ROBERT HAUCK

WHO CROSSED THE WATER TO BE A COLORADO EMPIRE BUILDER .

From far across the ocean came the voice of America calling young Robert Hauck to be an Empire Builder in the New World. The call was heard at Stettin on the northern coast of Germany in the middle of the Nineteenth century and at once the young man shipped on a sailing vessel for the land of destiny. His objective was Wisconsin which in Germany seemed the extreme frontier but which was soon discovered to be several hundred miles to the east of it. Late in the summer of 1858 his ear caught the first whisperings of gold discoveries far to the West in a land called The Pike's Peak Country. Other young men with senses alert heard also and a company was quickly formed to follow the Call to the promising West.

Eight young men associated themselves together under the title of The Wisconsin Gold Mining Company for the enterprise, thus anticipating the famous Gold Rush of 1859 by several months. Besides Robert Hauch they were: A. J. Mackey, S. J. Plumb, Theodore J. Squires, Hiram Buck, Dennie Dailey, M. E. Barnard and Captain T. F. Godding, the last named being made President of the Company. The covenant between them was that all gold found was to be pooled and at the end of the season divided evenly amongst the Company.

Thanksgiving Day, 1858, was a day of farewells as well as Thanksgiving for the eight who were ready for the long trek to the Pike Peak's Country. Each had two covered wagons with four yoke of oxen and grain to carry them through the winter when grazing would be scarce. Each also carried sufficient supplies to last two years: ham, bacon, flour, coffee, salt, pepper, sugar, dried vegetables and fruits and a five gallon cask of vinegar. Also bedding, clothing, cooking utensils and a good supply of tallow candles.

Robert Hauck was elected "Master" of the train and on his advice the two wagons of each outfit were fastened together in tandem fashion, the four yoke of oxen being hitched to each

tandem, thus making it easy for each driver to handle his outfit.

Early in the morning of the day after Thanksgiving, 1858, the caravan of eight wagons lumbered down the main street of Rolling Prairie, making the start. It took courage for so hazardous a trip in winter, through an unknown country with only a compass for a guide; but the eight men had considered the difficulties and prepared, as far as possible, for all eventualities.

To keep warm through wintry days the men walked beside the slow plodding oxen, directing their movements by the alternate calls of "Gee," and "Haw." Reaching the Mississippi River they ferried across to the city of Debuque, Iowa. Here they were told to be on the outlook for Inkpaducah's band of renegades, outcasts from various Indian tribes, who were said to molest peaceful Indians as well as white people.

Often hard storms delayed the travelers, when they would stop, form their wagons into a corral and place their oxen within the inclosure to keep them from being driven away by the storm. Sometimes these blizzards lasted for a week at a time.

One day when the travelers had about forgotten the warning given them with regard to the "renegades," they heard in the distance war whoops and yells, rapidly growing nearer. The Master quickly gave the order to "corral," then, the oxen protected, each man grabbed his gun and stood at the end of his tandem wagon; they were no sooner in place than the wild band were upon them; but evidently the band had some power of discrimination, for, seeing the reception prepared for them they paused not at all but wheeled their horses and galloped away. Then the Master summed up the situation as "a good scare, no powder wasted and no harm done." But it was an experience to be remembered.

They ferried across the Missouri River at Council Bluffs and reached Omaha, in Nebraska Territory. Here they made ready for the long trek over "The Great American Desert," as the big, indefinite region including Pike's Peak Country was called. Here oxen were re-shod, tires re-set, purchases made and letters written to the folks back home, for this would be their last chance to mail letters for a long time. And early in the morning the

caravan headed for the Land of Promise and slowly wound its way along the North Platte, following the trail of the '49ers and the Mormons. In due time they came to Fort Laramie, situated in the eastern part of what is now Wyoming. Here they decided that they must go farther south if they would reach the Pike's Peak Country.

After resting a few days they turned southward and moved over what proved to be the toughest part of the journey; no sign of a trail anywhere; over mountains and through canons often deep in snow, amid howling winds and biting cold. Battling many hardships they came to the South Platte River on March 9, 1859. Following the river they came upon a settlement of a few tents and one log cabin, and were told by A. H. Barker that this was "Auraria, the place to start out from for gold." So, having almost reached the Promised Land they stopped and took a much needed rest and learned all they could about prospecting for gold, and the location of the most promising diggings.

A week later they forded the Platte and headed for the foothills and the golden harvest. At the "Golden Gate" they stopped and planned their first campaign. M. E. Barnard was assigned to remain with the wagons and supplies and the others to go prospecting for gold.

A kit, consisting of tools, provisions, necessary utensils, clothing and blankets, was made up for each man, which proved to be no light weight as the prospectors trudged through the trackless mountain canons. When they came to the Gregory diggings they camped for a week and prospected in the neighborhood. Then they moved on to Russell Gulch, and after a few more days crossed the Georgia Pass to the Blue River district, (now the Alma and Breckenridge mining section.) Here they found their first "color" and staked out a number of claims.

By the very democratic method of management adopted they decided that three of their number should stay at that place and make a dugout camp while the others should go on to the head of the gulch where Leadville now stands. There they engaged in placer mining and set up another camp which was

the beginning of Ora City. When the summer came on they established the custom of meeting half way between the two camps to talk over the business of the Company.

One day at their halfway meeting place they had a pleasant surprise. A man and a woman came riding along, each leading a pack horse; they stopped and introduced themselves to the Wisconsin men as Mr. and Mrs. H. A. W. Tabor from Kansas. They received a hearty welcome, the Wisconsiners declaring it to be a "great honor to have a lady" in their camp. Mrs. Augusta Tabor arose to the occasion, giving cordial greeting for cordial greeting and as time went on establishing a lasting friendship with every man of the Wisconsin group.

During the summer of 1859 so great a number of disappointed gold seekers from California stopped in the gulch that it finally took on the name of California Gulch.

Abundant trout in the streams and game in the hills combined with provisions still stored in the wagons lent assurance to the Wisconsin men that their operations would carry through the winter without difficulty; but the very first week of September, 1859, brought snow to the depths of five feet throughout the Gulch, and convinced every man they had better get to leveler land before another snow fell. So they gathered up their belongings and, on improvised snow shoes made of small trees, they started. The men from the Oro City camp met them and together they plodded over the mountain range, on and on through deep snow till at last in the distance they saw the open spaces. The valley down below, with a winding stream of water and well timbered hills would be an ideal spot for a winter camp; when they reached it some of them cut down trees and built cabins while others returned to the Golden Gate for their stock and wagons. These cabins were the very beginning of the village that the men named "Boulder City," because of the many boulders lying on the ground.

To the west of this infant city were a number of Indian tepees, and one day came a group of seven Indians protesting against the building of "strong tepees" on the Indian land.

The head of the band was Chief Left Hand, who explained to the white men that his domain extended from the mountains to the east beyond the Platte River, and from where they were, both north and south as far as the eye could see.

This looked like trouble, but the white men met it in such a way that instead of trouble it became friendly co-operation. Dinner was just ready and they asked the Indians to eat with them; the invitation was accepted, and all dined together. After dinner the white men brought forth their buckskin pouches filled with gold dust and small nuggets and offered to pay for the land they were using. But the Chief refused as politely as he knew how and, with his men, took his leave, saying he "would come again." That promise might mean anything, but the cordiality of the Chief tended to disarm fear.

In six days he returned; again the white men offered to pay, but again their gold was refused, and they were assured that they might build their "tepees" there. Thus a friendship sprang up between the red men and the white that never was broken.

In the spring the Chief asked the white men if they would like land on which to plant corn, saying, "there is land enough for the paleface and his red brothers." The white men thanked him, accepted the land, planted their corn, built their houses, and, to the end, had no better friends than Chief Left Hand and his band of Indians.

On October 17, 1859, the keen ear of Robert Hauck caught an unusual sound, like the rumbling of heavy wheels. "Impossible," said the others, "this is away off the road to the diggings." But Robert Hauck put his ear to the ground and was convinced, giving out the information that "a bulltrain was coming up along on Boulder Creek." "Then," said Mr. Godding, the president, "Hauck and Plumb will go down to the bend and meet them and bid them welcome." Promptly the men obeyed and at "the bend" met Alfred A. Brookfield and Captain Aikins with a caravan headed, as they supposed, for the "gold diggings." They told the Wisconsin men of a controversy that had arisen at Ft. Vasquez as to which way they should go to reach the diggings; their

map had been drawn by a returned emigrant and they began to question its accuracy. So the big caravan had divided, L. M. Freese and a portion going south and Brookfield and Aikins and the other portion fording the river at the Fort and coming on westward.

The Wisconsin men told the newcomers that they had taken the wrong road, but invited them to spend the winter there, which invitation was accepted with the result that the real social life of the little community began. Among the newcomers were four married couples, and it goes without saying that with four young and enthusiastic feminine pioneers the social amenities were soon established. These couples were: the A. A. Brookfields, the Daniel Gordons, the Henry Nortons and Judge and Mrs. J. H. Decker. By and by a baby came into the Norton family, with the distinction of being the first white child born in the new settlement. They named her Ella.

So deeply did the Wisconsin men appreciate the coming of the ladies that they gallantly gave over to them the finished cabins until such time as their own cabins could be made ready for occupancy, the bachelors doubling up and "bunking" with each other. This arrangement put Robert Hauck and T. J. Squires together.

The men of the settlement prospected in the mountains and staked a good many claims, but with it all did not neglect their future "corn fields" promised by Chief Left Hand; and, in fact, it was not long until their agricultural interests far outweighed their mining interests in importance, and mines were all sold out and proceeds invested in farming. Their "squatter's" claims were all in the Boulder Valley, reaching from the village to the St. Vrain River.

Theodore Squires located his near the village of "Boulder City," and it is now known as "Squire's Addition" in the heart of the present city of Boulder. A. J. Macky's was near Valmont Peak; Robert Hauck, S. J. Plumb and Dennis Dailey went fourteen miles farther down the valley and T. H. Godding stopped near the St. Vrain River in what has since become known as the Godding Hollow. In 1866 when the Federal surveyors came out

from Washington and officially platted the counties it was found that Hauck, Plumb, Dailey and Godding were in Weld county, the others in Boulder. Hauck's was but three quarters of a mile from the county line, on Boulder Creek. Later Hauck assisted young Joseph Block, one of the new comers, to stake a claim adjoining his own on the east.

But before this, in fact as far back as 1859, Hauck had surveyed irrigating ditches and established a "water way" to his corn land; other settlers following his example. Establishing farms involved much hard work, but the settlers were equal to it. Timber had to be felled in the foothills, cut into logs and poles for buildings and corrals and hauled by slow lumbering ox teams. By 1861 homes were established and the married settlers who had come without their families now either returned to "the states" to bring them, or met them at the Missouri River. And pioneer society was the gainer.

Robert Hauck is credited with taking the initial steps toward the establishment of the first school in the settlement. He was not married at that time, but was deeply interested in educational matters. He circulated a petition and the first school house was built by subscription. It was a comfortable one-room log cabin and was ready for the opening of the summer term of 1862. It was situated in District One, Lower Boulder Valley, now in Weld county. It was probably the first rural school in Colorado Territory. Robert Hauck served as President of the school board for thirty years.

In the spring of 1864 one hard storm followed another continuously, snow lying as deep as five feet over most of the Territory as late as the last of April; then followed a two-weeks steady rainfall and all rivers and streams left their banks and all lowlands were flooded. Hauck's cabin stood in a meadow land near Boulder Creek, and when he saw the coming flood he hurriedly moved his household goods and stock to higher ground, outrunning the onrushing flood by but a few minutes. But even while he stood and watched his house float by on the crest of the waters his mind was shaping plans for a better one on higher ground. He built on the exact spot where Chief Left

Hand had first advised him to build. Following the flood, A. J. Macky, the carpenter of the Wisconsin group, found no lack of employment. And it is said that the shingles he cut with an axe, sheltered the houses for full thirty years. He also made furniture from the native lumber which mostly furnished the new house of Robert Hauck. the first story-and-a-half residence in the Boulder and St. Vrain Valleys.

By 1864 Indian troubles had become serious and the settlers organized into companies known as "The Home Guards." The government furnished every member of the Companies with a muzzle loading rifle, a cap-and-ball sixshooter—then called a horse pistol—and all the amunition needed. Robert Hauck was a member of the Lower Boulder and St. Vrain Valleys Company; T. F. Godding was its Captain, Perry Smith first lieutenant, John McKissick second lieutenant and Elisha Duncan commissary sergeant. Duncan was also Justice of the peace of the district and it was his duty to muster in and muster out the men and keep all records. Twice a week the "guards" met at his homestead for drill. In the summer of 1864 they built Fort Junction. near the junction of Boulder Creek and St. Vrain River.' It was made of sod cut into eighteen inch lengths and laid up like bricks.

For several years Indian troubles hampered the business of freighting across the plains, and, as a consequence, the incoming of supplies fell off and prices soared. Then the grasshoppers put in an appearance in such tremendous numbers that fields and gardens were stripped and famine seemed imminent. Flour sold for from $35 to $50 per hundred pounds; eggs $1 a piece; bacon and ham $1 a pound. Barley, if it could be had at all, was browned and ground for coffee. Other commodities from the states were either out altogether or prohibitive in price.

About this time a chemist among the settlers who had been quietly analyzing the soda deposits to be found at Soda Springs and Soda Lake near Morrison, announced that they were good, and from that time on all soda used for household purposes was brought from those places; and the water was found to be almost infallible as a cure for stomach troubles. To Robert Hauck

generally fell the job of transporting supplies from the Lake and Springs to the settlement, and he made of it a sort of joy ride, taking different ones of the younger folks for the trips in his covered wagon.

During the winter of 1865-6 Hauck began teaming between the states and the settlement, taking baled hay eastward and bringing back needed supplies, and, finally, milch cows. But by and by he gave up the enterprise because, though he could protect himself from the Indians by choosing the time when they would be following the buffalo herds to the south, he could not sufficiently protect himself, his men or animals from the terrible blizzards that swept the plains; so after one last desperate experience when both men and animals almost died from cold and starvation he gave it up. A few months later he established a market with Central City and Black Hawk which were then thriving towns with good promise for the future. These trips were hard and tedious enough, but safer than the plains trips. Prices were good in the mountain towns, too, a single load of hay sometimes bringing as high as $300.

In Black Hawk not only was trade above par, but Cupid, that little winged god as old as humanity and young as the spring, was busy. He maneuvered to bring the young farmer and the mountain maiden, Miss Ernestine Lange, together and the knot was tied at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Block in Denver, by the Rev. A. Y. Moore on March 27, 1868. Miss Allie Hatton—later Mrs. George Crater, and Miss Margaret Smith—later Mrs. Christian Schaeffer, were bride's maids, and Joseph Block and Joseph Bailey were best men and witnesses. The wedding tour was on the spring seat of a covered wagon, back of which were stored new dishes, bedding, furniture, trunks, etc., for the beginning of the new home in the Lower Boulder Valley.

TRAGEDY: THE KILLING OF WM. BRUSH

Late in the summer of 1868 the shadow of tragedy fell upon the settlement, shocking to arms the Home Guard. Out of that shadow came a rider carrying news of the killing by Indians of William Brush, his cousin Jared Conway and a Swede workman

in their employ. The massacre had occurred on the hay land near the confluence of Crow Creek and the Cache La Poudre.

The Home Guard sprang into action at once. Coming upon a band of Indians in whose possession were two horses owned by Bill Brush, they opened fire with an aim that left no Indian to tell the story.

One Indian had been dressed in the uniform of a captain of the Union Army, with a sword without scabbard hanging from his waist. This sword was carried from the scene of battle by T. F. Godding, and a bridle, a beaded blanket and pair of moccasins by Robert Hauck. Later these mementos were given by Augusta Hauck-Block, daughter of Robert, to the State Museum in Denver, and the sword by Mrs. Bina Godding Marsh, daughter of T. V. Godding, to the Meeker Memorial Museum in Greeley, where it may be seen by Museum visitors at any time.

In 1869 Robert Hauck and several other settlers made the first drive of "Longhorns" from Texas. These were bred with Durham stock, producing a sturdy strain of "Colorado Natives," well adapted to the climate of the plains. Three years later over a thousand cattle bore the brand "R.H." Successful with cattle, Hauck now turned his attention to horses, importing a Norman Percheon for draft horses and a thoroughbred Kentuckyian for carriage stock. When "halter broke" his young horses were shipped to the Atlanta, Georgia market, and also to the markets of Alabama and Mississippi.

"GRASSHOPPERS"

In the summer of 1874 an unusually good crop was following good crops and the world looked promising, when suddenly the sun was darkened by a cloud that soon descended with devastation upon the fields in the form of untold millions of grasshoppers that in a few hours left the country bare. And not only was that year's crop a total loss, but the unwelcome visitors left the ground filled with eggs that brought destruction for several years following.

THE FIRST GRASSHOPPER MACHINE.

Then Robert Hauck turned his attention to invention, and brought forth the first machine to combat the grasshopper plague. It was a tin tray measuring 4x12 feet, on runners; along the back was stretched a length of canvas, fastened to upright rods at the two rear corners; to the two front corners horses were hitched, and as the trap was driven over the field the hoppers flew up and struck the canvas then fell down into the tray that had been spread with tar and that held them fast. When the tray could hold no more it was scraped clean, and the hoppers piled and burned. Next Hauck bought a barrel of kerosene, put it in cans, drilled a small hole in each can and placed all on planks across irrigating ditches. The oil slowly dripped upon the water, spreading in a thin film and killing the hopper eggs as far as the irrigating water spread over the land. All settlers adopted this plan, and as a result the devastating pests disappeared from that section of Weld county.

SUGAR BEETS FOR FEED.

Robert Hauck had not forgotten that in his home land sugar beets had been fed to dairy cows with splendid results, and he reasoned that it should be so in America as well. So he asked his mother in Germany to send seeds which she promptly did. The yield was fine and the cows prospered, and Robert Hauck is credited with being the first farmer in Weld county to raise sugar beets.

Hauck's next adventure did not turn out so well. He ventured into the sheep business with Diedrick Schroder for a partner. In 1880 they had 21,000 sheep on the Big Dry section of the wide prairie. But it was found that the sheep cropped the grass so close to the ground as to endanger its life and threaten all future pasturage for cattle. So the partners sold out, deeply thankful for an even break on the deal.

In 1904 a great honor was conferred upon Robert Hauck by the Federal Government. It was a diploma presented by the Agricultural Department in Washington for his success and ef-

ficiency in every phase of Agricultural Achievement, and for his generosity in passing on the benefits of his experiments to other farmers.

Through the years Robert Hauck found time for much study and research, collected a fine library, and was vitally interested in all public affairs, national and local. May 2, 1908 witnessed the closing of a well spent earth life; a life that had been a dominant factor in shaping the destinies of the western section of Weld county. His mortal part rests in Crown Hill Cemetery in Denver. Three of his eight children still survive: Mrs. Augusta Hauck-Block (Mrs. Joseph Block), Carl Oswald and Alfred Ernest Block, all proud of their pioneer heritage. It is to Mrs. Augusta Hauck-Block that this History is indebted for the facts of this story.