

Martina R. Mahon and John. E. Paul

They were born of English descent, he in Sharon Pennsylvania, October 16th, 1855; she in Independence Missouri on September 14th, 1859. Their father, George E. Paul, was a farmer. In 1865 the family moved to Wyandotte County, Kansas, where they engaged in farming and the children attended school. On March 5, 1878, Martina was married to James Mahon, a pioneer rancher of Cottonwood Creek Colorado.

In '64 William Bales filed upon 160 acres of land on Cottonwood Creek but later relinquished his rights to Judge Christison, who in turn traded his relinquishment in '64 or ⁶⁵ to James Mahon for a yoke of oxen. The ranch at that time was considered the best in the upper valley. It and John Thompson's ranch, which was filed upon the same day, were the first homesteads located on Cottonwood creek; and the Bales ranch had the first water right, which also dated back to '64.

Traveling by rail to Colorado Springs, and then with freighters, James Mahon and his bride, accompanied by her brother John, arrived at Cottonwood Creek on St. Patrick's Day, 1878. Although Mrs. Mahon worried during the entire journey from Kansas about her new home having a sod roof, she was pleasantly surprised to find that the four room, log cabin not only boasted a shingled roof, but was also comparatively well-furnished.

Other ranche on the creek then were the Gray or Gorell ranch, now known as the Tegler ranch; The Frank Lone ranch, which partly included what is now the site of Buena Vista; and the James McPhilemey ranch, in which also was included part of Buena Vista's site. The post office, with James McPhilemey as postmaster, was located on his ranch and was named Mahonville, with mail service thrice weekly.

Mrs Martina Mahon

The Mahons operated a "transient house" where they accommodated all travelers and their stock. Mrs Mahon, in addition to her duties as a rancher's wife, cooked all the meals for the travelers, for which she charged fifty cents per meal. Hay was sold for the stock at \$60 per ton. Travel was very heavy with as many as 300 freighters and 12 stages each day. Included as Mrs Mahon's guests were such well known men as Tabor, Tom Murphy, and Dubois.

Principal crops were oats, peas, and potatoes--and hay, of course. Potatoes brought from three to five cents at Leadville, while oats brought four cents on the ranch. Cattle were cheap in '78 and sold for as low as \$6 per head; but in '79 the prices raised sharply to as high as twelve cents per pound.

In '79, according to the subjects of this sketch, Major W. M. Kesson conceived the idea of founding a town near the confluence of the Arkansas river and Cottonwood creek, and so approached the settlers there in an attempt to acquire land for a townsite. Mrs Sadie Dearhammer, daughter of Gov. Waite, and James McPhilemey donated 40 acres each; and Lawrence Waters also donated an unknown amount. The townsite was surveyed by an engineer working under Major Kesson's supervision, and the Buena Vista Town Co. was formed to give title to the lots.

The new town, which at first consisted of tents and frame shacks with canvas roofs, sprung up over night. The first merchants were Wade and Mead, general store; Bartholomew's store; M. J. Marks, clothier; and Joe Graham, livery barn. Hiller, Hallock & Co. established a bank with E. H. Hiller as manager. The post office was moved from McPhilemey's ranch to Wade & Mead's store during the winter of '79--'80.

In August the city trustees appointed a committee comprised of Hugh Mahon, Mrs James Mahon, Mrs Sadie Dearhammer, Major Kesson, Mrs

Dunbar, and John Smith. Mrs Mahon suggested "College Peaks", while Mrs Dearhammer suggested "Buena Vista" because of the splendid view of the mountains to be had there. The latter name seemed very fitting, and was adopted.

(James McPhilemey, when he donated the land to the town company, reserved a plot of land for the Catholic church and parsonage site - on which the church was erected in '80. Although school was established before, a school building was not erected until '81.)

Buena Vista was incorporated in October '79. The city trustees included forty acres of the Mahon ranch in the incorporation, and of which Mrs Mahon was unaware of until she received her tax notices. She immediately protested this rather high-handed procedure so the limits of the town were changed so as to not include a portion of the Mahon ranch.

Buena Vista thrived when the railroads reached the town, and it was the terminal and forwarding point until July when the rails reached Leadville. Although the coming of the railroads and the founding of Buena Vista created a larger and more demanding market for the ranchers, at the same time they caused the prices of their products to decrease. Ranches increased in value, and many more were settled and located as there was a rapid influx of people following the railroads.

It seemed almost impossible to Mrs Mahon that railroad service reached her very door but the reality of it materialized that summer when she made a trip to her former home in Kansas for a visit of several months.

Four boys and six girls were born to the Mahons, eight of whom are yet living. Mr. Mahon passed away June 5th, 1896. John Paul sold his ranch, which he homesteaded in 1910, in December, 1933. He and Mrs Mahon, aided by her son, James, still operate the original ranch on Cottonwood Creek near Buena Vista.