

The Statement of M. N. Jordan of Saguache, Colorado.

I came to Colorado from Illinois in 1881 and located at Saguache. There were four of us in the party. At that time there were no large bands of Indians settled here, although frequently small bands wandered through or hunted in this country. There were trading posts at Fort Garland and on the Pinos.

At that time there were a great many ranchers in the country, more so than at the present time, and Saguache itself was about four times as large as it is today. There were Mexicans on practically every 160 from Saguache to the Piquet ranch and Englishmen on the ranches from there on.

Shortly after I came here, a body of soldiers came through from Fort Garland to round up some Indians that had strayed off the reservation and camped at the spring northwest of Saguache. I remember that we sold them wood at \$25 a load, hauling it from Saguache when it was abundant in the hills within a hundred yards of the camp. We sold them potatoes, vegetables, hay, etc.

Bob Jones had a ranch below Castle Rock; Piquet was on the next ranch, then Monroe, Hoagland, Hodding, Joe Hartman, Teavebaugh, Schuyler, McGree, Carothers and Michaud on what is now the Curtis' ranch. Laughlin was on his ranch at the mouth of Mill Creek. The Mexicans gradually sold out and the individual holdings were concentrated in the hands of a few men as is the case today.

Jess Nolan was bringing quite rich ore from the Phantom mine and considerable rich ore was taken out of the old Klondyke mine about 1900.



Saguache was originally a station on the freight route from Canon City, Alamosa, and Denver to the southwestern part of the State, and a great many ore teams and other freight wagons stopped there. At this time it was not at all uncommon to see two rows of teams around the main block in Saguache and one morning George Jeep who ran the blacksmith shop said he took in \$50 for blacksmith work by 9 o'clock. There were originally two towns; one at Milton on the Woodard ranch and the other at Saguache. Milton was abandoned and the last building, the Presbyterian church, was moved to Saguache in 1886. A wagon road was built over Poncha Pass and also from Alamosa to Saguache, the first mail coming from Alamosa. The road over Poncha Pass was a toll road, but the one over Cochetopa Pass was not. The first station below Saguache was the stage station on the north forks of the Cañero.

Many of the houses around Saguache were built so they could be used for forts and the walls extended four feet above the roof with adobe walls eighteen inches thick. The upper walls of one on the present I. L. Gotthelf ranch was not torn down until 1889. The building was twenty feet wide and eighty or ninety feet long. It had a flat roof supported on heavy logs and was very substantial in every way. The old roof was not torn off and the present shed roof was constructed over it.

Bob Jones had the first sawmill at Castle Rock, securing his logs from the hills north and east of there.

It was customary to set fire to the grass in the poison patches in order to drive the cattle away from them in the spring. The riders made this a general practice and this was the cause of many forest fires. No particular fire stands out as being different from the others, but fires were very common.



At the time I came to this country and settled over on Tracy Canon, the grass was so high that it often hid cattle which were lying down. The Government had big herds of cattle to furnish meat for the Indians, one of which was run in the vicinity of Russell Springs under the charge of Alex Russell. Lon Hartman and Jim Kelley ran another big herd on the Cochetopa. These cattle were driven over to the Los Pinos Agency in the fall. All the ranchers in this vicinity ran cattle, the principal ones being John Davey, Alex Russell, George Tracy, Isaac Gotthelf, Horace Means, Joe Hartman, Franklin Clark and sons. At this time, 1881, John Lawrence owned practically all the sheep in and around Saguache, the number fluctuating between twenty and fifty thousand, depending upon the prevalence of good and bad years. Jim Woodson was in partnership with John Lawrence at times and Nate Russell also had sheep. These sheep were run on the low range and foothills as a rule and were leased on shares to different Mexicans, of whom Joe Garcia was the principal one. The first time that they were taken to the high range was in 1895 or 1896, when there had been a period of very short feed on their usual range and losses that spring had been heavy. After being taken up on the Badlies, a severe snow storm was encountered early in July which caused further losses. Altogether, it was a very unfavorable year for the sheep industry. No sheep ever ran in Saguache Park and none in Cochetopa Park until 1888. The sheep range in Cochetopa Park was on the east and south sides. After the disastrous season of 1895, the sheepmen saved the lower range for sheep feed in the spring and fall.

In 1903, Felix Chavez was taking a bunch of John Lawrence's sheep from the high range down through Saguache Park. Tom Tucker was riding for the Clark brothers at this time and jumped Chavez about taking the sheep



through there and in the ensuing altercation, killed him. Tucker always claimed that Chavez had pulled a gun on him first and that he shot in self-defense, a claim which secured his acquittal at the trial. But I always believed that Tucker had had a few drinks and deliberately provoked the quarrel as an opportunity for killing Chavez. The sheep were taken to the lower range by the other herders.

In 1905 I had an agreement with some of the herders of John Lawrence by which they were to keep their sheep in the poison on the east side of Fullerton Park and reserve the west side of the park for my cattle. Several times my rider came down and told me the sheep were getting over beyond the agreed line and I spoke to the herders about it, and each time they told me they would keep their sheep east of the line agreed upon, but did not observe it while I was away. A day or so after my last talk with them, my rider came down and said that the sheep were on the cattle range again. I went up to Fullerton Park, taking along seven or eight extra head of horses and told the herders that it was my belief that we could run the cattle and the sheep together, and since they could not, or would not, keep the sheep where we had agreed to hold them, that I thought it best to throw the two kinds of stock together. I showed them that I had plenty of extra saddle horses and that we would handle the cattle carefully in distributing them among the sheep. To this the herders objected and after some consultation among themselves, they told me that if I would not mix the cattle with the sheep they would keep the sheep over on the east side. This I agreed to and they kept their agreement afterwards.

I do not know of any buffalo ever being in the country. Elk



were not abundant except in Saguache Park and in the Cochetopa country. Deer were very abundant in the mountains, and mountain sheep in the high range. Antelope were very abundant in the San Luis Valley and both deer and antelope were killed by commercial hunters of whom John Curtis and George Hazard's father were two. The Indians hunted a great deal in this country, and I heard tell of a number of traps that had been built by them in the vicinity of Red Rock. About 1886, the deer and antelope became too scarce for further commercial hunting. In 1890, George Hazard killed seven elk in California Gulch and was nearly hanged for it, as mosy everyone felt that he had killed too many at one time. John Oline's father and ten or fifteen others fished for commercial purposes, as that was all that they did and fish were very abundant in those days. Oline fished in the Arkansas between Canon City and Pueblo in 1879 and 1880. After that, he came to the Saguache country. All fish were native trout and I don't remember there being any other kinds in Saguache creek at that early date, not even chubs.

Robinson trapped beaver in the early 50's in the vicinity of the Russell Lakes; but at the time I came here, beaver were no more abundant than they are today. The first attempt toward the protection of the game was in 1905 when the Forest Service was started. There were no noted bear and I think that the stories about dangerous bear were rather exaggerated.

The railroad was built over Poncha Pass to Mineral Hot Springs in 1881, and it was the original intention to have it run over Cochetopa Pass. A depot site was laid out north of the old court house in 1881, but for some reason the project was abandoned. It was said that it cost too



much to bring it around this way and that Marshall Pass offered a more direct route. Tom Atwood was the location engineer and he laid out the town of Pencha.

Irrigation ditches Nos. 1, 2, and 4 were built in 1866, and No. 5 in 1867. Otto Mears was one of the first to take out water rights, and Suttle shortly afterwards. Mears built the first store in 1865, where the present court house is. Jesse Nolan had a store north of the present Saguache Hotel in 1881.