

Incidents of Old Central Pacific Days.

Milando Pratt Tells Some Stories of President Stanford, Collins P. Huntington, General Connor and Others Heretofore Unpublished—Honeymoon Trip Spent in Gathering Up Scrap Iron as Payment in Full for Contract Work in Building What is Now Part Of E. H. Harriman's Great Ocean to Ocean Railroad System.

THERE is a current superstition in regard to the great railway magnate, C. P. Huntington as to general unapproachability—especially in connection with railway matters—in the days before the interstate commerce law when a few at least outside the railway officials and employees might have a chance to obtain railway privileges.

Milando Pratt, the well known Utah mining man, who resides at 564 South State street, tells a story, however, which shows that the big railway official in the last days referred to was not entirely the invulnerable ogre pictured in general thought.

This story shows its beginning away back in 1887, when Mr. Pratt, a boy of 18, was bossing a contract for grade-work for the Central Pacific railroad then being built to the coast. It was obtained on a bid let to sub-contractors by the firm of Benson, Farr & West of Ogden, for the completion of 200 miles of grade west of Ogden for the contemplated road. Monument point, 100 miles west of Ogden was the starting place of the locality covered by the contract, and it was near this point that Mr. Pratt obtained his work.

STANFORD'S VISIT.

"It was about this time," said Mr. Pratt, "that Governor Stanford of California, then president of the Central Pacific, was traveling eastward by overland stage—drawn by a double team of four mules and with several escorts on horseback, and late one evening this company rode into our camp and without announcing the personnel of the party, asked permission to remain over night. The privilege was granted and an offer made to send their mules and horses out with the night herd into the hills for grazing. There was no hay in the camp, and for reasons of safety this offer was declined, and the animals had to regale themselves upon grain and water—their use of the latter greatly diminishing their strength, and not until near bedtime did we realize that we had so distinguished a guest within our midst."

THE NEXT morning, upon taking his breakfast, Governor Stanford shook hands with me and said: "Now, young man, when this road is completed you will want to come to California, and don't you hesitate to let me know when the road you are helping to build. Let me know when you want one and you shall have it."

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER.

Time passed and the opportunity to go to California did not offer itself till 1892—25 years after the completion of Mr. Pratt's work.

Then his mind naturally reverted to the great railway magnate, Stanford, who so long ago, by this time, however, Gov. Stanford was dead, and C. P. Huntington was in his place as president of the great overland road. To ask him for the fulfillment of his predecessor's promise appeared an undertaking as fatuous as a trip to the moon. "If you get a pass from C. P. Huntington on that bygone blockade," said a friend, to whom Mr. Pratt mentioned the subject one day, "I will take off my hat and bow down to you as one of the greatest living wonders of the age."

Mr. Pratt, however, had a mind to try; and some two weeks before the starting time set for the journey, wrote a letter to President Huntington's office in New York, stating the incident of Gov. Stanford's promise and asking if the past president's pledge had any chance of making good a quarter of a century later. As it chanced, President Huntington was abroad, and when the day for the trip arrived, no answer had come from the railway headquarters. Mr. Pratt paid for his tickets, spent a month in San Francisco, and desiring to get an extension of time on his ticket, went one day to the local offices for that purpose.

PLEASANT SURPRISE.

"If you are Milando Pratt," said the clerk who waited on him, "I have a letter here forwarded from Salt Lake, and has been waiting for you several days." Mr. Pratt opened the envelope. It contained a pass, together with a letter from C. P. Huntington, stating that the latter had been much interested in Mr. Pratt's request, and in meeting with Gov. Stanford, and took pleasure in honoring his famous predecessor's promise. The writer had returned unexpectedly from his trip, and without having dispatched the pass to Salt Lake. As the privilege was now useless, Mr. Pratt enclosed the pass in an envelope and mailed it to



MILANDO PRATT AT 17.
Taken About the Time He Was Awarded Grading Contract on C. P.

the sender, explaining that the delay had made its use impossible.

The sequel came upon his return to Salt Lake two weeks later, when he found awaiting him a refund of the amount spent by him upon his recent railway journey to California, made by the order of the president, C. P. Huntington, and forwarded by officials from the coast.

"It went to show," said Mr. Pratt, in relating the incident, "that railway magnates are not proof against sentiment at all times, even if the necessities of business make them so often invulnerable against appeal."

CLASH WITH GEN. CONNOR.

Another interesting incident in connection with a well known personage occurred to Mr. Pratt during the time of his connection with the railway grade work. General Connor, of early Utah fame, undertook the task of delivering railway ties for the C. P. track from the Garfield beach locality floating them by raft across the lake with the old Connor steamer as a tugboat. Upon one of these trips the general himself being in command, the steamer, Mr. Pratt met the general's raft with one of the heavy seas—near Monument Point, and anchored a quarter of a mile off shore. Being short of fresh water, Gen. Connor ordered the small boat manned by four rowers, to the Pratt-Nebeker camp to obtain a supply of water for his steamer.

Fresh water was extremely scarce, having to be carried in barrels a distance of 12 miles; but notwithstanding the trouble with which his own supply had been obtained and the inconvenience to the camp in letting it go to the steamer, Mr. Pratt met the general's offer to buy a number of barrels with good will, and the water was conveyed to the boat. Mr. Pratt went on board the steamer and presented his bill. The barrels were duly delivered, but a question arose as to price. Fifteen dollars had been agreed upon at the camp as fair equivalent for the water and the labor of transporting it to the camp, and to this Gen. Connor objected, declaring that the bill was exorbitant and ordering the steamer to face about for the trip to Black Rock. Young Pratt, who had come aboard with the bill, insisted upon its reasonableness and an instant settlement. The general, however, ever so obstinate and young Pratt declared his intention of staying with the boat till he was paid. "I will make the trip to the landing with you," he said, "and I will stay with you till this bill is paid. I never saw a man in a worse rage," said Mr. Pratt, "He swore a mighty oath, and promised me that if I went with him he would throw me aboard, but finally offered me \$5 and advised me to get back to land while I had yet the chance."

THREATS AND PROFANITY.

"I don't do that till the bill is paid in full," answered the young Pratt, "and in full," he said, "you can afford to throw me overboard, I guess I can afford to let you try. The general," went on Mr. Pratt, "apparently struggling with the general prose and cons of the situation finally handed over three \$5 bills. 'Now, by G—,' he said, 'you scamp off this boat as quick as God will let you or your G—d carcass may be found floating up on shore with those grasshopper heaps.'"

Young Pratt, deliberately retreating to the boat now filled with the empty water barrels replied, "All right, general, but the next time you cross the lake, come supplied with plenty of water, or you may have to make your appeal to this inhospitable desert. I pleaded your cause with the camp this time; I may not be able to do it again. A number of years later," said Mr. Pratt, "Gen. Connor and I met, and were introduced at the old Peter Clinton house near Garfield, where the general was stopping with his boat—at that time called Gen. Connor, but afterward named Garfield in honor of the dead president."

EPISODE RECALLED.

The episode of the water barrels was referred to by Mr. Pratt, who described the painful circumstances attending the transportation over the desert. The result was that Gen. Connor fully agreed that under the circumstances the general was not reasonable and should have been paid with gratitude. "He kindly apologized," said Mr. Pratt, "for his attitude at the time, and invited me aboard his steamer, where we shared away a pleasant time in reminiscence of experiences on the water. The night of his visit to our camp, when they had come near being shipwrecked in a violent tempest which had raged throughout the night and next day, a struggle which we men at the camp had ourselves witnessed from our camp on the shore. Our own tents were blown down, the wagons stripped of their covers and other belongings of the camp scattered to the four winds. We saw the Connor vessel shifted about by the wind, dragging her anchor, but though our sympathies went out to the helpless crew yet we could do nothing to aid them."

GRASSHOPPER DYKE.

An interesting reminiscence of this time at Monument Point was the immense ridge of dead grasshoppers surrounding the lakeshore, which this terrible storm fully summed up. This ridge or wall had been caused by a scourge of grasshoppers which during the spring and summer had been exceptionally troublesome. Great gray and black clouds of the "hoppers" were constantly flying through the air, obscuring the sunlight, and lighting down on both water and land in great swarms. Billions of these, washed ashore by the wind, formed a dyke a great bank two to five feet high around the lake shore. "Our men," said Mr. Pratt, "who went into the lake for their baths, had to take along shovels to get through this wall of piled 'hoppers' to reach the water. Under the hot sun rays this heap became almost unbearable to sight and smell, and when the great storm of that night washed the refuse away, there was much rejoicing. The wall showed, though, the proportions of the great pest which almost devastated the valleys at that time—making them gray and almost so scarce that we had to pay from \$12 to \$24 for a hundred pounds of flour, \$15 for grain and about \$50 per ton for hay, while other necessities were correspondingly high."

TROUBLE WITH INDIANS.

According to fragments of Mr. Pratt's Journal, the incidents related are but "things of the hardships of the times. Young men in those days earned their living by the literal sweat of their brows. At 17 Mr. Pratt drove seven oxen across the plains and returned for much of the time, for the firm of Kimball & Lawrence. "Indians," says the journal, "were very bad that year. They killed and drove off some of our teams. Sharp's train, half a day ahead of us, had two men killed by Indians and some of their cattle driven off."

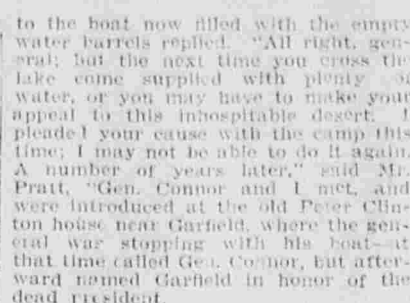
In 1887, the journal states, Mr. Pratt went to Ogden valley and commenced grading. All the crone axes destroyed by grasshoppers, and he then crossed the mountains between Ogden and Weber valleys and took a sub-contract from the late President John Taylor for grade work for the U. P. railroad.

LET THE BOY HAVE IT.

Then came the grade work for the C. P. R. R. and in connection with this Mr. Pratt tells an incident illustrative of the generosity of the times. When it became known that Benson, Farr & West had secured the C. P. R. R. grade contract would let bids to sub-contractors for a part of the large number of miles of grade. Bidders went out to Monument Point in company with Lorin Farr of Ogden to compete for the work. Mr. Pratt being one of the number. On account of the presence of so many bidders only a limited amount of grade was to be let to each contestant, and when the auctioneer of these parcels commenced, young Pratt, being inexperienced and rather retiring, at first hesitated to make his bid, but with the rest. At the second parcel his courage strengthened and he put his bid—36 cents per cubic yard, following those who had commenced at 40, and raised down to 35 cents. As the boy's voice was heard a sympathetic voice from the crowd of bidders shouted, "Oh, let the boy have it!" and the bidding ceased. The man who turned the bid, said Mr. Pratt, "was that much honored veteran the late Richard Ballantyne of Ogden, who was himself a contestant for this work. He said, 'Mr. Pratt, 'took up the full and wintered yet after all brought me no pay—though my bills were presented both to the C. P. company and to the U. P. and W. contractors.'"

IN CONNECTION WITH this part of the contract, Mr. Pratt tells an amusing incident. The only return to the young sub-contractor for his work was in tools and scraps of iron and other things left round the construction camps, and young Pratt had to make his trip to Ogden valley to bring away his share of the old wagon wheels and other junk left in the camps. It was about this time that he became engaged to his future wife, then Miss Rich. As help was scarce in those days his affianced wife went with him on this treasure quest and drove one of the wagons loaded with indiscriminate scraps from Ogden to Salt Lake. Such were incidents of courtship in the early days, no rose tinted romance of auto drives, lake parties, and the thousand alluring things that make up the "best girls" courtship of today. Mr. Pratt will remember, driving to the theater in those times, an ox team, with his girl on the seat beside him and the wagon box filled with produce to pay for their seats at the play. "It was," he says, "in those days," he tells, "that some boys went to dance with their girls on one arm and a pumpkin on the other to pay their admission to the ball."

For all the disastrous ending to his first matrimony, Mr. Pratt holds no feeling of bitterness toward the road or its officers at that time, though the work indeed had been doubly strenuous by Gov. Stanford's injunction to hurry the work at any cost. His great continental railway ideal was making him reach Ogden first in order to obtain the land and franchise subsidies provided by Congress and the contractors were urged to make it at any expense. "The C. P. won the spoils," said Mr. Pratt in early days, "and the miners got the junk of his discarded wagon camps."



MOUNTAIN HOWITZER PACK SADDLES OF JOHNSTON'S ARMY.

Presiding Bishop C. W. Nibley has just handed over to the State Historical society a number of valuable relics of Johnston's army which invaded this state from the east in 1857-8. These relics include four mountain howitzer pack saddles, of a style long since abandoned by the government, a lot of cartridge pouches, flint lock gun stocks, pistol holsters, slugs, army belt buckles, two cannon swabs, and other miscellaneous articles bought by President Young when Camp Floyd was abandoned and the army returned east. It is believed that one of the Howitzers used by the troops and buried in an old well, will yet be found with other articles of war.

Hon. Spencer Clawson, the custodian of relics of the Historical society, has charge of these articles, as well as spinning wheels, rope ladders, and part of an iron railing used in the office of Gov. Young back in the '50s.

GENEALOGY.

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BABCOCK FAMILY.

The name of Miss Maud May Babcock is well known in this intermountain region, and most people know that she is the daughter of one of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was converted during her first sojourn in the state, and the sister who carried the gospel to her urged her at the time she secured much information as possible concerning her ancestors. On her first trip east thereafter, Miss Babcock secured a small pamphlet containing a very meager account of some of the Babcock family, but nothing further was to be obtained, except through family recourses until very recently. The story of the printing of the Babcock book and attendant incidents is not only interesting, but to the faithful reader, carries the same assurance of divine direction that other such incidents convey. Miss Babcock has an only brother, Dr. Wayne Babcock, who has risen to the highest rank in his profession, being one of the wealthiest and best known physicians in the city of Philadelphia. Not long since, Dr. Babcock was approached by a brother-physician, in regard to the Babcock family, and the object simply to discover if he were connected with a family which was then under course of preparation for a genealogical history of the Babcocks in America. The doctor wrote to his sister and father, who live in this city and from them secured the very meager account of their own direct ancestor, one David Babcock, who had emigrated from Stonington, Conn., to East Worcester, Otsego county, New York, about 1780. This David married Mary Hinckley and was a revolutionary soldier, and he had a large family in Stonington, Conn., and was well known later in East Worcester, N. Y. The information given was most welcome for the compiler of the Babcock book had never before been able to trace David and had been searching for 30 years for him. David disappeared from Stonington, and none knew whether he went. Thus, the missing link of the Babcock family was found, and the information which had heretofore been so meager in its details for Miss Babcock, was thus connected up with the whole American family. How singularly these facts do focus themselves, and how subtly do these threads unravel themselves to the eager student!

Another interesting feature of this story is connected with Miss Babcock herself. As is well known, Miss Babcock has been on the board of the deaf and dumb school for over 10 years, being the president of that board for three years. Her devotion to the interests of the blind and deaf are well known, and some years ago she took a trip in the interests of her school. She went while away to the New York School for the Blind, and while there she was introduced to the superintendent of the same, as Prof. Babcock. The gentleman, himself a blind man, also bore the name of Babcock, and an interested inquiry resulted. As it happened, the father of the Babcock book, having labored on the same for over 30 years, on the other hand the gentleman knew at once who the lady was, for her name as well as her famous brother's was well known to him. Think of it, you who are mourning because there is so little for the blind or deaf or feeble people to do, here comes a blind man who had made himself a scholar, had risen to the head of a very powerful institution, and for his amusement had been laboring for over 30 years in the compilation and publishing of a book containing thousands of names and family histories. No man or woman should sit down with folded hands in this world when blindness or other bodily affliction assails him, and now as to the Babcock family in America. There has been considerable confusion thrown upon their origin by conflicting traditions, which have no corroborative evidence. The

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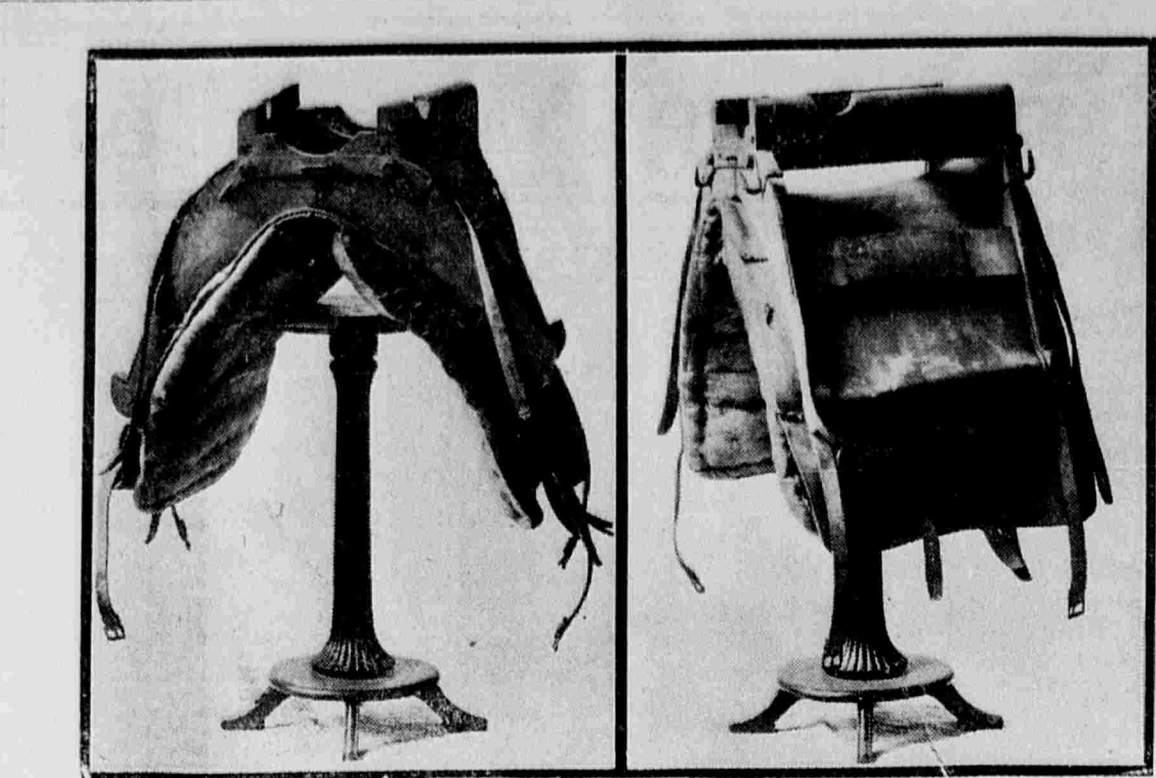
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References: Dr. Geo. H. Brimhall, Provo, B. Y. U.; Dr. John A. Widdow, Provo, A. C. Logan; Des. Nat. Bank; State Bank of Utah, S. L. City; Provo Com. & Savings, and State Bank of Utah, Provo.

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