

HAPPENINGS ALONG THE TWIN LAKES AND ROARING FORK TOLL-ROAD

DON L. GRISWOLD



Speaker of the Month

Don L. Griswold is another native of Colorado, born in Olney Springs, in the Arkansas Valley. He is a graduate of Denver University and holds a Master's degree in Education from Columbia University. While teaching in the Leadville public schools, he met Jean Harvey, now Mrs. Griswold, herself a member of one of Leadville's (and Colorado's) oldest and most prominent families. They were drawn together by a common interest which has continued throughout their married life.

Don insists that this toll-road story as well as the rest of their published works, is due just as much to Jean's

research ability and enthusiasm as to his efforts. They jointly authored "The Carbonate Camp Called Leadville" (1951) and "A Century of Colorado Cities" (1958). Don claims the latter as the first of the heavy crop of Centennial publications.

Since 1941, Don has been in Denver teaching in the public schools, except for four years spent in Air Force Intelligence in Europe from 1941 to 1945. In the summers, however, the Griswolds may be found at their summer home in Twin Lakes.

Silver mine—gold mine, locate one and you will be rich! Where? Leadville was the answer in 1878, but by 1879 the silver seekers reaching this section of the Colorado Rockies found that every piece of desirable and much undesirable ground had already been staked. Then came reports of silver and gold strikes in the Gunnison and Roaring Fork regions. How did you get to these new finds? You had to cross the Continental Divide. There were several low places—that is, lower than the towering peaks of the Sawatch Range—but all were difficult.

Some prospectors headed west from South Arkansas or Buena Vista; some crossed Tennessee Pass, north of Leadville; and others crossed Hunters Pass, southwest of Leadville. On the 4th of July, 1879, a rich gold strike was made about five miles west of the summit of this last mentioned pass, and because of the date, the fortunate miners called their mine the Independ-

ence. They also christened the camp, the mountain and the pass with the same name. Farther down the Roaring Fork River promising silver locations were made and Ute City was proudly planned in that same year. But how did you reach Hunters or Independence Pass, and where were these new Eldorados which could make you a millionaire if you were lucky? The intrepid soon found the way, spearheading the rush to Aspen.

One recorded trip across Independence Pass told of a party of six men "well armed and equipped" with riding horses and a dozen burros "loaded with the necessaries of life, being mostly flour, sugar and bacon." These men left Leadville one morning in late November of 1879 and proceeded down the Arkansas Valley to Lake Creek and then west six miles to the village of Twin Lakes, an old townsite and county seat called Dayton in the 1860's, but in '79 freshly laid out north and south, east and west and renamed Twin Lakes. On the second day the prospecting party followed the Lake Creek road as far as it went and then took to the narrow, rough mountain trail, which led them up the steep mountainside to Mountain Boy Park where the men camped out in the open, laying their blankets on a two-foot depth of snow. On the third day, the day which "tried their very souls," they struggled through snow to the top of the pass, and as they descended, one of the burros made a misstep and rolled down a hundred-foot bank of snow. After using several hours in freeing the burro, they reached the camp of Independence and stayed there for the night. Ute City was reached on the fourth day with not too much difficulty.

There seem to be no records which tell of any other crossings of Independence Pass after the above until

January 17, 1880, when Fred G. McCandless decided things were pretty dull in Ute City, and so chose to visit his old friends in Leadville. According to his report, it took him five days to make the crossing, the first three being spent in fighting the elements for the eighteen miles from Ute City to Independence. "Heavy, wet snows had laden the trees in the canon and soaked them full of water. Cold weather had frozen them solid and strong winds cracked them off their stumps like so many matches. This caused the narrow gulch to be completely filled with dense brush or a thicket of snow-laden branches." After nearly starving and freezing to death in the canyon, he "crawled up to the door of a cabin in Independence camp" and "was warmly welcomed and tenderly cared for." On the fourth day, remarkably revived, he scaled the top of the pass, and being an expert skier, made the descent in seven minutes, which according to his calculations was a speed of "over a mile in two minutes." Because he was unable to slow his descent, he almost hit a tree, and as a result was so frightened that he walked the rest of the way to Twin Lakes; but after a night's rest in a hotel there, he made the trip from the Lakes to Leadville in a record two hours.

Although the reports of crossing the divide were usually thrilling, hair-raising episodes, the riches of the Roaring Fork area were said to be even bigger, better and more fabulous than those of Leadville. The business men of Leadville and of Buena Vista, realizing that a road into the Roaring Fork district "would bring thousands of dollars in trade" began pushing such a project. The merchants and citizens of Buena Vista not only talked, but actually started work on the Cottonwood Pass road before the winter halted their labors. Some rumors in-

icated Denver interests were helping in the construction of this road, and in answer to these rumors the Carbonate Camp's business men declared through the columns of the *Chronicle*, "Leadville can well compete with Denver, and in the matter of mining outfits greatly surpass her, and it is hoped the opportunity will not be allowed to pass."

On March 27, 1880, the Leadville boosters of a toll-road to the Western Slope called a public hearing in Turner Hall. At this meeting, the Fryng Pan and Roaring Fork, the Eagle River and Gunnison, the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork, and the Grand River, Leadville and Roaring Fork toll-road companies presented their plans to an enthusiastic group. Each company claimed a charter and ability to build a good road with a minimum of expense as soon as the necessary capital was raised. However, since much of the area was still held by the Indians and white settlements were non-existent or mere prospecting camps, no decision was reached at this March meeting as to which toll-road or roads should be supported. The whole matter of how to reach the Western Slope, and specifically the Roaring Fork region, was more or less at a stand still until J. E. Rice, respected Leadville physician, and J. S. D. Manville, prominent hardware dealer, began to promote the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork Company. The projected route of this company was from Leadville to Twin Lakes, "thence to the foot of the range, ten miles distance, thence over Independence five miles, thence down Castle Creek to the junction with the Roaring Fork River, twenty-four miles, and on fifteen miles farther to the Indian Reservation." The capital stock of the company was set at \$100,000 and the company officials made the following proposition to Leadville officials:

It will sell \$40,000 of its stock at forty cents on the dollar and agree to complete the road from Dayton (Twin Lakes) to the Roaring Fork in sixty days from the date of the receipt of the money, and have a trail suitable for pack animals in twenty days. Or, the company will build the road to Independence Gulch within ninety days, and complete a pack trail to the town of Roaring Fork (a rival camp of early Aspen) in fifteen days, or forfeit its charter and franchise, if the citizens of Leadville will build the remaining portion to the town of Roaring in 60 days, receiving from the Company \$40,000 of the capital stock.

No definite agreement was reached, but enough money was raised for a start on the toll-road that spring. The Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork Company did the best it could under the circumstances by having a crew of workmen shovel the snow off the old road so teams could haul wagons a distance of twelve miles beyond Twin Lakes, and from that point the trail was shoveled for about five miles farther. Beyond that the crossing of the actual pass remained "perilous."

By May about thirty people per day were going over the route and a toll of 25 cents apiece for saddle horses, mules and burros was being collected at the Twin Lakes toll-gate about a half mile from the village. June found the stampede to the new silver camp of Aspen to be in full force, but discouraging reports on the condition of Independence Pass continued to come in. J. W. Iron and R. D. Wagner wrote:

For five miles the Pass is full of snow . . . beyond that the ground is either boggy and sloppy, full of rough boulders, or characterized by a general rough surface that renders it practically impossible to man and beast. . . . On the range the snow is very deep yet, and where the snow has

melted there is no way of avoiding the mud, which in places is up to one's knees. . . .

And in a lighter vein Hamilton S. Wicks wrote:

Judge S. J. Hanna and myself left Leadville last Wednesday morning, May 26, expecting to enjoy a little picnic excursion to Roaring Fork. We pictured to ourselves a pleasant little canter over the Twin Lakes Toll Road, amidst picturesque beauties of the Continental Divide. Oh! witching scenes of foul delusion! Owing undoubtedly, to the particular tenderness of our feet, our imagination was allowed to get the better of our judgments. I do not wish to, or shall I say aught against the Toll Road Company, for I believe they have displayed commendable zeal in hewing out a pathway among the rocks and timber from a point northeast of Twin Lakes to a point about three miles west of Seaton's ranch comprising in all perhaps twenty miles; but I want to say a word to my friend the toughfoot, who, out of abundance of his experience, actually believes a trip of fifty to sixty miles over the mountains a very simple and easy matter to accomplish. Do not hereafter speak so glibly about the rapidity with which you accomplish the trip from Leadville to Roaring Fork and return. In your easy flowing conversation don't level whole mountains, and fill up vast chasms of mud; for your simple-minded tenderfoot believes all you say, and when he finds those mountains, and that mud to be toiled over and wallowed through he curses you with imprecations loud and deep. . . .

At the end of the letter Wicks pointed out that the rush to the Roaring Fork district was a genuine one, prospectors going in "a hundred strong every day" by the Twin Lakes, and the Eagle River trails, and probably as large a number by the Buena Vista-Cottonwood wagon road, which

by that time had been completed to within twenty miles of Aspen.

At about the same time that Hamilton Wicks and Judge Hanna arrived in Aspen so did the first wagon to come across Independence Pass. It would be better to write was brought across, since this "historic wagon" had to be "taken to pieces and packed upon mules, hauled upon hand sleds, and, in fact, every means of transportation known to genius used." After a stormy passage of one month the wagon was re-assembled and placed on display on a public lot in Aspen.

The need for the completion of the road across the pass was intensified in late June of 1880 when the excitement in and about the nearby booming camp of Independence reached a "white heat" following rumors of discoveries in South Independence Gulch, which would "surpass anything before heard of in Colorado." During July of that year the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork Toll-Road was cleared and widened as far as Seaton's ranch. Beyond Seaton's the road was lost in a trail which, though well-marked, was rough and usually marshy. Farther along the steepness and uncertainty of the ascent to the top of the range were testified to by "the score or more of dead animals" which had missed their footing and tumbled back into the valley below. Furthermore, many a traveler of this trail believed the descent into Independence "surpassed anything the wildest imagination could conjure." The narrowness of the almost perpendicular pathway that leaned toward the gulch meant that here again if a misstep were made by man or beast, a fall, probably fatal, of one hundred or two hundred feet would result. Having once reached the camp of Independence, some of the treasure-seekers stayed in that camp so as to prospect the area; the others continued on down the Roaring Fork

River trail where for twenty miles the path led "across more rocks and swamps than any other hundred miles of trail in the world." Another prominent feature of this route was the toll-bridge, many of which were said to be located at intervals of every three or four miles, and at each, every traveler paid 25 cents, not only for himself, but also for every pack animal which he might have.

The wagon road was extended no farther during that summer, nor was the trail improved in any way; so the disparaging reports of the dangers and hardships in crossing the pass increased throughout the fall and broke forth with even greater and lustier vigor in the spring, despite the fact that J. S. D. Manville had guaranteed, in early March of 1881, enough money to complete the road.

Perhaps inspired by the assurances of Manville as well as by those of Dr. Rice, who had moved to Twin Lakes during the winter so as to be close at hand to supervise the renewal of the road building as soon as weather permitted, a singular crossing of the pass was attempted.

Here is the story as written in the March 15, 1881, *Leadville Chronicle*:

The narrow, tortuous and snow-walled trail that traverses Independence Pass between this city and Aspen, has been heretofore considered passable only for jack trains and not for vehicles of any sort. The major part in fact all of the road outside of the city consists of a very narrow trench pressed down in the snow and walled on either side to the height of about six feet by the frigid element. This has been kept open during the winter by occasional travel, which has grown considerably brisker as spring advances.

Sometime since the proprietors of what was known as the New York bakery of this city, decided to remove their establishment to Aspen, and for

a time the transportation of apparatus, etc., amounted to a very serious embarrassment. The largest and most unwieldy of the apparatus was a huge sheet iron furnace that could not be taken apart, but was an absolute essential in the manufacture of the savory pies, cakes and brown loaves of bread that so delight the heart of the patron. Perseverance accomplishes wonders and the bakerymen finally decided to make a desperate attempt to transport their oven by means of the jack trail. Accordingly they started with the big iron box. Little difficulty was experienced between here and Twin Lakes, as the road is comparatively open. Beyond, however, the jack trail, with all its horrors began in dead earnest. A sled was here purchased, on which the furnace was securely fastened, and the party slowly started upon the worst half of the journey with half a dozen jacks as motive power. The trail soon narrowed to such an extent that the projecting sides of the oven "stuck," and it was found necessary to excavate several feet at each side to admit its progress. Occasionally a tree would be encountered, and of necessity chopped down. The jacks would then be unharnessed and hitched to the log, which was by this means dragged out of the way. At night the weary bakers slept in the oven haunted in their dreams by the faint aroma of pastry that, like the scent of the roses, hung around it. . . . The morning daylight would find them plodding their toilsome, but determined way.

Meantime an unexpected difficulty arose. The spring tide of travel had already set in, and several jack trains were not long in following the baker's caravan. They were not long in catching up with it, either, and the awful fact dawned upon them that they could not pass it, but would have to linger in the rear. This filled them with sorrow and disgust, for they were in a hurry, and, like most travelers into a new mining camp, imagined if they didn't get there right away

all the land would be staked off, all the trades overcrowded and all the provisions eaten up. So it looked as though three or four rainbows in all their varied hues, but principally blue, had settled on the spot. Then another and another jack train came hurrying up, and stopping at the rear of their unfortunate predecessors, inquired anxiously:

"What's up?"

Slowly the answer came back the enraged and suffering line:

"A G— D— pie factory is blockading the road!"

"Well, why don't you push the — — thing off?" howled the impatient from the rear.

"Can't do it, it's too hell-fired big!" was the answer wafted back on the chilling winter breeze.

Then all hands joined in a general stream of profanity that brought a blush to the face of even the usually shameless jack as he shuddered under his load. Then more jack trains came up, and the same interrogatories and answers were repeated, only it took longer for them to come down the lengthening line. So the matter stands at present. The oven isn't at Aspen yet, and isn't liable to be before late this week, and the pack trains still accumulate in the rear, until the road for nearly a mile is back with shivering, swearing, howling men. Travel is delayed, mails are stopped, communication is cut short, and perdition is to pay generally all for one oven.

Two days later, near the camp of Independence, the drivers of the pack trains became so clamorous to get around the big oven that the owners "deemed it impracticable" to take the oven farther and decided to drag it to one side of the trail where it was abandoned. Did the bakers ever return to take their oven on into Aspen? Did someone else take it into Independence or into Aspen where it was used in a bakery? Or was it buried forever by the rocks and gravel dug from the

mountain side later that year by the workmen building the road on towards Aspen? Those are the unanswered questions in regard to the final disposition of the Big Oven. At any rate the trail was cleared of this cumbersome piece of man made impedimenta, but the obstacles placed in the projected roadway by nature were to continue to make traveling difficult for several months longer before their removal was effected; so the protests against the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork Toll-Road Company kept pouring in.

Finally in early June, Dr. Rice wrote a progress report to the editor of the *Chronicle*. He said seventy-five men divided into three gangs were working very hard and that the crew working east out of Independence would have the road to the foot of the pass opened in a few days. The other two groups were working from Aspen toward Independence and if everything went as planned the entire route would be opened by the 15th of July with daily stages running between Leadville and Aspen. He probably guessed more money might be needed for he added, ". . . most freight now coming to Aspen has to be brought over the Buena Vista route, which is eighty miles, and two ranges to cross, while from this point to Aspen is but fifty-two and but one range."

As the road work went on, more money than guaranteed by J. S. D. Manville was requested. In the request the members of the company, which had been reorganized as the Leadville and Aspen Toll-Road Company, stated at least \$4,000 more was urgently needed, and further asserted that when the road was completed all the ores of Aspen would be shipped to Leadville for treatment, and that all goods consumed in Aspen would be purchased from Leadville merchants; therefore, did it not seem reasonable

to expect that such a small sum as \$4,000 could be raised among the smelting and mercantile business men who would profit most by extending their trade into the Roaring Fork country? "But," added the boosters of the toll-road, "no time should be lost. Denver and Buena Vista are making herculean exertions to secure the trade by way of Cottonwood."

The first to respond to the request were Charles Mater, Leadville's pioneer merchant and Samuel McMillen of McMillen Bros. Grocery and Miner's Supply. Other merchants hesitantly contributed small amounts; so although the work on the road did continue, the progress was much slower than had been predicted by Dr. Rice. Nonetheless, encouraged by these rather limited prospects, Wall & Witter, stage and livery keepers of Leadville, started a daily line to Independence in late June of '81. At first, the coaches which were advertised as the best in Colorado for comfort and safety, only went to the stage stop, first known as Gilmore's and later as Bromley, at the foot of the range. Two other companies, Carson's Stage and Express Line, and McDonald, McLain & Company, Dealers in Hay, Grain & Feed, also announced they would operate stage lines on the route. In mid-July, Andrew J. White of the Leadville *Chronicle* journeyed to Aspen and had the following to write of his trip to the end of the stage road:

The measure of life is full when you have made a trip from Leadville to Aspen via Twin Lakes and Independence. Leaving Leadville with its whirl of mixed business and pleasure, when you reach the lakes you have come into an atmosphere laden with holiday perfume and resonant with picnic merriment. . . .

From the lakes a good wagon road leads along Lake Creek in a westerly course, and the ascent is easy. Five or six miles from the lakes the south

branch of Lake Creek directs your course over the Red Mountain pass, and the same distance further on the north branch pours its ice cold waters from Lackawanna gulch into the main stream.

Gilmor's hotel, at the foot of the range on this side, is the end of the stage line, and is five miles from INDEPENDENCE, which is over on the western slope.

Gilmor's is reached by McDonald & McLain's line of coaches which is well equipped with good horses and experienced drivers, who give you a safe, pleasant trip. They leave regularly from their office, corner of Third and Harrison avenue, every morning at 8:30, and you arrive at Gilmor's at about 5 o'clock, the distance being twenty-nine miles. The trip thus far has been exceedingly pleasant. . . .

There is no regular conveyance from the end of the stage line, and if you have not taken the precaution to take along your horse, you may be compelled to walk. . . .

The Farwell Consolidated Mining Company of Independence, tiring of waiting for the road crew to finish the stretch across the pass to Gilmore's, and fearing heavy snows would come before the machinery for the Farwell Mill could be brought in, hired "all the people of Independence" to go to work on and complete that section of the road. As soon as the job was accomplished, J. C. (Kit) Carson began running his coaches and wagons from Leadville to Independence, serving both the traveling public and the express trade. His rates were \$1.00 to Twin Lakes, \$1.75 to Everett's and \$3.50 to Independence.

August and early September of 1881 proved to be stormy with rain, hail and sleet, making both the road and the trail one long, continuous quagmire, and putting a halt to the road building eight miles east of Aspen. These signs of an early winter made

the residents of Aspen apprehensive that their promising camp would be shut off from the rest of the world by snow and by mountain ranges before winter supplies could be brought in; and again the builders of the road ran out of money. At a mass meeting in Aspen, Dr. Rice explained to the interested citizens of that silver camp that there were two courses they could choose between. They could either organize a construction company of their own to complete the road the last few miles, or they could turn the whole problem over to the Board of County Commissioners of Pitkin County. The citizens chose the latter course and the county commissioners in turn appointed H. A. Day to negotiate sufficient warrants to complete the road. Mr. Day succeeded in his purpose and by October 19th a force of better than one hundred men was making "rapid progress" on the section leading into Aspen; on November 1st, 1881, the first wagon jolted over the finished, but far from smoothly graded road, and six days later the road was declared officially open for travel. Much of the passenger and express service, although not all, took to sleighs and cutters with the first fall of snow, and all traffic was stopped temporarily in mid-November by heavy snows. Within a few days the united efforts of a number of workmen had scooped out a shallow trough of a road. All through the winter and far into the spring a shovel brigade was kept on call to clear the roadway after slides had swept down the mountain sides or harsh winds had swirled snow into deep drifts.

Although no daily schedule could be maintained, Carson's express wagons or sleighs traveled back and forth between Leadville and Independence and Aspen at fairly regular intervals. McDonald & McLain and Wall & Witter apparently made infrequent cross-

ings during late 1881, but Earl S. Rockwell and George H. Bicknell, both of Leadville, organized a new line. Their complete outfit arrived in Leadville on November 22nd and consisted of

. . . three elegant mountain wagons, twenty-two head of horses, among which is some of the finest stock ever brought into the mountains, harness and all the other paraphernalia necessary for a complete equipment. A fine lap robe and a heavy wolf robe have been purchased for every seat, so that passengers crossing the range may entertain no fears of the depredations of Jack Frost. From Twin Lakes the trip will be made on sleighs during the winter, all of which have been made to order for this line. There will be five relays of stock between Leadville and Aspen, so the trip will be made as expeditiously as possible; the trip will be made in eight hours to Independence, and eleven hours to Aspen. At first the trip will be made to Independence, and then lay over until the next morning, thus arriving at Aspen about half-past ten the next morning. Leaving Aspen at half-past two in the afternoon, will arrive in Leadville the following afternoon at half-past three o'clock.

The initial trip of the Rockwell and Bicknell line left from the Clarendon Hotel, Leadville, at eight o'clock sharp the following Friday morning and was accomplished without incident. However, the erratic winter weather added not only to adventure but also to the hazards of staging across Independence, and on December 1st, the *Daily Herald* reported

A STAGE ACCIDENT

The perils of the pass have commenced in dead earnest as was proven at eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning on the Independence road. The snow which fell a few weeks ago, in many cases has been compelled to melt under the warm rays of a late November sun and the streams com-

ing from the mountain sides have been detained in their downward course by the early nights and the freezing atmosphere of the same. In many places ice has thus formed in the roads through the mountains which promises to do damage during the winter months to those whose business calls them to the outlying settlements. At the time above mentioned Carson's coach was driving toward this city with Mrs. Mack, Joe Hoyt, better known as Buckskin Joe, and Martin Sullivan as passengers. They had just left Everett's about two hundred yards when there was a very short turn and a steep downgrade encountered. The driver slacked the pace of his steeds but was unable to keep the vehicle in an upright position, for the hind wheels slid off on the ice striking against a stone careening the wagon over the side of the hill. It didn't turn over, but simply fell on its side, dumping the passengers in confusion and throwing the driver into the bottom of the wagon. Buckskin Joe had been sitting by Mrs. Mack and consequently was thrown out over her, but the seats caught her and piled upon her. As soon as the passengers recovered from the shock the lady was found in an insensible condition and badly bruised about the head and face. Her lower lip was frightfully lacerated and considerable trouble was experienced in restoring her to consciousness. Buckskin Joe had his right hand dislocated while Mr. Sullivan struck his cheek against a rock, which he claims broke in two. His shoulder was considerable bruised but no bones were broken. A fortunate and narrow escape fell to Buckskin Joe. His cartridge belt was torn and the caps were badly bent. The percussion point, however, escaped, which in all probability accounts for the saving of Joe's life.

When the coach had been righted the passengers regained their positions and drove to Wolf's hotel, at the upper Twin lake, where Mrs. Mack stopped and will receive medical care.

When Rockwell and Bicknell's coach reached the place of disaster, the hind wheels of that conveyance acted in the same manner, and the driver was thrown from his seat, headlong into the road. By his side sat Samuel Lessme, Esq., who, seeing the perilous position of the driver, gathered in the lines and halted the horses. No sooner had this been done than both traces on the off horse dropped out, but caused no damage. The equilibrium of the coach was maintained and nobody was hurt, the driver escaping injury simply by a miracle. The passengers all arrived in town on very close to time.

Undaunted by snow or accidents, "Kit" Carson, and Wall & Witter (who purchased the Rockwell-Bicknell equipment in January of 1882) continued to operate the two stage and express lines. Optimistically, in February, both companies announced from that time forth their coaches and/or sleighs would, by leaving Leadville at 7:30 in the morning, make the trip to Aspen in one day—a time schedule which neither company could maintain with any degree of regularity until the summer months.

Late in the spring of '82, three-toll-gates were established between the Lakes and Aspen, one on the western limits of the town of Twin Lakes, the next at Bromley on the eastern approach to Independence Pass, and the last at Weller, east of Aspen. One of Twin Lakes leading citizens tells us in his booklet entitled *Patrick J. Ryan Remembers* that the Carson stages had

. . . four horses to a coach except from Bromley to Weller, where they used six horses.

From Leadville to Twin Lakes they used Concord stages. The coaches over the range were what they called canvas-top coaches. The Concord stages carried fourteen passengers and the driver, while the canvas coaches

carried eight passengers and the driver. There were two each way from Aspen to Twin Lakes, but one to and from Leadville seven days a week. The stages left Leadville at 7 a. m., arriving about 9 at Twin Lakes. By the time they made their transfer, it was noon when they reached Bromley, and when roads were good they would get into Aspen around 5 p. m. The fare was \$8.

Once the operation of the road was established the counties regulated the toll charges; for example the Lake County commissioners ordered that the rate of toll to be charged by the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork road should be from June 18, 1884 to June 17, 1886 as follows:

Vehicle drawn by span of horses or yoke of oxen	\$1.00
Each additional span or yoke25
Saddle horse or pack animal.....	.15
Loose cattle and horses.....	.05
Loose hogs and sheep.....	.02

Besides the passenger service both lines transported express articles—anything from “1 Iron Bench Screw 1 in.,” to bullion. The carrying of bullion by the stage lines was both a responsibility and a risk. On one occasion nearly \$9,000 worth of gold was lost in the mountains west of Twin Lakes. F. M. Brown, the manager of the Farwell Consolidated Mining Company of Independence, deposited three gold bricks, the aggregate value of which was \$20,000, with the cashier of the Bank of Pitkin County. The cashier then placed the bricks, each in its own separate ore sack, in a large gunny sack for shipping on a Wall & Witter stage. When the stage was ready to leave Independence for Leadville it was too heavily loaded, so another horse on which the gunny sack of gold was packed was placed in front of the coach. The horse was thus kept in front of the stage as far as Everett’s on

the opposite side of Independence Pass. Here, while the passengers were stretching their legs, the driver checked the pack animal, and a sight “for which he was illy prepared” met his eyes. The part of the sack on the far side of the horse was hanging empty. A big hole told the story that somewhere along the route the brick, the largest of the three, had dropped out, its weight and the constant rubbing against the side of the pack animal having worn the hole. The driver immediately reported the loss to Mr. Brown, who was on the coach, and the two went out on foot in search of the brick, which Brown estimated to be worth nearly \$9,000. They scoured the road all the way back to Independence but no trace of the lost gold was found. Upon returning to Everett’s late that night, they were met with the rejoicing news that Charles Bennett, a passenger on the coach, had discovered the brick all covered with dirt and dust in the middle of the road less than a mile west of Everett’s.

As well as staging with its associate express service over the toll-road, there was heavy freighting from 1882 until the railroads reached Aspen. Mr. Ryan said that on many days he had seen “a half mile of freighters pulling into Twin Lakes at a time.” The largest of these outfits were run by Jim McGee, three-finger Jack, Holbrook, Finn Davis, Lewellon Blank and John Borrell. Most of the freighting originated in Granite or Leadville where supplies, mining and milling equipment had been shipped by rail. These outfits had their difficulties such as breakdowns in the middle of the narrow roadway, snow-wagons stuck in drifts, conveyances or freight sliding from the road to the bottom of the canyon, loss of animals that fell from the road, many of which were killed

by the fall, and high prices for feed. John Borrell recalled some of these difficulties as follows:

Once, it was during the dead of winter, and the snow had been falling until it was as much as ten feet deep, the round trip to Aspen proved to be one of my worst experiences. Although traffic was heavy, the snow drifted so badly that the road was not kept open. We were at one place, between Bromley's and the top of the range for three days and nights in a traffic jam. That may sound odd, but it is true. Someone got stuck in the snow, teams began to line up, unable to pass, until they reached in both directions for a great distance, and it was impossible for anyone to advance in either direction. We finally cleared up the jam by carrying sleds, stages and wagons, and their loads out of the road and to new positions. It was mighty labor and we were all exhausted from our efforts.

Then at other places, where the way down was steep, we traveled too fast. At this time I was driving a six horse team with wagon and trailer. It was almost impossible to hold the heavy load. At times I found it necessary to put four rough-locks on the trailer and two on the wagon to keep them under control. Even then one of my wheelers fell and was dragged at least 100 feet before we could get stopped; but it didn't kill him. Of course the price of feed rocketed at the stopping places, and we paid ten cents per pound for hay and grain. The round trip required fourteen days and nights and I lost \$100 on my last trip which was also my worst.

Lewellon Blank recalled in an interview that during the muddy season of 1883 the freighters operating between Granite and Aspen lost many of their horses through a strange foot infection. The first symptom was lameness, then the hoof would turn blue, swell and burst; within six hours

the horse or mule suffering in this manner would die. The infection was believed to have been a hoof rot caused by poisonous mud on the east side of Independence Pass. Fortunately, there appears to have been no recurrence of the disease.

During the fall of 1882, the Leadville papers reported "The Boldest Hold-Up On Record" on the toll-road between Twin Lakes and Leadville. Considerable loot was taken from seven passengers on Carson's stage, and it was the recovery of some of this loot which led to the arrest of five men, including the driver of the stage coach, some four months later in February of 1883. In a queer twist of circumstances, only one of the men, Frederick Judge, was convicted and sentenced to a five-year prison term. He turned state's evidence, admitted and even boasted of his part in the hold-up, while the others went free because all evidence introduced was so indefinite and contradictory that there was reasonable doubt as to their guilt.

On June 6th, 1884, Samuel Derry shot General H. B. Bearce, prominent Denver mining man, near the junction of the Twin Lakes toll-road with the Hussey Placer road. General Bearce was taken to the toll-gate house and died there.

Such were some of the happenings along the Twin Lakes and Roaring Ford road during the 1880's.

As soon as the stage, express and freight companies learned the Colorado Midland and the Denver and Rio Grande railroads were competing for the honor of reaching Aspen first, they realized their business opportunities were coming to a close in that area. By this time, autumn of 1887, only one of the staging companies, that of J. C. Carson, was still in operation, McDonald & McLain and Wall & Witter having gone out of business several

years earlier. Carson though held on to the end, with the last of his line's advertisements appearing in the October 22nd Leadville *Herald Democrat*, and with the October 25th issue of the paper reporting:

"Kit" Carson sent out the last stage for Aspen yesterday morning. Until the Denver and Rio Grande gets to Aspen his stages will meet all trains from the end of the track. Thus another relic of the early days gives away before the great civilizer, the iron horse.

The toll-gates were closed down soon after and no written records of any further use of the toll-road as such from 1888 on have been found. Nonetheless the road was used to some extent. Austin Stevens, a former toll-gate manager at Bromley, brought his granddaughter from Aspen to Twin Lakes via the old road in the early 1900's and a few other people remember taking excursions over the road in the summer times to camp out or to enjoy the scenery. A little before World War I, engineers surveyed a road for automobile use over the pass and this road was completed in 1920 under the supervision of Elwood B. Harlan. It is of interest to note that Mr. Harlan was the son-in-law of Dr. J. E. Rice, who, it will be remembered, was the originator of the Twin Lakes and Roaring Fork Toll-Road. In the 1930's the road on the eastern side was improved considerably because of the construction of the Twin Lakes Diversion Tunnel, and in recent years both sides of Independence Pass have been further improved and maintained as a scenic summer highway. In 1950 the first six miles of the road

(from the Arkansas River to the western edge of Twin Lakes) was given a coating of hard-top, and here it is interesting to record that State Representative Frank E. Kendrick Jr., whose wife, Alicia, is the daughter of the Elwood Harlans, helped greatly in the securing of this improvement.

Although parts of the old toll-road are a part of the modern State Highway 82 which now crosses Independence Pass, a little searching and hiking will reveal the old road with its sharp curves, log poles put down over swamps and its steep inclines. Evidence of the stage stops at Everett's and Independence can still be seen, but nearly all other material evidence is gone.

Book Reviews (Continued)

McLoughlin—his personal finances, his children, his land holdings in the lower St. Lawrence River valley, surprisingly little of the correspondence has anything to do with the Fur Trade, the Hudson's Bay Company or the North West Company, which would be of prime interest to students of Western Americana.

However, if the reader wishes a well-rounded picture of Dr. John McLoughlin and his activities, especially in his earlier years in and around the Murray Bay area of French Canada in the early 1800's, the book will be of value.

Dr. Barker has done an excellent job of correlating the letters and related material and the volume is in splendid format as are all volumes prepared by the Arthur H. Clark Co.

Armand W. Reeder