

Henry Templeton (1831-1914)

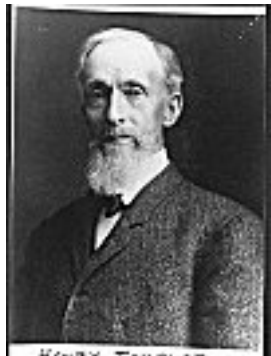
Category: OLD COLORADO CITY - People

Published: Monday, 01 December 2008 21:55

Written by LaDonna Gunn

Hits: 10566

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Information Compiled by LaDonna Gunn and Dave Hughes

Henry Templeton and his family arrived in Colorado City in July 1862 by wagon from Henry County, Illinois. He was unable, when he tried, to join the Union Army because he had physically ailments. So he and his wife decided to move far west - away from the Civil War largely fought in the east.

Since they did not have a home to live in, the Templetons lived with the William Baird family on their ranch (known later as Beaver Ranch) until the following spring. When the spring of 1863 arrived, the Templetons settled below the mouth of Shooks Run in what is now Colorado Springs.

That summer the Templetons had the first baby girl in El Paso County--Mary Harriet. During the winter of 1863, Henry Templeton operated a hotel in the northwest part of Colorado City. With increased Indian hostilities, town residents build a log stockade around the hotel and used it for a safe house for women and children.

Although the exact date is not known, in the mid-1860s (possibly 1864), Henry Templeton and his partner, Mr. White, established the region's second flour mill, naming the mill the "Hawkeye Mill." Templeton and several men had gone "east" to purchase the necessary equipment for the flour mill. The men bought a combine reaper and mower, a 10-horse power threshing machine, and used a string of horses for power. Upon their return, Templeton and the men then built a ditch off Fountain Creek to supply water to the new mill. Their business venture eventually failed.

Because of Colorado City's decline in population during the 1860s, many settlers

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who remained in the area speculated in town lots which were recorded on the Fosdick Plat. Having invested in many lots, some of which Henry could buy for \$1.00 Henry Templeton later was able to sell them in the mid 1880s when the Midland Railroad constructed its offices and rails in 1886 and 1887. Templeton then invested his proceeds and, for \$15,000 built the 3 story brick "Templeton Block" in 1891 on the present-day corner of Colorado Avenue and 25th Street, opposite its twin looking Waycott Opera House building on the east side of what was '5th' street then. He also built a home on the corner of Pikes Peak Avenue and 25th Street for his sickly wife. She died before it was completed, but he was surrounded by his family, all of whom lived close by, for the rest of his life. He died in 1914.

Both the 'Templeton Block' building at todays 2502 West Colorado, and that home still stand.

Henry's entire family were involved in the Methodist Churches of Colorado City and he was a generous doner. In fact Henry Templeton was often called the 'Father of Methodism of Colorado City'

Henry had built a smaller, narrow building, between his home and the Templeton Block and rented it out. It became one of the earliest Mortuaries in Colorado City. At times, when the staff was unable to do it, Henry delivered services to the bereaved families in a small room in that building, before their loved ones were taken to the cemetery to be buried.