

## **GEORGE BUTE**

### **Information Compiled by LaDonna Gunn**

Arriving in the Pike's Peak region in 1858, George A. Bute played a major role in the organization and development of Colorado City and El Paso County.

George A. Bute joined a fifty-man and one-woman prospecting party from Westport, Missouri. Leaving Missouri in August 1858, the party arrived in the Pike's Peak region in the early fall, learning that two separate prospecting parties (the Greene Russell party from Georgia and the Lawrence, Kansas party) had reached the area earlier in the spring and summer.

Once in the Pike's Peak region, George A. Bute, Captain John Price, Charley Gilmore, and Ryan extensively explored the South Park area for gold, discovering the first placer mines sometime during the winter of 1858-1859. Yet, not only did Bute and other members from the Westport party search for gold but they also searched for town sites. Because of Ute Pass, Bute, Anthony Bott, and others platted the town site of El Dorado in the latter part of 1858 on the present location of Colorado City. However, with the rival of Auroria, Denver City, and other mining supply towns to the north, El Dorado did not survive, dissolving in the spring of 1859.

Not wanting to abandon the idea of a town at the bottom of Ute Pass, George A. Bute, along with several other town promoters, met in Denver City and organized the Colorado City Town Company on August 11, 1859, founding Colorado City on August 12. A few days later, on August 15, 1859, Bute and many of the same eager town promoters organized the El Paso Claim Club, a vigilante form of civil government, to record real estate claims and settle land disputes.

In 1859, George A. Bute, Anthony Bott, M. S. Beach, A. D. Richardson, Lewis Tappan, several people from Golden City, and several women hiked to the summit of Pike's Peak, taking several days. At the summit, the hikers found evidence of others having reached the summit. Records indicate that members of the Lawrence, Kansas, prospecting party hiked to the summit in the summer of 1858.

After the federal government created the Colorado Territory in February 1861,

## **Bute, George A**

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newly commissioned Territorial Governor William Gilpin charged all of the mining communities with creating local governments. As a result, the citizens of El Paso County held a convention on November 24, 1861, electing George A. Bute as the secretary. The citizens also nominated Bute to run for county clerk; and after the elections a short time later, Bute became the first El Paso County Clerk.

With all of Bute's other responsibilities, Bute still had time to farm. Anthony Bott recalled that Bute "grew the first potatoes" in the Pike's Peak region during the summer of 1862.