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MEMOIRS
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PIONEER

...By...

GEORGE LATHROP

Indian fighter : : : Cheyenne-Deadwood stage driver : : : One of the first to help in the opening of the Great West,

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Memoirs of a Pioneer

Autobiography of George Lathrop

Early Wyoming Settler

I am known as George Lathrop, but my right name is Marvin M. Lathrop.

I was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, in the year 1830, on the 24th day of December.

Of my boyhood days I will say nothing. My troubles were plenty, but they were my own.

I left my home on the third day of July, 1853, and like most boys who run away, I did not know where I was going, and did not care. But since then I have. I had never known what it was to want, but I do now. When I left home I had no money and did not ask for any because I did not have time.

Don't think that I want to appear that I wanted to act like "Black Bert" or like

"Johnny Behind the Rocks" or any water tank kid. I was just a plain runaway and did not stop until I got to Toledo, Ohio. There I met a man by the name of Asa Fairchild. I did chores for him until spring for my board.

He was all ready to start for the Territory of Kansas, as this was in 1854, before it was called Bleeding Kansas.

But it soon afterwards got the name, by the troubles between the border ruffians of Missouri and the Red Legs of Kansas in the years of '56 and '57.

I came to Kansas with Fairchild and his family, his wife and two little girls. We took a claim five miles from the state line and all went well with us until the spring of '56. The stealing, burning and killing commenced on all sides of the state line and all work stopped in Kansas

Men left their families and bachelors left their claims to guard the state line.

Our house was the stopping place for all free Statesmen, such men as John Brown, Jim Lane, Pickles, Doc Jenson and Montgomery. They were all good men and sometimes when they got over the line they would bring back lots of good things, such as horses, cows, hogs and wagons loaded with grub, bacon, ham, corn meal, flour and fruit and white door knobs for our cabin doors at home. Then in a few days the Border Ruffians would come over the line the other way and kill all the free Statesmen they could find, take all the

plunder they could lay hands on and burn all the cabins with white door knobs and go back into Missouri.

There were not many men in Kansas at that time, but those who were there had good stuff in them.

Well, we lived there until the spring of 1859, then Fairchild got the gold fever and left his claim and crossed the plains for Pike's Peak.

We landed at Cherry Creek on the second day of July in 1859.

On the way across the plains lots of the wagons had the sign on the canvas covers, "Pike's Peak or Bust," and some we met going back had "Busted, by G—."

We did not get rich ourselves while there but stayed until the spring of 1860. I had worked all winter in Denver for two dollars and a half a day and as it was the first money I had ever earned, I thought I was getting rich.

In the spring of 1860 quite a good many people went back to the States, and my friends, the Fairchilds, went back to Kansas and that was the last I ever heard of them.

Then I bot a horse and a mule with saddle and pack saddle to pack my grub and bed.

I, with two other men, left Denver and traveled all summer over Old and New Mexico. Late in the fall we got around to Fort Union and all of us went to work for the government. I drove a team all

winter but in the spring of '61 I wanted to go back to Kansas.

Now in those days there was a great deal of freight shipped by ox train and mule train and lots of these trains were Mexican outfits and had Mexican drivers.

Every spring lots of these Mexican drivers would leave Mexico early and would walk across the plains to the Missouri river.

They would go to St. Joe or to Kansas City just to get a mule team or a bull team to drive back to Mexico during the summer. Now, some of them would have a wagon to haul their grub and beds, but when there were twelve to twenty in the party they would have a horse or a mule to pack the grub and beds. They did not have much to eat and, God knows, little enough to sleep on, and if God doesn't know it I do, for I slept with one of them on the way to the river.

When the outfit came along in March, 1861, on their way to the river, I quit the government and joined this party to walk back.

There were nine Mexicans and one white man and the white man was I. It was hard traveling. We had but two pack animals and not much of anything to eat, and while crossing the Rattoon Mountains we got caught in a bad snow storm. We camped for five days in one place and it snowed all the time. When we did get out of the mountains down on the Arkan-

sas river it rained about ten days. We were going to Kansas City by way of Fort Riley but by this time I had about all of the Mexican outfit I wanted and made up my mind to leave them the first chance I had, so when we got to a little town by the name of Indianola, in the Pottawatomie Nation, we met and camped with a party of six men going out on the plains. The boss' name was Shields. He had a contract to build some new stations and repair some old ones on the old Santa Fe stage road. He wanted one more man so I turned back over the same road with him.

After we got out west of Abhen we repaired three old stations and went west to a stream called Ash creek. There we had to build a new station. We camped on the creek about three hundred yards below the place where the new station was to be built.

The boys had been hauling logs for several days and I herded the extra stock. One night after supper Mr. Shields told me to get up in the morning at daylight and to turn all of the horses loose up on the hill to herd. The hill was about a quarter of a mile east of the camp. So at daylight I got up and turned every horse loose but one, the one I was to ride. Mr. Shields said he would send a man up by the name of Jack McGrau to take my place while I came to breakfast, so when Jack came to the herd I gave him the saddle horse and my gun and I walked to camp.

Shields and four of the men had gone up to start on the new building; the cook was washing the dishes and my breakfast was on the fire. Everything was peaceful, but the time was short. I had just dished up my breakfast and sat down on a box to eat it. The cook was on the other side of the fire cleaning a frying pan with a butcher knife when all of a sudden we heard the most unearthly war whoop that the Noble Red Man can raise. How I wish some of the kind-hearted eastern people could hear it. How they would change their minds about that time and run for a place to hide in just as I did.

The Indians came charging out of the brush to the number of thirty or thirty-five. They came right at us. I looked at the cook and he was just falling over backwards. The arrows and bullets were tearing up the pots and pans all around the fire. They were all around us, but they ran thru the camp and did not stop. The camp was on the east side of the creek and on the west side were steep sand hill bluffs with patches of plum bushes on them that grew from one to two and a half feet high. As the Indians passed thru the camp I jumped over the fire and across the creek and up the hill into the plum bushes to hide.

I think they thot they had killed us both so they went straight for the boys at the new building, and from where I lay on the hillside I could see all that took place, a sight that I shall never forget. The boys

had not taken a gun of any kind with them and so the Indians had them at their mercy. Of all the whooping, howling and shooting that band of red devils raised while they were butchering the boys, and all I could do was to look on.

After they had killed them all, they got off their horses and took what little they had on their backs and then scalped them. I saw one Indian cut the scalp off one man's head, then he raised it above his own head and waved it in the air and howled with delight. Part of them went up the hill for the horses and the rest of them came back to camp. Then I thot my time had come. I could see they missed me and were looking for me in the creek and willows.

Now some people think it strange that my hair is not grayer than it is at my age, but I do not think so, because I died right then.

For some reason they did not come up the hill to look for me. They scalped the cook and stripped him of his clothing. When the Indians that had gone up the hill for the horses came back they cut up several of the horses, and after loading all of our grub, bed clothes, camp outfit and guns, set fire to the wagons and went away rejoicing.

I did not know what had become of Jack McGrau. I could see the horses but could not see Jack and did not hear any shooting so thot he had got away. I was

afraid to get up, so I lay all day in the brush, without water and the sun burning hot. I could see the water in the creek but could not go for a drink for fear some Indian was playing the same game, hiding in the brush to get my scalp. So I thot I would rather have my scalp than water. I stayed there until five o'clock in the afternoon when the stage came along going west. There were three men on the stage besides the driver when I saw them coming. I could not use one leg muscle but I got down to the creek and drank so much water it made me sick. I did not know which was worst, the water or my leg. Well, after the driver and the passengers looked over the wreck, and it did not take them long, they put me in the stage and pulled out for Pawnee Fort creek, twenty miles west. The stage driver told me he had met Jack McGrau going east to Walnut creek. Jack told him we were all dead and I guess he thot we were. I did not blame him for getting out of there.

When we got to Pawnee the boys put me in a tepee and did all they could for me. All the medicine we had was grease and water, so you see our doctor bills were not hard to pay. I had been there about two weeks when the stage brot in another who was much worse than I. He was with a small freight train of nine wagons and eleven men. He was the only man left alive in the outfit. I have always thot the Indians thot he would die and left him

alive so that he would suffer longer. He was shot right through the body and had his scalp taken off. All he got was grease and water. The stage company could not move him and it was four hundred sixty-five miles to a doctor. I woud occassionally josh him about his hair-dresser and he would ask me what company made my wooden leg. Finally the government took him away. I got so I could get around again and went to work for the stage company. I herded mules the rest of the summer and until late in the fall; then one of the drivers quit and I took his place and thot I was about as high up as I ever wanted to be.

Now this drive that I took was from Pawnee Fort to Walnut creek, forty-six miles. East one night and west the next. It was a good short drive but a dangerous one. You may imagine how I felt every night over the same spot where all of my friends were killed on Ash creek. I drove on that route until the spring of 1862, then the division agent put me on the drive from Pawnee Fort to the old Dodge Station, sixty-two miles west. I am told that Dodge City is three miles above on the Arkansas river.

We had nothing to burn but buffalo chips. As this was right on the edge of the plains, during the winter there was not much travel so a driver had a good many long and lonesome drives. Of course he could keep his eye peeled all the time

for the Noble Red Man. I drove there until February, '65 and we had more or less trouble all the time. But I won't bother anybody with my troubles from '62 to '65, so will tell you about others.

In the early days there were several old Indian traders on the plains. I will speak of but two of them. One was old Col. Bent. He had a white family living in West Port, Mo., and two Indian families on the plains, at old Fort Bent on the Arkansas river. There were a lot of Indian families lying around the stage stations that were worse than those on the war path. There were three of old Col. Bent's boys, two of them belonging to the Cheyenne family and one to the Arapahoe. Their names were Bob, Charley and George and there were two girls. They had all been back to the States to school and could read and write some, but they came back on the plains and painted up in war paint and dressed like the rest of the Indians and you could not tell them from any others of their tribe. These three boys were always out with war parties and were the worst Indians on the plains. The girls' names were Mary and Jule. Now I will not deny the fact, Jule was my first (and only ?) sweetheart. She helped me herd the mules all summer and when I was wounded was always good to me. If you would like to know more about Jule, buy the book called "Beuel Hampton." I laid the plot of this book in this country;

a perusal of it will tell you all and more than I can write now.

There was a man by the name of Wynkoop who lived in Denver at that time and there is a street in Denver named for him. He was alright. When the Indians got too bad down on the Platte river or down on the Smoky route he would gather up a lot of men around Denver. Sometimes he would have 40 men and sometimes more. He would go out on the roads, drive the Indians off and kill all he could just for fun and get what horses he could. He was alright and I'll tell you why. He did what the government could or would not do.

In the summer of '64 he came to the Dodge Station with about thirty-five men. We did not know what he wanted or where he was going. The next morning he took his company and crossed the river and went south. He was gone seven or eight days when one day all at once we could see the whole country south of the river alive with Indians and we thot our time had come. There were over two thousand Indians in sight and only four of us at the station. But we soon saw that Wynkoop and his company of rangers were with them and we soon found out what he went south for. It was to get a little white girl by the name of Maudy Fletcher.

She and her mother were captured from a train of emigrants the summer of '63 and she had been with the Indians about one year. Soon after they had been taken

prisoners one tribe had taken the mother and one the child. The little girl never had seen or heard from her mother again. Now just how Wynkoop found out that the Indians had this girl I do not know. He went over south and pretended to have a treaty with them. He told them that he had a big train load of Indian goods back on the Arkansas river and if they would give him the girl he would send the train right there to camp. He thot to get the girl and get out of the country, so the Indians made the trade. They gave him the girl but did not wait for him to send the train. They were too sharp for that. They took him and all of his men prisoners and the whole outfit came to the river with him. Now here is where the trouble came in; Wynkoop had no goods and never did have, so when he got to the river and the Indians found no goods you can see the kind of a box we were all in. But as good luck would have it, old Col. Bent had a train-load of Indian goods down the river about thirty miles on the way to Mexico. When Wynkoop found this out he sent most of his men down the river and made the wagon-master of Bent's train pull thru Dodge. Then he unloaded the goods and gave them to the Indians and they thot it was a square deal. Now if the train-load of goods had not been there, the Indians would have killed the last one of us and taken the little girl back. As it was, they took the goods and went south again

and Wynkoop had all the fun he wanted. He left the little girl with us and a bill of $27,000 for the government to pay for the goods.

That was not so bad for the government as it was for the boys at the station, for the little girl had no clothes; her wardrobe consisted of one small blanket and one other garment; she was bare-headed and bare-footed. We were so much bigger that our clothes did not fit her very close, but by cutting them short she put them on and wore them until we could send to Spanish Peak, where there were some Spanish women, for some clothes. It was seven or eight days before they came and when they did you could hide her in them. Some of the boys told her to dress up and put on all the style she wanted to and if the Indians came back all she would have to do was to slip up or down in her new clothes and they would never find her. She stayed with us boys at the station for a few days and as she did not know of any relative, she was sent to Washington and became a ward of the United States. She was about nine or ten years old at that time. I heard that she got a large amount of money from the government, and I hope she did.

This was in the summer of 1864 and I stayed there until February, 1865, when I came to Denver in March. I went from Denver to Fort Sedgewick, Colo., and was transferred to Fort Laramie, in what is

now called Wyoming, but what was then called Dakota. We got to Fort Laramie April 2, 1865.

How strange it seems for some people to want to be called pioneers of Wyoming. The other day I met a man and talked a few minutes with him. He told me all about the early days here in Wyoming and all about the Indians and bad men he had met. In the course of our talk he called himself a pioneer twice, so I asked him what year he came to Wyoming. He said he came to Cheyenne in March, 1883, and said you bet Cheyenne was a hummer, full of bad men and Indians all around the outside. Well, I smiled down the back of my neck when I thot how much safer a man's life was in Cheyenne than it was in New York City on a dark night of '83. The fact of it is, the bad men came from the east. Fighting men are not bad men, and besides, this country was well settled and no Indians running at large in 1883. It was all in his mind.

I may be mistaken about the word pioneer, but I will tell you of one winter that I spent in Wyoming, called Dakota then. We loaded our ox, or called in those days bull, train at Julesburg, Colo., late in the fall and started for Fort Reno, on Powder River, and Fort Phil Kearney, on Little Pine River. Going across from the Platte River to the Dry Cheyenne we were struck by a blizzard that lasted for three days. It was so bad that we could not hold the

work cattle, so when it did clear up there was nothing in sight but our camp and snow. Five of us took some grub and one blanket apiece on our backs and started out afoot to bring back what we could find of the work bulls. The first day's tramp we found about seventy-five head, the next day by noon we had overtaken about one-half of them. They were along the trail working back to the Platte River. Our grub was getting low, so three of the boys turned back on the same trail to gather up the cattle we passed the day before.

Gail Hill and I kept on towards the Platte and that night we camped about five miles from the river. The next day we found all of the cattle on the north side of the river in the bad lands. We had no grub, but had found what we started out for, and were happy. We gathered the bulls up and put them in the timber. That night one at a time, we stood guard and the next morning we started back to the train. The cattle did not drive well, but we stayed with them and about three in the afternoon we met two of the boys from camp coming to help us and bringing some grub which looked good and came in very handy just about that time.

We drove the bulls along until late at night, then we stood guard until daylight and started on to camp. We arrived late that day. The next day we saw that we could not make Powder river as it was in December and the bulls were too poor after

the storm. We hooked up and pulled back to and crossed the Platte River. There were thirty-six teams in the train loaded with sixty to sixty-five hundred to the wagon. We went into winter quarters just above the mouth of the La Prele River. This was the winter of '67-'68. A few days after we made camp another bull train came up the river and camped with us. This train belonged to a man by the name of Colonel Shanks. He saw that he could not go any further until spring, so they put both herds together, and picked five men from each train to stay with the cattle until spring. Col. Shanks took one team, six yoke of the stronger bulls in the outfit and took all of the extra men down the North Platte river to Julesburg and up the South Platte to Denver, as you could not discharge a man out on the plains in those days. I will give the names of the ten of us left with the cattle:

James Lob was the boss; Thomas Ramsey, killed on Deer Creek during the winter; Alick McGuffey, killed on Deer Creek, '67-'68; Gail Hill, Curley Dolen, Thomas Reed, George Sizemore, James Hubler, killed by Indians on Bitter Creek in '68; Charlie Stord, killed on North Platte River winter of '67-'68, and George Lathrop.

We stayed in camp there until the soldiers came to build Fort Fetterman. Major Macadam was in command of the troops. Capt. O'Brien, who later lived in Douglas, Wyo., was a sergeant with these soldiers

and helped to build the new fort. We were not there long after the soldiers came until the Major thot we were too close for comfort. He said we would cause the Indians to come around so he sent orders for us to move three miles away. We did not go for some days, so he sent about twenty soldiers to drive our cattle off and then we had to move. We went up the river about five miles and camped there about two weeks and then moved up to the Bottom lands, afterwards called the Hay Reserve.

One day when all seemed safe and tranquil, Charles Stord took his gun and went across the river to kill a buffalo. He did not get far out of the timber in the open when the Indians rode out right behind him, opened fire and killed him. They cut his scalp off and took his gun. By the time we got our guns and crossed the river the Indians were a mile away. We had not seen any Indians for several days and did not think there were any around. We buried Charlie right where be fell in about one hour after he was killed and I don't believe there is another man in Wyoming today who knows where that grave is. We then moved up the river above the mouth of Deer Creek. Here they gave us another call and took every horse and mule—nineteen head in all. Then, as we were afoot, we moved back to the mouth of Deer creek again. We had not been in that camp three or four days when the Indians slipped in

on us and took seventeen head of cattle. They tried to drive them across on the ice and we heard them out on the river but knew we would do well to hold what we had left. In the morning we found the seventeen head all dead. The ice had broken thru and they had all perished in the cold water. It was not deep enough to drown them but they could not climb out on the ice.

Then we thot we would move to a safer place, so we moved up on Deer creek. We did not waste time as we had done before to go ahead and put up a log corrall to put our tepee up in, but moved that afternoon. We were not fixed to recieve callers but they had been watching us and knew just how we were fixed, so they gave us a call while we were eating a late dinner. We put our tepee between the creek and a steep bluff under some big cottonwood trees. The Indians came out on top of this bluff and opened fire right into the tepee. They killed Thomas Ramsey and Alick McGuffy. The rest of us grabbed our guns and ran to the top of the bluff. We fired a few shots but it did no good, for the Indians were too far away, so all we could do was to bury our dead that evening. They are buried not far above where the railroad crosses Deer creek, right in the Careyhurst alfalfa field. I could see the place from the train the last time I went up to Casper. They are both buried in the same grave.

We then started to move along the foot of the mountains east. About the first of March we got back on the La Prele river, where we expected to camp until grass started, but Commander Macadam thot we were too close again, so he sent us orders to go. But we would not go unless he would recieve the government freight that the trains were loaded with and which had been in the camp all winter at the mouth of the La Prele river. He said he would recieve and reciept for it and we were all glad to get out of the country, as we had had enough of it in the last two years and a half, and enough of Indians.

We then moved down on the La Prele and here I must tell something on myself. One day George Sizemore and I were out on the bluffs below camp when we saw a man coming up the river and we thot we would have some fun with him and see how fast his horse would run. So we hid in the rocks until he got a little past us, then we began to shoot and halloo like Indians. But he did not run worth a cent. He pulled his horse around, slid off and was ready for fight. Then it was our time to take a sneak, and we did. I guess if he is alive yet he thinks he had a narrow escape from the Indians. That day we both thot we did well to get into camp with the tops of our heads in the right pace and no holes in our breadbaskets.

After the fight with the Indians at Fort Fetterman I hired to a big freight outfit

bound for Salt Lake City so I whacked an eight mule team to Zion, as the Mormons called Salt Lake City or Utah at that time. On my arrival in Brigham's country and after unloading the mule wagons and drawing my pay, the latter being very important, I took a look at the tabernacle and the city in general and was surprised to see what Brigham and the twelve apostles had done for the desert. While wandering around looking at the stores and reading the strange signs over the doors, my attention was called to one reading, "Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, Holiness to the Lord." My curiosity was aroused and wishing to know how they dished out "holiness," I stepped inside and in looking around the store I found from all appearance, "holiness" was mostly kept in bottles. A Mormon-looking chap told me that the bottles contained Valley Tan, and on my asking what it cost to sample the Tan he said, "One drink for 50 cents, or three for a dollar." For a starter I invested 50 cents, and after it got to working on me I felt that I could whip all the Sioux Indians on the plains or any of the bull-whackers who had been in the habit of talking back to me. I want to tell you that Valley Tan was the forty-rod stuff.

In order to be sociable, I invited an "elder" looking chap to have a drink with me and he told me that the stuff was made from wheat and potatoes; I said I thought

it was made of horned toads and Rocky Mountain rattlesnakes, judging from the way it agitated me. I tell you that it put a fellow in the brave column all right. Of course I felt like fighting something or somebody and after I had zipped out two or three war-like whoops a fellow tapped me on the shoulder and whispered in my ear that I was not posted in their ways of silent dreams and blood atonement nor was I of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He said the sign of the Pick and Spade meant they were the proper implements for digging a grave and advised me to be a little less hilarious. His hint made a profound impression on me, and the jubilant effects of the Valley Tan having begun to subside, I concluded that as soon as I had seen Brother Brigham, a few of the "twelve" and perhaps one or two of the "saintesses," I would pull out for Southern California or Nevada. In a short time I ran across a man named Kinkaid who had a fine mule team, but was minus a mule skinner, so I tied to him for a trip to San Bernardino, California.

On our way through southern Utah with the mule train we passed many Mormon settlements, one being the Mountain Meadow settlement where, I was told, one hundered and fifty Missouri emigrants, men women and children, were massacred on orders of Brigham Young. Only one little girl remained of the whole train. It was said that the emigrants had with them the

finest horses and cattle that had ever come west up to that time; they were on their way to Southern Caifornia when they were waylaid and murdered.

I had met such men as John D. Lee, Bill Hickman and Porter Rockwell and when I was in Salt Lake in 1879 Lee was arrested, tried and convicted; as the laws of Utah give a fellow the pleasure (?) of choosing the manner in which he makes his exit, hanging, shooting or beheading, Lee opined he would prefer shooting, so his executioners accomodated him, and he was duly shot.

My trip to San Bernardino didn't amount to much, as after we left the Mormon settlements what Indians we saw were the Pah Utes, a lazy lot that never bothered us, knowing that we were well-armed. California was not exactly to my taste, and as it happened I got acquainted with a man named Witherton who was going over into Nevada with a herd of cattle, so I hired out to him for a year to look after his stock on White river. This was no more of a river than the Runningwater is at Lusk as there are no streams that head in the state of Nevada, and none run or empty out of the state but all sink in the desert sand.

In 1869 I met my good friend, Luke Voorhees, near White Pine, a great silver mining camp at that time, as was also Virginia City. The latter, in those days, beat the world as a fast rip-roaring, wide-open town, with gambling to beat all crea-

tion. Any man who could not drink whiskey, gamble and fight, was usually run out of the country as a bad character.

Learning that Gilmer and Salisbury were going to send a herd of cattle thru to Wyoming for Mr. Voorhees, and as I told them that I knew him, I was put in charge of the herd which I delivered at the Raw Hide Buttes in the fall of 1879. As I had had a good deal of experience in stage driving I found a ready opening on the Black Hills-Cheyenne-Deadwood route, and which strongly appealed to me as there were the old exciting times which were almost second nature to your humble servant.

In the spring of 1880 I was driving on the Cheyenne and Black Hills stage line out of Cheyenne, and between there and Ft. Laramie. I tell you I had some dandy six horse teams. Each horse had his own harness that was not used on any other horse, as the company had a set of harness for each team. When my teams went into the station the harness was thoroly cleaned as well as the horses. I was usually said to be the best kicker on the route about clean harness and horses. I was always proud of them. Another trouble I had was that all the passengers wanted to ride with the driver. I recollect one morning in loading the coach at Cheyenne, Alex Swan, John Sparks, G. B. Godelle and R. S. Van Tassell, all big cattle men at that time, each telling the other that he had the seat beside the

driver engaged and that it made them sick to ride inside the coach. There was a man in the crowd by the name of Goldsmith, a cattle man, so they agreed to leave it to Goldsmith to decide who should ride by the side of the driver, each one of the crowd insisting to Goldsmith that he should have the seat, and in their argument they would offer him a cigar and also something out of a bottle. This affected Goldsmith that he concluded he was the best man and should have the coveted seat, so he climbed up leaving the crowd to get inside or not go that day.

Nearly all the early men who owned large herds in Wyoming rode with me at different times. They were great hearted men; so few of them alive now. My experiences for the five or six years of my stage driving were, to me at least, interesting. Mr. Russell Thorp, Sr., bot out the stage line of the Black Hills company and I continued to handle the reins for him and had many interesting men ride with me. When Mr. Thorp pulled off the stage line from Cheyenne north, it was a great day for me, I would not have changed places with Grover Cleveland. Our photographs were taken, Mr. Jenks', Mr. Whitcomb's and many others. It was a great day!

Mr. Coutant, in getting up such doings and accounts of the country as I was able to give him, rode with me many times and took notes which I used to think would

fill half a dozen big books. I was sorry he did not live to complete his history of Wyoming, for such men as High B. Kelley and E. W. Whitcomb had told him a lot of good history, as Mr. Kelley had crossed the plains in 1849. His story as to the name of Rawhide Buttes was, about as I recollect it, this way: A young man from Pike county, Missouri, had boasted that he would shoot the first Indian he saw on the plains. The young fellow had forgotten about it for the first month from the Missouri river. On his attention being called to his boast one day about the first of June, 1849, near the mouth of Rawhide creek he saw a camp of a few indians on the Platte river and the d—n fool shot one of them. That caused a lot of trouble as the Indians demanded the young man at once, else they would attack the train, consisting of some thirty wagons of California gold hunters, men and women. The man was surrendered to the Indians who, in broad daylight, tied and skinned him alive. It seems that while the poor fellow fainted a number of times he lived till they had him nearly skinned. That, Hi said, was what originated the name "Rawhide." I tell you a fellow gets tired of telling about himself, and this story about the Indians skinning the fellow was Hi Kelley's yarn.

After the Cheyenne railroad was built Mr. Thorp had to quit staging. There was a mail contract let from Wendover to Lusk across the country by Rawhide Buttes. Mr.

and Mrs. Lowrey lived there and I made my home with them. The mail route was discontinued so I was out of a job. I put in four years for Mr. Voorhees on a stage route from Rawlins to South Slater, Colo. After this contract was finished I came back with the stock and outfit to Rawhide Buttes, where I went to work for Mr. Voorhees and Mr. Gill in the copper mines.

I tell you, boys, it was sort of lonesome at times. The Ord and Agnew families made it pleasant for me many times. As I said, a fellow gets tired of talking to himself as well as talking about himself, so I will wind up this yarn and say, "So long, Boys!"

(The End)

George Lathrop

By Tom Black, Willow, Wyo.

It was in 1882, just about forty-seven years ago, that I first met George Lathrop. I was at that time employed as station and express agent at the Rawhide Buttes stop station for the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage company, operating between Cheyenne and Deadwood. Lathrop at that time was driving one of the large six-horse passenger, mail and treasure coaches between Fort Laramie and Rawhide Buttes, where I was employed as station agent.

The stage line at that time was owned and operated by the late Luke Voorhees of Cheyenne, later being sold to, and operated by, the late Russell Thorp.

After the stage line had been abandoned to make room for the modern railroads, Lathrop went to Muskrat Canyon, near here, to take charge of some copper mines owned by Mr. Voorhees and D. W. Gill of Cheyenne. He remained there for a time, doing his work faithfully and well, but as the years wore on he was no longer able to do hard labor, and his sturdy frame and indomitable spirit began to break under

the weight of years. The last two years were nearly all passed at my ranch, near Willow, Wyoming, where he made his home until his death.

I had repeatedly urged him to write down for future use some of the thrilling incidents of his eventful career, but he was very reluctant in this regard. He finally did write this rough sketch, and I have the original manuscript in his odd handwriting and spelling in my possession. His story ended more abruptly than he had intended. I afterward turned the manuscript over to The Lusk Herald, and it was published in a small booklet, which was sent to his friends after his death. A few of these original copies are still in existence and are highly prized.

After living with us for two years as a member of our family, in the summer of 1915 his health began to fail rapidly. A few months previous to his death, he was taken with a severe attack of pneumonia. Winter had set in early that year, and there was no doctor nearer than Manville, 14 miles distant. Dr. J. F. Christensen was called out from that town. After a long, tedious and dangerous trip over almost impassable roads on horseback, the doctor arrived at the ranch. Dr. Christensen decided that the best and only plan to pursue was to move Lathrop to Manville, where he could receive careful attention. After deciding to do this, a sled with four horses was prepared to take him in, with an extra

heavy warm bed, to my residence in Manville. This was a last resort. The weather was cold, thirty degrees below zero, and, as I remember it, the snow lay in deep drifts. He stood the trip exceedingly well, with his usual courage and nerve, and afterward, at my residence, under Dr. Christensen's care, and careful nursing by Mrs. Black, he recovered, although he was never quite strong again.

It was in December, near Christmas time, that George was at my ranch at Willow, when another bad cold developed, affecting the bronchial tubes, which was aggravated by a bad case of asthma. A few days before Christmas time another attack of pneumonia set in, from which he never recovered. He passed away on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1915, and his remains were interred in the Manville cemetary, where they now rest in peace, after a long life of usefulness, filled with stirring events.

Within a few months of his death, he was conscious that his alloted time of life was nearing its close. His bedroom was near the room occupied by D. W. Smith. Feeling that the end was near at hand, George, with his usual courage, got out of bed, walked over and called Mr. Smith, and then went back to his own room. When Mr. Smith arrived a few minutes later, he was dead.

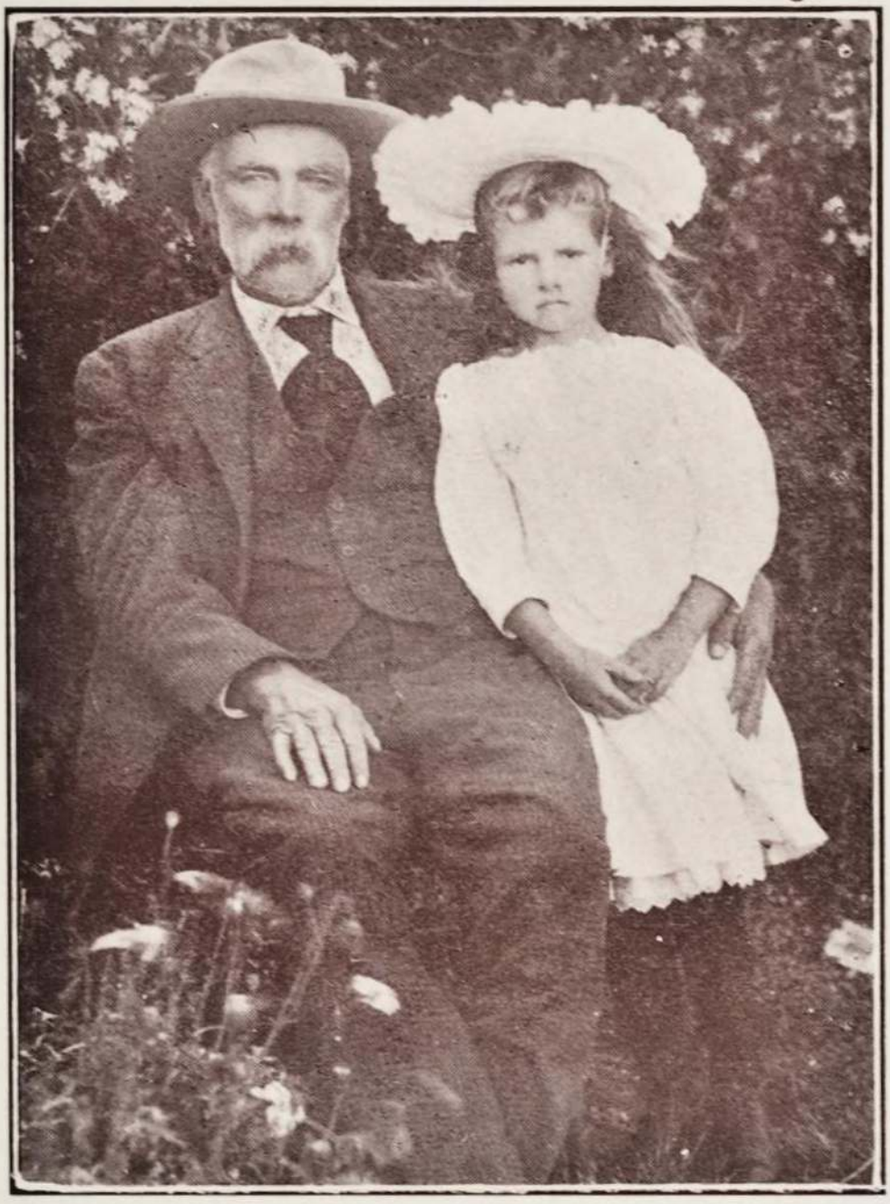
In conclusion, I will say that George Lathrop was a man among men—honest, faithful and fearless. He was a great char-

acter, and to know him was to love him. He was one of the type and class of men who in the early days had no fear, and helped to make the West grow to the wonderful country it is today.

TOM BLACK

Willow, Wyoming.
October 5, 1929.

The Old Stage Driver and His Little Playmate



This is the only photograph of George Lathrop in existence so far as is known. With him is little Adele Black (now Mrs. Glisson Winkler of Cheyenne), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tomson Black of Willow, Wyoming

The Lusk Herald

LUSK, WYOMING

ESTABLISHED AND PUBLISHED
CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1886, BEING THE
FIRST NEWSPAPER IN WYOMING
TERRITORY NORTH OF THE
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.

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