

Dr. And Mrs. W. K. Eggleston

The subjects of this sketch were both descendants of pioneer families, each tracing their ancestry back to the early New England days. The Grandfather of Dr. Eggleston, Darius Eggleston, was born in New York State, and was one of the leading contractors of the Erie Canal. His father, Elisha Eggleston, also born in New York State, moved to Norfolk County, Canada in 1832, remaining there for five years, during which time he took up arms in the Canadian rebellion; for which he was ejected from that country, with all other citizens of the United States.

After remaining in New York for six years, he returned to Canada, where he was engaged in a sawmill. Again returning to the United States, he moved by successive stages to Illinois, Iowa, and Colorado; engaging in brickmaking, farming, stock raising, milling and prospecting in various locations before he finally settled on a farm home on Coal Creek, Boulder County in 1861. His first appearance in that county was in 1860; bringing his family and settling there the next year as related above. His irrigation ditch was the first taken out of Coal Creek.

In 1863, his sons, Wellington K. and his younger brother, Byron, returned to Iowa to complete their education, and were caught in the war fever, enlisting in the 1st Iowa Cavalry, Company G. Wellington served with this Company through the southern states until he was mustered out at the close of the war.

He returned to Colorado, locating in Boulder. He there engaged in dentistry, operating a drug store in connection with it, also combining photography with the other two trades. He and a brother made many scenic photographs of the country surrounding Breckenridge, Georgetown, and Boulder; mounting them for use with the stereoscope, which, at that time, was found on almost every center table together with the family Bible, and photograph album. He also found time to teach school, being one of the first teachers in Colorado, and having taught in the first school house of the Territory. The site of this school house, which is in the town of Boulder, is now marked with a tablet.

Returning to Iowa in December, 1872, he was one of a train load of passengers snowed in on the plains, and did not reach his destination, West Liberty, until January, 2, 1873. The day following, he was happily married to Esther Mosher, with whom he had become acquainted while both were students at Iowa University, before his first journey to Colorado.

That spring, he, his bride and son four years old--by a former marriage--faced westward, traveling by train as far as Boulder, where all of their worldly possessions were loaded onto a heavy wagon drawn by oxen; thus they completed their journey to a small cabin built on Oak Creek, a few miles from the present site of Cotopaxi. At a point, near Pueblo, the tired and thirsty oxen scented water and made a wild rush down into an irrigation canal. Mr. Eggleston, who had been walking along beside the oxen, guiding them with a goad, was left behind; the two occupants of the wagon, having no means of controlling the beasts, expected to be drowned, but were finally rescued, thoroughly wet, but uninjured.

Scrub oak brush was cleared from the land surrounding their cabin, and farming began on a small scale. As this itinerant dentist and druggist was far from neighbors or settlements, thought on the direct route between Canon City and mining activities up the Arkansas, he traveled back and forth, up and down the river, plying his trade whenever a sufferer was located.

Meanwhile, the bride and small son, left to care for the new home, suffered with terror from Indian tribes, who were making their annual excursions from Southwestern Colorado to Manitou for the healing waters, camping and hunting on the way. Finding in time that a friendly swap of freshly killed game for molasses was their principal reason for visiting the cabin, the fears of being tomahawked passed away; but the mountain lions, bears, and rattlesnakes still filled the young Eastern woman with fears.

No wayfarer was ever denied a night's lodging or a meal, even though during the years of the grasshopper ravages, food for the family or the animals was of the scantiest. Itinerant preachers and missionaries were especially welcome guests, and the Reverend Cyrus A. Brooks, carrying the gospel to the scattered inhabitants, was the first white visitor to see and hold the baby Bessie, when she was several months old. He afterwards

lived in Salida where he was Presiding Elder of the Methodist Church.

During these early years, with an increasing family and but few neighbors, the parents, both well educated, furnished for their children the best of reading matter, music, and pictures. The "Youth's Companion" was a regular visitor in the home from the time little Ernest began to read, and for thirty years thereafter. The Berean series of Bible Study, begun in 1873, reached this home through a religious publication, and the daily Bible readings, by one of the parents, as outlined in this series, was as familiar from the children's infancy as their meals. A series of pamphlets dealing with the sun, the moon, the stars, and planets were bought, and each child, when old enough to read, took his turn in reading aloud from them during the evenings. A four octave organ had been freighted to the house during the early years, and music was instilled into the home.

(Mrs Eggleston, having been a school teacher in Iowa, not only taught her own children the rudiments of education, but as neighbors settled in the vicinity, the children of these homes also gathered there for regular lessons. Too, both parents were close observers of natural phenomena, of native flowers, birds, animals, and trees; and gave accurate, thorough knowledge to the children of the surroundings, augmenting it with the authorities obtainable.

During the mining excitement in California Gulch and Leadville, Mr. Eggleston freighted to the new camps, hauling loads of potatoes and grain, which had been raised on the fertile acres, the grain being cut with a cradle, failed and winnowed out. As he made the trips up and down the Arkansas River, he watched for a new home; and in September of 1883, moved his family to a newly purchased forty acres on the Arkansas River, west of Salida. This place is now a part of the Franzhurst Trout Farm. Mr. Eggleston constructed the first pool on his forty acres in 1888, stocking it with trout from the Leadville hatchery.)

Mr. Eggleston, or Dr. Eggleston, as he was now addressed, for he had attended Dental College, taken the examination, and held a certificate entitling him to maintain an office displaying a sign of his profession--established an office in Salida, associating with a Dr. Mallory, and he went back and forth from home daily.

On the ranch his pioneering instincts still prevailed, and he introduced alfalfa into Chaffee Co unty, having experimented with it on his Oak Dell land. The neighbors ridiculed the idea of there being a crop which could be repeatedly harvested during the season, and for many years in succession, but they, too, soon adopted the new forage plant. In his ideas for poultry houses and culture, bee keeping and dairying, Dr. Eggleston was also many years ahead of the times; carrying out many of the methods in vogue at the present time, lacking, however, the present markets or marketing facilities.

Religiously inclined, Dr. Eggleston and his wife helped to organize the Methodist Church in Salida, contributing of their means to the erecting of the first little one room frame building, added to later by an ell. They also paid in full, their subscription to the present edifice, though no longer residents of Salida at the time. He sponsored and helped to raise the funds for the Academy which carried education a step farther than the public school did at that time.

Mrs Eggleston was an active worker in the ladies' organizations of the Church, a teacher in Sunday School, and a worker and officer in the W.C.T.U. She taught school in the winter of '84-85 in the little Pinon Glen log building against the hill. Children from Missouri Park and part of Adobe Park attending it. An almost fatal attack of Pleuropneumonia contracted by wading through the two miles of snow, breaking a trail for her two youngest children who attended there, brought the school term to an abrupt end. The next year the Eggleston ranch was included in the Salida district, and the rest of the public school life was spent in the town schools.

As Salida grew and its inhabitants increased, Dr. Eggleston's office was moved to more desirable locations as to business, sharing that of Dr. Jessie Hartwell's at one time, and later that of Dr. F. A. Jackson's.

When the panic of 1893 reached Salida, Dr. Eggleston tired his fortunes at Grand Junction, which was just coming into prominence as a peach growing district. Buying a five-acre tract of land, he erected buildings on it, planted it to young peach trees; and in 1897 his wife and younger children joined him there,

Both parents spent their last months with their daughter, Mrs Elsie E. Freeman of Howard, Colorado; and are buried there in the Howard Cemetery among old time friends

and neighbors.

Of their sons, Ernest, who for years was associated with the electrical work in Salida, rising from night watchman and fireman of the first electric light plant, through successive stages to the superintendency of the Light & Power Co., now lives in Spokane Washington. Wallace, who has a license from the state of California to maintain an office and do business as a draftsman, architect, estimator, and builder, lives in Pomona. Alwym, the only one born in Chaffee County, is a preacher and missionary in Northern Canada.

Of the daughters, Mrs Elsie E. Freeman, a member of the first graduating class of the Salida High School, has for a number of years been postmistress at Howard; and was recently given signal recognition by the government by being appointed as one of the few postmasters or postmistress to furnish vital statistics on employment in this country.

Mrs Myra Nelson, wife of a farmer lives near Durango, Colorado.

Mrs Effie Gardner lives in Center, Colorado. Her husband, also a teacher in Chaffee County in the '90's, has served in the State Legislature, spent several terms as County Superintendent, and also County Commissioner of Saguache County.

Amongst the grandchildren is one welfare worker, a preacher, a printer, and teachers, some holding high office positions, a worker in a lumber camp, electrical engineers, builders in wood, concrete and stone. construction engineers, and one who has won local recognition in music, being a soloist, a member of fine quartets, and glee clubs in Monrovia, California.

*(Mrs) Myra E Nelson*