

James W. Callaway

The subject of this sketch was born at Batesville Mississippi, July, 19th, 1871, of Scotch-Irish descent. Three years later the family moved to Arkansas, where the father, J. W. Callaway, engaged in the operation of a general store.

In the winter of '79 the family emigrated to Colorado, coming first to Pueblo, then going on to Silver Cliff the following spring. They traveled via Hardscrabble Creek and Pass. There Mr. Callaway Sr. engaged in the mercantile business; also operating a store at the "Bull-Comingo Mine" for the following two years.

Silver Cliff boomed, and became famous for the richness of its mines. Business was excellent, and the Callaways prospered. The town was talked of for the state capitol. Then, in '82, a large fire occurred which consumed an entire business block. The same year ores began to peter out. Mines and mills began to close; and a bad slump in local business was experienced. The Callaways lost everything except their home.

In quest of a new location, Mr. Callaway Sr. and eldest son went to Montrose. One mile west of town, Mr. Callaway Sr. and his brother, D. A. Callaway, located homesteads of 160 acres each, and named their new holdings Adobe Ranch. The following spring of '83 the rest of the family, Mrs Callaway, daughter, and four sons, joined them there.

They left their home, a fine large house, at Silver Cliff, in the keeping of a friend, who later relinquished it to the charge of a relative of the Callaways at Pueblo. In '83 he traded the house for a saddle pony.

The year the Callaways settled in the Montrose Country there

were no churches or schools, and no irrigation ditches. The first school was held in a rented frame building located on what is now North First Street between Cascade and Townsend Avenues. That winter the Callaways dug an irrigation ditch from the Uncompangre River, just west of Montrose, to their land. This was one of the first irrigation ditches in that district.

They grubbed and cleared off about fifty acres of land, which they plowed, and the next spring seeded to grain. They then irrigated the field--with disastrous results. The hot sun baked the soil to such a hardness that the tender shoots of grain could not come through, which resulted in the total loss of the crop. The seed had cost them seven cents per lb.

After this misfortune the family moved to Montrose, where Mr. Callaway Sr. secured employment at the Buddicke-Deindl General Store. Young Jim and his brother, Joe, engaged in the bootblack business--with portable boxes. They were the pioneers of this industry in Montrose and enjoyed a substantial and growing trade, thus exciting the envy of almost every boy in town; who, within three days, had become active competitors.

The two boys continued in their new business, however, and earned a living for the family that winter. Their business was aided to a great extent by the sporting people, who constituted a great part of the town's populace. There were 20 saloons and two large dance halls, these two the saloon and dance hall, boasted every game of chance, and everything was wide open. It was altogether a lively and thriving town for at that time it was the forwarding point for Ouray, Telluride, Rico, etc. It was not uncommon to have as many as 100 mule teams, with their drivers there at one time.

Dave Wood was the most extensive freighter, His huge barn accommodated 100 head of stock, and his 20--mule teams were all matched. These

teams--driven with a jerkline--usually pulled a wagon and two trailers the combined load of which filled a narrow gauge car. The principal freight was merchandise on the outgoing, and ore on the returning trip. There was daily stage service each way.

In the spring of '85 the Callaways traded the Adobe ranch for one five miles above town. There were about 160 acres in the new place, which was covered so thickly with brush that it was almost impossible to turn a wagon on it. The only improvement was a small log cabin, so one of the first tasks of the new owners was to build a new three room house.

Here the crops were vegetables and fruit for which they received a good price in the distant mining camps, strawberries bringing as much as seventy five cents per quart. Local prices were low, however.

That winter the neighbors hired Mr. Callaway Sr. to teach school, and a room of their home was used as a schoolroom. There were twelve pupils, including the five Callaway children, arithmetic and reading were the only subjects taught during the three months term. This arrangement was repeated the following winter.

In '87 the first school house was built in what is called the Riverside (No. 3) District. The same year the railroad was built thru that vicinity, finding it necessary to move the school house to the opposite side of the wagon road as the right of way cut directly thru the building.

In the early nineties they traded the ranch and returned to Montrose, where our subject attended school. He then went to Coal Creek, now known as Pepper's Garden, there managing three ranches for his father, and raising a crop of oats and wheat. Returning to Montrose, he entered the employ of the E. J. Mathews Mercantile Company, where he remained for

eleven years; later becoming part owner of this business. He remained in this business, which was located on a corner of Cascade and Main streets, an additional five years, selling his interest the year before the Gunnison Tunnel was started.

He then engaged in the bottling business for two years, doing business under the name of Scott and Callaway. After that he went to the Gunnison Tunnel where he and his brother, J. A. Callaway became engaged in business. Returning to Montrose he served as undersheriff for three years.

He was married to Lillian Blythe on January 1st, 1902, one daughter, Blythe, was born in 1903.

After serving as undersheriff, Mr. Callaway engaged in business and worked at various occupations in Colorado and New Mexico. He also spent four years in the Internal Revenue Service at Denver and Montrose.

On June, 12th, 1911, he was happily married to Della B. Hitchcock of Salida.

Later he engaged in the meat business in Salida which he is yet operating. He and Mrs Callaway make their home at 67 F St.

*J. A. Callaway*