

# AN AMERICAN MEMOIR

By MARGARET MARSHALL

Courtesy The Hudson Review

## I Raft River Valley

Raft River, which got its name because beavers, built their dams, had made it so wide at its mouth that it could be crossed only by raft, rises near the Utah-Idaho border, flows mainly north, and empties into Snake River. Its central valley is wide and shallow and tips toward the east, toward the river and the base of the Black Pine Mountains beyond. There is one other sizeable stream in the area. This is Cassia Creek, which flows in from the Goose Creek Mountain to the west, crossed the valley, and joins Raft River.

As I knew it, in the early years of this century, Raft River Valley was sagebrush country, but in the eighteen-seventies, it was also a natural pasture. Every spring, the valley flood spreading out from the river showed a rich crop of bunch grass, which cures itself and stays sweet all winter. Forage was so abundant that great herds of cattle were driven in, to winter there or to rest and take of fat before being driven to farther points, to Montana or California. Along the river were a few permanent ranches, which served as headquarters for the owners, or foremen, and the cowhands of herds in transit. There were some ranches also on Cassia Creek in the west. But there were few women and children in the region because it was considered unsafe for families. The local Indians, though they had been “pacified” in the sixties, still posed a threat to isolated settlers.

In the spring of 1872, a pair of covered wagons and a little bunch of

horses, ridden or trailed by the two men and the older boys in the party, came to a halt on the south bank of Cassia Creek. The wagons were stowed with the families and household gear of Charles Park, My Maternal grandfather, and his brother Thompson; another ranch was in the making, a mile down the creek from the Conant place and somewhat less than that from the place of two brothers names Rice-“Black Bill” and Dell.

The small caravan, which had started from the town of Willard, Utah, had been on the way much longer than the distance warranted. “We were eleven days on the road my father hobbled a fine horse for the night and he got lost and we stopped to hunt him.” So my mother wrote me sixty-eight years later when she was old and time hung heavy on her hands and she was recalling the early days. She was Charles Parke’s daughter Catharine, then eight years old.

We drove horses and oxen on the wagons. I remember the day before we got to where we settled; my uncle’s wife Aunt Jule drove her team into a creek [always pronounced crick] that was called Clear Creek. One of the horses balked in the stream. She had a crate of chickens tied to the back of the wagon and they were all drowned in the high water. I remember driving through the same stream with my mother. She drove a yoke of oxen and I can remember hearing her call out to the oxen “Whoa! Haw! Gee! Buck!” We always called it Chicken Creek after that.

There was no house ready for the women and children who spilled out of the wagons; the building of cabins was part of the summer's work. The two families went right on camping out, in the covered wagon boxes, which were set on logs on the ground.

Charles Parke was an old western hand. He was born in Eugene, Indiana, in 1829, probably of Scotch-Irish stock. He went to California during the gold rush but later doubled back to Utah. His mother had been a Mormon and he called himself one, but even Mother admitted that he was not a very good one. "Charlie Parke," she would say-she liked the sound of his full name- "wasn't as good a Mormon as he should have been but he'd never let anybody abuse the Mormons. He'd just say, Stranger, my mother was a Mormon, and if the fellow knew what was good for him he'd take it back.

Charlie Parke died before I was born. Most of what I heard about him I heard from Mother, and her remarks about him run together in my memory. He was a real frontiersman. He had a wild streak in him a mile wide. He swore like a trooper, and every so often he'd let out a yell that like to scared you to death. He feared neither God nor man and loved a fight. But he was full of fun, too, and played the damndest practical jokes. He rode hard. He drank hard. He'd pour a little whisky into his hand, Mother said, smell it, and say, "By Gad, that's good whisky. Smells like henshit."

Soon after the arrival on Cassia Creek, Kate went with her father to see "Black Bill" Rice. It was early in the morning and Mr. Rice was wearing a Bathrobe. Kate was Wide-eyed at the sight of a man in what looked like a woman's get-up and asked her father, in a whisper, what it was. In a stage

whisper, Grandfather replied that Mr. Rice was about to be confined.

Once, with a friend, Grandfather was driving a team of mules hauling a heavy load-sacks of grain-over a "dugway," a track gouged out up and around a mountain, just wide enough for a wagon. The friend, who was scared, urged Charlie Parke to take it easy. As they reached the highest point and started down, He repeated his warning. Charlie Parke leapt to his feet, shouting, "I'll be damned if anybody's going to tell me how to drive a team!" Then he flung the reins over the mules' backs and let out a yell that scared them into a dead run down the narrow curving track. Wagon and mules went over the side. The men and animals survived-I don't know about the grain-but Grandfather carried the scars of the crash to the end of his life.

Grandfather wore his religion lightly, but he did observe-or take advantage of- one Mormon practice. He was a polygamist. He had three wives altogether, but he separated from his first wife before he married his second; his household consisted of the second and third wives and their children. The third wife was my grandmother Margaret Alice Watterson, for whom I was named.

Charlie Parke, I am sure, went west for the hell of it; Margaret Watterson was the daughter of pioneers preoccupied with heaven. Her parents, William and Mary Colvin Watterson, had lived originally in or near Peel on the Isle of Man; Margaret, too, for she was born there in 1834. William was a fisherman and owned his own boat; his ownership of a boat was stressed, perhaps because it denoted status. For the rest, no mementoes except for a stray likeness or two of people inadequately

identified and a small picture of an ancient ruin which does bear a label: "St. Patrick's Church and Round Tower, Peel Castle."

To Peel, in the early eighteenth-forties, came fishers of missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) who traveled in pairs. The Wattersons were converted to the new religion and with it to the new world. William Watterson sold his fishing boat and whatever else he owned that could not be transported, and the family migrated to America. They landed in New Orleans where they took a steamboat up the Mississippi to Nauvoo, Illinois, then the headquarters of the church. When they arrived, the Prophet Joseph Smith himself came on board to welcome them. William Watterson bought a farm at Macedonia, twenty-one miles from Nauvoo, and the family lived there until the spring of 1846, when the Mormons, by agreement with their persecutors, began to leave Illinois. Great Grandfather Watterson, in this crisis, exchanged his farm for a yoke of oxen with which to escape. But on the first night out, the oxen plunged over a bluff and were killed. William managed to get another team, and the family moved on. They stopped at the Little Mesquite River in Iowa and there William again settled his family on a farm, where they remained until 1850. Then, in one of a hundred wagons under command of Captain Foot, the Wattersons crossed the plains to Utah, arriving in Salt Lake City on October 1.

The Wattersons were not among the distinguished first of the Mormons pioneers to reach Utah, nor of the even more illustrious handcart companies of later years, as Mother seemed to wish they had been. But as she used to say, Great Grandmother Watterson walked

most of the way across the plains, leading one child by the hand and carrying another." By "carrying" she probably meant that Great Grandmother was Pregnant.

The family settled in Bountiful, in what now is Davis County, Utah. William died there in 1855. His wife and their four children remained in Bountiful until 1860, when they moved to a farm in Cache Valley near the town of Logan.

The Wattersons, unlike Charlie Parke, were good Mormons, members of that body of sturdy, hard-working believers who enabled Brigham Young to set up an agricultural society and a theocracy in the path of the tides of adventure and speculation that were sweeping across the West. William Watterson took no more wives. Polygamy was proclaimed a church doctrine only in 1852; the practice must have come hard to many of the Saints who had grown to maturity in the old world in stern monogamous religions. By necessity, the Mormons set up their Zion on a frontier, but they were always at war with the frontier. Brigham Young was particularly opposed to gold mining. (Iron mining was another matter.) "Gold is for paving streets," he said. "The business of a Saint is to stay at home and make his fields green." The Wattersons obeyed. And Margaret Alice grew up a devoted daughter of the church. By what waywardness of chance or choice she married a wild man and what true believers called a "Jack Mormon" like Charlie Parke, who can say? Perhaps the fact that Margaret was nearing thirty and was by Mormon standards a very old maid had something to do with it. Marry him she did, in the early sixties, and she went to live with him and his other wife and family in Willard, Utah. Her double wifehood was of short duration. Soon

after her first child-Catharine, My mother-was born, in 1864, the other wife died, leaving four children to Grandmother's care. Within a few years, Grandmother had three more children: another girl, named Margaret, and two boys, Ether and Lamoni, whose names were drawn from the Book of Mormon.

Charlie Parke had a farm in Willard, but he also worked away from home at times, for in 1869 he was driving a team in a construction camp near Antelope Springs, Utah. It was no ordinary construction camp. The work in hand was the laying of rails, and it culminated in the completion at Promontory, Utah, which is only a few miles from Antelope Springs, of the first transcontinental railway in the United States. Charles Parke may be in the well-known photograph taken at the celebration of the driving of the final spike, but I can't identify him.

Charlie Parke may have been away from home at other times, too, but home continued to be Willard until the spring of 1872. Mother said it was a wonder he stayed in Utah as long as he did. Like Daniel Boon, Charlie Parke disliked the sight of another man's smoke. Unlike Daniel Boone he disliked trees- shade trees, that is, for in that country shade trees had to be planted and denoted settlement. By the seventies, Utah was showing more and more smokes, shade tree, and fences. Charlie Parke decided to move on. Prospecting for good cattle country, he found in the central valley of the Raft River just what he wanted. Plenty of grass and no fences; no settlements to speak of, and the only trees and willows along the water course. He took up two half-sections of land with water rights and range rights. One of them was on Raft River itself. The other was on

Cassia Creek, and this was to be the home place. There were neighbors, but the next ranch was a good distance up the creek and on the other side of it-out of sight beyond the willows and not near enough to pollute the air with its smoke. On the rising land to the north there was nothing, and the view to the south was likewise uncluttered. The few ranches on Raft River itself were several empty miles to the east. Charlie's brother Thompson, who had been living in Centerville, Utah, also decided to settle in Idaho, but he was still prospecting. Until he found what he wanted, it was decided, the two families would remain together on Cassia Creek. Thomps, as he was called, went farther north two or three years later and settled on Snake River.

The day the Parke's arrived in the valley was a bright as Mother remembered it. The grass was already "as high as a man's head" and the country looked its best. It's best, certainly, for Charlie Parke, for the curving landscape of gray sagebrush. Green shining grass, and feathering golden willows was unbroken by any visible square of man-made shelter.

There were seven children in Charlie Parke's family when they went to Idaho. The four older ones- Joseph, William, Ira, and Jane- were his second wife's children. Then there were Catharine, Ether, and Lamoni; the child named Margaret had died in Utah. Great Uncle Thomps and his wife Jule had several children and in addition there was a boy named Fred Parish who, Mother wrote, "went in that country with us."

House building was the first task, and with the running gear from the wagons the men and the older boys went into the mountains to the west to get out

logs for cabins and for the winter fuel-willows are no good for building and not much good for burning. With logs to haul and cattle to attend to, the men and the older boys were away from home through many a long day; the women kept house as best they could, in, or out of, the wagon boxes. Grandmother, who was timid and wished they and never left Utah, worried from morning till night about young ones getting lost in the high grass or in the willows along the creek, about the rattlesnakes and wildcats that were common in that country. Great Aunt Jule was by temperament far less timid than Grandmother, but both women dreaded the sight of Indians and hoped that none would come while the men were away.

Indians did come, but the great event of the first summer, at least for the eight-year-old Kate, was a bullfight, between two bulls, which provided the spectacle for the Parke's first Fourth of July in the valley. The animals belonged to a big herd of cattle that was passing through on its way from Texas to Montana-in itself a spectacle. Mother often recalled that bullfight, with excitement that made her blue eyes glow.

The local Indian potentate was Chief Pocatello, after whom the city in Idaho is named. He and his two sons came rather often to the ranch on Cassia creek. If the men were at home, the Indians "behaved themselves," as Mother put it. But if the men were away the Indians were "impudent," and once, during the second summer, they were very impudent indeed.

By then two log cabins had been built. On this day, Wrote Mother, "the men folks went in the mountains after logs to build another room. There were

no men on the ranch, only two boys, my half-brother Joe Parke, and Fred Parish."

**After they [the men] had left that morning along came 3 buck Indians, Pocatello and his 2 sons on horseback-no saddle and only a rope in the horse's mouth. They jumped of their horses, went out in the sagebrush, killed 2 rabbits, pulled the skin off of them but did not take their entrails out, held them over a fire they built and roasted them and eat them. They waved their arms and pointed to the land and water and said "All my land and all my water." They were very sassy.**

The Indians ordered the two women to bake bread for them.

**My poor Mother baked bread all day for them-said it was better to feed than fight. Aunt Jule was washing. She threw her table in front of the door, threw the Henry rifle on the table and told them to go to hell and she'd be damned if she would cook them a bite. Us children were all under Aunt Jules bed frightened to death almost. One of us would slip out once in a while to see if the Indians had gone. The finally went away toward evening.**

Mother told us that while Grandmother baked bread, the Indians stood in the doorway and stuck lighted matched in the cracks between the logs of the cabin. Finally mother went to the window, shaded her eyes with her hand, and said she thought she saw the men coming. The Indians laughed at her, and told her what they would do to her family and her kind.

The next time Pocatello and his sons came, the men were at home "My father and Uncle Thomps told them if they ever came back and acted that way again they would kill the whole damn

bunch of them, and they behaved after that.” It may be that the Parke brothers rampant did have an effect. Certainly far worse things happened to other people, and the stories of Indian outrages that filled the air kept the Parke's from ever feeling safe. There was the usual tale of the child stolen by the Indians, but this child belonged to a family the Parke's knew. There was an added fillip. The Indians spread word that they had buried the child alive, and no one could be sure they hadn't. Then there was the story about a greenhorn that Mother told as if it were a great joke. This fellow, she said, showed up one day in a fancy cowboy outfit-chaps, high-heeled boots, and all, and all brand new. He'd bought it, she guessed, in a store “back East.” A few days later, one of Chief Pocatello's sons appeared wearing the same suit and riding the same horse, and “that greenhorn was never seen again.

The Indians, after many threats, finally did go on the warpath- this was after Great Uncle Thomps and his family had settled on Snake River and Charlie Parke's family was alone on the Cassia Creek ranch. It was reported that the Indians planned to come down Raft River from its junction with the Snake. Most of the settlers in the region sent their families into Utah until the trouble should blow over, but Charlie Parke said he'd be damned if he was going to be driven out by bunch of painted Indians and made no such move. He did keep a span of mules in the barn harnessed and ready for flight to Kelton, Utah, which was fifty miles to the southeast and a station on the railroad he had helped to complete. For the rest, he and his elder sons and Fred Parish mounted guard on the roof of one of the log houses, spelling one another in a watch that went on for three days and nights. Then word

came that the war party had gone down the north side of the Snake.

This story had a postscript. One of Uncle Thomps's sons ran a ferry across the Snake. In the dead of night he was routed out and forced to carry the Indian war party, in full regalia, across the river. They told him that if he did what he was told they wouldn't hurt him; and Mother never tried of saying that they had kept their word. They had not, she asserted, harmed a hair on his head. Mother's tales of the misdeeds of the Indians invariably ended with a defense of their behavior. In the letter describing the frightening day when the “3 buck Indians” had been so “sassy,” she wrote:

**I often wonder why they did not kill us, but in after years I found out why they did not. Conner an Indian fighter had been in that country about 7 years before and killed most of them off. The poor Indians hid their squaws and papooses up in Connor Canyon 4 miles from our ranch. [It was named Connor Canyon in honor of his exploit.] After the soldiers had killed the bucks they found the squaws and papooses and murdered every one of them which I think was a disgrace to them and America. They should have taken them to the reservation at Fort Hall. I am a great friend of the Indians. I have heard my father say the government sent blankets to the Indians and the agents stole them. I do not blame the Indians. They were never treated right and this was their country. We believe in our religion that they are God's chosen people and that they will yet become delightful and white.**

Mother never tried of denouncing Connor in particular, and the whites in

general, for their treatment of the Indians. And she had great regard for the Indians virtues. They always kept their word, she said, and were as honest as the day was long.

Life on Cassia Creek was hard. Grandmother called "that country" the loneliest place on earth. But the kids weren't lonesome. They had chores to do; they also had horses to ride, the creek was alive with trout, there was endless excitement and escapade. Once in a while, people from other ranches came to spend the day, and sometimes away out on the flats was the sight of freighters making the trek from Kelton, Utah to Boise, Idaho. Then there were pet horses and colts, cows and calves, dogs and pups, cats and kittens. One cat was especially smart. "When a dog came into the house and her kittens didn't run under the cupboard she'd box their ears. Then she'd jump on the dog's back and ride him out of the house." There were pet chickens, too, and a magpie with its tongue split to make it talk-I never heard that it did talk. And of course there was the pet deer, which was so common among early settlers from Maine to California that it has become a frontier legend.

**We raised a deer. We called him Dote. He was wonderful. He would go 60 miles from home to meet with other deer. The Indians all knowed him. We kept a red flannel around his neck. In the evening when the cows came home and we put them in the correll if there was a strange cow or steer that did not belong in there he would drive them out. He was very jealous of children he wasn't used to.**

Like so many pet deer in the wilderness, Dote was killed by someone who didn't see or failed to honor the

touch of red that marked him as a member of a family. "Finally," wrote my mother, "a neighbor shot him. We mourned his loss."

Some of her stories about Indians were peaceful. As the years passed, hostility faded, and the families of Indians often came in the fall, pitched their wigwam across the 'little creek' from the log houses, and stayed all winter-the little creek was the irrigation ditch that carried water for crops from Cassia Creek. The able bodied among them went into the mountains to gather pine nuts for winter food. The old people and the young ones remained at home. The Parke kids spent many a daylight hour playing with the Indian children. "And sometime us children would go to their camp in the evening and watch the squaws grind the wheat to make bread." The Indians barrowed things, but they always brought back anything they borrowed, even to the smallest tool.

Visitors, red or white, were not common, however, and much of the time the Parke children had only one another for company. Mother always defended polygamy (the church held that polygamy was as much advanced over monogamy as monogamy over celibacy). She seemed to assume that men were by nature polygamous, and she asserted that it was better for a man to "acknowledge his children and their mothers that turn them out in the world without a name-Mother loved rhetoric. She Further contended that plural families always lived peaceably together. To judge by her general statement, the double family on Cassia Creek was no exception. But these statements were undermined by the defensive tone in which they were delivered and by some of the specific recollections she cherished most. She

often noted, as if for the record, that Grandmother loved her stepchildren as if they were her own, but there was turbulence in Mother's voice and descendants of the stepchildren have a different impression. However that may be, it is clear to me that Kate was less than wholehearted in her acceptance of the other wife's children, and I suspect that the Mormon hymn "Love at Home" was meant to promote as well as to celebrate polygamous family affection. Mother was always careful to distinguish between her two "own" brothers and her Half-sister and brothers. As a consequence, I grew up with the impression that Aunt Jane and Uncle Joe, both of whom I knew, were only half-relations. Mother was touchy about both. She was always taking digs at Aunt Jane, who was two years older than she was; and she told us over and over again a story about half-Uncle Joe that was intended, whether she knew it or not, to show that he was only half a character. The story reveals something about my mother, to, and the airs that blew about her childhood.

When Joe was twelve and Kate was nine, he dared her to drink a water-glassful of whisky. Joe filched the whisky from Grandfather's supply and the two contestants met in the log barn. At the signal, Kate drank her glassful and promptly passed out. Joe, either from a loss of nerve or a sudden access of sense, did not drink his. Kate never forgot, or let Joe or any of his relatives or friends forget, that he had welsed.

A School of sorts was set up eventually at the Conant ranch a mile up the creek. The Conant ranch was also a post office on the freighter route from Kelton to Boise. The Parke children attended the school irregularly, but they did learn to read and wright and cipher.

When Kate was eleven or twelve, she was sent down to Logan in Utah to live with her grandmother and go to a real school. She hated it wholeheartedly and after a few months, during which she made more than one dash for freedom, she was returned to Cassia Creek.

Mother often said that she was just like her father and that they had both been a trial to her mother-though a descendant of the other wife once told me that "Kate got her meanness as much from her mother as from Charlie Parke." Mother also claimed that she has been her father's favorite child. He probably did find her more congenial than her two own brothers, who, compared with her, were mild as milk; but she had a rival in her half-sister Jane. Still, there is no question that the attachment between Kate and her father was strong. Their relation took the form of a battle of wills and wits. She was forever defying him; he was forever threatening to lick her and often did. But Mother's accounts of the running battle left no doubt that they had both enjoyed it.

Kate had no more use for the inside of houses than for school, but since she was a ranch girl housework was an essential part of her life, and since she was a Mormon girl she looked forward to having a house of her own and a large family. But the work of women and girls on a ranch in frontier country was as strenuous and absorbing as the work of men and boys, and much of it was done outdoors. They not only cooked and cleaned and washed and ironed and made and mended clothes; they also milked the cows, had charge of the chickens and probably the pigs, pulled up water from the well or carried it from the creek, took care of the vegetable patch, and helped pick the fruit they canned. Grandfather approved

of fruit trees and planted an orchard in the first years.

For all her love of the world outdoors, Her father's world of horsed and cattle, of fields and ranges, Kate Parke, was never a tomboy-she frequently said so. As she grew older, she was vain of her feminine Charms. She was pretty. Her hair was auburn and curly, her eyes were sky blue, her face was delicately formed. Her figure was slim and her ankles were trim. She liked the attention and the fun that fall to the lot of pretty girls, wherever they lived, and she had plenty of beaux. She loved a fast ride over the flats on horseback-but she always rode sidesaddle. Her other favorite activity was dancing the whole night through.

Any child growing up on Cassia Creek in the early days had to come to terms with violence, danger, and cruelty. But the bent of a child has something to do with his responses. Kate Parke spent her first eight years, which are supposed to be crucial, in a settled Mormon community in Utah, but it was to the frontier life on Cassia Creek that she responded with all of her being. Her own brother, Uncle Eph, had no tolerance for violence or cruelty; Mother had a taste for both. She gave lip service to the conventions; she actually despised them as unnatural. She admitted excess and the defiance of control, especially in men; she reveled in violent quarrels, stormy reconciliation's, and new quarrels-these were to her the very stuff of human relations. She professed absolute belief in her religion, but the humility and piety and peacemaking it prescribed were alien to her. What roused her stood out in her constant talk about the only true faith were the persecutions of the Mormons, the revenge they sometimes took, and the

church prophecies of what happen to the Gentiles in the "last days."

To this child of the frontier and of Charlie Parke, civilization was of course unnatural. She never gave over her contempt for settlements, and she always looked back to the Cassia Creek of her growing up as to a lost paradise. When she was seventy-six, she sent down for me in a letter a headlong list of things she remembered.

**The first night we camped after leaving Willard on Bear River. Next I remember when we crossed Clear Creek, Next the first 4 of July, the bull fight. Next Pocatello the Indian Chief and his two sons. Next Indians lighting matches and sticking them through the cracks of the floor. Next going to Elba [seven miles up Cassia Creek] and dancing on the dirt floor. Next Mother afraid of us children getting lost in the high grass. Next my little brother and Uncle Thompson's little girl getting lost-finding them a mile away-had gone to pick gum from logs. Next us children buying a little fawn from the Indians the one we raised his name of Dote. Next the Indians coming to go in the mountains to gather pine nuts. Next freighters from Kenton to Boise. Next the school house a mile from the ranch. Next fishing and hunting was good. Next rabbits by the million. Next my brother sitting on the corner of the log house watching for Indians. Next My youngest brother hiding his playthings in the chicken coop when a certain family was coming to visit. Next the jumping from the wagon when Father was driving a wild colt.**

II "What Was Your Name in the States?"

THE WINTER Kate Parke turned nineteen (1883), She fell in love with a man named Jim Wilkes. She met him at a dance – perhaps at Elba, perhaps at Malta, the cow town five miles down the creek near Raft River. He had been in the country even longer than the Parke's. Charlie Parke (Kate's father) had known him known him for years, but Kate had never met him before, to her knowledge. He was a fine- looking man, and a good dancer. (Kate always added, "Sow was I.") Apart from his good looks and his dancing Jim Wilkes, one might have thought, was not the sort to attract the daughter of Charlie Parke. He was no tenderfoot, but he was soft-spoken, and both his grammar and his manners set him apart from the men Kate was used to, including her father. He was fifteen years older than she was. But the frontier contempt for civilization was often the reverse of awe; more over, country girls have frequently been captivated by older men with worldly manner-and why not?

When Jim Wilkes rode into Raft River Valley in 1870, he had two pasts behind him though he was barley twenty-one. His real name was Griffin Seth Marshall He had called himself Jim Wilkes only since a spring evening in 1867 when an incident in a Virginia village had sent him in to exile as a fugitive from the law.

I heard the story from Mother-I am the daughter of Kate Parke and Griffin Marshall. Father wouldn't have considered it suitable for al little girl, but Mother had no such qualms. Mother had a strong sense of drama, and for her the story was the thing.

"Your father changed his name," she told us, "because he got in trouble back home and had to leave the country. He never done anything. No indictment was ever found"-Mother was careful to insert

the formal, exonerating phrase- "but he was in a crowd one night with his brother John and this colored man was killed. He'd been a slave of your grandfather's before the war, so when he was shot they thought the Marshall boys had something to do with it. There were soldiers there, northern soldiers, but your father and his brother got away. They left the country that same night-without even saying goodbye to their mother. That was when they changed their name. That's History," Mother would add, as she usually sis when she told us a story about the early days. "Do what you will with it."

The time came when I visited the Virginia village. And I discovered not only that every word of Mother's account was true, but that the full story was adorned with details and a couple of postscripts that would have delighted her.

THE NAME of the village is Charlotte Court House and it is the seat of Charlotte County. It's the courthouse, built in 1823, is a handsome building of red brick, with a white portico and four white columns overarched by venerable trees. Before the courthouse on an evening is the spring of 1867 a crowd had gathered to listen to a speech. The speaker was a Negro, who was able to make a speech only because Federal troops were camped in a grove of trees across the street. His name was Jo Holmes. He had been a slave, the butler of Judge Hunter Marshall whose plantation Roxabel was five miles from the village. Now Jo Holmes was not only a free man but also a member of the Virginia legislature. Jo Holmes' podium was the slave block that still stands at the point where the walk from the courthouse joins the street. According to

the local story, he was advocating mixed marriages. He didn't get very far with his speech. A shot was fired and Jo Homes fell dead. The bullet, I was told is buried in the front wall of the courthouse.

In the crowd were my father and his older brother John who were home on vacation from Clifton Academy in Fauquier County. John had been in the Confederate cavalry. (Their oldest brother Hunter had been killed in the Civil War- four days after Appomattox.) Griffin, who was only seventeen, had been too young to go to war. With them was cousin David Morton, actually a second or third cousin, and a friend named Fred Beal.

The shot that killed Jo Homes came from the part of the crows where the four young men were standing. One of the four did fire the shot- then slipped the gun into the hand of a friend who threw it into the creek that runs through the hollow beside the courthouse. The Federals came running, but before they could get to the scene the four boys had made their escape with the help of relatives and friends. They were hidden for several hours in a house in the village. Before dawn they were driven to Pamplin, the nearest station on the Norfolk and Western Railway, and put on a train headed west.

The four fugitives soon parted. A letter from Griffin to his older sister Mary dated May 29,1867- I got it from the daughter of Father's sister-shows that he and John had been commended to the care of people named Taylor in country that might be Texas. There is no mention of the other two boys. The letter is written on a piece of stationery embossed in the upper left-hand corner with the head of an Indian and, beneath it, the legend "N.P. Co."; but there is no

place name on the letter and the envelope is missing. It reads as follows:

**May 29,1867**

**My Dear Sister:**

**You must really excuse me for not writing to you sooner but I have been sick nearly ever since I have been here and the other part of the part of the time I didn't feel like writing. I haven't had anything to do at all- we have been waiting for Mr. Taylor's son to come down here- but he has been sick and is now worse and probably never will be able to come. The old man said that he (his son) could get better situations than anyone else and advised us to wait for him and of course as we are under his care we took his advice and are now waiting to see what is going to turn up. Mr. T. Sr. went up to see about his son yesterday and we are expecting him back every day.**

**Morgan is well and in pretty good spirits, but I an not in good spirits. I am getting tired of doing nothing and paying board.**

**This is the hardest country I ever saw; there isn't a tree of any consequence in two hundred miles of this place. One day it is hot as five hundred (this was a simile my father often used) and the next day you can't wrap up and keep comfortable-now today it is very hot.**

**I wrote to Ma some two or three days ago; tell her to write to me and that often. Has the old fuss died out yet or not? I am very anxious to know the effect that thing produced.**

**I haven't got anything to write about and I am going to stop. Give my love to Bee Jim and all at Roxobel and regards to all of my friends and write soon to your affectionate**

## Brother

The handwriting is the same that appears in two letters Griffin had written to his mother a few months before from Clifton Academy, but the writer signs himself not “G. S. M.” or “G. S. Marshall” as in the earlier letters but “J.T. Wilkes.” The “Morgan” he refers to can only be his brother John.

I never understood,” said my cousin Sarah when she handed me the worn sheet, what a letter with that strange signature was doing in Mother’s papers.”

IN CHARLOTTE COURT HOUSE it is asserted as fact that Fred Beal fired the shot that killed Jo Holmes, and evidence is cited to prove the assertion. Soon after the incident there arrived in the village a coffin purporting to contain the remains of Fred Beal. The device misfired-coffin was opened and found to contain wrapped rocks.

What happened to Fred Beal remains a mystery. The fate of David Morton, the fourth fugitive, is known. He wound up in Nebraska where he became first a cowboy, then an outlaw and a pal of Billy the Kid. The two had a falling out and became mortal enemies. The last sequence of Morton’s life is recorded in **The Saga of Billy the Kid** by Walter Noble Burns. Morton is called Billy in the book, but there is convincing evidence, in a footnote, that he was the David Morton who left Virginia with my father. In the course of the Lincoln County cattle war, after a series of events too complicated to set down here, Morton and another outlaw, Frank Baker, became the prisoners of Billy the Kid. The Kid for the moment was on the side of the law – he had been deputized as a member of the posse that was sent out to capture Morton and Baker and

bring them to Lincoln, the county seat. The posse did capture them, but the Kid had no intention of delivering his prisoners to the sheriff. As the party neared the town of Roswell, on the way to Lincoln, the Kid told Morton that he could write a letter. Morton did so, and when he handed it to Ash Upson, the postmaster at Roswell, he asked Upson to inform the person to Whom it was addressed of “the full particulars of my death when you hear of them.” In the footnote it is stated that the letter was addressed to Morton’s cousin in Virginia. Judge H. H. Marshall, my grandfather.

Soon after leaving Roswell, the posse and its prisoners turned off into a trail leading to a “spring pool” which was used as a waterhole for animals. The spring bore the beautiful name of Agua Negra, but its local name was Stinkin’ Springs. Accounts agree, according to Mr. Burns, that the Kid killed Morton and Baker, though the exact circumstances are in dispute. A few days later sheepherders found their bodies beside the pool and buried them.

I once asked my father who killed Jo Homes. He replied only it was not he.

How long John and Griffin stayed at the Taylor place is not recorded. Eventually they went west from the Taylor’s and, working their way, finally arrived in San Francisco. They turned eastward again when they got jobs driving a six-mule team, hauling a load of freight over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to Elko, Nevada. That was in 1869, and Griffin earned his first money in Elko peddling newspapers on the trains of the recently completed transcontinental railway. He had another job in Elko, as a bartender in a saloon where shootings were so frequent that the bar was faced with a sheet of metal

of that the bartender, by ducking, could get out of the line of fire.

This interlude had a sequel many years later. My father, who became first a cattleman and then a sheep man, went to Chicago with a shipment of stock. In those days shippers from the West were greeted at the station by “gentlemen” with elegant carriages who offered to show the greenhorns the town and wound up by mulcting them of what be a large part of their year’s cash income. Father was approached by such a man, but this time it turned out that the fleecer and the prospective victim had already met. The gentleman with the carriage was the man who owned the saloon in Elko. He showed Father the town, but the greenhorn went home with his stock money intact.

FROM NEVADA the Wilkes brothers went north as cowhands with a cattle train bound for Montana. They decided to stay in Montana, and John did spend the rest of his life there. But Griffin soon moved on again- as the result of an incident that made him once more a fugitive from the law.

A man was killed. The local vigilantes were aroused and swore to find the culprit. The dead man was known to be a cattle rustler, and it seems odd that Vigilantes would bother about the death of a cattle rustler, but perhaps, like those villains so often summoned up by the script writers for “The Lone Ranger,” this was a cattle rustler who appeared to be something quite different and respectable. It may even be that the vigilantes were villains in league with the cattle rustler.

The sheriff, who was a friend of the Wilkes brothers, apparently believed the victim was a villain and had reason to think that the vigilantes were no better

than they should have been. On the other, a piece of evidence found at the scene of the crime implicated the Wilkes brothers; they were bound to be suspects and, if apprehended, hanged. The sheriff made them a proposition. If one of them would light out, thereby drawing the blame upon himself, he, the sheriff, would try to give the fugitive a good start before he sent a posse after him. The young men accepted. Griffin was the one who lit out. The plan succeeded and Griffin got away.

He rode south and a little east. Some time later a young fellow calling himself Jim Wilkes turned up in the Raft River Valley. It was cattle country and Wilkes had no trouble getting a job as a cowhand with one of the outfits on the river. The year was 1870.

By the time Jim Wilkes met Kate Parke thirteen years later, he had acquired a stake of his own. With a partner he had a ranch and cattle near the town of Albion, fifteen miles northwest over the mountains from the ranch on Cassia Creek. But he still came to Raft River Valley. He had friends there and he liked to dance.

In Virginia, the “old fuss” had long since died out and Griffin was free to resume his own name long before he met Kate. But his relations with people in the Valley were he turned up as a stranger in 1870 has been built around his identity as Jim Wilkes. In Raft River Valley the story of a Virginia planter and judge would have sounded more like a tall tale than straight fact-or worse, like one of the current romances about southern gentlemen in the wild West, In any event, Griffin had got used to being Jim Wilkes. As for the secret life his disguise entailed, that, too, had become familiar.

Whatever the reason, Griffin had preserved his disguise and his secret.

Only in his letters home did he speak in his own name. Three from the 1880s were kept. They were addressed to his mother in Richmond where she and Grandfather now lived. Around 1870 Grandfather Marshall, who had always been more lawyer than planter, had left the plantation to be farmed by tenants and had entered a law partnership in Richmond.

THE FIRST LETTER, postmarked Albion, was written on Christmas Eve:

At home  
12/24<sup>th</sup>/83

My Dear Mother

I thought for a long time that I would not write you but would surprise you by dropping in on you about Xmas holidays, but I am afraid I cannot get away. In the next place I have a partner that drinks very hard and if I should leave home for a month or two everything would be neglected, besides he would get so deeply in debt, that it would compel me to sacrifice property to settle. I was never so worried in my life. There are certain parties that fill him up with liquor, and handle him as they please. In spite of all I can do he squanders from eight hundred to a thousand dollars a year for whiskey alone. His nephew has been here since the first of June, he has become perfectly disgusted and will leave tomorrow. I think now that we will divide the cattle in the spring for I will not stand it.

I have heard nothing from the lawyers since they advised me of the receipt of the papers Pa sent them. I do not suppose Pa would care to see me anyway, he never writes or seems to take the least interest in me whatever, but it is his pleasure to treat

me so, and I have no complaints to make. I would make every possible effort to go home but I do not feel that I would be particularly welcome so do not try very hard; I may, however, make you a short visit before the winter is over for I would like to see Sister and your dear self; more than anyone living. I am doing very well, have a good start in the world and with anything like average luck will have had a good stake inside of five years, that is, will be worth probably \$25,000.00. We have had a splendid fall and this month here has been fine weather. There is about three inches of snow at present, but it is a benefit. Cattle eat snow and do not have to go so far for water.

I will write Sister soon. My Xmas will be a very dull one. Times are hard and money very scarce. To add to it all I have the blues; I know I am alone in the world and the older I get the more I feel it; if a man has no property in this country he is shunned by all that know him, but if he has money he is considered a pretty good fellow. Wishing you a Merry Xmas and a happy New Year, I am

Your affectionate son  
G. S. M.

Griffin's remark about lawyers and papers has to do with the death of his brother John. Through the years, John had done well. He had acquired a ranch of his own on Birch Creek, in Montana. Like Griffin, he had not married, but he had a housekeeper who, with her two small girls, lived in the ranch house. One evening a tramp passing through the country asked for food and a bed and was told he could sleep in the barn. In the middle of the night, the tramp entered the house. The

noise he made woke Uncle John, whose bedroom was on the ground floor. He went out to investigate the disturbance, and was shot by the intruder. The housekeeper, wakened by the shot, ran downstairs from her room on the second floor, and she, too, was shot. The tramp then set fire to the house. The housekeeper, though she was wounded, was able to get out, and she saved her children by persuading them to jump from the second-story window, but Uncle John was either killed by the tramp or too badly wounded to make his escape. The tramp was caught. Mother loved to tell the story. And in one of her letters, she wrote. "They led the two girls through the store and they both pointed out this man. A vigilance committee was raised. They hung the man to a telephone pole of something like that." Mother wouldn't have known or cared what the word "anachronism" meant.

This was the way I heard the story when I was a child. But in the family papers I got from Virginia, there is evidence, in letters written in 1890 by Grandfather Marshall and my father, that Uncle John's death may have been plotted by a man or by men whose motive was robbery of a different sort, that the tramp may not have been a tramp but the tool of a rival in search of documents. It is one of those storied that cannot be verified, except for the detail that Uncle John was indeed killed.

Before the next letter to Richmond was written, Kate Parke and Jim Wilkes had met and become engaged, secretly. But the secret could not be kept, and when it leaked out, Charlie Parke raised hell. He said that Wilkes was "too damned old." But that was the last of his objections. Nobody knew, he said, who Wilkes was or where

he had come from. Some people doubted that Wilkes was his real name. It was even rumored that he had killed a man and has come to Raft River to hide out. And if he didn't have something to hide, why was he so closed-mouth about himself? No daughter of his, Charlie Parke, would ever marry a man "old enough to be her father" and, for all anybody knew, a murderer besides. Grandmother had an objection too. Wilkes was not a Mormon. Grandfather probably threw that in for good measure. Whether or not he snorted at Wilkes's High-toned bearing I hadn't the sense to inquire when I might have got an answer, but I could not be more sure that Jim Wilke's Virginia manners confirmed Charlie Park's worst suspicions.

Grandfather forbade Wilkes on the ranch. He forbade Kate to leave it. The battle of outwitting Charlie Parke. When a dance and a meeting with Wilkes were at stake, she pretended to go to bed early, then slipped out later when the house was still, caught and saddled one of the horses-which her father turned out every evening into the pasture the better to defeat her schemes-and make her escape. She told us she sometimes rode as far as fifteen miles through the dark valley to meet Jim Wilkes and dance till dawn. She knew she'd get a licking when she got home, but licking were something she was used to. And when her father resorted a practical joke as a method to punishment, Kate had the last laugh. One night, having discovered her absence, Charlie Parke, out of some wild logic, went to the trouble of bringing in the pet Dote and tying him to Kate's bedstead; but it was daylight when Kate got home, and Dote by that time had torn the bedclothes to pieces to get at the straw in the ticking.

Threats, blows, a deer in the bedroom-none of them worked. Meanwhile, Griffin had told Kate his real name and his history. And in the end, Grandfather consented to let Kate marry Jim Wilkes on condition that he produce proof of the story he had told the girl about his family and his past.

It was at this point Griffin wrote to his mother the second of the three letters that were saved. This letter is also postmarked Albion.

**“Hardscrabble”  
2d/10<sup>th</sup>/1884**

**My Dear Mother**

**Your most welcome letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> was received several days ago. Glad to know you are well and comfortable.**

**The weather has been very cold here for the week or more, and the snow is coming down tonight. Our stock have wintered splendid so far; but it is a long time yet until spring and green grass. We do not have any green grass to speak of until about the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, and if we should have a very severe March we still lose more or less cattle.**

**You will get a letter from a young lady, making some inquiries about me, about the time this reaches you or very soon thereafter. Please answer any and all questions, correctly do not keep any thing back. I have already told her everything and told her to write you; and gave her your address-please write her a nice sweet letter.**

**She has never had the opportunity of acquiring an education, but she is good, and thinks lots of me-so I hope you will look over any mistakes made-say nothing to Father about it. He is not much**

**interested in me; answer her letter and say nothing about it to anyone-do not be afraid. I trust her.**

**I wrote sister not long since-I would like to have sent her a nice Xmas present but I never was as hard run for money in my life-I have heard nothing from the Montana business...Am expecting to get word every day.**

**My love to all. How do to Aunt Mary and Randolph.  
From your affectionate son,  
G.S.M.**

Kate's letter to Griffin's mother was not kept. Neither was Grandmother Marshall's reply. But her answers to Kate's questions were apparently satisfactory, for Kate and Griffin were married on December 29,1884-not in Raft River Valley by at the home of Kates Grandmother Watterson in Logan, Utah. The last of the three letters from Griffin to his mother reports his marriage; it also refers to the death in a railway accident of griffin's younger brother Charles.

**Ogden, Utah  
Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>,1884**

**My Dear Mother**

**You must not think strange of my not having written you since Mr. Gaines [his sister's Husband] & father advised me of poor Charley's sad ending. It was a terrible blow. I can hardly realize that it can be so. But it does no good to talk of it now, it only makes it the sadder.**

**I do not suppose it will surprise you much, when I tell you I am married, was married the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>. Will stop here two or three days, & then go on home I would have liked so much to have made you all a**

**visit this winter, but it is out of the question. I do not think I will live in this country very much longer. I was married by my own name; I was one hundred & fifty miles from home, & outside of my wife's parents, it will not be known for some time. I shall get my business straightened up so that I can resume my own name any and every where. I have a partner, papers are drawn between us; we will divide in the spring. I will have to keep quit about it until then. You can therefore address your letters to me as usual.**

**My wife joins me in love to you. You have had a sad blow, my dear Mother, but try to be as cheerful as possible.**

**With best love to all I am as ever**

**Your affectionate  
Son G. S. Marshall**

The first child of Kate and Griffin was born on April 1, 1886. He was named Hunter Holmes Marshall, after his grandfather.

Just when my father resumed his own name "any and ever where" I do not know. One story has it that he was forced to do so before he planned to. He ran for sheriff of Cassia County, which had been created in 1879 with Albion as its seat. His rival got wind of the fact that Wilkes was not Wilkes and made an issue of the deception. Whereupon Griffin admitted that his name was not J. T. Wilkes but G.S. Marshall, too the offensive, and made such a good case for himself that he won the election. It is a good story. Whether or not it is true I have not been able to find out. My father was elected sheriff of Cassia County in November, 1888 for a two-year term.

Being sheriff of Cassia County, Idaho, in the late 1880's was hazardous.

The county was wild and sparsely inhabited. Every man carried a gun as a matter of course. One of the stories my father told a brother who, years later, told it to me, was about a dangerous outlaw who was married to the daughter of a rancher in Cassia County. Some time before my father's accession, the outlaw came back from wherever he was hiding out to pay her a visit. A reward had been posted for him. His father-in-law decided to turn him in and sent word to the sheriff to come and get him. Meanwhile he kept his son-in-law within firing range. When the prisoner asked to go to the privy one day, his father-in-law conducted him there and waited outside with his gun trained on the door. The outlaw, as he came out, leaned down as if to adjust his overalls, whipped out a gun he had concealed in his boot, and killed his father-in-law. He lit out and disappeared. Time passed. Then word came to the new sheriff, my father, that the outlaw was heading back toward Cassia County (he must have been genuinely fond of that wife of his). And what did my father do? I'm afraid his behavior would hardly suit the uses of Hollywood. Instead of waiting for the outlaw to turn up and preparing a hot welcome for him, at high noon, Sheriff Marshall got on his horse and rode for two days, "clear into the Salmon River Country" where the outlaw was reported to be. The sheriff found his man and persuaded him not to return to Cassia County.

I was nettled when I heard this story, but the brother who told it to me argued that in a period when violence was rampant our father had only played the part of common sense in keeping the outlaw, and more violence, out of his territory.

In addition to being sheriff, my father had his own cattle, of course, and he also worked for a big cattle company. My brother said that he was connected for a considerable time at least with Miller and Lux, one of the biggest of the cattle companies, and that the territory for which he was responsible extended from the Canadian border to Mexico. This sounds as if exaggeration had entered in. I do have letters, however—they found their way into the Virginia archive—that show that in 1890 my father was working for J. G. Baker and Company and that its affairs did take him to Canada.

Out of these letters rise a picture of my father traveling through Montana—his brother John's country to sell a herd of cattle that had been driven there earlier for fattening. And they reveal other things as well.

The first letter from Griffin to Kate was mailed from Cartersville, Montana. It is written on the stationery of J.G. Baker and Company.

**May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1890**

**My Dear Wife**

**I got here yesterday and will start out for St. Mary's River this afternoon. Stewart was not at Pocatello, had to wait for him until Saturday morning. We found our team here and everything in good shape. From what we know everything is all right North, and think we can sell without any trouble for about \$25 per head. You can write me as soon as you get this to Lees Creek, Alberta, N.W.T. I will write you again at Choteau and again the first opportunity after getting to St. Mary's. I hope the children are well. Kiss them for papa.**

**Nothing more now. I wrote Sister from Pocatello. Do not put any**

**extra Stamps on your letter, one will do.**

**Your affectionate husband  
G.S. Marshall**

The second letter was written from Birch Creek, Montana.

**May 17<sup>th</sup> 90**

**My Dear Wife**

**I wrote you from Wolf Creek, but will write again. We are getting along as well as possible; we are now in the country where John used to live, crossed the creek yesterday where he lived and was killed. I met quite a number of his old friends. The outfit that got away with his property are about broke, it done them no good. Everyone says it serves them right. We think we will get to camp on St. Mary's by Monday night. We heard through a man yesterday right from there that there was a party wanting to buy the cattle and were waiting for us to get there. Write me at Lees Creek and tell me if anything is going on in the Sheriff's Office and how things are. Did Joe Smith get the stallion from California, from Rutherford? If not what did he do? Tell me if they have gone to working cattle over about Dry Creek. I do not think I will have to stay where the cattle are more than a week. I understand they are pretty much all gathered and in fine condition.**

**With a kiss for your dear self and the babies I am as ever**

**Your affectionately  
G.S. Marshall**

The third and fourth letters were written from Fort MacLeod, N.W.T.

**May 25, 1890**

**My Dear Wife**

I came in here yesterday morning early, horse races here, the Queen's birthday, everybody from the surrounding country were in. We cannot tell right now just what we can do with the cattle, we can sell the steers and dry cows for \$30 per head, 3's steers \$40, 4's and up \$45; but we want to try and sell them all in a lump. The cattle are big for now, this is by far the finest grass country I ever saw in my life.

I hope everything is running smooth at home. It will only take us three or four days to gather the cattle when we sell; and I will try to go by Va. on leaving here. Write me Lees Creek Via Lethbridge, Alberta N.W.T.

I do not think I will be gone more than a week over time, but you look for me any time after the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. If you need any money and can see Jim Pierce get it from him. Kiss my boys for me and a kiss for your dear self. I am as ever yours affectionately

G. S. Marshall

June 4, 1890

My Dear Wife

We have finally made a sale of the cattle \$25 per head round and just as soon as they can be got together and delivered will start home. I will be much over time that I will not dare to go home (East). The commissioners would surely kick. I do not think it will take us over a week or ten days at the outside to get through.

Have the patch of alfalfa watered and get Asel to water the pasture if he has not done so already. I think I will certainly be home by the 17<sup>th</sup> of June. I am in a great hurry so

will say good-by. Kiss the babies for me, and a kiss for yourself.

Your affectionate husband  
G.S. Marshall

These four letters came to me from Virginia enclosed in a letter written by Grandfather Marshall to his daughter Mary. Grandmother Marshall had died in 1887. Grandfather's law practice kept him in Richmond most of the time, but he went as often as he could to Roxabel where Aunt Mary, whose husband had died in 1886, now lived with her four children. Grandfather had apparently heard from her of Griffin's trip through Montana, and his letter expresses a love and concern for Griffin that accords not at all with my father's contention that his father did not care for him. It is written on the stationery of the Westmoreland Club in Richmond.

30 Jun.'90

My Dear Mary

I returned from Chicago Saturday morning-I was so uneasy about G that I hurried back, having left this city on Monday night. I reached Chicago on Wednesday morning, stayed there till Thursday night and leaving then reached here Saturday morning-had a hard time, encountering heat that was overpowering.... As soon as I returned I saw Miss Lilly who told me of the telegram and how she had sent it to you-and relieved my mind from the weight of anxiety which was crushing. While I tried to write encouragingly to you I was uneasy because G. had been in that country where his brother had been murdered and although he had left it I imagined that he might have been followed by some of those wretched and himself murdered. As it

**is – He is all safe, thank God. I wrote to his wife the moment I rec'd your letter enclosing hers-and yesterday rec'd as envelope addressed to her undoubtedly in his handwriting enclosing sundry letters and a telegram from Griffin-but not a line or memo from her....I am very sorry that we will not see G. now-I hope he will come next year at any rate, it not sooner....**

**God bless the little children. Tell them I hope soon to get up there to see them.**

**In haste most affly your devoted father**

**H.H.M.**

Kate and Marshall as they always called each other, spent the first eleven years of their married life on the ranch near Albion. Five of their “babys,” all boys, were born there. After Hunter Holmes came Griffin Harris, Charles Parke, Wilmer Stith, and Joseph Lamoni. Charles died in infancy; Lamoni had spinal meningitis in his first year, and never fully recovered. In spite of these sorrows, the years in Albion, so far as I can make out, were relatively happy. Yet there was no trace in the family memory of any affection for Albion. My father never spoke of it My mother referred to it as “that hole.”

The town of Albion is fifteen miles over a low divide from Cassia Creek. Low on the Raft River Valley side, that is; the valley in whose pit Albion lies is smaller and deeper, the mountains that ring it are higher. It is a bowl, while Raft River Valley from civilization, the civilization of the Mormon communities in Utah. But it was a town as well as a cowtown; as the seat of the seat of the county it was a growing point of settlement, and in 1893

a state normal school was established there.

Mother said she hated Albion because it was low and because she always felt shut in there. She called it not only “that hole” but “mudhole”-in the spring the mud in Albion was assuredly thick and deep. And there is no question that the words and phrases has used in talking about it-“low,” “shut in,” “mud,” “that hole”- were for her set against the cluster of words that were associated in her feelings with Raft River Valley-“High,” “open,” “dry.” “wide.”

As for my father, he had never become committed to any part of the region where he had been set down by chance in 1870. Eve in the letter he wrote to Mother from Fort Macleod, Virginia is “home,” though he inserts “East” in parenthesis as an afterthought. Thousands of miles of space and a quarter-century of time had not weakened the cable of affedction that bound him to his early life. His mother had died, but his older sister, who like a second mother, still lived, and she lived at Roxabel.

Since his departure from Virginia, My father had lived the strenuous life, first of a newcomer making his way in a new country without funds and without friends, and then of a man of affairs. Certainly his preoccupation with Virginia was not born of frustration in the ordinary sense. He had prospered and had come to terms with the world he lived in. He had credit at the bank, and his politics were those of the cattleman-high-tariff Republican. Nor was he unhappy in his personal life. He had married, he loved his wife, and they had founded a family whose future was his passionate concern. He had made for himself a life designed to

discourage rather than intensify a preoccupation with the past; this life moreover, had been built in a period of change so vast that to a man as sensible as he was in practical affairs any return to Virginia was unthinkable and in a region where the past had no standing. Yet the image of Roxabel not only remained central in my father's heart and mind; it was transformed into his vision of the good life. The power of this vision became greater as the years passed and reached its apotheosis in my early childhood.

Why?

I think the image remained central and inviolate because it was preserved, against all chances and changes, in a substance as intangible and as indestructible as light—a love for his mother that never became quite adult. A boyish longing pervades his letters to his mother and his sister. His complaints about his father, whom he regarded with both awe and resentment, are likewise those of a boy. Through the years, though he had become a man in practical matters, his boy's feeling toward his parents had not altered—as if they had been fixed by exile and intensified by secrecy long drawn out. Moreover, he had remained an exile. He never accepted the West; he never, in one fastness of his being, accepted his growing up.

In such longings and refusals, visions find their rise.

I speak from objective evidence, but I speak even more confidently out of my own experience. The nature of my father's love for his mother and his sense of being an exile—these become, very early, elements in my own inner life that yielded both pleasure and pain. They played a decisive and at times a

destructive part in the lives of his other children and of his wife, my mother.

### **Prelude to AN AMERICAN MEMOIR**

When Charles Parke and his brother Thompson Parke came to the Raft River Valley they settled on Cassia Creek. The Ranch that Jay Cottle owns is the original Parke Ranch.

Kate (Catharine) Parke (8 years old) was the oldest child of Margaret Watterson & Charles Parke and Eaf (Eather) Parke (3 years old) was the youngest when they came into the Valley.

Charles had another Ranch down on Raft River. This was eventually Eather's Ranch (now owned by Bob Parke) and this is where my mother and her siblings were raised. My Grandfather married Cecilia Hutchison and their children were Unice Parke Neddo, Florance Parke Beigh, Eather Parke, Glenn Parke, Cleione Parke Freaser, Margaret Parke Ward, Wilmer (Dude) Parke.

Charles Parke is my Great Grandfather  
Eather Parke is my Grandfather  
Margaret Parke Ward is my Mother

Thompson Parke's wife was Julia Sessions (Aunt Jewel) reportedly to be the second child born after the saints came into the Salt Lake Valley. They eventually settled up at Carey Idaho.

R. Jay Ward