

## Hannah

by Debi Clark

Hannah was restless. She was sixteen, and the oldest child still living at the Burroughs home in Wayne County, Illinois. When her mother died the year before, Hannah was left to run the household for her father, Edward Burroughs, and care for her five younger siblings. Her older brothers and sisters had already married and built homes of their own. She was still adjusting to all the new responsibilities when her father announced he would marry again. To Synthia Smith, a woman much closer to Hannah's age than Edward's.

The Country was restless too. Political tensions were high about whether or not the expansion of slavery would be allowed as the Western Territories applied for statehood. Still, many people were being drawn West for new land, new opportunities, and the promise of riches.

W.C. "Frank" Simpson, a nearby miller, had lost his wife at nearly the same time Hannah had lost her mother. He must have caught that restless mood, as he sold his land and mill and joined a wagon train heading West. With him were his own five children, and Hannah.

More than a hundred years later, the Colorado Transcript printed a story about Hannah's journey, as told by her grandson, Edward Blood:

"Hannah married a Mr. Simpson when she was only sixteen years of age. Simpson, previously wed, had two daughters older than his young bride, when they came west across the plains in their covered wagon. Somewhere in Kansas, they met up with an Indian Chief who rode up to their wagon on his horse, and said he wanted Simpson's white squaw. He offered three ponies for her, but Simpson held out for five." (If they'd made the bargain, Ed chuckled, his own life might have been quite different). "When the travelers reached Cherry Creek, they found just thirteen log cabins stretched out along the banks. An Indian told them there had been some mighty big floods there, and he stood in the stream and held his tomahawk above his head to show the depth of the flood waters. Leaving Denver, the party went on to Black Hawk and Central City, which took them almost six weeks".

By October, 1860, Hannah and Frank were living and working in a hotel in Central City, which was still part of the Kansas Territory at the time. They had a son, "Kit" Carson Simpson, and Hannah was pregnant with daughter, Elerado. Also living at the hotel was Lyman Blood, a young man from Massachusetts, who came west in the mining boom.

The following year, the Country became consumed with the Civil War. Hannah would lose two brothers in the conflict. Her oldest brother, Hays Burroughs, died at the infamous prison at Andersonville, Georgia. A younger brother, Austin Burroughs, survived Andersonville, but never regained his health, dying of tuberculosis in 1867. During that same time, Hannah's marriage unraveled. Details of the divorce are missing, but the Rocky Mountain News announced that "at the St. Nicholas Hotel, Central City, on Dec. 31, 1867, Mr. Lyman wed Miss Hannah Simpson; both of Ralston Creek, Jefferson County, Colorado".

Lyman had given up mining to become a cattle rancher, and the couple settled in Golden Gate Canyon, about five miles up the mountain from the town of Golden. The couple built and ran Five Mile House, a roadhouse and dancehall located along the narrow gulch road. Lyman purchased some additional grazing land and registered his livestock brand as the initials LB, and noted that he also painted the cattle horns red. In 1870, in addition to Carson and Elerado, the family had welcomed another son, and there would soon be a third. Hannah's younger brother, twenty year old William Burroughs, had also come to visit.

Tragedy struck in 1872 when Hannah's twelve year old daughter, Elerado, was returning from a shopping trip in Golden. John Virden and his new bride were driving the wagon up the canyon road. John's fourteen year old sister, and twelve year old Elerado were with them that July day. There had been an unseen, sudden, intense mountain storm further west in the Rockies that sent an eight foot wall of water, trees, logs and boulders surging through the gulch. The wagon was swept away, carrying the bodies of the two girls and one of the horses more than a mile downstream. Elerado's step-father, Lyman Blood was the one to find her battered body. Mr. Virden and his wife survived by holding each other to a tree on the side of the canyon.

The years went on, and by 1890, Hannah's oldest son Carson Simpson had married Ellen Shepherd and started a family of his own. The children of Hannah and Lyman Blood were all still living at home. Lyman F. was 20, Edward was 18, Arthur was 16, John was 14, and Anna was 11. Just a year later, in March 1891, a second tragedy arrived. Lyman, Hannah's husband, was returning home just before dark, along that same canyon road that had claimed Elerado so many years before. Something frightened his team of horses, running his wagon off the road and over a cliff. Lyman was found the next morning and was carried to his home where he succumbed to his injuries.

A few years later, tax records show that Hannah left Golden Gate Canyon, building a home on Illinois Street in the town of Golden. However, she kept the mountain property until just before her death in 1912.

William Burroughs, Hannah's brother, returned to Illinois shortly after his visit in 1870, and married Emily Miranda McGrew. In 1903, he returned to Colorado, hoping it would benefit his health. Although he died that same year, Emily Miranda and some of the younger children settled in Golden near Hannah.

Another brother, James Jarvis Burroughs, arrived in Golden in 1907 and 'bought the old Simmons place on the North side', of Golden. He sold the house a year later, returning to Oklahoma.

\*My 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather was Hays Burroughs, Hannah's oldest brother. In researching Hays, I stumbled upon Hannah's name, and soon realized I finally had a Colorado connection. I began gathering the bits and pieces of the story of her life just a few years ago. Hannah and Lyman, and many of the Burroughs, Simpson and Blood families are buried at the Golden Cemetery near the Jefferson County Courthouse. There are many living descendants still in the Golden area. Debi Ashcroft Clark – February 2017