticket to Kansas City.

After working three weeks for the Salida Lumber Co., he entered the employ of a contractor, Dave Yates, who was erecting a brick store building for Webb & Corbin; (This building is now occupied by Baur's Store) receiving \$3.50 for a ten hour day. A short time later, however, he returned to the employ of the Salida Lumber Co.

In '87 Peter Mulvaney erected a four story brick hotel on the corner of 2nd and

F Sts. (Now occupied by The First National Bank Building) Shortly after completion, this building was destroyed by fire. This fire, the worst in Salida's history, occurred on New Years Day '88,--one of the coldest days ever experienced in the town--and completely destroyed four business blocks, excepting a small frame building, which is still standing just to the rear of the Commercial National Bank Building.

Mr. Spencer was happily married to Carrie Snell of Emporia Kansas, February 29th, 1888. Two sons were born to the couple, one in '90, the other in '95.

In 1890 he was appointed night marshall by Mayor Jason Gillette and the City Council; three of whose members were, Whitcomb, Deans, and Andy Rogers. The City Clerk at that time, according to Mr. Spencer, was a certain Mr. Conover, who absconded with the City's funds in '90, and was never apprehended.

In 1890 there were 27 saloons in Salida, each of them paying the city yearly, one thousand dollars for the privilege of operating--quite an income in itself. The only time the saloons' front doors were closed was on election days; and then the rear doors were propped open first.

One of Mr. Spencer's recollections as night marshall was the foul lynching of Briley. This was one of the worst crimes perpetrated in Salida; one that did much towards blackening the city's reputation.

Briley, an employee of the railroad,--a mere boy--and Paddy Sullivan, boss of an extra gang, (they were laying the third rail thru Salida) engaged in an altercation over some coal. This took place in the railroad yards where young Briley was on duty. Sullivan, who was a huge man, and could have beat two such boys as Briley with his bare hands, struck Briley with a slab of wood. Sullivan, after being warned by Briley not to do so, struck the latter again. Briley pulled a gun and shot him--clearly in self defense. The shot was fatal, Sullivan dying soon after.

Mr. Spencer going to work that evening heard the shot but thought nothing of it at the time; he was to become very much involved in the aftermath, however. Briley was lodged in jail before he arrived. Shortly before this the old jail located near the railroad crossing at First and G Sts,--it was nothing but old ties spiked together and covered with an dirt roof--was badly burned when a negro incarcerated there, started

a fire, hoping to liberate him self thereby. I might add in passing that it proved to be the negro's death pyre. A building was selected as a temporary jail on West Second St. (Now occupied by the Ideal Cleaners) It was nothing more than a mere shell of a building; leg chains, bolted to the floor, being used to retain the prisoners.

Sullivan's friends formed a mob and were determined to lynch the Boy, so a line of guards was thrown about the jail, Mr. Spencer being stationed at the front, where first tried to force an entrance. Warning them that the first man to cross the ditch in front of the jail was a dead man, he succeeded in holding the lynchers off for the time being. The guard at the rear, however, became frightened, and deserted his post. The mob then gained an entrance, secured their victim, and immediately shot him. They then tied a rope around the poor fellow's neck and drug him thru the streets to the railroad crossing where he was hung. Mr. Spencer being wounded trying to avert the lynching.

Later, a group of the lynchers,--fifteen in number,--very angry because of his protecting the dead boy, instructed him "to wade the Arkansas", (An expression used then, meaning, To leave town and never return) or else--. Mr. Spencer, undaunted, took a position behind the old "iron mike" at the corner of First and F Sts, unlimbered two 45s; and dared his enemies, across the street, to come and get him. The lynchers, sensing the apparent disastrous result of such a venture, wisely left the vicinity.

In April, Mr. Spencer resigned his position and entered the employ of the Salida Transfer Co. Later he purchased this concern, selling out in 1904, when he went to Wisconsin on a visit. Upon his return to Salida he was elected street and water Commissioner; filling this position for two years. He then became heavily interested in city real estate, which proved to be unprofitable. He then traded some of his town holdings for a 170 acre ranch, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south of town. Later he was employed as County Supervisor, and also returned to the transfer business for awhile.

Both of Mr. Spencer's sons are now dead, and his wife passed on June, 10, 1929. Mr. Spencer, active and in good health, and surrounded by his grand children, still resides in his old home--which he had built in 1890--at 224 Palmer.

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