

Buzzard, S.M. -40-Rod Fire-Water

Category: OLD COLORADO CITY - People

Published: Sunday, 23 November 2008 21:30

Written by Compiled by LaDonna Gunn

Hits: 9793

S. M. Buzzard was working for Webb Milner and his brothers hauling vegetables into the mining camps in South Park. In October of 1862, the men were leaving the mountains for the winter and heading for the Randall and Sweetland ranch just below Colorado City on Bachelor Flats. Buzzard was herding the "loose oxen" which required Buzzard to continuously push the oxen to keep up with the wagons. At sundown, the wagon train passed through Colorado City, but they did not stop to eat. However, several of the men from the wagons stopped long enough to buy some liquor at a saloon and set a "canteen of 40-rod fire-water" beside the road, motioning to Buzzard what they had done. When Buzzard reached the canteen, he picked it up and took a drink. Determining that the beverage tasted pretty good, he slung the canteen around his neck and began taking a few sips whenever his throat got dry or he became hoarse from yelling at the oxen.

A short time later, while chasing the oxen out of a corn field next to Monument Creek, Buzzard realized he had lost sight of the wagons. Quickly figuring that he could follow the wagon tracks easily enough, Buzzard set off again. But, every time he started to follow the set of wagon tracks there were soon multiple wagon tracks, heading in all directions. With much persistence, Buzzard came upon a sign post with "fingers", one pointing to Pueblo and the other to Canon City. After climbing the sign post and surmising the situation from on top, Buzzard headed toward Canon City. Soon, however, Buzzard and his oxen ran into Fountain Creek. Since Buzzard did not want to get wet, he tried to climb on top of the biggest ox he could find. But, by the time he climbed on, Buzzard realized he was already across the creek. Thankfully, with no further incident, Buzzard finally made it, in one piece, to the Randall and Sweetland ranch where he found the bunkhouse bed much to his liking.