

Salida Colo. 12/19/31

Dear Mr. Wilcox, Have a little spare time will try and answer your inquiries. A letter last year covered a good deal which will save a lot of space especially in regard to the different bands of tribes(?). The Tabeguache (Tab-a-watch-e) were around here more so than the others although all of them were here at different times. Welminuches, Capotes, Nwaches, White Rivers or Kavewaters, Piaho band TC, then these bands were divided up into smaller bands under sub chiefs. At times there would be a large number here there again a small bunch 50 to 100 or so. A large number of the old time prominent chiefs wore lether [sic] head or kerchiefs.

A band would come in and it would be Dowerwictes Colorows Pottodeons Piohs, Shavanos or some other chief with more or less promince [sic]. Spoke and Nueguluso were a small party 1 v or 30 who stayed around here a good deal of the time. Put up chain tepees and be here all summer. They never travallen [sic] with wagons but travoix [sic] or the tepee poles lashed to the side of the ponies with the packs on the ponies. In moving, I've seen a calvacade [sic] what seems like to me more (?) as I mentioned before I was quite young at that time. A mule or so in length the bucks prancing along on their horses, the squaws on theirs and the papooses, where babies would be in those backboards while a two or three old would be sitting on a pack like a little monkey.

The white settlers were more or less acquainted with most of the Indians as they were more or less in contact with them all the time. Shavano and Ouray were both great friends of my fathers. Shavano use to come to house here often. If father didn't happen to be at home at the time He use to say "me go no Joe." Joe was fathers given name. The settlers what few they were tried to keep on good terms with the Indians as you never knew when an outbreak might start. Father

traded horses with them taking the worst of the bargain to keep on good terms. I remember of him trading a good corral saddle horse for a little old split eared Indian pony. This trade was with Shavano himself. This is what what [sic] you would call diplomacy in present day dealings. The squaws also (?) come to the house a dozen or so more or less come in set down in a circle and jabber away. My grandmother after awhile would tell 'em "Vamoose." In present day English "Beat it."

I had probably better go back and start with a little foundation. My natural great grandfather came to America from Scotland in 1810 and settled near Rochester New York then a comparative New Country and like most of the Old Country people at that time birth control was an unknown quantity. Had 10 children of which my grandfather was one. As most people in those days, they lived on farms. My grandfather left NY, after selling his farm in 1859 moved to Sparta Wis. where his youngest brother had proceeded him and Pike Peak gold discoveries happened about that time, in the following year June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1860 they left Sparta with ox wagons bound for Pikes Peak, crossing the Mississippi at Prorie du Chene on a ferry boat then across Iowa to Council Bluffs then across the Missouri on the low Plains. Grandfathers family consisted wife and three children the oldest 15 my mother 12 and the youngest 5 who died 9 years ago. My grandfathers brother was along also. Good many of the incidents of the trip across, will refer you to the date of Mr. Agee of the Forest service had published in "Salida Mail." My mother said the first few days were tiresome with the slow moving open bat (?) that soon wore off and they staid [sic] in the wagons, did their sewing and other duties that they could while traveling. They were evidently religiously inclined. I know my grandmother was as she was a very devout Presbyterian and they never traveled on Sunday.



My mother said it was beautiful on the Plains the wind blowing through the grass like the waves on the sea antelope running Indians now and then lopeing (?) their ponies along thru [sic] the sea of grass and the sun setting down in the horizon away off in the West to where they were trekking and wondering when they would ever reach the end of their journey.

After different incidents happening : no Indian attacks however they arrived at Canon City in October where they spent the winter. In the spring of 1861 they went to California gulch where Leadville now stands where they staid till the spring of 1865. The gold panning and sluicing having about played out-- No lode winning at that time. The people drifted out. Bannock left and Alder Gulch Montana taking a number of them as gold had been discovered there. Some went back to "the States." A few remained and the others drifted off down the valley and commenced generally at the first opening of where the valley commence (?) to open out where they squatted around Buena Vista or where Buena Vista now stands. Not very many of them. My grandfather's family among the rest. It was as primitive as it was 5000 years ago. Nat Rich came on down and squatted on site of the present Poncha about the only one this side of Brown Creek built him a cabin. John Burnett followed while after settling above Poncha on the present Burnett Ranch. All the rest of the country was open wilderness no roads nothing but Inian [sic] trails wasn't a road even towards Canon City. And no settlements either, awhile after that a few more came down and settled over on Adobe Park. In 1868 my father who had just married my mother near the present town of Buena Vista came down and bought Not Rich's squatters title as of course the country was unsurveyed, and where I was born in 1870. King and Cox settled on the present Scanga Place above Burnetts. King was the first Post master. My Grandfather before coming down to this locality being the Post master at Helena the name of the Post office in the Buena Vista and Brown Creek settlements. The mail being carried by horseback once a week

from Fairplay Park Co. This uncle (?) who died not long ago was about the first mail carrier between Helena and South Arkansas as this place was called on name of Post office. He was only 14 years old at that time. The mail bag was brought to Helena from Fairplay, our bag sufficing (?) clear down to Del Norte. The bag was opened and the Helena mail taken out then to S. Arkansas where their mail was taken then closed and then on to Del Norte.

The people down here thought they ought to have an Election Precinct for if they wanted to vote they would have to go to the Brown's Creek neighborhood near the present site of Nathrop, so in 1868 they formed an Election Precinct which ran from the top of the range east of Salida to the Utah line and from the top of Poncha Pass to Brown's Creek. Every man voted (1868) and there were 8 votes.

As my grandfather's place at Poncha being at the mouth of Poncha Pass was sort of natural meeting, camping place, stopping place for both Indians and Whites so came in contact with both Indians and Whites more so than other settlers.

When the Ute Indian Reservation was set out—the largest was set out in 1868—the Utes prior to that time covered (?) the whole mountain region. A treaty was made and this Reservation was given them which included practically every thing west of the Continental Divide, with an Agency established at Los Pinos between where Gunnison now stands and Saguache some 40 miles from Saguache. The present McDonough Ranch. This Agency was for the Tabaguaches which were the most numerous at that time. Later on agencies were established at White River and another at or near where Durango now stands. The country to the West over the Continental Divide was sort of mysterious [sic] unknown (?) region where you didn't find a settlement of whites till got around settlements at Salt Lake.



I saw Nat Rich at Poncha a few years ago where he stopped awhile on his way to Buena Vista. He was living at Crestone at that time and he said when he first came down here and built his cabin he hadn't seen a person for 3 months Indian or White so he thought he would see if couldn't bring in some Indians to sort of relieve the solitude-- He went over one of those hills south of here, climbed up on a high point which could be seen from the surrounding country, and built some signal fires. He said the next day he had the country full of Indians as that was the method used by Ute scouts to signal that Cheyennes Arapahos Sioux or some other enemy tribe were coming in to attack. Then Rich had quite a stand in with the Utes for after we came, Indians coming in not knowing of the change would come in and finding newcomers as Richs observed (?) would say "This Navaet's (?) camp you no good three sleeps you go Navaet heap good man" Navaet was the name applied to Rich by the Indians. Shavano had a child born up there and he went to see Rich and wanted him to name it for him. Rich said "Call him 'Friday'."

A few years ago I saw a magazine article on Indians and illustrated with individuals and groups and there was a one picture of a Ute named "Friday." He was a pretty old Indian and the photo was taken at the Uintah Reservation in Utah where the Ute were moved in 1880. I saw this article about 12 years ago and I was wondering if it was the same Indian that Rich named. After the agency was established at Los Pinos the Indians confined themselves more to that part of country than they did prior when the San Luis Valley, South Park and this valley was their territory and as I said above we at the mouth of Poncha Pass and the most convenient stopping place. Came in (----) with Army officers, Indian Department Officials, Agency officials—Brunot—pronounced Bruno in the early seventys [sic] was at Grandfather's up here after a trip over the Ute Reservation. This was at the time when they were executing those Modoc chiefs at Ft. Klamath Oregon after the Modoc War. Brunot paced back and forth in the house. If he could

even got to Denver or was in Denver where he could get in telegraphic [sic] communication he would stop the hanging of Capt Jack one of the Modoc chiefs, so a little Western history was changed thru [sic] this incident. In the early days the Utes were at continued war with the Plains Indians Sioux Cheyennes Arapohos TC and battles were more less frequent as the Utes made forays on the Plains after their enemys [sic] and buffalo. While the same thing happened when the Plain Indian raided into Ute Territories after Utes deer and tepee poles. My mother mentioned of seeing a large war party of Utes going down to the Plains with the war paint with yellow cresents [sic] on their cheek and bright (----) under their eyes giving them a terrifying appearace [sic]. They ran into some Plains Indians somewhere as they had a bunch of scalps and had a big War dance when they returned. They had a big war dance up above Poncha which my uncles witnessed. The whole "Little River" was lined with tepees. Seemed as though the whole Ute nation were here. Along about sundown they started coming to where the dance was being held which was up at the north of the Chochope, where it empties into the S. Arkansas about 2 miles above Poncha. The bucks were excited jumping into (?) the creek where ever they came to it regardless of the banks brush (--), of covers (?) on their ponies. A pole was erected and fire burning near the foot, a few scalps hanging on the pole and a lot of bucks beating their toms (?), and lot of the rest dancing around. Considerable concern was felt at one time. Indians had been passing all day and every once in awhile a bunch of bucks would stop and come in. They were all pretty mad about something all had the same exspression [sic]. "White man to much." My mother said the Whites were pretty badly worried as they didn't know but what this might be a general clean up of the Whites. There was always more or less apprehension anyway.



Andy Hice who died not long ago over at Hotchkiss, took up the Ranch now owned by Tuttle over at Round Hill or Alder the other side of Poncha Pass, was trying (?) to get pay for a lot of cattle he claimed the Indians killed up at Shirley 7 miles up Poncha Creek from Poncha. The Government didn't think he had proof enough I guess for they wouldn't allow his claim. This was only a few years ago when he had his claims. Hice claimed 67 head and my uncle said it was 36. My uncle who was asked at the time said he came in the house one afternoon his mother (my grandmother) said "Andy Hice was over today to see Burnett and take him up to show him a lot of cattle that Colorows Utes had killed." An Indian was setting in the house at the time and he got up and said " You heap de (?) liar. Utes no kill ure (?) cattle." They thought he didn't understand enough English when they mentioned it. Tannasee (?) an Italian who lived down on a ranch, now owned by Lou Swallow and others at Salida gained the displeasure of Shavano who gave them three sleeps to go and he went.

In 1868 the annuities were issued to the Utes. The goods being stored at the Burnette Ranch. The building are still standing. Apparently the whole Ute nation were up there. A good deal of Indian business was down at Poncha as often times they didn't want to go over to the angencys [sic] "Meet us at the north of the Ponche" Ponche seemed to be the original way of spelling or pronouncing.

It seemed as I remember that there was Indians around all the time when I was small. I was afraid of them not so much so when they came in but they had a habit of riding up in front of the house and sit there on their ponies for quite awhile apparently never saying a word to each other. Finally ride off much to my childish relief. Spoke, mentioned before, come in one afternoon. He hadn't been around here for 2 or 3 years and had come(?) in with a band of 300 or more and were camped up above the house and were not aware that Spoke was calling. He wanted to see

the papooses. Mother came out and brought us in. "More papoose" then he wanted to know if there was any more. Mother took him into the bedroom where the baby was asleep. "Heap wore Papoose." He was also quite observing, for mother had a vine cut in front of house, imported article, not native to the country, and he immediately noticed that and gave it the once over, making all sorts of inquiries as far as his knowledge of English would permit. So they were evidently well versed and observing along nature lines. I remember he had pleasant smile on his face. His hair quite grizzled and a big eagle feather stuck up in the back of it and a rifle across his knees. He would have made a good study for an artist who was looking for Indian art. There was one who wore a white cows tail with the buss dyed pink had it fixed on behind some way and went around with this tail dragging behind him. Colorow dropped in one afternoon and informed my grandmother that he was going to call next day. "Heap visit bring squaw. Heap cook." Grandmother told him alright come along. He showed up next day, per his notice. His squaw like her white sisters had to dress up for an occasion of a formal visit. She had on one of those old fashioned hoop skirts in vogue during those time, had them on over her blanket and a white night cap such as old ladies wore in those days. Mother said she was the most ludicrous looking person she ever saw. He was very attentive to her at the table, helping her to everthing [sic] he could reach especially sugar. No toole etiquett of course as setting up and giving to it was the main idea.

In 1878 was the last time I saw any Indians here.

Prof Hayden of the U.S. Geological or Biological Survey or both stopped at my grandfather's up here at Poncha and we were quite well acquainted with him. Game was plenty bear ran around on the creek bottoms. Buffalo were all gone when the first white settled here. Zebulon Pike



killed 8 near the present town of Salida. Christmas 1809-- Old dried up carcasses were numerous. Ouray said deep snow killed them all off sometime in the 40tys [sic].

Have school Dist no 3 (the present Poncha Dist.) report for 1874. 13 between the age of 6 and 21 and the District at that time comprised what is now Salida, and all the other districts in the valley here.

In the "Lake Co War," if you have a letter I wrote to you last year covers a good deal of the incidents. They had a rope stretched across the road at Cleora which they called Fort (?) Lariat and no one went out or came in unless they could give an account of themselves. Father Dyers "Snow Shoe Itinerant" colored up everything on the side of the Gibbs for (----) perfectly natural as his son was killed in the troubles. Most of the vigilantes were law abiding respectable citizens and they were just as firmly convinced that Gibs murdered Geo. Harington as other side thought he didn't of which there were good people also on that side-- I have heard that Judge Dyer was related to the Gibbs thru marriage or something to that effect. Anyway the vigilantes and't any use for Judge Dyer as they claimed he was a double crosser. When he went met the vigilantes after his return from Southern San Luis Valley, and was giving to, and promised him he would assist them in resotring law and order and was in bull sympathy with them which when he got to Granite he repudiated and went back on everything he promised. "Doc" Chofin was captain of the vigilantes and practicly [sic] all the men at his end of the county belonged to the vigilantes besides those that belonged at the other end. Several killings took place before it over including Dave and Sam Boone and Friar Kove who were killed at Gus Creek in attempting to lynch gibbs. When the buried the Boon Boys and Kove was the first funeral I ever attended. I was pretty oung but I remember it quite well. It was in January and some snow lying around in drifts. Had a big fires burning so they could get warm. most everyone was heavily [sic] armed. "Shace we

gotten at the River” and “Sweet bye and bye” were the two hymns sung. The men gathered around the graves and singing those hymns created a feeling of awe in me even at my age and to this day when I hear those hymns it takes me back to that day. Father Dyer was very vindictive. my mother knew him in California Gulch and he asked her if when she got married where ever that might be if he could perform the ceremony. When she got married some years afterwards (3 or 4) Father Dyer had left the country and didn't know where he was at. When he returned later finding my mother married he gave her the cold shoulder from that time on. We have a photo of the old man that he gave my mother when she was a girl in California Gulch. He was very bitter towards the South as he lost a son who was in the Union Army. I could discuss this Lake Co War far better verbally than in writing. I might add that I saw an old man in the hospital at Salida a few years ago who was from Elbert Co. down by Denver and he happened in as the trial of Gibbs, a sort of a phenomenal (?) proposition and this man told me that Gibbs was very arrogant and made a remark when he came out of the court room that he was going to do the same of these people up here. As I understand this was what precipitated a lot of the later trouble or trouble following. To hear our side you might think that the vigilantes were a lot of cut throats and vandals while they were for law. The burial of the Boones and Kane was the second funeral in this part of country. The first being James Maxell, Mrs. Burnett's father, grandfather to the Burnett Boys up here now. He died in 1870. The first known white cartel down here was James Rich. While I've given you sort of an outline rather jumbled up at that. Probably be considered and told in few words could be told verbally much better especially the lake Co. War- - “The Pueblo Chieftain” still published at Pueblo supported the vigilantes and the files of that paper for 1874 + 1875 probably would furnish historical data—

Write again and if here again call.



Best wishes [sic]

Very sincerely

Arthur Hutchinson

Rt #1

Salida Colo.

P.S. I might add that in 1862 my mothers elder brother along with Chas. Nactrieb (more commonly called Nathrop the present town of or station of Nathrop being named after him) left California Gulch with a pack train. (pack horses) to go to New Mexico after meal as they had run out of meal + flour up there and that was about the best place to get any without paying and exorbant [sic] price. The came down the valley and over Poncha Pass + down thru San Luis Valley, about the first time to come this way and outside of early trappers + early day explorers. They saw nothing but Indian camps and no Americans till they got towards or into new Mexico. When they told them down there that they had come this way they rather doubted it generally went by the way of Pueblo and South by way of Trinidad. My uncle spoke in glowing terms of the beautiful country he saw bluffs, meadows, the cottonwood trees along the creeks and rivers quite in contrast to the bleak, high California Gulch region to which they were use to up there.

R.H