

HISTORY

FIRST DRAFT

GETTING TO KNOW MR. HARLOW

Roamer J.P. Harlow found home, avocation in Grand Valley

One of the most amazing things about Winnie Mading's great-great grandfather, John Petal (J.P.) Harlow, was the variety of



BOB SILBERNAGEL

jobs he held in various locations in 19th century America.

"In Mem-

phis he was a lawyer and a teacher," Mading said earlier this month. He would later work as a miner, a mining superintendent, a railroad clerk and a restaurateur. He would also become a justice of the peace, a deputy U.S. marshal and a fruit farmer.

It was in the latter occupations that he was important to Mesa County. He was the first justice of the peace in Grand Junction, and one of its early deputy U.S. marshals. He was also among the earliest people — perhaps

the first — to attempt to grow peaches in the area. He and his wife Kate established one of the first fruit farms in what would become Mesa County on Rapid Creek, just east of Palisade. They also may have constructed the first irrigation ditch in the region.

Harlow is buried on his farm, and a sandstone monument still stands there. Mading and her husband, Jim, who live near Milwaukee, Wis., were in Grand Junction earlier this month to visit the Harlow monument and to do more research on her ancestor. They also stopped in Gunnison and Salt Lake City.

The greatest surprise in that research came in Gunnison, Jim said, when they discovered that J.P.'s son, William, apparently joined him in Gunnison around 1880, not long before J.P. and Kate moved on to the Grand Valley. That occurred in 1881, just after the Ute Indians had been forcibly removed from most of western Colorado.

William did not move to the Grand Junction area with his father and stepmother. He eventually settled in Salt Lake City, where he plied his trade as a sign and mural painter.

The elder Harlow was born around 1830 in Canada, although the exact location is not known. The only community in which Mading could find any mention of him was in Whitby, Ontario.

He next appeared in the official record is Geneva, N.Y., where he married his first wife, Elizabeth Augusta, in 1854, Mading said. The couple then moved to Memphis, apparently with Elizabeth's parents, and William was born there in 1855.

"Within a year, she and her parents and William all moved back to New York," Mading said, although it's not clear why. Perhaps Memphis became an uncomfortable place for Yankees as the drumbeats of the approaching Civil War grew louder, she speculated.

In any event, J.P. didn't accompany them. Instead, he headed west, apparently smitten with gold fever. He went first to Salt Lake City, although Mading said she has found no indication that he was ever a member of the Mormon church. Then he headed to South America for a few years in search of mineral wealth, be-



Photos by BOB SILBERNAGEL/The Daily Sentinel

Jim and Winnie Mading in front of the remains of the Harlow farm home on Rapid Creek. John Petal (J.P.) Harlow is buried on his farm.

fore returning to Utah. In 1870, he was listed as a railroad clerk in Ogden, Utah, and by 1874 he was a mining superintendent.

Sometime in the late 1870s, Harlow moved to the new town of Gunnison, Colo., where he apparently met and married Kate. There was no bigamy involved. Elizabeth had died earlier in New York.

By 1880, the Harlows operated a restaurant in Gunnison. "He had made money mining, and now he was making more money serving miners," Mading said.

When and how William arrived is unclear, but his name showed up in Gunnison County court documents when he filed a lien against the owners of a defunct opera house to try to obtain payment for painting he had performed in the building.

J.P. Harlow, seemingly always searching for greener pastures, was attracted to Grand Junction

when that area opened up to settlers after the Utes were removed in the fall of 1881.

According to documents prepared for the Colorado State Historical Society in 1995 to get Harlow's grave site listed on the National Register, J.P. and Kate moved first to the brand new town of Grand Junction, where they again operated a small restaurant. But Harlow also homesteaded 160 acres on Rapid Creek. His friend and Grand Junction founding father, George Crawford, would later have a large ranch and farm nearby.

By the spring of 1882, Harlow had planted peach trees and perhaps a few apple trees on his Rapid Creek property, convinced that the region was prime country for growing fruit. His first crop of trees failed. But, undaunted, he planted a second crop, using the bone meal as fertilizer. And this

time he provided water from an irrigation ditch running from Rapid Creek.

"This irrigation ditch was the first to be built in an area that now depends solely on irrigation water to nourish its abundant crops," the application to the Historical Society said. "Through the pioneering actions of 'Judge' Harlow, the Rapid Creek area and present day Palisade became the lush agricultural region that it is today."

By 1886, according to one early history of the region, Harlow's ranch had more than 2,000 peach trees, 200 apple trees and "a variety of other fruit trees, bushes and plants."

The farm continued to be productive even after Harlow died in 1891, according to an 1893 feature on Kate Harlow in what was then the community's newest newspaper, The Daily Sentinel. The article said

the Harlow Ranch was then "a talisman for every excellent fruit grown in the Grand Valley" and "its reputation has gone forth into every city in the state of Colorado."

The Harlows moved permanently to the farm some 15 miles from Grand Junction in 1884, after construction of a sandstone house was completed. J.P. was named justice of the peace in 1882 and a deputy marshal in 1883. He divided his time between work in Grand Junction and his ranch on Rapid Creek.

J.P. died of pneumonia in 1891. Kate continued to live in Grand Junction until her death years later.

Thanks to Winnie and Jim Mading, Cheryl Borchardt and the Museum of Western Colorado for their assistance with this article.

Century-old scrapbook opens teen's eyes to history

By CAROL MCGRAW
The Gazette

COLORADO SPRINGS — Fifteen-year-old Graham Gale has spent hours trying to solve the mystery of Mary Kyle, who was born 134 years ago.

What she found earned her a new respect for local history and a top grade at Palmer High School for her International Baccalaureate community service project.

She also has concluded that her generation is losing out on the opportunity to leave behind tangible mementos of their lives: "Things that a Facebook timeline can't show," she said.

Mary Kyle, a Colorado Springs resident, was Gale's age when she began keeping a scrapbook in 1894 and finished it in 1913.

The book was found stuffed in a secret compartment behind a fireplace in the house where the girl had lived on Wood Avenue. It was given to the Pioneers Museum collection of valuable artifacts in 1998.

Graham, who was searching for a class project last spring, thought she might answer phones for her service project at Radio Colorado College. But Craig Richardson, a producer for KRCC's "The Big Something," suggested something more ambitious and steered her to Matt Mayberry, the museum's director, who is a friend of her parents Kimberley Sherwood and Chuck Gale. He suggested she take a look at the scrapbook. Museum staff often help students with history projects.

"I thought it would be a photo book like we have today," Gale said.

But when she sat down in the museum's research room with

the old yellowed scrapbook on a stand in front of her, she was stunned. It was nearly a foot high, and was crammed with the clues of a young girl's life decidedly different from her own.

Graham recently revisited the book, carefully donning white gloves to keep fingerprint oils from deteriorating the pages.

The girl it belonged to captivates Graham even though her project has been completed.

She found that the book continues to reveal new clues about a teenager who lived more than a century ago.

"I didn't see this flower she kept," Graham said, peeking into an envelope filled with crumbling greenery.

One of her first and biggest challenges for the project, she said, was reading the old-fashioned handwriting that accompanied the mementos. "Her handwriting was impossible," she said. It didn't help that schools rarely teach cursive, and students usually see information only in type. But now she is more adept at reading the dainty curlicues of yesteryear.

She believes that Kyle must have been fairly wealthy. There were pages of ship manifests and itineraries from an extended three-month grand tour through Europe.

She was a bit mystified by the scores of little white cards pasted on the pages. She found out they are calling cards, notes left at the girl's home inviting her to teas, luncheons and sometimes, merely saying that someone had stopped by to see her.

She pointed to one. "Mrs. William Jewell was asking her to tea at 5 o'clock on April 17."

"That tells me there weren't any phones then," she said.

There were colorful mementos including Valentines, birthday cards, an invitation to a bridge game with a tiny scoring pencil attached; a tiny Japanese-style fan; a dried carnation boutonniere; a telegram from her brother announcing the birth of a daughter; menus, including one from New Year's supper in 1913 at the Antler's Hotel, where lobster and Camembert cheese was served.

"She was very popular," Graham said. "There's even a note that says, 'Will you marry me.'" She found out later that Kyle apparently never married.

She also found several items indicating that Kyle probably attended St. Ignatius College in Chicago.

Graham was especially taken by a small sketch of Kyle done on a scrap of paper. Her hair was rolled stylishly on top of her head. "I think she must have had cool clothes," she said, pointing to a poem that said: "There was a young lady named Kyle, who always followed the style, when she came home from Paris, people all gasped to see, this stylish young lady named Kyle."

Graham also decided that Kyle loved music, having kept dozens of programs from the Colorado Springs Musical Club.

One of the most astonishing finds, Graham said, was learning that Kyle lived on Wood Avenue, only a couple of blocks from her own Old North end house.

"How weird is that," she said. Graham assembled what she learned about Kyle into a PowerPoint presentation for her class, and also a video in collaboration with Radio Colorado College. Looking at the book a week later at the museum, she said wistfully, "I'd like to know

more."

Mayberry, the museum director, pulled from the stacks a city directory. Graham found that Kyle had lived with her sister Katherine Hunt and husband Alfred H. Hunt, a bank executive, at the Wood Avenue address.

Mayberry showed Graham how to search for Kyle's obituary, which she found in an old Gazette newspaper. "Oh wow," said Graham. "I thought she was older when she made the scrapbook, but she was my age."

Kyle was born in 1879 and died at a hospital in Amsterdam, N.Y., at age 84.

This information just fueled more questions, Graham said. "I would love to find her diary if she wrote one," Graham said.

Graham said she has learned a lot of history looking at the scrapbook. "It's way different than just scrolling Facebook. It's really better to have a scrapbook that you can put your hands on."

After the project, Graham

decided to start her historical record. She has created a Keepsake Box out of an old hiking boot box. So far, it contains some shoes she painted and wore almost every day her freshman year at Palmer High School. It also includes some cards, ticket stubs and a program from "Alice in Wonderland" in which she saw her cousin perform in Los Angeles.

"I've learned that preserving history is very important and you have to make sure to share it."

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