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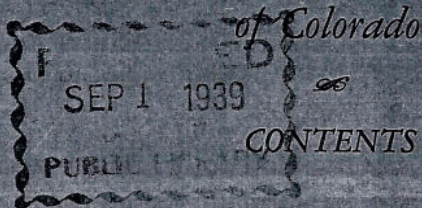
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## Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards and Fort Junction

AUGUSTA HAUCK BLOCK\*

Broken treaties, unfair dealings of the white men, and the wanton slaughter of the buffaloes by big game hunters and hide gatherers, and the realization of the fact that the Indians had been coerced into selling their land for a mere pittance caused much dissatisfaction among the redmen of the plains. All these grievances brought on an alliance of tribes of the plains, with the idea to stem the influx of wagon trains bringing more people to their hunting grounds.

The Indians saw that by the killing of the buffaloes, their livelihood was at stake and starvation would soon be upon them. This caused the Indians to burn haystacks and farm buildings, run off the livestock and attack wagon trains.

By the end of the summer of 1863 they began to lay plans to drive white people out of their domain, and kill if need be. The settlers on the Kansas plains were first attacked, and some (eighty odd) families had been wiped out by the Indians. They began on the Divide section of Colorado Territory to take the livestock and then murder the pioneer settlers. The Indians grew bolder right along, coming to the larger valleys and killing men and women, even coming on the Platte Valley near present Platteville to burn buildings and stacks and drive off the livestock.

It was evident that the Indians were becoming a menace to the settlers. This caused the people of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain valleys to ask permission to form a "Home Guard" company. So early in the spring of 1864 the pioneer settlers, having received the sanction of the right Federal authority to organize a "Home Guard" company, met at the Duncan homestead to organize.

Elisha Duncan at that time was the Justice of the Peace of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain District, so he "mustered in" the members of the new company. The name chosen for the organization was "Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards." The Federal Government furnished ammunition—a cap and ball six-shooter and a cap and ball rifle to each member of the company. Elisha Duncan, who had been elected the Commissary Officer, kept the supplies for the Home Guards on his homestead and once a week the members met there for drill.

\*Mrs. Block is a member of the Territorial Daughters of Colorado and a daughter of Robert Hauck, Colorado pioneer and member of the Home Guards.—Ed.

The Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards were officered as follows:

Captain .....	Talmai F. Godding
First Lieutenant.....	John McKissick
Second Lieutenant.....	Perry L. Smith
Commissary Officer.....	Elisha Duncan

Members of the Home Guard Company were as follows:

Bailey, John C.	Mayfield, Elijah
Belcher, Freeman	Mayfield, Thomas
Burchard, John	Matthews, George
Burbridge, Thomas	Mathison, David
Burbridge, Charles	McKissick, James
Burns, William	McKissick, William
Canaday, Ira	Mills, James
Canaday, Thomas	Mott, Frank
Clough, Hiram	Mohr, William
Coffin, George W.	Mulvihill, John
Coffin, Morse	Murie, David
Cornell, Albion	Norton, H. C.
Churches, John	Plumb, S. J.
Dailey, Dennis	Porter, C. P.
Elliott, John	Pratt, Barney
Ervin, David	Roberts, Edward
Fleming, A. J.	Roberts, H. N.
Gordon, Wm. H. H.	Scott, Holland
Grosclouse, Andrew, Sr.	Shobe, Rudolph
Grosclouse, Peter	Smith, Milo (Mike)
Hauck, Robert	Smith, Winton
Higgins, John	*Stewart, Henry
Hiller, William	Taylor, James
Hodgson, David	Templeton, Andrew
Jones, Jr.	Thomas, Jay
Kelsey, Calvin	Titus, John A.
Lyons, Elisha	Wright, Henry
Lycan, William	Wisner, Jeduehan H.
Lycan, James	Williams, Steven B.

News came from the Divide that on June 11, 1864, the Hungate family, comprised of Mr. Nathan W. Hungate, his wife, Ellen, and two little girls—Laura, aged three, and Florence, aged six months—had been massacred on their homestead. Besides, the Indians killed men who were hunting strayed stock or working in fields, and in the "Pinery" (now called Black Forest).

This news caused great consternation throughout Colorado Territory. Immediate plans were laid by the Lower Boulder and

St. Vrain Valley Home Guards to build a fort for protection of the settlers' families.

Second Lieutenant Perry L. Smith offered a site for the fort on his homestead, which was at the confluence of the Boulder and St. Vrain rivers. So the first week in July the Home Guards met on the place, bringing plows and oxen to plow the sod into strips twelve inches wide. The strips were cut into twenty-four inch lengths and laid up in regular brick fashion. The structure of the fort was 130 feet long by 100 feet wide. Walls were two feet thick and fully finished from the bottom to the top. In the southeast corner was an offset room 25 feet by 10 feet, and another room 25 feet by 10 feet within the fort in the northwest corner. These were for storing supplies, etc. There were two watch towers, one on the northwest corner and the other on the southeast corner, built in on the main square of the building.

Port holes were in the walls around the structure, eight feet apart and eight feet above the ground. These were fairly large, so as to make it handy to swing the gun in any angle desired. All around the inside walls of the fort was a bench of sod bricks, two feet wide and three feet above the floor, on which the guards could walk to shoot from the port holes. When the fort was finished it stood out as a majestic "Isle of Safety."

The new fort was named Fort Junction because it stood at the junction of the Boulder and St. Vrain rivers. A few weeks after it had been completed, important news was brought by Elbridge Gerry, a grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence who bore the same name. Gerry had married the sister of Chief Red Cloud and learned from her relatives who were visiting them on the Platte near Crow Creek of the alliance of all Plains tribesmen and of the big attack which was to occur shortly.

Gerry, like Paul Revere of the Revolutionary days, lost no time. He quietly slipped away on his horse to notify the white settlers of the coming warfare. At the Platteville stage station he sent William and George Cole up to Fort Junction to warn the pioneer settlers. People gathered their valuables and keepsakes, while others buried their treasures, and taking food, a few clothes and bedding, started for the fort in their vicinity.

The rumble of ox-drawn covered wagons containing the pioneer families was heard along the valley roads leading to some fort for refuge. Fort Junction was filled to capacity, and many campfires burned in close proximity, while families gathered to talk and make plans as to what they would do "if the Indians did come." But thanks to Gerry for the warning he gave the white people, the big attack never materialized, for the red men learned of the preparations the whites made.

After a stay of several weeks in the fort, many new ties of friendship were made, and by the time all dispersed to take up the threads of routine again, the bonds of old friends were tightened into everlasting friendships.

As was the wont of Chief Left Hand, he came often to visit his pale-faced friend, Robert Hauck, to talk over current happenings and matters relating to the white and the red men. In August, 1864, the chief came for a visit of a day, to tell Bob that he would go to the Indian country on the Arkansas River to try to have the Indians make peace with the white men by arbitration, as he was certain this could be accomplished. Early the next morning he bade his friend farewell and left for the southeast.

Shortly after this, a messenger from Governor Evans came to the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guard company, to get volunteers and horses for the "One Hundred Days" regiment. The messenger stated that "They were going to kill Indians without recourse or arbitration." Many of the Home Guards said that the question could be settled by arbitration and without the wholesale killing of the Indians. The messenger said to Hauck, who had refused to be a party to a raw deal of that sort, "You'll have to furnish horses, whether you want to or not." Six of Hauck's horses were taken, and about the same number were taken from the Canaday brothers for the same reason.

A number of the unmarried members of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards joined the "One Hundred Days" regiment. On the return of the regiment from the Sand Creek massacre of Nov. 29, 1864, the horses belonging to the Canaday brothers were returned, while those belonging to Hauck were never returned.

David Ervin, a member of the "One Hundred Days" regiment, on his return to the Lower Boulder valley, reported the "death of Chief Left Hand with a band of 600 Indians, chiefly squaws, papooses and old bucks."

All through the '60s, and especially the latter five years, the Indians continued their work of molesting and destroying wagon trains bringing people and supplies, and burning as they had done in the beginning.

After the Civil War the Indians had been supplied with all old discarded guns, but nevertheless they learned to shoot. By haying time in 1868, the Indians began to be very active and sniped off white people here and there. This caused all homesteaders to keep their guns primed and ready for the cap.

One afternoon Swift Bird and his band came to the meadow on Crow Creek where William Brush, his cousin Jared Conrey, and a Swede hired man were haying. From all appearances the

red men had made camp close to that of the Brush party and must have appeared to be friendly, even though they were considered a "warring band," as their squaws and papooses were not with them. However, after breakfast next morning, the three men were massacred. The Indians left for the plains, taking the "State's" horses belonging to Brush, with them.

A settler found the remains and rode to the Platteville vicinity and reported his finding of the scalped dead men. Immediately the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards were called out by Captain Godding, who sent messengers on horseback to notify all to "come to the Duncan place at once and be prepared to hunt for the perpetrators of the deed." All Home Guards responded, and like the "Minute Men" quit their haying and rode to the Duncan homestead, which adjoined the site on which stood Fort Junction, and from there they rode for the carnage grounds.

When they came to the place where the massacre had occurred, they looked for tracks and signs by which to trace the murderers. Finally they came upon signs which they followed and eventually came upon Swift Bird and his band—about twenty in number. The Guards recognized Bill Brush's horses, so were sure they had the right culprits who had massacred the haymakers. A fight began in which all the Indians were killed, with no loss to the Home Guards.

One young buck had on the uniform of a captain of the Union Army, and he carried a sword without the scabbard. The sword, Captain Godding brought home as a souvenir. (Later his daughter, Mrs. Bina Godding Marsh, turned the sword into the Meeker Museum at Greeley, Colorado.) Robert Hauck brought back a blanket, a bridle and a pair of moccasins, all beautifully beaded. (The moccasins were placed in the State Museum in Denver, Colorado, by the writer, a daughter of Robert Hauck.)

After the Custer massacre in the Wyoming country in 1876, the report came that "the Indians, having been so successful, were again uniting to come to kill the whites."

A man by the name of Robert Brown, who had leased the milch cows belonging to John A. Titus on a share basis of all the butter he sold, was out hunting for stray cows of the herd. In the distance he saw what he thought was a large band of Indians, and gave the alarm.

The Home Guards were called out, and on investigation the Indians turned out to be a band of horses. They then went to the Titus homestead and found Bob Brown in the milk house churning butter. They grabbed him and were about to duck him into a barrel of butter milk, with the "intention of drowning him," they said. Bob begged them to spare his life and promised that

thereafter he would make sure that it was Indians instead of horses that he saw.

Fort Junction was not only a refuge for pioneer settlers to seek in time of Indian scares, but served as a stopping place for ranchers down the Platte Valley who were bound for Central City and Black Hawk with wagons heavily loaded with bales of wild hay. Here they and their faithful oxen rested for the night.

Later, the friendly walls of the fort sheltered many tired and footsore travelers, as well as cowboys who rode the adjacent prairies, or in roundup times.

In the late '60s, Fort Junction came very near having a nickname. It was not used long, however, and then only by a few men who named it. It so happened that some travelers or hunters infested with vermin spent the night at the fort and slept on the hay which was some days later used for a bed. A couple of cowboys stopped there and put their blankets down on the same bed of hay, and all the hungry "graybacks" soon found a good meal ticket. The cowboys were so incensed that they said, "We'll change the name from Fort Junction to 'Fort Grayback'."

May the spirit of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards, and the building of Fort Junction for the protection of all who cared to be sheltered within its walls, be a beacon light in the community life of today.\*

\*In the year 1925, Mrs. Mary Duncan Perkins and the writer worked together to obtain the "Indian Fighters Pension" for a few of the survivors of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards, living at that time. We did not succeed, because the "Muster Roll" and other records of the company had been consumed by fire while in the possession of Mrs. John McKissick, wife of John McKissick, the Second Lieutenant, and successor of Elisha Duncan as Justice of the Peace of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valleys.

The above history of Fort Junction, and the list of officers and members of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valley Home Guards, were verified by Robert A. Duncan and Mrs. Mary Duncan Perkins, son and daughter of Elisha Duncan, Commissary Officer, and by George A. Hodgson, a son of David Hodgson, a member of the same company. The burning of the records of the company is confirmed by a letter from Miss Nettie McKissick of California, which is in possession of Mrs. Mary Duncan Perkins. The first records of the Federal Land Office were very carefully searched for verification by the writer.

## Ranching on the Colorado Plains Sixty-one Years Ago

From the Diary of S. L. CALDWELL

[Continued from the July number and concluded in this]

11th. [of May, 1878] Rode to the Bend on Buckskin; got there just as the train did; mailed letters home. Got home just at dark and found that A. had returned in the morning.

Sunday 12th. A chilly, rainy day. Haveran and I intended to ride to Deertrail to look at a house, which A. thinks of hiring, but the rain kept us at home. A. skinned my duck which was a