

Stanley

4/4/90
Probably more than
you ever cared to know
- or did I get this
from you? (If not you,
probably Anne Haslanger.)

Bob

NM Mine File No. 515

The La Belle, New Mexico Story

by
F. Stanley



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Limited to 500 Copies



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P. O. Drawer 128, Pantex, Texas

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THE LA BELLE REGION was once the hunting grounds of the Utes, later joined by the Jicarillas. Raiding parties swooping down on the Rio Colorado sheep and livestock hid out here. Herders from the settlements often grazed their sheep here. In the early days when La Belle had no post-office, the CRESSET was registered at the Catskill, New Mexico, office. The very first issue gave some historical background about the early mining days. If the editors sounded like a chamber of commerce it was because they had a good deal to lose if the mining town failed. One thousand copies were run the press for the first issue. Every one of these copies were given away free in the hopes of attracting subscribers.

"The first mineral discoveries," wrote the editors in the first issue, "in the locality known as La Belle, were made during the summer months of 1866-67 by St. Louis parties, outfitted with two years supplies, for the ostensible purpose of thoroughly prospecting the Rocky Mountain range. How scant the supplies and how great the undertaking, when we come to consider that for nearly thirty years, thousands, yes, tens of thousands of people have swarmed over these mountain ranges, and yet the business of prospecting is still in its infancy.

"But in 1866, the Civil War having just ended, the hardy old warriors were troubled with peace upon their minds. They were now fitted for pioneers, and a trip across the plains was the next thing for excitement after Lee's surrender . . . From Elizabethtown let us turn to La Belle,

a cresset city and mining district without a rival. Here, too, monopoly has breathed her polluted breath, and fastened her fangs upon a portion of lands,, but it is a matter of congratulation, that all of the west side of the mountain range (known as Sange de Cristo Mountains) is still government land, and regarded by many as having equal, if not superior, advantages over the east side.

"The U. S. Freehold Land & Immigration Company have adopted a system with rules and regulations, by which prospectors may locate and develop any of their claims, and by the payment of a small sum as stipulated in the company's circular letter, become owners, with a deed in fee simple to their claims, as soon as the survey and records can be properly made. This arrangement is considered on par with the government provisions for obtaining patent, with the odds in favor of the company, as no considerable amount of work need be done, as required by the government. The formation of the district around La Belle may be spoken of in general terms as porphyry and trachite, and is often compared by experienced miners to that of Cripple Creek, with the material exception that our gold veins are much stronger, better defined and immeasurably richer . . ."

Although prospectors came in from St. Louis in 1866, La Belle itself did not become a reality until the last week of December in 1894. S. B. Jellison moved his store from Amizett to La Belle; Sam Truman built a big business house with a choice line of cigars, whiskies, wines, lunch goods; Bert and Frank Akers opened a saloon. It was called The Musicians Headquarters. Quite a name for a saloon where a few swigs of Taos lightning usually produced the music of six-shooters. Bishop & Brigham set up a huge tent — well boarded — to sell beef and grain. H. Clay Threlkeld was the town carpenter and contractor in those early days. Tim Millar had a saw mill. Calvin Hodges was another carpenter and builder as well as contractor. E. C. Van Deest was the agent for the U. S. Freehold Land & Immigration Company. Fuller & Hamilton handled dressed meats, butter and vegetables. George Hendricks ran the livery stable as

well as the Colorado Transfer Company. John Hays, the blacksmith, moved in from Trinidad, Colorado. M. Crumly, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, started the stage line. During those early days when there was no postal service the people went fifty miles to Catskill and Elizabethtown to pick up their mail. By March, 1895, La Belle had a population of six hundred. James Lynch, wealthy in his own right, came in from Elizabethtown and invested many thousands of dollars in his La Belle projects. Alois Leibert, Denny Murrian, Herman Frelik, M. Turner and some others were among the first to settle there, and worked for twenty-five years in the hope that some day La Belle would become one of the greatest mining camps in the world. The town was named for Mrs. Belle Dixon, the wife of one of the early day investors and prospectors. The town jumped to a population of two hundred and fifty within ninety days of the day it started. Shortly afterwards when the town had five hundred men, it could count only twelve women in the camp — all of them wives of miners willing to hazard inconveniences to be with their husbands. There was only one child in town. On Saturdays the men, for the most part, traveled the fifty (some say forty-nine — but let's not quibble over a mile) miles to Catskill to be in on a dance and some gay life. Later a dance hall was built in La Belle and the people of Red River, Catskill, Elizabethtown and other places in the area came to La Belle for dances.

The first mine to be opened at La Belle was called the Wonder Mine. The second one was the Colorado. Both of these mines were owned jointly by M. Wing and R. E. Twitchell. The La Belle was owned by Jack Young, A. Harrison, Freeman and Grimes. The Gold Bug was owned by Foreman and Hamblin; the Queen of the Valley Mine was owned by the Dillon Brothers; the Mollie was owned by Hughes & Brigham; the Evaline by Jellison, Bishop and the Dillon Brothers; the Coxey by Garnor & Prouse; the Tom Thumb by Fred Baker and J. Burns; the Jerry Simpson by Dr. Frank Pierce; the Lafe Pence by the Gorman Brothers; the Bullet by Jack Young and F. Garrison; the Mineral Point by Porter & Dillon; the Mooney & McCarthy

by the two men named; the Sunnyside & Eagle by Boyd & Martin; the Leadville by Pizot and Harper. These were the mines that comprised the La Belle District during those first days.

P. Maes opened a hay, grain and livery business. The first hotels were the La Belle and the Chamberlain House. C. P. Casey, a well known prospector, built one of the first houses in La Belle.

Although settlers came in the latter part of December, 1894, it was not until January 1, 1895, that the Land Grant people opened their lands for location. Ira Wing and partners came into the district on a prospecting trip. They first located a placer claim where Spring Creek empties into Comanche Creek. They went on further and at Spring Creek located the Wonder and Colorado mines. The miners held a meeting and established rules and regulations governing the small community. Three months later (March 21) the paper announced: "The La Belle School District wants a school marm, a middle-aged woman with some experience. More than one thousand dollars has been collected and made available for teacher's wages. These will be in the school fund by May 1st."

Number of pupils available for the "school-marm" — six.

Two items in the first issue of the CRESSET were eye-catching: "The saloon men of La Belle talk of putting down saw dust floors to accommodate lodgers." "A grand ball is to be given about the holidays, under the auspices of the Band boys, if a suitable hall can be rented."

Other men and places of note during the early days: J. W. Bayne, notary public, deeds, abstracts; C. C. Cotton, surveyor; A. H. Martin, surveyor; D. R. Hurdman, groceries and hardware. G. P. Casey was also a civil engineer; the Dillon Bros. were contractors; L. H. Bishop called his meat market the Home Ranch. The La Belle Hotel was owned by George C. Cole. As the town continued to flourish and increase its children population, W. H. La Grande was given the contract to build the school. Perhaps today we would not consider it remarkable, but it was a frame building

sixteen by thirty-two feet, built on log foundations. All of La Belle was proud of it and many of its graduates went on to important positions in life. The children had the advantage of few distractions and lots of time for learning. This school and the hotel owned by the Nadoch family became the two gathering places in the community.

"La Belle now (July 1, 1895) has five general stores carrying stocks of dry goods and groceries that would be a credit to much older towns. Our first class assay office has just been added to the new and attractive features. Three large and commodious hotels, besides a number of restaurants and bakeries, now grace our town. Other features of La Belle are a first class blacksmith shop, one butcher shop, second to none (an interesting observation considering it was the only one); four livery barns; one drug store; two practicing physicians; one second-hand store; three surveyors; six saloons, and a good school house nearly completed, and plenty of money on hand for six months school commencing on July 15th; a justice of the peace; officers of the law; a new jail; saw mills; two laundries; two barber shops; the Southern Hotel which is four stories high and has eighty rooms." (a. c.)

For July 4th there was a baseball game in the afternoon and dancing in the evening. Shortly afterwards the La Belle Social Club was formed comprised of Mrs. B. Nadoch, H. C. Fortson, Dr. B. W. Rice, Olaf Thornason, W. C. Whitcarver and Mrs. Newhouse. The first meeting resulting in arranging for a hop to be given in September, Turner's five piece orchestra being hired for the occasion. The RATON RANGE concerned itself about the progress of the town and often gave its readers a resume of the various doings. The December 6, 1894, issue had much more information than the CRESSET:

"There are now over eighty houses in La Belle, and many others are coming up every day. Some Chicago parties were in camp and obtained options on several claims. The Wonder and the Colorado have each sold one-third of an interest for over thirty-thousand dollars. The new buyers will put up a mill in the near future. Messers Burns

and Connors are running a tunnel on the extension of the Belle of Mexico mine. They have struck good ore which pans well. The Aztec struck ore last Tuesday in the lower Tunnel. The body is over one hundred feet, all panning splendidly, and an option has been given to some parties from Chicago of \$40,000. This vein averages 14.22½ cents per ton across the vein. This is the largest body of ore in this district. Mr. Foreman, formerly of Cripple Creek (not to be confused with the one in Colorado, but the editor here means the one near Red River to the south of La Belle), struck a fine body of ore in the Gold Bug. Gold is panned out of the ore. There are now over one hundred claims being worked all winter. The Belle of Mexico vein will be worked this winter by a tunnel and something big is expected when they strike the vein. There are now three saloons, one butcher shop, one hotel, one restaurant, one blacksmith shop, one feed store, one mercantile store in La Belle. There has been a road completed from Catskill to the camp and three hundred dollars is to be appropriated by the Colfax County Commissioners to put the road in the best of condition. The citizens of Trinidad, Colorado, are about to commence a stone road from Trinidad to Stonewall, and thence to La Belle. Also a road has been built from Questa up to Cabresto canyon to camp. Several experts from different parts of the country have been in camp, and claim that the camp is making one of the best in the State of Colorado or (the then Territory of) New Mexico. Two coaches will run tri-weekly from Catskill, a station of the W. P. Railroad . . ."

Anyone seeking to reach La Belle today going from Raton to Trinidad to Stonewall will definitely see some spectacular country. Nowhere else in the nation will your photo lens give you so much more for the mileage contained. Students of the Maxwell Land Grant should spend some time at Stonewall and visit the Russell home as well as the little cemetery containing the remains of the arch-enemy of the Grant, O. P. McMains. There was an habitus for the writer when he gazed on the Russell diary containing these short, terse, cryptic sentences:

April 15, 1899 — Pleasant day. Mr. McMains died at 15 minutes past 12. Sick of cararrah of the stomach.

April 16 — Pleasant day. Sam bell bought McMains' casket.

April 17 — Pleasant day. Mr. McMains buried today.

If you are not acquainted with the Maxwell Grant War, McMains will mean nothing to you. So don't stop at the little cemetery but continue on through what might be the Switzerland of America, which is about the only way to describe this section of the country. The first three children born in La Belle were a baby boy born to Mr. and Dick Dillon; a baby girl born to Mr. and Mrs. Ben Pooler; and a baby girl born to Mr. and Mrs. John Carr. Bishop's remarkable meat market did not pan out as well as he expected so he sold out to J. Rich. A school teacher was found to teach the children but it did not last six months as expected. "Miss Pratt closed a very successful four months term of school on December 18, and departed for the house of her parents at Osceola, Nebraska. She will likely be retained here for the school next summer." (CRESSET). Winters were extremely hard on all during the early years and even after more conveniences were placed in town. Thirty-five to forty below many nights in January and February were not rare. The scarcity of deaths speaks well for the hardness of the people. The townspeople were sophisticated enough to name streets. The T. A. Clarks, for instance, had the Buckeye Log Cabin Home on East Pels Street. Later J. J. Justess, Bennet and Weber started another livery stable. When Justess left for Red River City the stable was known as Bennett & Weber. Bennett took care of the livery stable while Weber opened another meat market in La Belle. They also opened the meat market in Red River. Hugh Perry operated the Perry Hotel. The first issue of the CRESSET, incidently, was on December 10, 1893, quite in advance of the founding of the township. When John F. Sinclair of La Belle married Grace B. Steward of Nova Scotia in Trinidad, the whole town went to the wedding. They returned to make their home in La Belle but after a few months left for a new job in Arizona. The

Nadoch family operated the Exchange Hotel, the meeting place for the elite of the town. G. W. Downey and A. J. Downey, pioneers of La Belle, were from Houston, Texas. Charles Keene, the famous racer of his day, was also a pioneer of La Belle. One is surprised he did not have Charley Udder with him, but Charles preferred to remain in the Tulerosa-La Luz area. Both these men merit a biographer, as does O. P. McMains. Keene was known in every town in New Mexico and Colorado. He was as famous in his day as Babe Ruth to baseball fans.

The Southern Hotel which was moved from Catskill seemed doomed from the start, for it converted into a livery stable due to lack of patrons, although the second floor was used as living quarters. The Exchange Hotel later became known as the Nadoch. It had fourteen rooms. It was the stop stage station. Because of its remoteness, La Belle was often the refuge of many seeking to avoid the long arm of the law. Three who took up quarters on the Viva-dell were Tom Ketchum, Sam Ketchum and McGinnis. Every now and then they went to the Nadoch Hotel for a good meal and to dance. McGinnis was not a dancer. He preferred to sit facing the door to watch everyone going in or out. The Ketchum boys were good dancers, and all the girls practically fought over which two would dance with the tall, dark, handsome strangers. Nadoch's own daughter, Anne, particularly liked to dance with Black Jack Ketchum, although she did not know who he was at the time. She later married Hudson and moved to Raton, New Mexico. One evening in early July of 1899, the train was held up four miles out of Folsom, near the Colorado line. The night the train was held up was a Tuesday (July 11). On Saturday, July 15, the three men entered the dining room of the Nadoch Hotel later than usual. Instead of dancing they all sat facing the door. Every now and then their hands sought their gunbelts. Nadoch noted the action and told Anne she was not to dance with the strangers that evening for they were acting very queer and he suspected some trouble. Lawmen came to La Belle in quest of the robbers. Between the time the men left the hotel dining room and

the time of the next dance, La Belle was agog with the news of the fight in the mountains. The SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN for July 20th carried this story:

"... There are over one hundred men in the mountains in pursuit of the desperadoes. The excitement runs high on the mountains over the tragic death of Ed Farr and the wounding of Love and Smith; and the posse from Huerfano County, Colorado, composed of sixteen men, left the railroad at Maxwell City for the trail of the robbers Tuesday (July 18). General Agent Thacker, of the Wells Fargo Company from San Francisco, is on the ground conducting the pursuit of the robbers who are yet in the mountains of the country.

"U. S. Marshal Foraker has about thirty rounds of dynamite, the tree of a pack saddle taken from the robbers from the express car at Folsom, and other stuff that was found in the cave in the mountains vacated by them. A hat and slicker were also found, indicating that the bandits had hurriedly vacated the cave.

"One of the men is supposed to be Ketchum, alias Black Jack, who was in a robbery about a year ago at the same place. The other two go by the names of McGinnis and G. W. Franks. The latter about two weeks ago received a 30-40 Winchester and one thousand rounds of ammunition. They are supposed to be heading toward La Belle or Taos. U. S. Marshal C. M. Foraker says that the posse which engaged the bandits Sunday (July 16 — Sam Ketchum seems to have been wounded in this battle — He later died in the Territorial pen at Santa Fe. He is buried under Highway 85 on the road to Albuquerque. At that time, however, it was part of a cemetery but modern traffic caused officials to slice off part of the cemetery for the throughway. Black Jack, Tom Ketchum, was hung in Clayton) was led by Deputy Marshal Elliott, not Sheriff Farr nor Detective Reno. The accounts first sent out to the press were founded on statements made by Reno, who Foraker says, soon after the fighting began deserted the posse, and leaving his horse and rifle behind, hurried back to Cimarron, a town of two hundred people, according to the papers.

A posse of fifteen men left Cimarron Tuesday afternoon in pursuit of the bandits. A big fight is anticipated as the bandits seem to be determined not to be taken alive. One of them particularly is a dead shot, and it is likely they will sell their lives dearly. According to the report by the U. S. Marshal, the fight Sunday came about as follows: The posse had started up a canyon and were ambushed by the robbers. Sheriff Farr was shot through the wrist while in the open. Smith was the next man to be downed, being shot through the calf of the leg. The shooting seems to have been entirely the work of one man, McGinnis, who after downing Smith turned his attention to Farr who was behind a tree three feet in diameter. McGinnis pumped a dozen shots into the tree, using a 30-40 Winchester. The bullet that killed Farr probably passed through the edge of the tree, entered Farr's body near the heart and came out near the groin. His body fell on Smith. Shortly after the firing began, one of the desperadoes seemed to fall. He attempted to rise a couple of times, but failed, then moved no more . . . His body could not be found afterward. After killing Farr, McGinnis turned his attention to Deputy Love. On exposing a leg to view, Love received a bullet near the thigh. After the shooting of Love, both parties suspended hostilities and the posse, with the exception of Reno, stayed there during the night. During the fight two of the four horses belonging to the bandits were killed, one of the horses wearing a A-V brand belonging to W. A. Urton of Roswell. The trio is supposed to be McGinnis of Magdalena, A. W. Franks, and the notorious Ketchum . . ."

Merlin Hudson, Anne's husband, was originally from Colorado. A number of businessmen from Trinidad had such confidence in La Belle's future that they caused a survey to be made for the construction of a railroad from La Belle to Elizabethtown. The Depression of 1893 caused the project to be abandoned. The Trinidad Chamber of Commerce made a second effort later on but their plans failed to materialize. A Sunday School was organized in La Belle on May 31, 1896. J. A. Bell called the meeting to order. The result of the meeting showed the following officers elected:

Mrs. Newhouse, Superintendent; Mrs. Bishop, Secretary; Muriel Whitescarver, Librarian; Dr. Kidwell, Chorister; Miss Ferrill, Treasurer. Teachers were Mrs. Jellison, Men's Bible Class; Dr. Kidwell, Women's Bible Class; Mrs. Patterson, Intermediate Class, boys; J. W. Phillips, Intermediate Class, girls; Mrs. Evans, the Primary Class. Twenty-four people attended the meeting. The collection taken up amounted to sixty cents.

"Lewis Bros., who own the Aspen and Taton placer claims on Comanche Creek, are putting in a ditch in company with Neil Garner, who owns the claim just below them. They have good claims and will have an abundance of water when the ditch is finished.

"The contract for carrying the mail daily, between La Belle and Catskill, beginning August 15th, has been let to V. Boreing of London, Kentucky, for \$1,430 a year. Mail will leave Catskill daily except Sunday, at 10 a.m. and arrive at La Belle at 9 p.m. It will leave La Belle at 3:30 a.m. and arrive at Catskill by 2 p.m. The price amounts to less than \$120 per month. This is ridiculous.

"The stockholders meeting of the Climax Company was held Monday afternoon, nearly the stock was represented. The balance of the treasury stock was sold at a good figure and the company is now in good shape to go ahead faster than ever and will put in another shift Monday. They will ship more ore in a short time as they have a large quantity on the dump and several tons sacked.

"The Keystone Tunnel and Mining Company had its organization fully completed with J. Leahey, President; P. H. Smith, Secretary; S. Tweed, Manager. The company is stocked for 1,000,000 shares at one dollar each and the sale of the stock opens at ten cents a share. J. C. Turner, the originator and promoter of the plan, surveyed the tunnel and began operations on June 3rd, since which they have organized the company and put everything in working order besides driving the large tunnel, which is seven feet in height, five in width, one hundred and twenty feet into the mountain, timbering it the entire distance, this with a force of only three men. They have money enough in the treas-

ury now to put the tunnel in fifteen hundred feet, and are certain to intersect rich veins before going that distance, as they are opening one of the richest hills in camp. Six men, two shifts each are now employed. Keystone Tunnel No. 2 has been located by the company just across the gulch from No. 1." (o. c. Aug. 1, 1895).

As the editor of the paper surmised, the mail service proved a failure. Complaints came in from all quarters. "There has been no mail service for a week," commented the editor in the Feb. 20, 1896, issue of the CRESSET, "the subcontractor having thrown up his contract, refusing to take out the mail last week. This state of affairs is deplorable. The entire system of contracting for mail routes is radically wrong. In nearly every State and Territory in the Union the routes are controlled by groups of individuals who, acting on each others bondsmen, by collusion with clerks of the department, are enabled to underbid any resident contractors, and then sublet the contract fraudulently obtained, at such prices that the subcontractor cannot give the required service, or must be a loser. No subcontractor can carry mails properly on the route between Catskill and La Belle winter and summer, at the full contract price. It also seems as if the contractor cannot be made to carry the mail, now that the subcontractor has refused to do so, and the postmaster cannot get a man to take the mail out of Catskill, on the strength of the bond given to the United States. There is something very rotten somewhere, and not only do the people of La Belle and the district require a better service in the future, but a thorough and speedy investigation and action taken by the department to prosecute the contractor to the limit of the law." The manager of the stage company in Catskill took pity on the hard working people of La Belle and brought in the mail. It was not necessarily his job but early settlers were built that way. Unselfish to the core.

The arrival of the mail hack was always cause for excitement. It was not easy to get the stage through Bitter Creek Canyon especially in winter and on rainy days. Sometimes there was no mail for weeks due to a severe

snow storm. Questa, Elizabethtown and Red River were more fortunate. But the mailman had his problems coming in from Questa. Many times he had to get down, chop the ice in the creek before the horses dared to cross. La Belle was twelve miles up Bitter Creek Canyon. The people of La Belle and Elizabethtown enjoyed visiting, as did the people of Red River. During the summer baseball teams from La Belle would alternate between Red River and Elizabethtown, and many times teams from these two towns came to La Belle. There was always a supper and a dance following the game no matter who won. There were never enough children in La Belle to warrant a high school but it was more than likely that if there had been a high school there the town would have backed a fine football team. The people of La Belle were always sports minded. When the people of La Belle followed their team to Red River they would always repair to the Young house because the Youngs were the only ones for miles around with a piano. Everybody joined in the singing. Some miners and prospectors would come along with their banjos and guitars, fiddles and mandolins and the mountainside would rock with music. When the Red River team went to La Belle, then Anne Nadoch would play the piano in the hotel. When she married Merlin Hudson they lived for some years in Raton but later moved to Arkansas, so I understand.

Another small community in the area was called Petersburg, but it never became the mining town that La Belle was. Midnight, Anchor had a brief moment but faded. The one town that did give La Belle a run for it money was Twining. Prospectors found gold here at a place called Gold Hill in 1895. The president of a bank in the East, Albert C. Twining by name, invested heavily in the project at Gold Hill. In gratitude, the prospectors changed the name to Twining. J. B. Young moved in from Red River and put up his sawmill in Twining. Soon a hotel, stores and saloons followed and Twining boomed. The Twining hotel, one of the prettiest in all of New Mexico, looked like it was brought in from the Swiss Alps, so perfect was the setting. It had a long porch reached by a two level stairway. Wil-

opment to the extent of a five hundred foot tunnel and a sixty-five foot shaft has been done by the owners, James Lynch and associates of Elizabethtown. This property is a copper proposition; the ore is found in a schistose rock carrying some quartz. On account of its inaccessibility it has been lying idle. A very extensive low grade cyaniding proposition is found in South Fork canyon and known as the South Fork group; it is being developed by the San Cristobal Copper Company of New York. The King Solomon group, Berry Extension and Copper King group, including some free gold claims lying in Long's Canyon, embrace the remainder of the principal lodes; very little development work has been done on these properties. Near the top of the divide in going over the trail from Twinning to Red River, is found some placer ground which was worked in the fall of 1893 by hydraulicing, but the enterprise was only partially successful; the water supply being inadequate on account of the position at the top of the range. Nothing since has been done at these diggings, only in a small way by panning . . . "

The boom at La Belle soon died down. Miners and prospectors became discouraged and many moved away. A number from Trinidad, Colorado, kept holding on hoping with each dawn that they would find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Men like Peter Del Dosso, August Endermann refused to recognize defeat. Every now and then the few people left in La Belle would see Del Gosso coming into town with his faithful little burro. He would pack his supplies — sugar, salt, coffee, flour, canned goods — and meander off into Bitter Creek Canyon promising to bring in good news on his next trip. Thus the weeks passed into months and the months turned into years but the promise was always there to be received by the empty houses, the sloping hills, and whispering pines. Eventually even Del Gosso decided that the La Belle area was not for him, so one fine day he took the burro by the bridle and headed for Red River. He had no better luck there and settled down to ranching and farming. Endermann came back every summer. During the winter he would tell the folks in Trin-

idad how he expected to strike it rich in the spring. Eventually he, too, headed for the more inviting Red River camp. There he also sought the elusive strike and with the passage of years when he spent his winters in Miners Hospital at Raton he regaled the nurses and doctors with stories of his prospecting experiences and always ended with the promise of going back in the spring for a new strike. Tall, thin, white-haired, in a faded sweater pulled up around his neck and held by a safety pin, he would walk about the grounds, eyes glued to the ground as if he momentarily expected to see a mine open up before him. Soon he became bed-ridden and finally at his ninety-first birthday party admitted to the nurses that he was getting too old for his trips to Red River and the La Belle area. He refused to admit that the prospects weren't good, only that he was too old to hit the exact spot. It was there in the hills for some young prospector to find if he enjoyed work: Kirsher, Pooler, Lowe, Moore, Brandenburg, Valdez, Montoya and numerous others came to know every foot of the country between La Belle and Red River. But the day of the big boom was gone. Old timers sickened and died. Many ended their days at Miners Hospital very much like old soldiers at the Old Soldiers Home in Washington, dreaming to the end.