



The Knights of the Golden Circle in Pueblo

At the beginning of the war for the Union there was grave doubt upon which side the influence of Colorado would be thrown. In the Arkansas valley region fully one-half of the population sympathized with the South. Arms, ammunition and other supplies were gathered from various sections of this region and secretly passed on to the South for use in the Secessionist army. The Knights of the Golden Circle maintained an organization near Pueblo, where considerable activity was shown during the early part of the war.

On July 4, 1862, an armed clash between the two factions in Pueblo was barely averted. The circumstances were as follows: A grand barbeque was being held, the settlers from the entire Pueblo region being in attendance. An arbor of boughs, nearly two hundred feet long, had been built on the bluff facing Santa Fe Avenue. Under this arbor the tables, groaning with luxuries, had been spread for the feast. All went well until it was suggested that, as this was the Nation's birthday, the Stars and Stripes should be displayed. The Southern sympathizers objected to this and declared that if any flag was to be displayed it should be the Stars and Bars. The noted Jack Allen had been busy throughout the morning dispensing his famous "Taos lightning," until a great number of both factions were ready for trouble—in fact were anxious for it. Every man, who had a gun or could procure one stood ready to participate in the impending conflict. This strained situation lasted for several hours, without any shots being fired, however. Finally saner council prevailed and the conflict was averted—but not until the Stars and Stripes had been raised.

"Zan" Hicklin and Mace's Hole

Lying some thirty miles southwest of Pueblo is the beautiful valley in which the town of Beulah is situated. The early trappers of this region designated it by the somewhat ferocious title of Mace's Hole, so-called because of its having once been the rendezvous of a desperado by the name of Mace.

During the year 1860-61 Mace's Hole became famous as the headquarters of Col. John Heffner, who was attempting to raise a Confederate regiment. His purpose was first to capture Fort Garland and then join the Confederate forces in New Mexico. At one time there were some six hundred Confederates secreted in this locality, some of whom were fairly well equipped with uniforms and arms.

Alexander "Zan" Hicklin, who according to legend, was living on the Greenhorn when the coyotes and prairie dogs came to Colorado, succeeded during the time Heffner was carrying on his operations in Mace's Hole, in "carrying water on both shoulders," by guiding Federal troops by day and driving beef cattle to the rebels in Mace's Hole by night. Hicklin continued to act in this dual capacity until the rebel regiment at Mace's Hole was dispersed by Federal Troops.

Upon one occasion he was arrested on the charge of being disloyal, but so clever was his defense that he was released upon his taking the oath to support the U.S. Constitution.
Extracted from:

Pathbreakers and Pioneers of the Pueblo Region,
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