

Platteville, The Colony That Was Different But Effective

The Colony that settled Platteville was different from its neighbors, but in no way antagonistic. It was founded on a different principle. Union Colony of Greeley and St. Louis-Western of Evans were co-operative in an economic way; Platteville frankly was not. Union and St. Louis-Western each created a co-operative fund and from it bought land for the whole colony; also built co-operative ditches and fences, but Platteville did none of these things. It was a colony only in the sense of its people banding together for mutual protection and social intercourse. They bought no land in common and kept well to the beaten path of individualism in business.

On May 27, 1871, the Platte River Land Company purchased from the Union Pacific Railroad Company several thousand acres of land in the valleys of the South Platte and St. Vrain Rivers; then a number of people decided to locate there and to do so in a group, the more easily to establish their central settlement and begin the development of their farms. *Experiments In Colonization*, by Willard and Goodykountz, p. 430, states that this group of people very frankly declared their intention—"To make a profit on their investment in a fair and legitimate way. To aid and encourage the building of a prosperous town with a flourishing settlement around it," to the end that "all citizens might improve their worldly possessions and happiness."

But while Platteville was not a co-operative colony as were its neighbors, yet it seems always to have been proud of its relationship to those that were. Advertisements of the Platte River Land Company "pointed with pride," as the politicians say, to the fact that the famous Union Colony was but seventeen miles north, the Chicago-Colorado centered at Longmont but fourteen miles distant from their western boundary, the St. Louis-Western but thirteen miles northward and the Southwestern at Green City but twenty-five miles eastward, thus making Platteville the hub of the co-operative wheel. Such overtures of friendliness were promptly accepted by the neighbors, and the same

cordial relationships between the hub and its rim still exist to this day, 1938.

Platteville is 35 miles northeast from Denver on Highway 85 and the Union Pacific Railroad. Its principle industry is agriculture, but it has also a fine stone quarry from which splendid building stone is taken, and a productive coal mine within a mile of its corporate limits. Beets and hay are its leading agricultural products and cattle and dairying are important industries.

The town is well laid out, its shaded streets running with the compass, east and west, north and south. The paved road formerly made a detour of a block to pass through the business part of the town, but in the summer of 1937 this detour was eliminated, the road straightened far enough both north and south to put the town on the direct line. This change left Platteville's famous historical landmark, Fort Vasquez, to the east instead of the west of the paved road as formerly. The caretaker in charge of the Old Fort at the present time takes great pleasure in showing to visitors the many mementoes of a bygone day and in telling in most effective manner the thrilling story of the past. The names of Platteville and Fort Vasquez are linked together in the thoughts of every tourist that ever visits the spot