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The School at Bailey, Colorado

by Martha A. Morrison

On Election Day, 1884, as the new school teacher, I alighted from the train at Bailey.

That year Grover Cleveland was elected President of the United States. While women were voting in Wyoming, in Colorado they could only vote in school elections, a privilege most of them neglected usually. Of course all the men were in town, and most of them were down to see the train come in. Even so, there was not a very large crowd.

Mr. and Mrs. Bailey were still keeping the log hotel. Mrs. McGraw, whose husband had died recently, was the owner of the store; she had a little boy who was too young to attend school. Mrs. Entrikin, Mrs. Bailey's sister, took me in as a boarder and I enjoyed my stay with her. Fred Walther was the station agent and took his meals there. There was also a Mr. Morrow who was there off and on. He later married Mrs. McGraw. I also remember meeting a Miss Trousdell who lived on a ranch somewhere near, who was a warm friend of Mrs. Entrikin.

Mrs. Entrikin's house was part log and partly frame. The kitchen and dining room were in the frame part and the dining room was papered with several thicknesses of newspaper for warmth. Pictures and stories could furnish entertainment. I remember her dog was a very important member of the family, and a friend who knew her later has told me that at that time all of her pets, chickens, dog, etc., bore the name of Dickens' characters.

It is sad but true that my memory is much more vivid of some of the people and the scenery, than it is of my school or my success as a teacher. Probably there is a reason. The school house was on a hill back of the hotel. When everyone was present I had seven pupils; but I do not remember their names, excepting that Lucy Jones was the foster daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bailey. Five of the children belonged to a family that had moved into town so that the children could attend school, but the boys were not inclined to attend regularly. One of the little girls told me one day, "I wish I was back on Crow Creek, where paw is a-bachin." I wanted very much to help the children learn, but by the time my three months were out I gave up teaching school, deciding that my talents, if any, lay in some other line.

At Thanksgiving time I had to go to Fairplay, the County Seat of Park County, to take the Teachers' Examination and get my certificate. I was successful and also enjoyed a visit with an old friend. It was many a year before I passed through Fairplay again.

I am sure we had some kind of a Christmas entertainment, but cannot give any details. There are memories of trimming the room with kinnikinnick and evergreens.

I never knew just where Crow Creek was, but on my way from Mrs. Entrikin's to the school I passed a little grave, carefully fenced, by the side of the road and was told that it was of a child belonging to the Crows. I remember them as pioneers who had "struck

it rich" and had built a big house in Denver. Mrs. Crow was studying French, anticipating a trip abroad, but unfortunately the strike did not last and she never went. She did make use of her big house in keeping boarders for a number' of years, and made no complaints. Even during their brief prosperity she was not ashamed to admit their habits brought on by poverty.

Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Entrikin were sisters of Father Dyer, a well known pioneer Methodist minister, who became mail carrier, in order to preach to lonely miners. The story of his life must have been very interesting and worth recording.

I still have a charcoal sketch of the scene looking down from Mrs. Entrikin's, but fear it proves that I had no more talent for art than for teaching.

One afternoon Mr. Bailey took Lucy and me down to his ranch, and showed the devastation the railroad had made in his plans. He said his people had come into Kentucky with Daniel Boone through the Cumberland Gap and had settled there. As the years passed, the families grew up and settled and others came in, until they felt it was too thickly settled. At the close of the Black Hawk War, some of the younger generation emigrated to Wisconsin. where they lived for twenty years or more. Even there people kept coming and settling, until there were too many people inside of ten miles. Then, too, there was talk of a railroad. Then came the news of the discovery of gold near Pike's Peak, so he and his wife turned their faces westward, bringing with them Mrs. Entrikin. They endured the long, slow journey in the covered wagon over the plains, with freighters for safety. After reaching Denver they pressed on toward the mines, and settled where the road came down to the Platte, after following the easier canyon of Turkey Creek. Here they built the log hotel.

The Canyon of the Platte was so precipitous, they felt that he had reached a place that would be free from railroads. A couple of miles down the river was a pleasant opening, which he secured and there built a home, where they could retire from the hotel and enjoy his farm. But almost before he was aware of it the railroad had found its way through the canyon, and even ran between his house and barn, going to Bailey and on over Kenosha Pass to Fairplay, Breckenridge and "the Lord knows where." He was so disgusted with it that the thought comes of how he would now relish seeing it all torn out. He was an interesting character. While he was the owner of a complete set of "store teeth" he wore them only on Sunday afternoons and holidays.

Memory flickers at the end of the film, and I fear the teaching was not very profitable to the pupils. Good intentions alone are not enough to insure success.