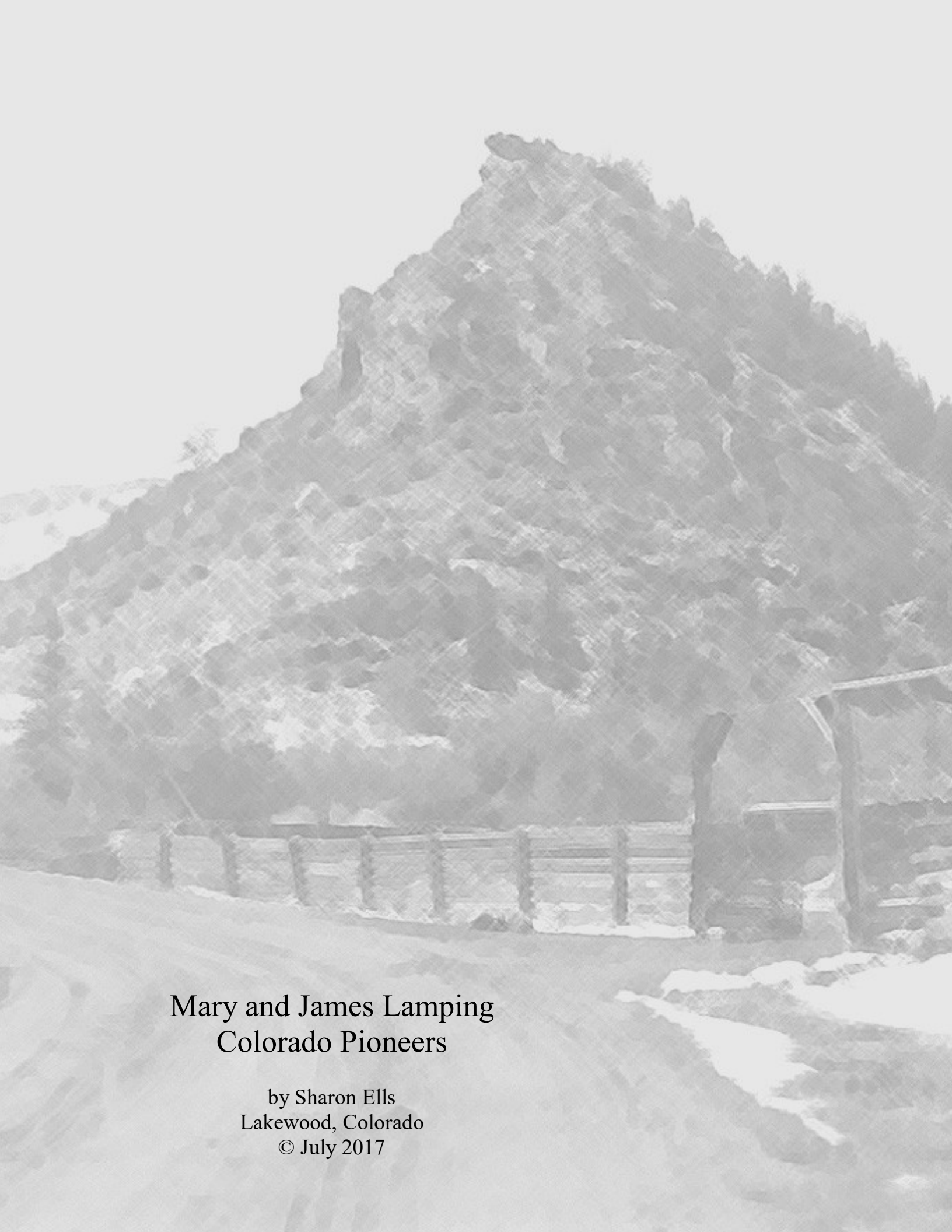


*Mary and James
Lamping*



Colorado Pioneers



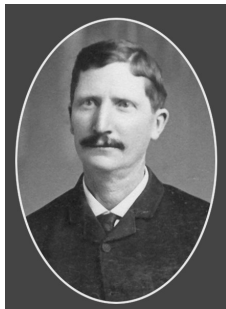
Mary and James Lamping
Colorado Pioneers

by Sharon Ells
Lakewood, Colorado
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Mile after weary mile, nine-year-old Mary trudged alongside the covered wagon. Her five-year-old stepbrother, John, couldn't walk far, and sometimes rode in the wagon with his parents and infant brother, Casper. The year was 1880; the Smith family had joined the wagon train in St. Joseph, Missouri,¹ and were bound for Leadville, Colorado. Years later, Mary told her granddaughter Alfaretta she had walked the whole way. Two-month-old Casper, likely born during the arduous journey,² did not survive childhood; there is no record of him beyond the 1880 census.



Jeals



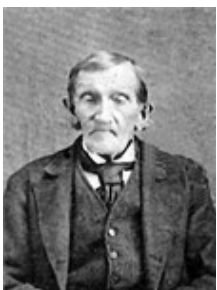
Posey

Mary Ann Smith was born November 29, 1871, on a farm in Brown County, Kansas,³ to Edward Posey Smith and his wife, Jeals Elizabeth Auxier. One day Jeals and her infant daughter were alone in the house when an intruder barged in. Fearing that he intended harm, Jeals fled to an upstairs room. To escape him, she jumped out the window with Mary in her arms. The baby was unhurt, but Jeals sustained severe injuries that led to a decline in health and an early death.⁴

Mary was about five years old when her mother died. She was cared for by a Negro nanny until 1879, when her father, Posey, married Elizabeth McGinnis,⁵ a widow with a young son, John. In 1880, the Smiths headed west and settled in Leadville.⁶ There Posey Smith mined and operated a boarding house,⁷ where Mary worked with her parents.



Elizabeth



Joseph



Susan

Joseph Lamping and Susan Godard, the parents of James Augustus Lamping, were both born in French Canada. The family immigrated to the United States, and son James was born January 24, 1861, in Hogansburg, New York. Baptized at the Church of St. Patrick in Hogansburg on January 28, 1861, his sponsors were Augustin and Celeste Rochoam.⁸ His was a large family, eventually totaling 16 siblings, eight of whom were adopted.



By 1870 the Lampings were living in Bombay, New York,⁹ where James helped with the family farm. James later recollected that in 1881 he joined his brother Joseph in Leadville. James doesn't appear there in the 1886 city directory, but does in the 1887 directory, which shows James working as a teamster and Joseph as sheriff of Lake County.¹⁰

James Lamping and Mary Smith were married at the Catholic church in Leadville on December 11, 1888. The groom was 27 and the bride was 17.

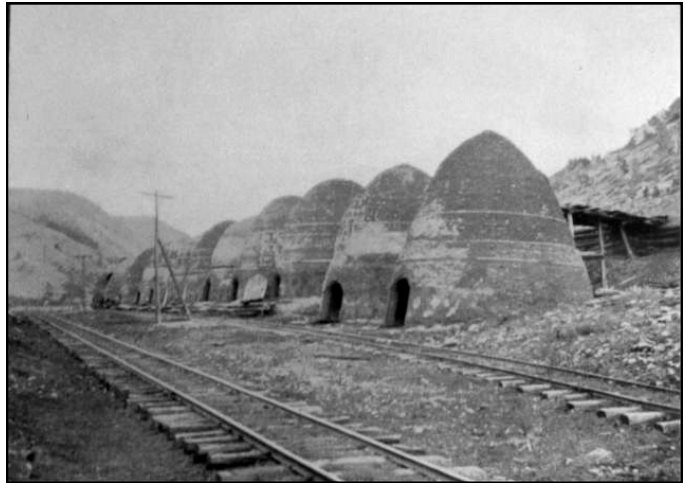
The following year they welcomed a son, Joseph Anthony, into the family. For generations a Lamping tradition has been to name the firstborn son after an early ancestor; thus there are many Josephs in the family line.

Several from the Lamping clan were in Leadville in 1889 for this family picture.



Back row: John Hartford, Esther Lamping White, Julian Lamping Jesmer holding Ann, Frank Jesmer, James A. Lamping
 Middle row: Libbie Lamping Hartford, Henry White, Lizzie Darling Lamping, Levious Lamping, Mary Ann Smith Lamping
 Children in front: Joseph Hartford, Amy Lamping, Joseph W. Lamping, Joseph A. Lamping

The family next moved to Webster, Colorado, at the foot of Kenosha Pass. There a second son, Edward Posey Lamping, was born in 1891. James was foreman of charcoal kilns owned by his brother Joseph. On December 23, 1891, the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* reported the explosion of one of the kilns. James “had a crew of men working at night, and kept the fire contained to the one kiln. Loss, \$1,000.”



Charcoal kilns at Webster in 1898, from the *Park County Local History Archives*

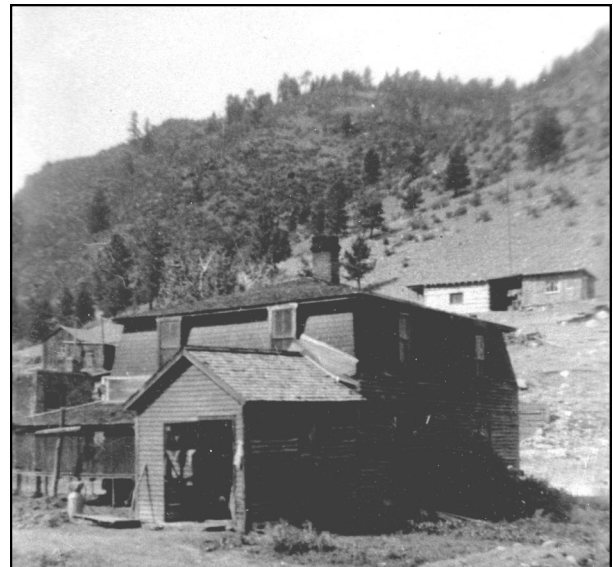
An article in www.geocaching.com by South Park National Heritage Area describes the kiln business in Webster:

The community of Webster was created in the late 1870s when it was briefly the terminus of the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad, receiving its post office in 1877. Construction on the railroad continued in 1878, but by that time the area had attracted other business investors such as the Lamping family, who constructed charcoal-producing kilns in Webster. The charcoal was sent to the smelters in Leadville, and the Lampings saw success in the business until they ceased operations in 1893. The kilns, mining interests, local ranching, and the timber industry kept the town afloat for many years, but the post office closed in 1909 and little historical evidence of the town remains today.

The next few years would bring both joy and sorrow to James and Mary. A daughter, Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie), was born in 1893. James’ mother, Susan, died in 1900 and was buried in Webster. The family moved to a new home in Grant, about three miles away.¹¹



Lamping corral



Back and side of Lamping home in Grant



Grant hotel with Lamping home in background



Joe, Posey, and Lizzie



Jeals Alfaretta Lamping

Another daughter, Jeals Alfaretta, was born December 8, 1907, and lived but two years. Tragedy struck again when daughter Mary Alice was born and died on the same day in 1909. Her mother, Mary, was inconsolable. She locked up the family piano and wore dark clothing from that time on.

James' brother Joseph, who had become warden of the state penitentiary, fell ill in 1910 and came to recuperate at James' home, where he also died.

Over time, James and Mary adopted other children, including John Joseph Lemons.



Alfaretta, Lizzie, Posey, and Joe Lamping



Mary and James Lamping



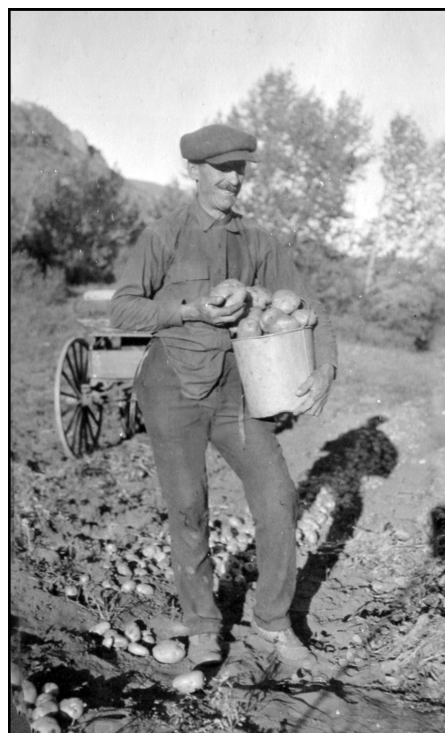
Sawmill

In Grant, James was a multitallented entrepreneur. He was active in local politics and served on three occasions as a delegate to state conventions in Denver.¹²

He raised cattle, chickens, pigs, and goats. The potatoes he grew were said to be so tasty they could be eaten raw like an apple.

Besides working at the charcoal business in Webster, he owned mines in Hall Valley above Webster and a sawmill in Fairplay. One mishap at the sawmill resulted in the loss of three of his fingers, which were kept in a jar of formaldehyde and buried with him when he died.

His letterhead, pictured below, reveals even more of his endeavors.

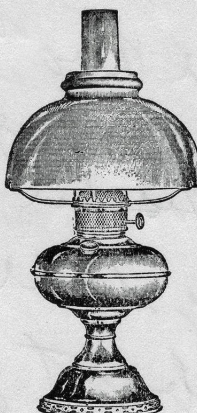


Workman "Schauntz" harvesting potatoes

NOTARY PUBLIC

BLACKSMITHING, HORSESHOING
DEALER IN
LUMBER, WOOD, HAY AND GRAIN

BOX 61
SHAWNEE POST OFFICE



JIM **ING**

GENERAL STORE

GASOLINE AND OILS
GRANT, PARK COUNTY, COLORADO

ESTABLISHED 1880

SADDLE HORSE AND ALL KINDS
OF TEAM WORK

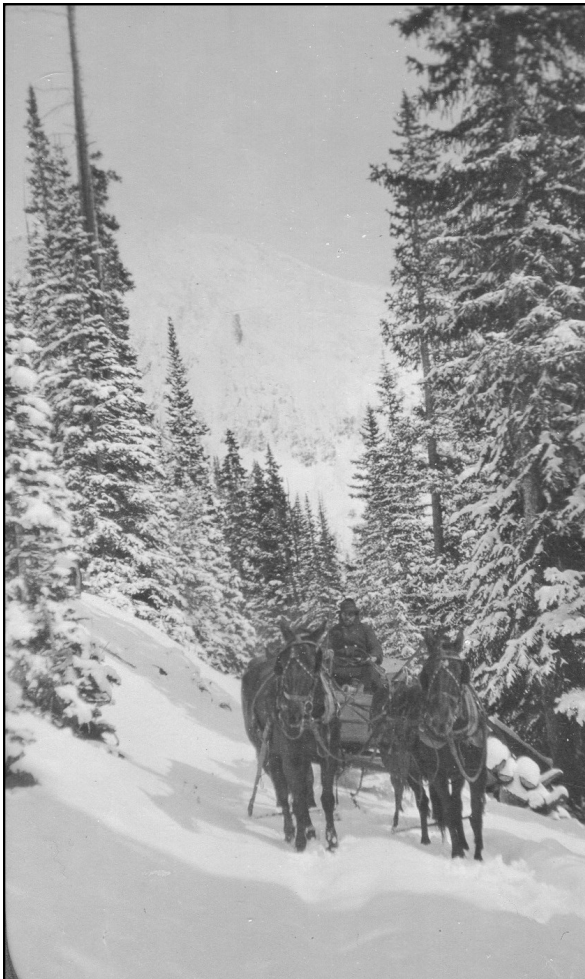
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

BUY AND SELL
ALL KINDS OF STOCK



The train in Grant

Fishermen from Denver would often come up the canyon by train and be dropped off along the route to fish. As James owned considerable property in Grant along the Platte River and Geneva Creek, he would charge the anglers who wanted to access the river via his land. A controversy arose between the fishermen and several landowners along the river, as the fishermen resented having to pay, and the farmers claimed it was just recompense for damage done to their property by careless trespassers.



James on Kenosha Pass



James and Posey by Lamping home



Driving cattle to Geneva Park above Grant



In 1904, area residents gathered in Grant to celebrate the First Communion of seven young people, including Lizzie, Posey, and Joe

Through the years Mary attended to the typical household tasks of cleaning, sewing, and cooking on a wood stove. In the kitchen garden she grew vegetables, rhubarb, raspberries, and gooseberries. Chickens and pigs had to be fed, cows and goats milked, butter churned, eggs gathered.



Mary Lamping

Mary was appointed postmistress of Grant in 1911¹³ and helped run the Lampings' general store. In addition, she managed the rental of some of the cabins owned by the family.

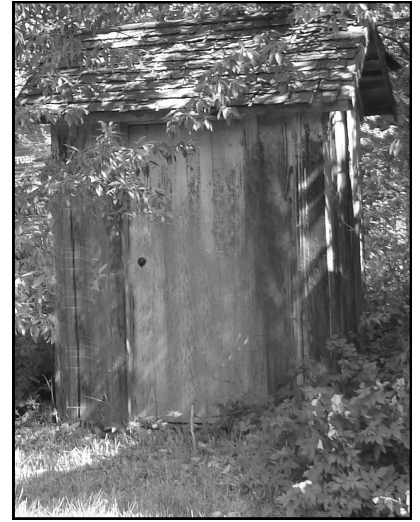
As the children grew up and married, numerous grandchildren entered the picture. Joe and his wife, Mabel, had six children; Posey and Sadie were parents of ten; and Lizzie and Leslie had five.

The Lamping home was often filled with the laughter of visiting grandchildren. One favorite pastime of the youngsters was to play cylinder records on the Edison record player.

Years later, James would remark that they had always lived in a house where there were so many people a body couldn't turn around.

One incident involving James was later recounted by his granddaughter Peto:

Cousins Peto (Alfaretta) Seeley and Ed Lamping were great pals growing up, and often got into mischief together. One April Fool's Day when they were teenagers, they were visiting their grandparents, James and Mary Ann Lamping (Gran and Grant). They decided to play a trick. They thought it was too risky to put a buggy up on a roof, so settled on a milder trick of tipping over a privy near a farmhouse in Grant that was no longer occupied. No horse or person was in sight. As they started rocking the outhouse back and forth, a voice boomed out from inside. "Help, Help!!" It was their grandfather, James A. Lamping. Horrified they hightailed it back home as fast as they could run. By the time Grant got the outhouse door open, they were already out of sight. When he got home that evening, he told Gran what some pranksters had done to him in the morning. She replied, "Well, it wasn't these two. They've been here with me all day long."¹⁴



Outhouse at Grant

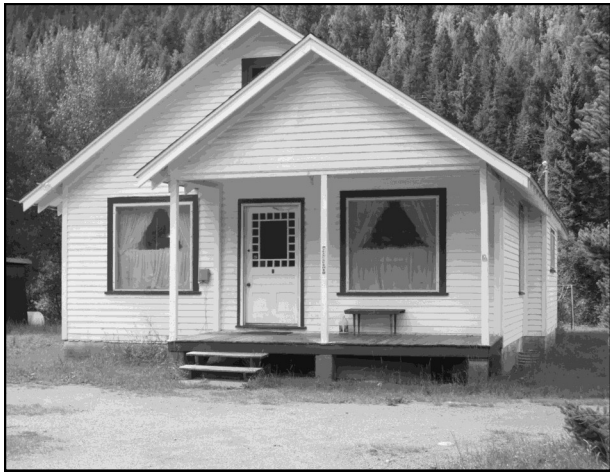


Joe, Lizzie, Posey, James and Mary

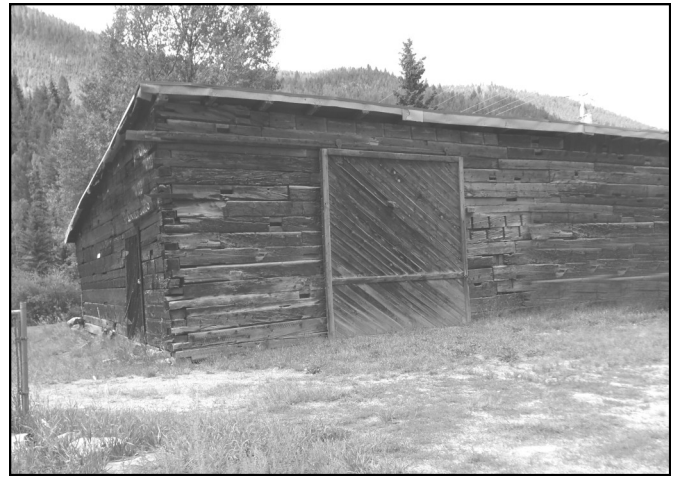
The December 19, 1913, edition of the *Fairplay Flume* newspaper reported the celebration of James and Mary's 25th wedding anniversary:

The Silver wedding of Mr. and Mrs. James Lamping, was celebrated on the evening of December 11 at their home in Grant. Regardless of the heavy snow their many friends from the Canon was in attendance, those present were Mr. and Mrs. James Lamping, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Lamping, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Lemons, Mr. and Mrs. H. Twinning, Mr. and Mrs. Kepple and daughter Vera, Mrs. Ella Tyler, Mrs. Matt Baker and family,

John Banna, Miss Searway and E. H. Lampman. Songs were sung by Mrs. James Lamping, A. E. Lamping and others. Miss Ella Banna rendered some fine selections on the piano. After a delightful supper, served by Miss Lizzie Lamping and Miss Ella Banna, the guests departed for their various homes, all reporting a most enjoyable evening. Many were the beautiful and costly presents presented to Mr. and Mrs. Lamping.



The Lamping home today



Blacksmith shop and buggy shed

About 1937, the highway department transformed the road through Platte Canyon into U.S. Highway 285. The potato patch and gardens were destroyed. The hotel, many homes, and other structures in Grant were in the path of the newly revised route and had to be removed. The family numbered and dismantled the timbers of the building containing the blacksmith shop and buggy shed, and rebuilt it with a new orientation.

With new and salvaged materials, the Lampings built a smaller house where coal oil lamps were supplemented with electricity and indoor plumbing made the outhouse obsolete. Water was piped from a pond dug along Geneva Creek.

Although the bathroom had a shower, water pressure was insufficient, so baths were taken in a wash tub in the kitchen, with water heated in a kettle on the wood-burning stove. The electric washing machine was filled with a hose attached to the sink. Stoves in the living room and basement heated the house. Food was no longer kept cold in an icebox, but in an electric refrigerator with a tiny freezer compartment.¹⁵



Chicken coop (now transformed into a playhouse) on left

Wood shed on right



James A. and Mary Ann Lamping - 50th Anniversary - Dec. 11, 1938

Picture from the *Denver Post*

On December 12, 1938, the *Denver Post* featured the Lamping's 50th anniversary:

Grandpa had the time of his life, but grandma didn't hold out with all the fuss being made just because she had happened to be married fifty years.

She had to be coaxed and joshed before she'd pose for a picture with grandpa. As a last resort, she said she'd never have her picture taken with an old man who didn't even keep his hair combed, but grandpa just laughed and went to work on the hair.

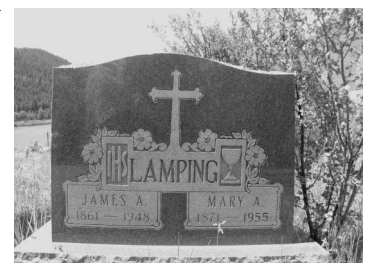
Posey is the second oldest son.... In the old days when grandpa used to run a blacksmith shop, Posey was something of a hero in Park County. He could shoe a horse all around in twenty-eight minutes flat.

...Grandpa was no slouch, himself. He could ring the anvil along with the best of them, and even now, at 79 he's not afraid to give his muscles a work out. There was time when grandpa didn't have to do any work at all. He was a rich man. He and his brother, the late Joseph Lamping, ...had made a lot of money in the charcoal business. The smelters were running twenty-four hours a day then and they burned plenty of charcoal. Grandpa figured he was worth in the neighborhood of \$300,000 when the panic of 1903 and 1904 took away everything he had. Now he and grandma get along on an old-age pension. Maybe it would be better to call it a retirement pension in their case because they worked more than fifty years helping build the state, and it's only right that they could be retired by the state.... He said, "Yes sir, I guess we were all pioneers. Still pioneers too, by golly."

As the years passed, James and Mary were no longer able to manage the rigorous routines of mountain life. Sometime around 1945, they moved to the home of their daughter, Mary Elizabeth Seeley, in Denver. James had been ill for several years, and died on May 17, 1948.

Mary lived several years longer and remained fairly active. She crocheted doilies from string to keep her hands limber and helped with household chores. Instead of a cane, she used a broom as an aid to walking. She wore long dresses, a bibbed apron, and gold nugget earrings. Her dark brown eyes could flash like fire when she was angry, but she showed tender love to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who called her "Gran."¹⁶

She passed away at home in Denver on August 11, 1955, and is buried next to James in the Lamping Family Cemetery in Webster.



NOTES

- 1 1880 United States Federal Census—St. Joseph, Missouri, enumerated on June 10
 - 2 The Smith family appears without Casper in the 1880 Missouri census; he is included in the 1880 Colorado census. It appears that they had left Missouri and arrived in Colorado, but word had not yet reached those left in Missouri.
 - 3 1900 United States Federal Census—Colorado
 - 4 Kenneth R. Hicks and Ellen Hicks Palmer “Descendants of Joseph Anthony Lamping, Holland Immigrant” page 23 privately published in 1997, Englewood, Colorado
 - 5 Ancestry.com—“Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-2002”
 - 6 1880 United States Federal Census—Leadville, Colorado, enumerated on June 6, 1880
 - 7 Ancestry.com—“U. S. City Directories, 1822-1995”—Leadville, Colorado
 - 8 Baptismal Record of James Augustin Lamping. Held by Sharon Ells
 - 9 1870 United States Federal Census—New York
 - 10 Ancestry.com—“U. S. City Directories, 1822-1995”—Leadville, Colorado
 - 11 1910 United States Federal Census—Colorado
 - 12 *Fairplay Flume* newspaper; June 8, 1900, Oct. 4, 1901 and Sept 16, 1910
 - 13 Ancestry.com—“U.S., Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832-1971”
 - 14 Kenneth R. Hicks and Ellen Hicks Palmer “Descendants of Joseph Anthony Lamping, Holland Immigrant” page 32 privately published in 1997, Englewood, Colorado
 - 15 Sharon Ells (Lakewood, Colorado) personal recollections 2017
 - 16 Sharon Ells (Lakewood, Colorado) personal recollections 2017
- (Sharon, Mary and James’ great-granddaughter, lived in the Seeley household from 1942 to 1965. She shared a bed and household chores with Mary for many years, and was present at Mary’s death.)