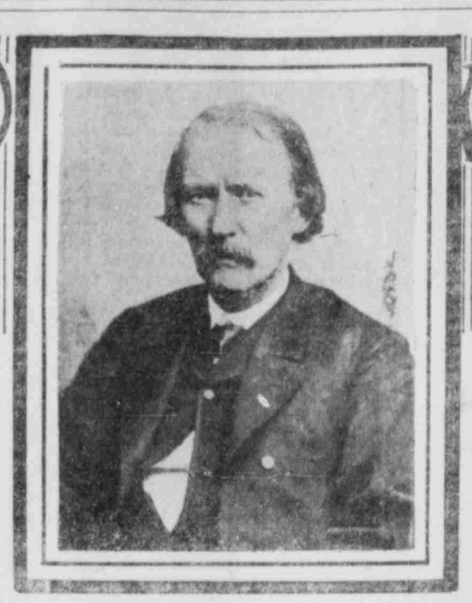
KIT CARSON III BUYS A HOME IN SALT LAKE AND FORSAKES FRONTIER LIFE

COLONEL KIT CARSON III, scout, deputy sheriff, Indian fighter, linguist, mining engineer, mine and [illegible] broker, lancier and grandson and chip-off-the-old-block of the celebrated Brig.-Gen. Kit Carson, who died with his boots on 42 years ago, has come to Salt Lake; purchased a residence on the North South and Douglas streets and intends to pass the remainder of his tremendously active life within the peaceful vales of Utah. At present he is a guest at the Kenyon, but in a few days will move into his newly acquired home.

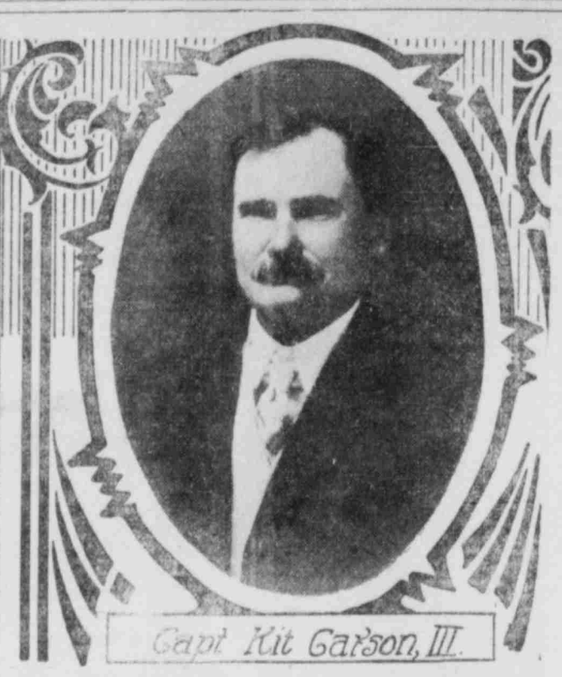
Col. Carson is accompanied to Salt Lake by Mrs. Carson (nee Lou Chipman, daughter of Joseph Chipman) who is his own cousin, herself a granddaughter of the most famous Indian fighter and pathfinder the world ever knew. Both Mr. and Mrs. Carson are three-quarter Sioux blood, their grandmother being "White Swan," the daughter of "Spotted Tail," the diplomatic chief of the war-like Sioux Indians. They are proud of the Indian blood coursing through their veins, making them strong both mentally and physically, both having splendid educations.

In addition to his fighting, scouting and shooting ability, Col. Carson is a mining engineer, with the additional advantage of a school of practical experience, so that today present him with a fragment of rock or ore from any part of this country and he can immediately give you a correct story of its formation, character, and constituent parts.

Mrs. Carson Carson



Kit Carson, taken June 1869.



Capt. Kit Carson, III.

BORN IN THE SADDLE

As the colonel says: "I was born in the saddle with a lariet in one hand and a six-shooter in the other." But the last four or five years he has turned back on the exciting days of his early border life among the war-like Indians and the more war-like cattle rustling whites of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and the Dakotas, and is now devoting his time to his mining and oil interests. And it is these which decided him to choose Salt Lake as his permanent home, it being centrally located from his interests in Colorado, Arizona, California, Nevada and Oregon, and he will eventually open a head office here through which to handle his holdings, which in the past five years have made him wealthy. "And I'm glad I'm able to say that Mrs. Carson and I don't have to worry any more how we're going to get along when we get old."

Considering the fact that the colonel "was born in the saddle" and since attaining the age of 12 years, has spent his entire life "punching" cattle, prospecting, hunting big game, the deer, mountain lion and bear, chasing marauding coyotes, cattle rustlers and bedeviling Indians, and boasting his quarter blood Sioux, yet he has brushed but much of his frontiersman roughness and today might appear anywhere without attracting unusual attention. "Won't you come with me today noon and have lunch, no luncheon," said the colonel, correcting himself.

Col. Carson was born 58 years ago, but looks 10 years younger, and was present with his father at the death of the famous scout at Fort Lyon, Colo., Sept. 25, 1869. In 1830 that old hunter and trapper was up on Bear river, and later came down to Great Salt lake and sailed on its waters, where about 20 years later some of the Mormon pioneers discovered the remains of one of his old canoes. The canoe was secured, brought to this city and today is found among the stored treasures of the Deseret Museum, which will presently be placed on exhibition in the Dermont building.

HALF BREED SIOUX.

"My father, Kit Carson II, was a half breed Sioux, but he was more 'civilized' than half the whites roaming the plains in those days," said the colonel. "He fought the Indians as fiercely as the whites when they raided the settlements to steal the cattle. So he became a government scout, and afterwards owned an extensive cattle ranch on the Pecos river, New Mexico. He was killed by the Apaches Oct. 3, 1872, at Adobe Walls, N. M."

The present Kit Carson, was then a middling frontiersman of 20 years. Thus thrown suddenly on his own resources, young Kit soon showed the strain of the blood of father and his famous grandfather. When the Indians and cattle rustlers grew bold in New Mexico, young Kit was appointed a deputy sheriff of Pecora county, in which capacity he distinguished himself for years. Soon the fame of his prowess spread. "Get the colonel; he'll run the trail like a hound after a fox," was frequently heard when the settlements had been raided and the stock driven off. And off went Kit, and seldom did he return empty handed. Many times he went 36 hours in saddle without food or drink. "Get the colonel," the distracted settlers would cry, and in this way by dint of hard, faithful work in the interests of the community he won his title of colonel.

INDIAN DIALECTS.

The colonel is a linguist of no mean order, having six languages at his tongue's end. "I got mixed up with so many Indian tribes that I unconsciously learned four of their languages, besides the Mexican, or Spanish," said the colonel. "A most interesting and surprising thing about the Indian languages is this: I found there are about 200 words spoken commonly among all the tribes I believe found in the United States. Knowing these 200 words I found I could get along comfortably among any of the tribes. That convinced me they must have some time come from a common root.

"You want my most exciting experience. Well, that was during the 80's, when in about three months 750 cattle thieves and cattle raisers were murdered or slain, about half in half. Those were wild, exciting days. Two men, or two bodies of men, would meet on the plains, or in the hills. When within 200 yards they would stop and yell, "Which side are you on?" and then up with our rifles and begin shooting. In those days, we never ordered 'hands up;' it was a question of who got his gun out first. We would shoot first and argue afterwards. Most of the boys were such deadly shots that the battles didn't last long. But I'd rather meet 30 Indians than three of those desperate New Mexican cattle rustlers.

"BILLY THE KID."

"There was Billy the Kid, for instance. I knew him well. He was only 21 years, 11 months and 5 days old, and had 26 men to his credit—just a kid, yet had killed 26 men before one of our boys got him."

During his many long years spent among the Indians, Col. Carson learned many of their manners, customs and modes of warfare. A most interesting thing is their method of poisoning their arrows for war. The poison was secured from a rattlesnake. A rattler would be captured, tormented until thoroughly angry and then a piece of liver would be thrown down in front of it. This liver the serpent would blindly attack, filling it so with poison it would turn green. The tips of the arrows would then be stuck into the liver, dried and then dipped again, and so on until each was well poisoned. This poison, Col. Carson says, would last for two years on arrows that were kept in quivers.

FEATS IN THE SADDLE.

"People nowadays will hardly credit some of our feats in the saddle on the plains 30 odd years ago," said the colonel. "Many a time have I rode from Horsehead Crossing to Camp Charlotte, 90 miles between suns, and that without water. Thirty-six hours in the saddle was no uncommon performance for us boys when we were running down Indians and murderous cattle thieves."

REMARKABLE DOG.

Down in the basement of the Kenyon hotel, chained to a post is a brown-black little Scotch Collie, weight about 45 pounds, age, 9 years, with as bright an eye, as intelligent a face as ever blessed a canine. The dog has an expectant, anxious look when seen, this week. It wondered why this solitary confinement down there. "That is 'Shep,' my favorite dog," said the colonel, as proud of it as if it had been a son.

"I never expect to have another like 'Shephard,'" said the colonel. "He will do almost every thing. His days are numbered, as he is getting old. He is a great retriever as well as a good watch dog. I can send him any distance for my horses. But what is considered his most wonderful performance took place down in New Mexico, a few years ago. A friend of mine had a 40-acre field. In the middle was a 20-acre patch of fine oats. There were 300 cattle in the enclosure and wire for fencing the 20 acres failed to come. "I guess I'll have to let the stock have that oats, and I need it badly, too,' said my friend. "Why don't you protect it?' said I. 'How can I?' 'I'll show you.' I walked down to the oats patch and pointing to it said: 'Shep look after the oats; keep the cattle off until I come for you.' She looked up into my face and off he trotted and soon had every critter out of the grain. For several nights I could hear his bark down in the oats, and I knew he was faithfully doing his duty, a difficult task of keeping 300 cattle out of the grain.

FOUR MONTHS ON DUTY.

"I left the ranch, and didn't return for four months. The oats were then harvested, and 'Shep' left his post the first time for four months. But the worst thing about it all was that man never gave poor 'Shep' one beefsteak—only common dog food, and he's not used to that. But 'Shep' didn't complain, neither did he work for that man again.

"Shep has traveled close to 50,000 miles with us. He has ridden on trains, boats, autos, wagons, and about every kind of conveyance known to civilization but one, the flying machine, and I hope he'll have that fun before he checks in. I want to get out on a five-acre place where 'Shep' will have all the room he wants, and where my neighbor won't throw any dish water on my back porch," said the colonel with a smile.

CAREER OF KIT CARSON I.

Christopher Carson was born Dec. 24, 1809, in Madison county, Ky. A year later, the Carson family moved to Howard county, Mo., known as the Boone's Lick country, and young Kit found plenty of excitement there while he was growing up, as hostile Indians were plentiful. At 15, the boy was apprenticed to a saddler, but he could not stand any occupation that kept him indoors, as he had spent most of the time in the woods since he was strong enough to carry a rifle. At 17, he joined a party bound for Santa Fe. The journey along the Santa Fe trail was made without incident. At Santa Fe Kit left the traders with whom he had made the journey, and went to El Paso as a teamster. Returning again to Santa Fe, he pushed north to the historic little settlement of Fernandez de Taos, in the valley of the Rio Grande, not far south of the present Colorado-New Mexico line. Here he spent a winter as cook and interpreter, as he had rapidly acquired a knowledge of the Spanish tongue. After another journey to El Paso, and as far into Old Mexico as Chihuahua, he returned to Taos and joined a party of trappers outfitting under Ewing Young. These trappers were going on an expedition into the southwest, and the prospect of Indian fighting delighted Carson. He was accepted as a member of the party on account of the skill he had shown with firearms.

TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

The party spent considerable time on the Salt and San Franciscan rivers. Pushing on across the inhospitable desert, they nearly perished, but were saved by friendly Indians, who gave them food. Crossing the Colorado, they penetrated southern California, and worked north to the Sacramento valley, where they trapped with great success. This journey was replete with desperate combats with Indians. The party had to be constantly on guard to prevent the savages from running off their horses, and skirmishes were frequent. Carson, on several occasions, headed parties that pursued the Indians and recaptured stolen horses. The furs which were brought back to Santa Fe were sold at an enormous profit, and Carson was quick to realize the opportunities that this business offered. He resolved to become a trapper, as the hazards of the occupation just suited his nature. In the autumn of 1829, Carson joined a party of trappers under the famous American fur trader, Fitzpatrick and went to the Platte river, afterward pushing to the Solomon river and wintering with the friendly Nez Perces. In the spring the party trapped on Bear river but Carson, with a few trappers, left the main party and went to South Park, at the headwaters of the Arkansas in Colorado. Sixty Crow Indians ran off the horses of the little party, but Carson and his men made swift pursuit, and by a bold dash secured their horses. Then Carson attacked the Indians and put them to flight, leaving five of their warriors on the field.

On the Arkansas Carson fell in with Gaunt, famous as a trapper, and put in an unsuccessful season trapping with him. Determined to trap on his own account, Carson left Gaunt, and, with only two companions pushed higher into the mountains, where he ran great danger from the Indians, but succeeded in getting many beaver pelts.

Carson was making a name for himself as a great trapper. He established headquarters at Taos, where he gathered about him some 40 or 50 of the greatest trappers and train-makers in the history of the west. He and his men trapped on all the important streams of the west, and their headwaters, Carson wandered through the Rocky mountains from Mexico to the Canadian line. He had many exciting adventures in the Green river and Humboldt countries, and trapped successfully, in the vicinity of Great Salt Lake.

DEADLY AIM.

While with Capt. Lee on Green river, Carson had an adventure that showed his courage. An Indian had stolen six of the best horses and fled. Obtaining Lee's permission to go in pursuit, Carson got a young Ute warrier to accompany him. After going about 100 miles the horse carrying Carson's companion became sick, so Kit pushed on alone. Thirty miles farther on he overtook the thief, who hid behind some rocks and prepared to make a stand. Carson charged toward the Indian at full speed, and opened fire from the saddle. So deadly was his aim that the first ball pierced the Indian's head. Collecting the stolen horses, Carson drove back to camp.

Some of Carson's most exciting Indian adventures took place while he was trapping with Jim Bridger in the Blackfoot country along the Yellowstone. The Blackfeet had always been implacable enemies of white people, ever since a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition killed one of their tribe. On one occasion the Blackfeet ran off a number of their trappers' horses. Carson and a party went in pursuit. The Indians made a determined stand, and Carson was wounded in the shoulder. It was midwinter and intensely cold, and Carson lay on the ground while the battle raged until nightfall, when both sides withdrew. Carson was taken back to camp where he made rapid recovery. Bridger and 30 men pursued the Blackfeet but the Indians had too great a start.

At the summer rendezvous of the trappers, on Green river, there were gathered hundreds of trappers of all nationalities, some of whom represented the Hudson Bay company, others representing the American company, of St. Louis, and the rest being free trappers. Here is was that Carson engaged in a duel with a big trapper named Shuman. The men mounted their horses and charged at each other. Shuman fired first. The ball from his rifle cut Carson's scalp. Then Carson fired his deadly shot and Shuman fell, dying a short time afterwards.

For eight years Carson followed the life of a trapper, meeting with countless adventures like those that have been described. He varied his experiences by guarding pack trains on the Santa Fe trail "between seasons," and he and his trappers, who had their rendezvous at Taos, saved many lives by their quickness in rescuing outfits that had been besieged by Kiowas and Comanches. Carson's adventures on the Santa Fe trail would make a volume in themselves. Such a reputation did he achieve as a fighter of Indians that the savages were afraid of his very name, and believed that he bore a charmed life.

At Santa Fe Carson heard that a gang of desperadoes had plotted to murder and rob two wealthy citizens by whom they had been engaged to guide over the trail to the states. The caravan was many miles on its way when Carson learned of the plot, but in less than an hour he was on the trail with 16 men. He took a short cut across the mountains, and by hard riding overtook the caravan, and at once seized and bound the leader of the desperadoes, a man named Fox. The traders were then informed of the plot against them, and were horrified. They had noticed many incidents that convinced them that such a plot really existed. The conspirators were driven out of camp, with the exception of Fox, who was taken to Taos. Fox made his escape from the adobe jail, and was seen in the southwest no more. The traders could not induce Carson to accept any reward, but finally they presented him with a pair of silver-mounted pistols, with an inscription commemorating the deed.

Every fall for eight years Carson hunted buffalo and other game for the soldiers at Bent's Fort, then the most important post in the southwest. He won international fame as a buffalo hunter, though he never slaughtered the animals indiscriminately and wantonly. On his bufialo hunting trips he would be accompanied by a large party of friendly Indians. The squaws would pounce on the slain buffalos as fast as they fell under Carson's fire, and would cut off the choice pieces of meat and make the skins into robes.

Carson married "White Swan," a beautiful Indian girl, daughter of Spotted Tail, the great chief of the Sioux Indians, who was noted for his wisdom and diplomacy. The Indian wife died after giving birth to a son and daughter, the son being the father of Capt. Carson who has just come to Salt Lake to make his home. While he was in St. Louis, in the spring of 1842, where he had taken the daughter to put her in school, he met Lieut. John C. Fremont, who had been commissioned by the government to explore the unknown west. Fremont had heard of the exploits of Carson, and engaged him at once as guide.

The first Fremont expedition went up the Platte to Fort Laramie, Carson killing many buffalo for the party. At Fort Laramie, the party cached most of its equipment, on the advice of Carson, who heard that the Sioux, Cheyennes and Gros Ventres had combined and were about to wage a general campaign against white invaders. Crossing the divide and entering the Sweetwater country, under Carson's guidance, the party approached South Pass, and in this vicinity Fremont explored the sources of the Colorado, the Columbia and Missouri and the Platte, which center here, and ascended the highest peak in the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming—the peak that now bears the pathfinder's name.

Returning to Taos, after the first Fremont expedition, Carson married a Spanish lady and engaged as a hunter for Bent's Fort. She bore him seven children. Fremont re-engaged him for his second expedition, and Carson secured the mules for the party, and joined the party at Fort St. Vrain, on the south fork of the Platte. On the second expedition Carson guided Fremont to Great Salt Lake. After sending part of the party back, Carson and Fremont and a picked command pushed on to the northwest, Carson being left at the Dalles of the Columbia to refit the equipage, while Fremont continued his journey down the river. After exploring the Klamath Lake country and the Bonaventura, the party planned to return, via the headwaters of the Arkansas to Bent's Fort. The party underwent great privations on this long and dangerous trip. On one occasion Carson saved Fremont's life by pulling the pathfinder from an icy stream into which he had slipped. It was impossible to return as had been planned, and the party was not out of danger until it finally penetrated to Sutter's Fort, in California. Over half the mules had perished, and the command was half-starved but far from being dispirited.

MADE A COLONEL.

In 1853 Carson and his friend Maxwell trailed several thousand sheep from New Mexico to California, where they sold the herd at a great profit. Here Carson was commissioned a colonel by Lieut. Fremont and sent with important letters and documents overland across the perilous plains. On the way, Carson learned that the federal government refused to confirm Fremont's commission of colonel. Friends of Carson endeavored to dissuade him from finishing his journey and delivering the papers. "Never," said Col. Carson firmly; "I told Lieut. Fremont I would deliver those papers at Washington, and so I shall, and it matters not to me whether I do my duty as a private citizen or as a colonel." He fulfilled his mission, and his title was sustained. When the Civil war broke out Carson was a colonel in the Federal army, serving with distinction in several battles and being breveted brigadier-general. On May 23, 1869, at Fort Lyon, Colo., where he was visiting a son, he died suddenly owing to the rupture of an aneurism of an artery in the neck. His body was removed to Santa Fe, where his grave is an object of public interest today, the Masonic fraternity, of which Carson was an enthusiastic member, keeping the last resting place of the great plainsman from exhibiting any signs of neglect.

Unlike most of the frontier characters, Carson was quiet and modest, and was not given to telling tales of his own prowess. Indeed, his biographies are pitifully meager, and probably not one-tenth of the man's wonderful adventures have found their way into print. As Indian agent for the Navajo and Apache tribes, he averted many threatened troubles with those warlike savages. His coolness and resourcefulness are said to have made Fremont's reputation, yet he never boasted of himself or his exploits. Because of all these things, it is not surprising that his hundredth anniversary at Trinidad, Colo., and Taos, N. M., last year finds Kit Carson occupying the leading place among the pioneers who shaped the destinies of the far west in the uncertain days of the frontier.

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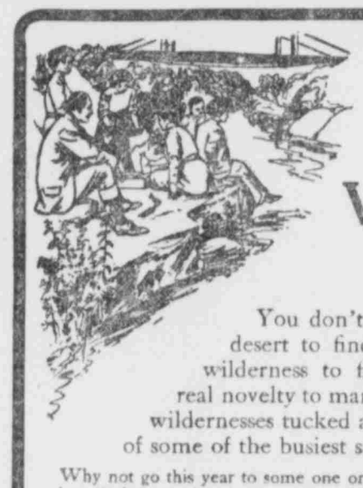

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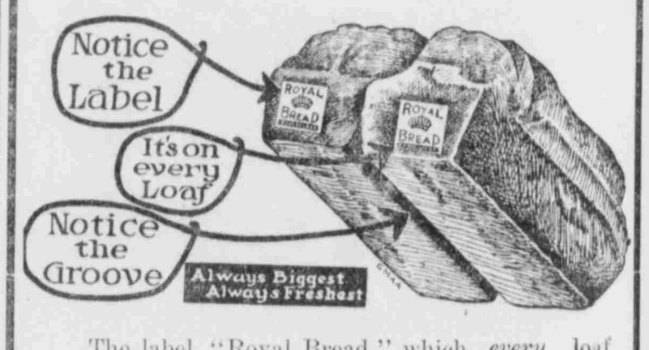

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