

Grant, Colorado

by Mrs. Alice Wonder, a frequent correspondent from Bailey. Flume, Aug 24, 1950



Grant, c. 1900

“As history was being made in Platte Canon there were many who stayed in one place long enough to have the immediate locality given their name. Such was the case in Parmlee gulch down Turkey Creek, Shaffer’s Crossing, where the road has always had to cross Elk Creek and the Shaffer family owned the land and built the home that still stands.

Then came Bailey and the story has been told many times of how this little town received its name from Charlie Bailey who, like Daniel Boone, ‘came west to have quiet and more elbow room.’

So on up the canon we had Slaghts, Cassells, and then, at the confluence of Geneva Gulch and the north fork of the South Platte river, we find the little town of Grant.

In the early ‘70s General U. S. Grant made a trip to the West spending some time in Colorado where he visited the several noted camps—Central City, Georgetown, etc. Of course this trip must be made via stage or with team and

carriage. There was no train through here as yet; the stage was a crude way for so noted a person to travel, consequently several carriage loads of notables from Denver, with U. S. Grant an honor guest, made the trip in style with spanking teams, coachmen and fine carriages.

One amusing incident is told by old timers (now few in numbers) about the reception this group received in Bailey.

All the women of the community including Mrs. Morrow, Mrs. Entrican, Mrs. Bailey, and many others, decided to have a really outstanding dinner for the General. They met in Bailey, spent days planning the feast, and finally had a dinner that was really ‘out of this world’ to use a more modern expression.

The day came for the guests to arrive. Everything was in readiness—chicken, mashed potatoes, hot biscuit, jellies, jams, pickles, and what have you! The hour was at hand and the cooks left their kitchen and prized foods to greet the travelers at the door. Some delay was experienced by the men coming for the celebration and all anxiously waited in front of the house hoping the biscuits would not be too brown, etc., before they were served.

Silently over the hill came old Chief Colorow and several of his braves on their way to the valley for fall hunting. Quietly they slipped into the kitchen, found all that wonderful banquet and what could be more fitting than such a feast for a Chief and his braves! They ate rapidly so they might not be disturbed and, as the last morsel of biscuit and chicken disappeared, the ladies came to investigate a strange sound.

Can you picture the dire consternation that reigned when they entered that kitchen? It was certainly heart-breaking!

Not to Chief Colorow, however; he smiled, looked the group of troubled ladies over, said, 'Umph, much good!' and slipped away up the trail in true Indian fashion.

Naturally General Grant and his group did not eat chicken that day, by the time the travelers arrived there was a delicious feed of ham, more hot biscuits and everything that even a general could wish for to satisfy their appetites before going on up the canon.

Passing on through the hills they did not stop at other stage stops, but hurried on to what was to be the end of the railroad that fall. A settlement of quite some size had sprung up where the two creeks came together—for the South Platte is a tiny river before Geneva Creek flows into it. Here, too, all was in readiness for a celebration and there was to be a lively time for this camp was truly of the early western type—'wide open and roaring.' After spending the night with these mountaineers Grant and his party returned to Denver. However, during the stay it had been decided that the name of the camp would be GRANT and there would be a post office bearing that name recorded in Washington.

Many have come and gone from Grant in the years that have passed. There was the 'marrying justice,' good old Jim McDonald, that lived at the Searles place where Andy and Harriet Anderson now live; there was for many years that genial pioneer so many of us remember—Jim Lamping who, with his good wife, reared a large family of sturdy boys and pretty girls in the old town of Grant.

Then, not too long ago, came the new highway 285 with many changes. Buildings were torn down to be replaced by others on a new site, and some not to be replaced.

Then the present town of GRANT developed and bids fair to grow into a busy burg with new industries and progressive people at the helm. 'TWIN SPRUCE CAFÉ' as one comes down the canon extends a hospitable greeting to travelers; 'PLATTE RIVER INN' extends its invitation to 'stop and rest.' The post office of Grant is under the capable management of Mary Cassell Pharness that everyone knows, for she is a native of the canon. Mr. and Mrs. Candlin have the store, and that pioneer, Jack Kimberly is there to tell you of early days and present signs of the times.

Now it is plain to all that GRANT is an ever growing place in the canon and bids fair to become outstandingly popular as a stopping place on highway 285 as the days go by."

Today Grant remains an unincorporated town along Highway 285 where Geneva Creek and the North Fork of the South Platte River come together. A turn onto Highway 62 takes a traveler to Guanella Pass and then on to Georgetown.

But travelers sometimes stop their cars in Grant around dusk and bring out the cameras. This is when the Rocky Mountain sheep tend to come down out of the rocks to get a drink out of the river.

Early Trains at Grant

The Denver South Park and Pacific narrow gauge train had been built as far as Morrison in 1874, then the line was developed as income permitted. In 1878 it arrived at Grant and had reached Buena Vista by 1880. From there it

served Leadville on “rented” Rio Grande tracks before building its own Leadville branch from Como via Boreas and Fremont Passes.

These incidents were reported in the Fairplay Flume:

November 20, 1879

“The night train on the S.P. met with two slight accidents on the up trip Monday night. First it suffered a slight collision with a freight train near Grant, by which means several cars were detached and started back to Denver, but were soon arrested by the brakes. Again on Kenosha hill a part of the train ran for a distance of one hundred and fifty feet on the ties. No serious damage was done.”

December 30, 1880

“Fire at Grant

The round house of the Denver & South Park road at Grant burned to the ground about eleven o’clock on Christmas night. A machinist was working upon engine No. 24 in the house when he discovered the flames, the origin of which is not fully known. This engine, as well as the building, was nearly a total loss. Passenger train No. 3 arrived during the progress of the fire and stopped to assist in fighting the flames and releasing the engine, but was unsuccessful in either, and went on after an hour’s delay. The house will probably be rebuilt as it is almost a necessity at this point on the line.”



Depot and train at Grant in 1930s