

Hutchinsons and the History of Jamestown Colorado

There is some Hutchinson history included in the *Mountain Memories, a History of Jimtown, Colorado* by Barbara Heaton and Jean King and compiled by Jann Gurnsey which tells of the little town which was named Jimtown and renamed "Jamestown" by the Post Office Department. It tells of the discovery of silver in the James Creek gulch by Joseph Hutchinson and James Smith in 1864, and of a daredevil young boy living there who made history later in the silent screen movies.

This Joseph Hutchinson is the son of great great grandfather James Adrian Hutchinson and the older brother of great grandfather Daniel Ulrey Hutchinson. Joseph was born July 8, 1822 in Warren County, Ohio and died September 3, 1889 in Weld County, Colorado. He married Rhoda Bessie Violet October 11, 1853 in Jefferson County, Iowa. They had children Harriet Keziah Hutchinson House (1854-1936), Daniel Watson Carson Hutchinson (1855-1912), Joseph Atterbury Hutchinson (1858-1956), Sarah Eunice Hutchinson Bucherdee (1860-1953), Margaret Bell Hutchinson (1862-1865), and Ida Josephine Hutchinson (1866-1875). Joseph was Buried Burlington Cemetery, Longmont, Colorado.

There was much activity in the region prior to Jamestown's official incorporation in 1883. In 1860 George Zweck, proprietor of the Zweck Hotel (later the Imperial Hotel) in Longmont, drove his cattle from his ranch to Jamestown where he found pasture, water, shelter, and abundant prospect. The ore deposits prospected by Zweck later brought significance to Elysian Park, the first name applied to what would eventually become Jamestown. In the late 1860's, residents petitioned to have a post office, and stated that they wanted the town named Camp Jimtown. The Post Office Department, however, designated "Jamestown" as its official name. Nevertheless, most old-timers still call it Jimtown.

In 1864, Johnny Knoop and Joseph Hutchinson prospected in James Creek Gulch. They found indications of minerals and located "float" in the creek that carried lead and silver. They returned to Black Hawk, gathered their supplies, and returned to make camp here. The ore that they discovered assayed at \$233.50 per ton in silver and lead. In the spring of 1864, Hutchinson and James Smith discovered rich galena veins at the Jim Creek location. As the beginning of the first boom, about 500 miners rushed to Jim Creek. News traveled quickly and people moved in temporarily until the first snow. This boom died quickly, however, as those miners did not have enough supplies to survive the winter.

In 1865, Hutchinson and Smith returned with friends G.W. Buchanan, H.N. Coffey, and John Viriden. These men had a lasting impact on the camp, particularly John Viriden. Viriden built a steam powered sawmill that summer and kept busy converting the hillside ponderosas to lumber for the cabins and stores starting to pop up along the two streets of the camp. Patten and Beebee, of the Gold Hill mining area, built the first stamp mill on Little Jim Creek.

In May 1866, three feet of snow fell and isolated some 600 miners and prospectors for six days, many of whom ran out of provisions. But this group stayed on. On September 7, 1866, the constitution of the Central Mining District was approved and signed by 16 men. This brought some semblance of law and order to the area and established means of legal claim. A post office was established in the busy mining community that same year. 1870 saw the construction of stores, saloons, blacksmith shops, and boarding houses. At this time there were 300 prospectors and 200 houses. Three sawmills and a smelting furnace were built between January and February 1870.

Miners soon held meetings. The first meeting was called to order and began with the miners singing "Sweet Betsy From Pike". The chairman opened the meeting only to find everyone speaking out of turn. It took a loud "Keep still" to calm the miners and obtain a motion. But before the motion could be made, it was stated by a miner that no doubt a lot (parcel) had been sold for a keg of beer, "but the beer was drunk and drunk or sober,

the title was just as good as if the consideration had been money." After many motions and resolutions, a town committee was appointed to survey lots. They determined that whoever drew "first blood" owned the lot.

The Argo (Kismet) claim was discovered adjacent to the Mount Pleasant claim in 1872. The close proximity and the lay of the ore led local citizens to believe that both of these mines were working into a horizontal deposit or blanket vein. While working on the Argo, news of the discovery spread quickly through the country. Thousands of people came to visit the mine and the entire state watched its development. Tellurium was identified in the ore of the area.

In February 1873, another hotel and store were built with the proposal of "supplying the district with necessaries of life at lowest cash rates." While the town continued to grow, the boom period could not last forever and, soon enough, a bust cycle occurred. A brief recession hit in 1874, though a variety of events led to another year of prosperity. William McKnight and Company staked a series of claims along Central Gulch that the Boulder County News reported: "We saw a prospect of .33 cents to a half of pan full of dirt."

During the summer of 1875, which began the third boom, two of the most prominent mines were discovered. The Golden Age and the Bueno (Wano) produced the richest gold specimens and the largest amount of income from any mines in Boulder County. The first schoolhouse was built on the west end of town. The first of many floods occurred, drowning 5- year-old Lula May Turner. The Golden Age was sold in the late 1870's. At this time, there were approximately 100 residents. Eugene Pike, of Parmely and Sheed in Chicago, bought the mine for \$194,000 and employed 12 men. The gold brought in \$17.75 per ounce. Mr. Pike was the administrator of the Boulder National Bank and exhibited specimens of the Golden Age nuggets in the lobby of the bank. Some of the gold was so pure it was sent directly to the Denver Mint. The selling of the Golden Age and the dawning of the 1880's ended the third mining boom.

The 1880 census showed a population of 251. At this time, the community had two hotels, a church, a school, 30 saloons, gambling parlors, brothels, and a dance hall. The Cricket Dance Hall was built and held nightly dances. The year 1882 brought another boom with a population increase to 10,000. The town continued to grow, meeting the needs with three stores, a small post office, a blacksmith shop, and six ore mills. A stage line, Lippo and Blumbeon's, made three trips a week to the town from Boulder. Quoted in Mountain Memories, an article from The San Francisco Examiner reported that, "Jimtown was a hard working and hard playing set of miners that took over the mountain hamlet and made it a rip-roaring mining town". There was no time to build houses, so the miners lived in tents. When the boom was at its peak, there was an area two to three miles square packed with tents. On April 4, 1883 the town was incorporated. The town government formed and the Board of Trustees gathered for meetings at the "Budweiser Palace," owned by Baron Walter B. Von Richthofen from Prussia. Mining was the way of life for many a resident in the town's early days.

In 1891, the boom ended. Not until the money dwindled did the miners realize that no ore of any amount was being shipped out of Camp Jimtown, though thousands of dollars were being spent in the development of valueless veins. Once again the town became quiet. The 1893 smallpox epidemic ravaged the town, wiping out both adults and children, many of whom are buried in the Jamestown Cemetery. Another flood passed through Jamestown in 1894 destroying the Budweiser Palace, the Golden Age Mill, and every house on the north side of town. The church, with its bell still ringing, floated down stream. Afterwards, basket socials and bazaars were held to help finance new construction and rebuild roads.

By 1916, the fabric of the community had changed drastically. Some of the extant buildings are those built in 1916. The pool hall and an old building that housed the Post Office sat adjacent (south) to the present Town Hall. When the pool hall was abandoned in 1933 or 1934, it remained in place until the flood of 1969. A grain dealer stood on the site of the present church. There remained only one saloon, the "Dopp Saloon". The icehouse on Main Street was deserted and the Evans House/Hotel was boarded up and eventually destroyed. In 1917 the town was asked to re-open the Bueno Mill at the request of the War Production Board. The mill was

remodeled and equipped to produce much needed fluorspar for use in steel production. The town grew little, but employment brought prosperity. By the 1930's, however, poverty was common. Those with determination stayed, hoping that the revival of gold activity would get them through this rough time. The Town Board began meeting on a monthly basis, meeting in the old Pool Hall, the Church or any other available location. Eventually in 1935 a motion was made to build a new town hall.

There are claims by the older residents that what is now the town office was built at the same time as the town hall and referred to as the kitchen and coal room. In order to increase revenue for the town, the town hall was rented out for \$25 per night for Saturday night dances. This was an issue that would trouble the Town Board for many years to come. The board went back and forth allowing and then discontinuing the dances from 1938 into the 1940s. By October 1943, the nightly dances reverted back to one night a week- Saturdays. In addition, the Board agreed to rent the town hall to the school kids four nights a week, excepting Saturdays.

It was at the July 16, 1947 meeting that the Board met to address the issue of unruly patrons and drinking on the street. They decided to turn the kitchen and coal room into a jail. At some point between this 1947 meeting and the July 11, 1983 meeting, possibly in the 1960s, the jail was eliminated and the space used for storage. The 1969 flood washed out the center of the town, destroying the remains of the old Pool Hall, where the Board met in their earlier days. Left untouched were the Town Hall and other buildings on the north side of Main Street. The storage area was again changed when the Town Board met on April 7, 1986 and a motion was made to convert the backroom into a town office. The motion passed unanimously and six hundred dollars was approved to complete the change. As mining became scarce and the Bueno (Wano) closed its doors, residents began seeking employment in Boulder, Longmont, and Denver. This once-booming mining town now has about 300 residents who enjoy the mountain vistas in this still rural community.

Elsewhere in the book men are shown in a photo of the "baseball team at the town park, 1885". In the photo are Dan "Hutcheson" [which would have been Joseph Hutchinson's son], Louis House [Joseph Hutchinson's son-in-law and Keziah's husband], and Jack Fairbanks (John - older brother of Douglas, Sr., who became a leading man on the silent screen).

Another story tells that "Main Street in Jamestown was often enlivened by an ore wagon drawn by four or six horses, careening down Falls Hill carrying a lad of ten or twelve years standing astraddle of the teams and racing through town. This was during the years surrounding the turn of the century, and the boy's name was Douglas Fairbanks. From his early Jimtown escapades he went on to conquer the early motion picture world. Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. lived in Jamestown with his mother and brother for some years. His grandparents operated a boarding house at the foot of Falls Hill. His brother, Jack, resided here for several years after the rest of the family left. According to the local lore, Douglas, the youngest member of the family was a tag-a-long and was called 'Me-Too' by his family, since he always wanted to be included and asked 'me too?'"

See also

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/03000615.pdf>

https://issuu.com/timescall/docs/7_9_2011_bcc0709a1