

The Latta Genealogy Newsletter

Issue 3

Winter 1997

Robert H. Latta, compiler of the 49 branches

Denver in the 1880s — an autobiography

This story by Mr. Latta was supplied by his only daughter, Edith L. Watson, of Denver. Mr. Latta bought the *Colorado Graphic* in 1900 and was its active head until 1927. Mr. Latta died in Denver April 27, 1940.

—Reprinted from *The Colorado Magazine*, July 1941, pp 131-136

I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, November 24, 1851, and was named for Robert Fulton of steamboat fame, who was a relative. In Boston I learned the printing trade, and worked for the White-Smith Company. I enjoyed singing, and belonged to the Handel and Haydn Society. I also studied for the stage, along with Georgia Cayvan, who became famous under the direction of Daniel Frohman, Edwin and Fred Maynard, Daniel Gilfeather, and others who continued in that profession.

I came to Colorado at the age of 30, following my elder brother William, who had arrived in Denver a year or two earlier. On arrival I went to Idaho Springs and secured work on the railroad. It

was early in the year, and very cold. Some of my fellow workmen and I bunked in a shack made of boards lined with building-paper and heated by a small sheet-iron stove. It would often grow so hot that we would have to throw

open the door to cool off, but after the fire died away for the night, the cold was bitter. I recall going to bed partly dressed, and donning one article of clothing after another as the cold grew stronger, until when it was time to get up I was fully dressed, even to my shoes and hat.

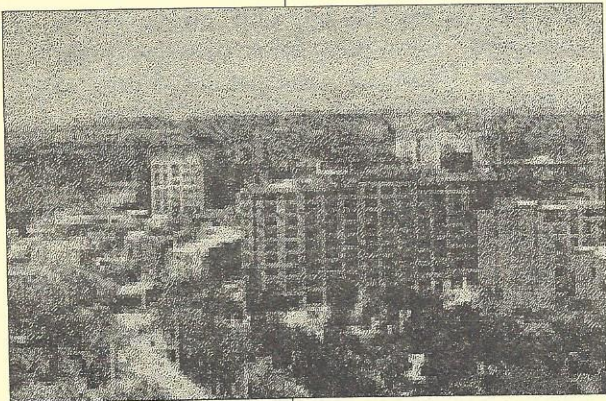
I came to Denver in June, 1881. Larimer was then the principal street. The firm of Browne and Putnam, lawyers, had an office here, and I began the study of law with them, later studying with Miller, Clough and Long (Mr. Miller afterward

became County Judge) in a building on Larimer between 15th and 16th streets, opposite Charpiot's Hotel, then a popular house. I boarded at a Mrs. Rust's on Curtis, between 21st and 22nd streets. Her house was near one that was owned by Admiral George Dewey, later the hero of Manila Bay.

The law office of Stallcup, Luthe and Shafroth was between Charpiot's Hotel and 15th street. Mr. John F. Shafroth was afterward United States senator. He had in his employ a young lawyer. One day a summons and complaint was brought in against a client. Mr. Shafroth gave it to the young lawyer, who asked him what to do with it. Mr. Shafroth told him to deny everything. When the denial was given to Mr. Shafroth, he found he had been obeyed literally. The young lawyer denied the existence of the State of Colorado, of Arapahoe County, of the district court, and of the plaintiff and defendant. One day walking down the street with Senator Shafroth, I spoke of it. He laughed, and said, "Do you remember that?" The Court House was on the corner of Larimer and 15th streets, and the post office was under it. The State Capitol was on the corner of Larimer and 18th streets. The "Rocky Mountain News" office was in a grout building next to the Good Block.

The present location of the capitol was then

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With this issue we commemorate the first full year of our fledgling publication.

Editorial

Trying to stay fresh

With this issue we commemorate the first full year of our fledgling publication. The response has been most gratifying, and we're extremely grateful for your support, contributions, suggestions and gentle reminders.

We keep looking for new and better ways to help you with your Latta genealogy. Two suggestions are ready to bear fruit: Alexandra Coates has agreed to serve as coordinator of Latta Reunion information, and we'll try to keep you informed of these events. See the separate article for more details.

We also hope to establish a column dealing with "Records And Where To Find Them" and we need a volunteer to coordinate this project. If you can see yourself compiling suggestions sent in by readers and putting them into a column to run maybe every-other or every-third issue, please let us know.

Finally, continue to send us articles and biographies and photos and documents that we can publish, all with the goal of helping us to stay fresh.

Apology

That darn disk!

Along with the last issue we sent a computer disk to all who had made financial contributions. Once again, we forgot that not everyone lives and breathes computers, and the instructions were rather sparse. *Nostra culpa, nostra culpa, nostra maxima culpa.*

With this issue we're sending an updated disk which contains, in addition to the branches and indices, the lettered notes to Robert H. Latta's archives. The files on the disk are plain ASCII text, and can be read by any word processor whether it's running in Windows, DOS, or Macintosh.

Fire up your word processor and choose "Open File" or something like that and specify the drive into which you've inserted the disk (presumably a:). On the disk you'll find a directory called "branch." Open it and you will see four directories called "br#1-49," "index," "newslett" and "notesa-z." Open the "br#1-49" directory *et voilà*, (have you ever noticed the way really cultured and intellectual people use foreign words and phrases all the time to let you know how cultured and intellectual they really are?) there will be the 49 files named "branch01.wpd," "branch02.wpd," etc., all the way to "branch49.wpd." Likewise, under the "index" directory are also "in-law.wpd" and "surname.wpd," these being the two indices to the branches. "Notesa-z" contains the lettered notes to RHL's 49 branches. "Newslett" has an introduction to the newsletter that seems not to be a text file. Ignore it for now.

Please keep in mind that Robert H. Latta's original manuscripts and indices contained numerous errors and omissions. Additional errors and omissions crept in when the work was retyped. However, George is hard at work making corrections and additions. Remember, though, that it's a project of phenomenal proportion which will take many long months, and rumor has it that George has a secret life outside of genealogy to which he retreats periodically, sometimes for

Yet another slip-up

The books don't quite balance. There was a financial contribution received in October that I failed to post to the subscriber's record. If you sent money in October and your name does not appear on page 11, please let me know so I can give you credit for your generosity, and so the books will balance.—PHC

The Latta Genealogy Newsletter

Published approximately thrice annually

Dedicated to research among the forty-nine branches of the Latta family in America, and of our family's origins in the Old World.

Funded by contributions from its readers. Suggested contribution: seven to ten dollars per year (US and Canada) international US \$10 to \$13

Please send your family group sheets, pedigree charts, photos, documents and/or gedcom files to:

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www.infinet.com/~pcalhoun/latta.html

Denver in the 1880s

(Continued from page 1)

only a rough hill, where people sometimes shot jackrabbits. It was owned by Henry C. Brown, builder of Brown Palace Hotel, who gave the land to Colorado for the capitol site. Mr. Brown lived in a house on Lincoln Street between 17th and 18th avenues, which was afterward occupied by Mrs. Augusta Tabor.

How Denver became the capital of Colorado is a secret known to but a few persons. The story was told to me by Judge George W. Miller, who was a party to it, and who went to the southern part of the state as one of the committee.

Before statehood was granted Colorado, the legislature met in different cities, among them Golden and Colorado City. It was decided to have a permanent capital, to be voted on at a general election. Nearly all the cities and towns wanted it, but there was great opposition to Denver.

A number of Denver citizens of both political parties held a secret meeting. A campaign was marked out, and the state divided into sections. A committee of each party was to go to each section and work for Denver. Each committee promised the leaders of their party in each section that if they would get the votes for Denver for the capital, the committee would pay a part of the general election expenses. Denver wanted only the capital; the other state institutions would go to other cities, and Denver would help them. Denver won. A great cry was made all over the state about it; no one knew how it was brought about.

The corner of Colfax and Broadway was a pasture ground for cattle, which was later known as the "Million Dollar Pasture," because the owner still kept his cows there after the land had become very valuable.

Broadway was one of the "speedways" of Denver; it was the rule to go out Broadway slowly, but to race back. The racetrack was out in Hyde Park addition. One day a funeral was passing the track when a great hailstorm arose. The hurt and frightened horses, drawing the hearse and carriage, dashed onto the racetrack and went around a number of times before they could be controlled.

The mention of funerals reminds me of an incident that happened a few years later. I was in Cripple Creek on business. One evening I saw a crowd of miners, led by a brass band, playing

"There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," making the rounds of the saloons. They were "celebrating" the funeral of one of their friends, and were carrying his coffin with them. Laughing and shouting, they followed the band from one saloon to the next all the way down the street, stopping each time for a drink in honor of the deceased. It was the noisiest funeral party I ever saw.

In the early '80s the sidewalks downtown as well as elsewhere were made of planks. Water was running in the gutters, and trees grew on the sides. A hail and rain storm came and washed the sidewalks into the streets, and I saw boys using them for rafts at 16th and Curtis streets.

A man was found guilty of murder and was hung from a tree in Cherry Creek near 10th Street. A large crowd gathered, and a woman with a small child was pushed by the crowd to the front, close to the hanging man. I delayed going to the courthouse, which was then a part of the old county jail, as I did not want to see the hanging. This was the last public execution in Colorado.

One evening I heard shouts near the Opera House, and found that a mob had a murderer and was going to hang him. They did so, but I did not want to see it.

Emma Abbott opened the Tabor Opera House in September, 1881. She received an enthusiastic reception from a crowded house. I attended the opening night.

General Samuel Browne, of the firm of Browne and Putnam, one day was passing in front of the Tabor Opera House when it was being built. He stepped on a loose plank and was thrown into the basement, landing on a pile of sand. He told me he must have been there at least half an hour before he came to his senses. The scar on his forehead showed plainly all the rest of his life.

The Circle Railroad had a station the other side of Cherry Creek on Larimer Street. They had a small engine and a few cars. The road ran through South Denver. One day a train killed a man, and soon after the train broke into the station without the engineer or fireman on it. It was said that both of them saw the ghost of the dead man on the track, got scared and jumped from the engine, letting it go wild. It was as a result of the man being killed that an order was made that be-

(Continued on page 5)



*Robert H. Latta,
compiler of the 49
branches of the Latta
family in America*

From the archives of The Latta Family Newsletter

NORTH CAROLINA MARRIAGE BONDS*					
North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.					
GROOM	BONDSMAN	BRIDE	WITNESS	DATE OF BOND	COUNTY
Robert Caldwell	William T. Shields	Maria Latta	Jno Hanner, cc	09 Jul 1825	Guilford
William Cole (Cole?)	Jane Latta	Geo. Laws, ccc		15 Jan 1863	Orange
Richard M. Jones	mar. 22 Jan 1863 by W. S. Strayhorn, JP	Elizabeth Latta	T. H. Taylor	23 Feb 1808	Orange
Morgan Carrington	John Carrington	Elizabeth Latta	J. Taylor	27 Feb 1810	Orange
Chadrack Chandler	Jas. Latta	Jane Latta	E. G. Gray	11 Dec 1846	Orange
James A. Cole	Thos. (?)	Martha Latta	E. G. Gray	13 Feb 1850	Orange
George C. Clement	E. W. Woods	Ann Latty	Charles Mason	08 Mar 1852	Person
Willey Collins	Wm. Vanhook	Polley Latta	J. Taylor	04 Apr 1809	Orange
Richard Crabtree	Thomas Latta	Cynthia Latta	J. Taylor	27 Sep 1833	Orange
William Crabtree	Edward Crabtree	Elizabeth Latta	J. Taylor	16 Apr 1810	Orange
Robert Davis	John Latta	Jane Latta	W. N. Carrington	25 Feb 1860	Orange
James Dixon	A. S. Carrington	Nancy Latta	Jos. A. Woods	06 Nov 1820	Orange
Robert Donnell	Thos. H. S. Hargis	Anne Latta	Joseph A. Woods	13 May 1818	Orange
John Durhan	Jesse Daniel	Easter (Escher) Latta	Jno. Harris	14 Jul 1801	Mecklenburg
Ephraim Farr	Joseph Latta	Sarah E. Latta	Samuel Y. Brown	22 Jan 1864	Person
S. B. Freeman	S. B. Freeman	Sarah E. Latta	by William T. Noell, JP	07 Mar 1809	Orange
Tires Garrard	John Latta	Candess Latta	J. Taylor	02 Apr 1840	Orange
Farthing Garrison	Caswill W. Durham	Nancy Latta	Geo. Laws, ccc	15 Dec 1808	Orange
Jno. W. Gates	Robt. Webb	Martha M. Latta	Geo. Laws, ccc	22 Jan 1868	Orange
Mager A. Green	Wm. Hanlan	Jenny Latta	A. B. Bruce	11 Oct 1793	Orange
Thomas Holloway	Thomas Holloway	Louisa E. Latta	Geo. Laws		
Bennett C. Hopkins	John Latta, Junr	Jane Latta	A. B. Bruce		

* Abstracted by John W. Latta, Jr.

NORTH CAROLINA MARRIAGE BONDS*					
North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.					
GROOM	BONDSMAN	BRIDE	WITNESS	DATE OF BOND	COUNTY
David Latta	Joseph Green	Prudence Allen	Jesse C. Draw	10 Jan 1860	Brunswick
Duncan Latta	Geo. Laws, Clerk	Martha Phillips		25 May 1867	Orange
Granderson Latta	Green Evans	Martha A. Reaves	A. Williams	11 Dec 1840	Wake
Henderson Latta	W. Nelson	Ann Khew	J. Taylor	06 Nov 1834	Orange
James Latta	James Johnson	Jain Knox		12 Apr 1796	Lincoln
James Latta	William Latta	Winnie Veasey	W. N. Carrington	21 Apr 1865	Orange
James Latta	Jno. Cain	Nancy Allen	S. Benton	24 Apr 1790	Orange
James Latta	John Latta	Hannah Holloway	J. Taylor	08 Oct 1806	Orange
James Latta	George Moore	Fatsy Moore	Jno. Taylor	27 Jun 1804	Orange
James Latta	Jno. Piper	Polly Scarlett	T. H. Taylor	18 Oct 1804	Orange
James Latta	Alexander Lac(?)	Elizabeth Dunlap	Jno. Taylor	21 Apr 1798	Orange
James C. Latta	James Hobbs	Sarah Thompson	Geo. W. Bruce	21 Sep 1845	Orange
James C. Latta	(son of James & Hannah Latta - dau of C. A. & Elizabeth S. Howard)	Jane S. Howard	H. P. Brandon, Cl.	26 Oct 1867	Caswell
James G. Latta	(son of Anderson & Elizabeth Latta - dau of C. A. & E. S. Howard)	Cattie F. Howard	H. P. Brandon, Cl.	26 Oct 1867	Caswell
Jno. Latta	Robert Cochran	Margaret Woodside	Jno. Carrigan	05 Feb 1803	Cabarrus
John Latta	James Latta	Sarah Scarlett	J. Taylor	26 Aug 1806	Orange
Jno. Latta	Joseph Latta	Nancy Cabs	J. Taylor	08 Dec 1812	Orange
John Latta	Thomas Latta	Maria Burton	J. Taylor	16 Dec 1835	Orange
John Latta	John Latta	Sarah May	Jno. Taylor	10 Jun 1804	Orange
Joseph Latta	John Latta	Sarah Cabs	J. Taylor	22 Jan 1810	Orange
Joseph H. Latta	James Freeland	Sarah Chambers	Joseph A. Woods	25 Sep 1816	Orange
Joseph S. Latta	John W. Latta	Susan M. Turner	Geo. Laws	09 Nov 1854	Orange
Priestly Latta	William Ellis	Mary Ashley	W. N. Carrington	13 Jul 1859	Orange

The census records on pages 39-42 were abstracted by Danny R. and Connie McD. Latta.

NORTH CAROLINA MARRIAGE BONDS.					
North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.					
GROOM	BONDSMAN	BRIDE	WITNESS	DATE OF BOND	COUNTY
Richard Latta	Dick Webb	Allice Craig	Geo. Laws	27 Jan 1866	Orange
Robert Latta	William Tilly	Nancy Rily	J. Taylor, Sr.	29 Jun 1827	Orange
Simpson Latta	David Turner	Hawkins Malone	J. Taylor	02 Feb 1843	Orange
Simpson Latta	Jno. A. McManus	Hawkins Alston	J. Allison	01 Mar 1852	Orange
Simpson N. Latta	mar. 14 Sep. 1859 by A. N. Hall, Elder	Emily M. Pearce	Charles Mason	14 Sep 1859	Person
Solomon Latta	Thyres Garrard	Elizabeth Wilson	J. Taylor	16 Aug 1814	Orange
Thomas Latta	James Latta	Janey Scarlett	J. Taylor	28 Aug 1810	Orange
Thomas Latta	John Latta	Elizabeth Haisting	J. Benton	25 Oct 1791	Orange
Thomas Latta	A. Moore	Nancy Roberts	J. Taylor, Jr.	06 Mar 1822	Person
Thomas J. Latta	Solomon Latta	Elizabeth Crabtree	J. Taylor	20 Nov 1837	Orange
Thos. Latta	John Moore	Polley Moore	J. Taylor	04 Oct 1803	Orange
William Latta	Bedford S. Oakley	Lucinda Oakley	Sam Y. Brown, cc	27 Jan 1866	Person
William A. Latta	Hugh Torrance	Camilla C. Torrence	E. Gates, ccc	24 Jun 1834	Wecklenburg
William C. Latta	Geo. M. Pratt	Sarah Jane Burroughs	Geo. Laws	05 Feb 1861	Orange
William R. Latta	mar. 7 Feb 1861 by John Mitchell	Rachel M. Jackson		16 Nov 1867	Orange
George Long	Wm. H. Woods	Mary Latta	J. Taylor	28 Oct 1829	Orange
Jno. A. McManner	James P. Warren	Elizabeth Latta	J. Taylor	14 Dec 1832	Orange
John H. Paul	Robert Faucett	Ellen Latta	E. G. Gray	13 Sep 1847	Orange
James H. Ray	A. Forrest, 2nd Bondsman; mar. 16 Sep 1847 by Archibald Currie MG	Ann Latta		28 Dec 1793	Orange
Rufus Reid	Thos. B. Smartt	Nancy A. Latta	Isaac Alexander	06 Sep 1822	Wecklenburg
Jonathan Thompson	Pemory Crafott(?)	Elizabeth Latta	J. Taylor	01 Oct 1832	Orange
James G. Torrence	Benjamin W. Davis	Mary Latta	Isaac S. Alexander	14 Apr 1821	Mecklenburg
John Walker	Jacob Wagoner	Polley F. Latta	J. Taylor	02 Oct 1829	Orange
Robert Walker	Wm. Walker	Ellenor Latta	S. Benton	18 Apr 1791	Orange
James R. Willis	E. G. Gray	Frances Hannah Latta		03 May 1852	Orange

PETITION OF EPHRAIM LATTA

Lancaster County Court House, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania
Miscellaneous Book 1803-1805, pp. 33-34
(Extracted by John W. Latta, Jr.)

July 26th 1803

On the Petition of Ephraim Latta of Bart township setting forth that Robert Latta, father of the Petitioner, died intestate about the year 1784 leaving a widow who is since deceased, & nine children-- Moses the eldest who is since dead without issue, Samuel, James, Robert, William, John, Letitia who intermarried with Joseph McClane, Mary, & the Petitioner -- That the said Robert was seized at the time of his death of about two hundred & fifty acres of warranted land, situate in Bart township adjoining lands of Samuel Downing, Patrick Henry & others -- and praying the Court to appoint an inquest to view the said land and premises with the appurtenances, & make partition thereof to & among the children of the said Robert Latta if the same can be divided without injury to & spoiling of the whole if not, to value & appraise the same -- It is ordered by the Court that the Sheriff of this County do forthwith summon an inquest to view the said premises & make partition thereof to & among the children of the said dead if the same can be divided without injury to & spoiling of the whole -- if not, to value & appraise the same -- & make report of their proceedings to the next Orphans Court, to be held on the third Monday in September next.

Hopewell Presbyterian Church Cemetery
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
(Compiled by Jane S. Latta)

Elizabeth L. Reid Second wife of Rufus Reid
Born February 9th 1777 Died May 11th 1888
First married to Benjamin Wilson Davidson, Esq.
Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Nancy L. Reid wife of Rufus Reid who was born 15th February 1801(?) and departed this life 6th Nov. 1833.
Beneath this Tomb is deposited the remains of Ezekiel Latta who was born Jan. 16th 1810 and died Nov. 21st 1820.
In Memory of Jane K. Latta wife of James Latta, died July 1, 1864 in the 89th year of her age. "She being dead yet speaketh".
Sacred to the Memory of James Latta He departed this life 30th October 1837 Aged 82 years 2 months and 9 days.
Sacred to the Memory of Benjamin Wilson Davidson Who was born the 20th of May 1787 Departed this life 25th September 1829.

(Editor's Note: The above is the family of James Latta [See p. 1-3] his second wife Jane Knox, three of their four children and his son-in-law, B. W. Davidson. [See also the marriage of James Latta, p. 38, and the marriage of Rufus Reid, p. 45].)

The articles on this page are reprinted exactly as they appeared in The Latta Family Newsletter.
Our thanks to Danny P. Latta and the late John W. Latta, Jr.

Denver in the 1880s

(Continued from page 3)

fore any tramway car crossed the tracks, the conductor had to stop his car and get off to see if any train was in sight.

Cheesman Park was then a burial ground, and many a gravemark said, "Killed by Indians." The Federal Government afterwards gave the ground to the city, and most of the bodies were removed. The west end of it was made into a park and called Congress Park. After the death of Walter Cheesman his widow offered to build a pavilion there if the city would change the name to Cheesman Park. At the time when the land was given to the city, a man filed on it as a homestead, claiming that as it was not used as a burial ground it was open to entry.

Chain and Hardy had a book and stationery store on Arapahoe Street. Mr. Chain was caught in a typhoon on the coast of China, and he and the vessel were lost.

The First National Bank was on the corner of 16th and Larimer Streets. One day when Mr. David Moffat, the president of the bank, was there, a man went up to him and showed him a bottle, and said it contained nitro-glycerine and that if Mr. Moffat did not give him some money, he would blow up both of them, the bank and all who were in it. Mr. Moffat got the money from the paying teller, and gave it to the man, who escaped. The papers said that the bottle was afterwards found in a business building on Larimer Street, and that it contained sweet oil.

Saloons, gambling houses and houses of ill-fame were flourishing and wide open. Ed Chase was then one of the leading gamblers, and owned the Palace Theater, gambling house and saloon on Blake Street. He allowed no cheating in his house. It was reported that it was a common event for someone to be shot there, but he told me that the only time a gun was discharged there was one time a drunken man dropped a gun, and it was discharged. No hungry man applied to him in vain. One day he was told that a widow and her children were cold and hungry, with nothing but rags to keep them warm. He immediately gave a friend some money and told him to go buy everything necessary, and then to inquire into the circumstances.

Soapy Smith, a noted confidence man, who was afterwards killed at Nome, Alaska, often

stood on Larimer Street near 16th Street with a raised stand. He would take a small piece of soap, wrap a large bill of money around it, enclose it in a piece of paper, and throw it on the stand in front of the crowd, and for one dollar anyone could take a piece of soap from the pile. It looked like a sure thing, but when a man picked a piece out of the pile, except when a confederate did it, it never contained money. This was due to sleight of hand.

United States Judge Moses Hallett held his court in the old Symes building, which at that time had an entrance on Champa Street. One day the elevator made so much noise as to disturb his court. He was an excellent judge, but severe, and the attorneys stood in awe of him. He ordered the elevator boy into the court, and told him the elevator must be stopped. The boy, not realizing who the judge was, said he took orders only from Mr. Hart, the custodian of the building, and that he would not stop the elevator. The lawyers present expected that the boy would be punished, but the judge ordered him to go back to work.

Frank T. Johnson, afterwards district judge, Robert W. Bonyng, afterwards member of congress, and others, including myself, met in my office in the Symes building in 1891 and organized the Denver Bar Association. I was its secretary from 1893 to 1894.

Judge Charles, for whom the Charles Block, on 15th and Curtis streets, was named, asked me to become his partner. I perhaps would have done so, except that he made the condition that I buy a half interest in his law library. I did not want to do this, so did not become his partner. The library was later burned in the Symes building fire.

Reverend Myron W. Reed of the First Congregational Church, then located on Glenarm Street back of the Kittredge building, was one of the most popular preachers in America. He was president of the Glenarm Reading Club, of which I was a member. Denver had no public library, and he notified the city that if they would not make a public library, the Glenarm Reading Club would do so. The city then made a library. The first city library was situated in the basement of the building of on the corner of Lawrence and 15th streets. It was afterward removed to the East Denver High School building, then situated where the Federal building now stands, and later to where the Civic Center is, in a low, one-story building.

(Continued on page 12)

Cheesman Park was then a burial ground, and many a gravemark said, "Killed by Indians."

Latta was discovered sitting at the dining room table in the Reagans' second-floor family quarters

White House connections

Sent in by Marion Latta Fawl

Press Telegram, October 13, 1945

In the opinion of President Truman the White House has an "indispensable man."

At the President's staff meeting this morning, he noted this was the 76th birthday of Maurice C. Latta [branch 3, family 80—ed.], executive clerk in charge of White House officers, who has been 47 years in the executive mansion.

Mr. Truman wished Latta a happy birthday and referred to him as "indispensable man of the White House."

Intruder Almost Became Unwanted Inaugural Guest

Washington (AP) - A man who 'just wanted to see the ceremony' followed the Marine Band into the White House for President Reagan's Jan. 20 inaugural and was arrested on the State Floor of the executive mansion less than two hours before Reagan took the oath, the White House acknowledged today.

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater denied the intruder, Robert Latta of Denver, was arrested in the first family's private dining room in the upstairs residential quarters, as had been reported.

"I just walked in with the band. I had my hat and coat on," Latta said.

But Latta, who was released on \$1,000 bond after spending eight days in jail on a misdemeanor charge of unlawful entry, said, "I really think that the penalty was a little unjustified, for the reason that I did it and everything."

Fitzwater offered no explanation why the Secret Service and the White House withheld information about the incident until after it was described in today's editions of the *Denver Post*, the (Denver) *Rocky Mountain News* and the *New York Times*.

Latta, 45, wandered freely through the White House until he was discovered sitting at the dining room table in the Reagans' second-floor family quarters, the published reports say.

Fitzwater, under a barrage of questions at today's White House Press briefing, first said Latta "was arrested for unlawful entry in a hallway of the State Floor. He was not near the family quarters."

Pressed for details, Fitzwater acknowledged the man may have been discovered in the Family

Dining Room, which is a small dining room off the much larger State Dining Room on the State Floor, the main public floor of the White House.

The spokesman said Reagan was informed of the incident "soon after" it occurred, but said he was not sure Reagan was told the same day.

The president took his oath of office on the same floor less than two hours after Latta's arrest.

Latta said he had gone through the White House four days earlier on a guided tour. During the visit, he said he and several other visitors "wandered off from the group. So, you know, I from this didn't see that that'd be such a bad thing, to walk in."

"As I thought about it later, I thought, well, yeah, that's a fact, somebody could have pinned something on me, maybe a bomb or something, and I might have been in there, why, it might have been bad."

Latta, identified by the *Times* as a water meter reader, said he had flown to the nation's capital to attend the inaugural ceremony.

"I'm kind of patriotic," he said.

Reunion Roundup

Reader Alexandra Coates has agreed to co-ordinate our new column on Latta family reunions.

Please send her the details on your reunion and the branch(es) involved, dates, location, directions, etc. Be sure to give her plenty of advance notice, as our newsletter only comes out three times a year.

Send your reunion information to:

Alexandra Coates, 1255 New Hampshire Ave NW, Apt 933, Washington DC 20036-2327. Her e-mail address is acoates@CapAccess.org

Komedy Korner

Is it just us, or do you find it curious that we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

////

The blind date was not going well as the young couple struggled to find a common interest.

"Do you enjoy Kipling?"

"Gee, I don't know. I've never kipped."

////

Overheard in a schoolyard: "I know grammar good."

You're looking for the centerfold, of course. Gotcha again!

Branch 3, family 22**Love lines from 1811**

The following is a transcription of a letter sent by Thomas Latta [Branch 3, family 22] to his future bride, Isabella Foster of Washington, PA. The original letter is in the possession of Ralph W. Allen of Cranberry Township, PA, who sent us a photocopy of the original. In a few cases the punctuation and capitalization have been modernized in an attempt to make the letter more readable.

Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul, sweetner of life, and solder of society, I owe thee much—

Chartiers, June 22th, 1811

Dear Isabella

From all that I have collected by my own observation and the remarks of others but especially by recent experience and reflection, I am convinced that friendship, virtuous friendship, is the most valuable property we can acquire in this inhospitable world. It is the medicine of the mind. Without a friend the world is a dreary road, and life itself a burden, but cheered by the enlivening [hole] of friendship [hole] smile in the most adverse circumstances. Health, honor, power, even learning itself is not so desirable. Learning, indeed, is a real, a solid advantage, a superlative good, which we cannot too much appreciate, nor too eagerly covet. It is to the mind what cultivation is to the soil. Compare your garden in its summer bloom with the wildest scene in your gloomy beech forest and you have the difference between a well informed mind and one suffered to grow up in rank ignorance. But tho learning is of vast importance in life it is not absolutely essential to happiness. Whereas Milton says—"without love, no happiness" and the love he speaks of is the same that I call friendship to distinguish it from that which can exist but between the sexes which last tho a dear delight a temptingly sweet enjoyment is only as the blossom to the fruit compared to friendship. It glitters a while in the spring of life and displays a very alluring figure which attracts the attention of all, while the unthinking often forget that to snatch the flower untimely destroys the fruit, and the flower itself quickly withers. But love even in its best character is a transient rapture rather than a lasting good. Whereas there is no evil incident to human life to which the alleviating virtues of friendship may not be applied with success— From these considerations, dear Isabella, let us as sensible of the true value and proper use of love solace ourselves with its sweets while we may but at the same time endeavor to secure for ourselves a sufficient store of that fruit which is to be the support and comfort of our lives in the cold winter of life when the flowers of affection shall have perished by the pinching frosts of infirmity, the furious gusts of misfortune or the more gentle operations of nature. For this purpose let us cherish the blossom and nourish the fruit by the only means our present circumstances will afford which is a communication of thoughts and sentiments in writing. I wrote to you about the first of May. Have not yet been gratified with an answer the cause of which I ascribe to my saying we intended going over the mountains but we are now fixed in this country for the season and you have no excuse for neglect (after the receipt of this). I would have wrote to you sooner but was prevented by a casual circumstance. I had left my writing apparatus here at Grandfather's and went to work about five miles off. A week afterwards I cut my foot slightly with the axe which however prevented my return for three weeks past, so that I am now embracing the first opportunity I had since I was sure we would stay in this country tho to tell the truth I hate to take up the pen for I find it impossible to evade the curiosity of some of the girls who watch every chance to find out what I am writing. Besides the noise of so much company while I write and the perturbation of my mind with other circumstances makes me blunder so much and write so awkwardly that I am ashamed to send my [hole] away after it is written but I trust that I know who I write to and I hope you will favor me with an answer as soon as possible. I have not had the smallest account from your country since I left it. At present I must stop abruptly, I can write no more. With a full heart I wish you health and comfort till I see you again. Depend on constancy and lasting affection in your familiar but not flattering admirer.

Thomas Latta

Miss Isabella Foster

NB: direct to Washington
Pennsylvania

We could probably pluck the rascal from our well-researched family tree, but I don't think I will

Branch 1

Down at Latta's Mill

By Lawrence Sullivan

Mother couldn't have been madder if the fellow had broken in and stolen the family jewels. Which, in her way of thinking, was just what he'd done.

"The Lattas were never anything but good, upright people," she said. "He had no business using the name of an honest family for thieves!"

What had upset Mother was a little novel, *The Salt and the Savor*, which my sister Bettie had brought to her attention. The book draws heavily on historical sources to take the reader gently back to the pioneer days of LaGrange County, Indiana, where Mother's family had been among the earliest settlers. She loved the book, but thought it intolerable that the author would use her family name in vain.

"Someone ought to do something about it," was how she put it. I figured she meant me, since there was nobody else in the room when she said it.

Actually, only one character in the book is specifically identified as a Latta. He's a strapping and unruly lad named Buck Latta who "borrows" the schoolmaster's horse for a week of joy-riding and then dunks the fellow in an icy pond when he complains. Along the way the schoolmaster tries to teach Buck a thing or two with a horsewhip.

"But it didn't do any good, not then nor later on, ever," the hero-narrator observes.

Elsewhere in the book, the name pops up only in several references to Latta's Mill at Northport, just across the line in Noble County, as the meeting place of a gang of thieves known as "Blacklegs."

Alas, author Howard W. Troyer knew his

history well. One of the leaders of the "Blacklegs," a notorious gang whose activities ranged afield as far away as Ontario, Pennsylvania and Minnesota, *was* indeed a William Latta.

We could probably pluck the rascal from our well-researched family tree, but I don't think I will. A 19th century county history says he married and settled down out west and died many years later highly respected by friends and neighbors.

But the "Uncle William" who erected the sawmill [16 William 4 of Branch No. 1] is in the clear. He sold out within a few years, moved away, became a probate judge, and made a fortune in banking and railroading. He was dead and buried long before the "Blacklegs" gang was smashed and scattered.

He was a younger brother of Mother's great-grandfather, the Rev. James Latta, who with their father established the Episcopal Methodist society in the Haw Patch region of LaGrange and Noble counties that began meeting in 1834.

An 1882 bi-county history describes Noble County in words that are hard to swallow considering its present bucolic nature:

Noble County at once became the headquarters of scores of convicts and criminals and soon gained national reputé as a perfect hotbed of sagacious crime. In California, after the gold excitement had somewhat subsided, any man, it is said, who announced himself as coming from Noble County, Indiana, was regarded with suspicion and distrust. So it was as far east as Maine, as far south as Florida.

A more objective book, the Writers Project history, Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State, published in 1941, paints a similar picture:

(Continued on page 11)

Update on the Update

This is where we would normally inform you of recent discoveries, newly-found connections among the branches, etc. Unfortunately, George and Paul have both had their share of distractions recently, and not everything that we planned to accomplish got accomplished.

George entered the hospital in January for some maintenance on his bionic arm, and Paul was in Pennsylvania most of the month visiting his father who's been hospitalized.

Happily, both situations now seem to be on the mend, and perhaps we can soon return to full capacity. Meanwhile, please overlook whatever's missing from this issue and enjoy what's here!

Bulletin - this just in!

George says it looks like we have a Branch 50 and a Branch 51—Lattas that don't fit into one of the established 49 branches. Look for details on these and other discoveries in the next issue, due out sometime in the spring/summer.

Queries

Send your queries to the editor, Paul H. Calhoun, 129 Lincoln Dr, Port Clinton OH 43452-1248 (pcalhoun@infinet.com)

LATTA	The Red Onion Restaurant in Aspen CO is housed in a building atop which is the inscription "1892 T. Latta" and at whose entrance is inlaid in tile the name "LATTA". What is the history of this building and the man whose name it bears? —Samuel A. McCray, Suite 390, 4130 Linden Ave., Dayton OH 45432-3077
BURGESS LATTA	Walter Allen LATTA (born NC) and wife Elizabeth Ann BURGESS appear in the 1860 federal census of Blount Co, AL, ages 56 and 42 respectively. Children: Jacob Allen; Robert T.; Martha Ann; James B.; Sarah M.; Parmelia F., John P.; Mary E.; Catherine; Walter A. Any information would be appreciated. —Lucinda (Cindy) Stiene, 102 Sugar Leaf Ct., Madison AL 35758-7925
LATTA BRANCH 39	Wish to hear from anyone with information regarding Branch #39. —Victoria J. Dandie, Dan Rob, Lot 4 Stretch Road, Mount Helena 6082, WEST AUSTRALIA (100247.1467@compuserve.com)
GREER LATTA TILDEN	Seek ancestors of Elizabeth GREER (also GRIER/GREAR) b 8 or 9 Mar 1841 in Perry or Morgan Co OH. Mar Josiah LATTA (Branch 29, Family 10) on 31 Mar 1859 in Perry Co OH. Died 29 Oct 1923 in Vernon Co WI. She had a sister Jane, who mar Mr. TILDEN and lived in OH. Father's name may have been James or Patrick. It is said her mother died young and Elizabeth lived with relatives or friends before she married. —David Myhre, 5110 Piccadilly Dr, Madison WI 53714-2016
AMOS ANDERSON BOULSON LATTA McMORRIS READ WOOD	Joseph LATTA left Scotland for Ireland, after 3 years went to Canada in company of a Mr. READ, who had stone quarries. Purchased the old Latta Homestead in 1800 at River Hebert, Nova Scotia. Married Elizabeth McMORRIS and had 4 ch: Abraham, b 1835, mar Dianna WOOD; Matthew, d.y.; Elizabeth, b 19 Jun 1840, mar in 1861 Thomas ANDERSON, d 21 Apr 1920 Saskatoon, Sask.; Jane, mar David AMOS. Joseph had a sister Elizabeth who mar Robert John BOULSON, res. Ireland. Seek ancestors of Joseph and Elizabeth LATTA. —Dr. Robert N. Anderson, #134 1237 4th Ave, Lethbridge, ALTA, CANADA T1J 0P9
LATTA LATTY McCROSKY	John LATTA, b 1795, s/o Joseph and Susanna LATTY, mar Jane McCROSKY. Their son was Abram LATTA, who married in Vigo Co IN. Other LATTA families in this area also. Any info appreciated. —Lisa Mast, 1320 25th St, Moline IL 61265-3254 (Turtlz@aol.com)
HOYT LATTA	Robert HOYT and Elizabeth LATTA were married possibly Nov 20/30, 1828, Gilboa, Putnam Co OH. They had 7 children: Nancy, Eliz., 2 unnamed daughters, Perry, Jeff and Jim. Jeff and Jim moved to Des Moines 1856. Any info appreciated. —Bob Hoyt, 6714 El Salvador St, Long Beach CA 90815-2405
HAIGHT LATTA McKNIGHT VAN VOORHIS	Rev. John Ewing LATTA [Branch 8, family 4] mar Catherine VAN VOORHIS. Her father was John VAN VOORHIS. Was her mother Mary McKNIGHT or Mary HAIGHT? Is there any documentation for the vital dates of John Ewing LATTA? In reference to James LATTA, D.D., [Branch 8, family 2] Robert H. Latta cites <i>Genealogy of Northern Pennsylvania</i> , Vol. 3, page 40. Who are the author and publisher of this work? —Richard M. Lyman, 9 Puffin Ct, Novato CA 94949-6638
LATTA SWANEY	Although LATTA is not my direct line, I have 114 descendants of Sidney LATTA [Branch 18, family 2] and David SWANEY, and 54 descendants of Rebecca SWANEY and Lewis LATTA [Branch 18, family 3]. Write me for details if interested. —David R. Swaney, 802 S Fairview Rd B5, Columbia MO 65203-0762
DUNLAP LATTA McLEAN	Branch 32 is headed by Robert LATTA, who came to America with the McLEAN family, and who died in Bart Twp, Lancaster Co, PA, about 1784, leaving a widow and nine children: Moses, Samuel, James, Robert, William, John, Letitia (mar Joseph McLEAN), Mary (mar William DUNLAP), and Ephraim. Would like to hear from anyone else researching this branch. —Charles X. McCalla, M.D., PO Box 151, Paoli IN 47454-0151
HUEY LATTA	Elizabeth Jane LATTA married James H. HUEY in Maury Co, TN, circa 1850. They had at least one son, William Kelley HUEY, b 28 Nov 1853. Any information would be appreciated. —Terry Joe Trimble, 9123 Brent Meade Blvd, Brentwood TN 37027-8525 (70773.1714@compuserve.com)

Our Financial Contributors since the last issue

We'd be nowhere without you! Many, many thanks!

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Down at Latta's Mill

(Continued from page 8)

South of Wolcotville is a fertile area that was once a dense tamarack swamp, the resort of a notorious gang of horse thieves and counterfeiters known as "Blacklegs," who operated in Noble County and throughout northeastern Indiana during the late 1840s and early '50s. ... Finally [in 1852] the State Legislature passed an act authorizing the formation of several companies of "Regulators," "whose duty it was to apprehend horse thieves and felons. When members of the gang were arrested it was discovered that several prominent citizens of the county were leaders of the "Blacklegs."

Troyer apparently drew his facts for the story from History of the Regulators of Northern Indiana, a booklet written in 1859 by M. H. Mott, a Kendallville lawyer and recording secretary of a group of vigilantes who called themselves the Central Committee of the Noble County Invincibles. Here's what Mott had to say:

On 17 January 1858, Gregory McDougall and eight others were arrested in or near Rome City. Taken to Ligonier, McDougall was brought before the Committee of Noble

County Invincibles on the night of 25 January 1858 whereupon a committee of five men was duly appointed to examine the witnesses and report upon the evidence and the final disposition of the case. The committee, after having made a full and fair investigation of all the testimony...recommended that the said McDougall be hung by the neck until dead on Tuesday, the 26th day of January 1858 [which is to say the following day!] at 2 o'clock p.m.

The hanging went off as scheduled—nine days after McDougall's arrest and some 18 hours after his "trial" before the Invincibles. As he stood on a makeshift gallows near Diamond Lake, just east of Ligonier, waiting for his executioners to drive the farm wagon out from under him, McDougall delivered an impassioned plea to the young people in the crowd exhorting them to heed his sorry fate and forego a life of crime.

The Regulators then set off in pursuit of William Latta, William Hill and George Ulmer, whom Mott describes as "the chief pioneers and leaders of the banditti."

Motivated by rewards of several hundred dollars, private detectives pursued Ulmer all the way to Pittsburgh and back. He was finally caught in Warren, Ohio, on 17 July 1858. After three quick trials, he drew a sentence of eight years.

Hill headed in the other direction and was nabbed later that summer along the Iowa-Missouri border and returned to Indiana. He escaped from the Noble County Jail on 6 March 1858 while awaiting trial and hadn't been heard from by the time Mott's little book went to press the following year.

Latta's final reckoning also is unknown. Without explaining how he got it, Mott shares with his readers a letter he says was written to Latta somewhere in Iowa by McDougall's brother John and dated 10 February 1858. In it John McDougall warns Latta, "You had better be on your guard [for] they intend to have you."

Except for this blot on the family escutcheon, the Lattas were an upright breed, as Mother would be the first to tell you. The family name—which means "from the land of the Laithis," whatever that means—first appeared along Scotland's Ayrshire coast. Sprinkled among the farmers and tradesmen of later generations are generous doses of ministers, doctors, scholars, teachers, poets and hymn writers.

The family genealogy traces our branch to an "Irish nobleman" named James M. Latta who lived in County Donegal, Northern Ireland, during the early 18th century. The Northern Irish Genealogical Society said there was no record of a Latta among the nobility of Ulster and suggested that James Latta probably was a wealthy merchant instead.

Whatever, Latta is said to have disinherited a son named William, forcing the young man to take his wife, Katherine, and head for the Colonies. They tried New Jersey, but

(Continued on page 12)

Financial report

from 1 September through 31 December 1996

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$239.94
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Receipts

Subscription contributions	\$526.00
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TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$526.00
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Expenditures

Advertising	\$ 31.75
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Postage	\$241.95
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Printing	\$170.66
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Supplies	\$116.96
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$561.32
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BALANCE ON HAND	\$204.62
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Estimated costs to publish and mail Issue 3: \$324.50

Unsolicited testimonial

"Reading The Latta Genealogy Newsletter is more fun than going to the dentist. Plus, it costs a lot less."

—Herkimer Latta, Novocain CA.

I went to the city of Mexia and married one of the belles of Texas—Miss Sadie Olive Myers.

Denver in the 1880s

(Continued from page 5)

I was a member of the First Congregational Church and taught Sunday School there. I arranged for the largest picnic ever to go by train out of Denver at that time, a church picnic to Lyons, Colorado. And, by the way, I was among those who got up the first free fireworks exhibition in Denver.

At the time when Myron Reed was president of the Children's Hospital, I was its first secretary. The hospital was in a building across Cherry Creek, later taken over by the Gross Medical School. Dr. Horace Hawkins was the physician.

In the early '80s I went with the Colorado Editorial Association to Texas. I was a member. General George W. West, Adjutant General of Colorado, was also a member. He had been appointed by our Governor to represent Colorado at the dedication of the state capitol at Austin, Texas. I went with him as his military aide. The first day there, Mrs. West became very ill, and it was necessary for him to take her to Corpus Christi, on the coast. Governor Ross of Texas requested of General West that I remain in Austin as the representative of Colorado and as his guest. I so admired Texas and the Texans that afterwards (1891) I went to the city of Mexia and married one of the belles of Texas—Miss Sadie Olive Myers.

One day Lieutenant Adair of the regular army was visiting Denver. I introduced him to my friend, General West. While we were in General West's office, Colonel Chivington came in, and I introduced Lieutenant Adair, who asked him about the Sand Creek fight, erroneously called a massacre. Colonel Chivington in my presence told Lieutenant Adair the whole story, and said that his action was entirely justified. Lieutenant Adair agreed.

When the Indians broke out in the western part of Colorado, the Governor called out all the companies of both the first and second regiments of the Colorado National Guard, except my company. B. Captain Folsom of Leadville, said to be a brother of Mrs. Grover Cleveland, was killed in action. General West telegraphed Brigadier

General Reardon, then in command, to give them hell, and ever after was nicknamed "Give-them-hell West."

I was acquainted with Harry H. Tammen and Fred Bonfils. One day I asked Mr. Tammen how to succeed, since he had been so successful. He said, "Get in the line of success."

Judge James B. Belford, former member of Congress, and William Gilpin often visited me at my office in the Symes building and told me many interesting stories of Colorado and Washington. Unfortunately, I do not now recall them.

Address Correction

Last issue we published an incorrect address for Vicki Breeze, branch 4. Her correct address is 542 Hutchinson St, Rock Hill SC 29730-0402. Her e-mail address is RSWG32A@prodigy.com.

Our apologies for the error.

Down at Latta's Mill

(Continued from page 11)

quickly left to join the hordes of Scotch-Irish who were carving out the Cumberland Valley wilderness in western Pennsylvania.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, according to unverified family lore, William joined a militia raised at Carlisle, Pa., but oddly known as Morgan's Virginia Riflemen. The unit's official name was the 11th Virginia Regiment.

Our lineage follows William Latta's second-born son, Robert H. Latta (1773-1859), who went on to become an early settler of Fairfield County, Ohio, and later joined his son, Dr. Johnston Latta, on the Indiana frontier. Robert—a giant of a man at 6 foot 4 and 300 pounds, according to family records—eventually amassed nearly 1,500 acres in Indiana. Among his property was land he donated for the Eden Chapel and Cemetery on the edge of Topeka, where many of our ancestors lie.

He was the first settler of Eden Township. His son Johnston (1807-73) was the first physician of Goshen; his son James (1796-1855)—Mother's great-grandfather, as already mentioned—was the first minister of Ligonier; and his son William (1801-47) built the first sawmill in Noble County's Orange Township.