

History Trail Run -The Adventures of Elizabeth Lennox, Pioneer Girl
By Jack Anthony, 3 March 2005

This is the third in a series of articles providing New Santa Fe Regional Trail enthusiasts with insight into the history of the communities and people who lived nearby this recreational trail. This article highlights a few months in the life of Elizabeth Lennox, specifically from April to December 1872. As you travel the trail north from Ice Lake, you are in Elizabeth's neighborhood. I wish to dedicate this article to Hester-Jane Cogswell, a 93 year young lady living in Meeker, Colorado. Hester-Jane and her late husband Wilton were the final owners of the 8000 square-foot Otis House home and the surrounding beautiful 117 acre property before it was procured by the government in 1954 to make way for the Air Force Academy. The Cogswell home enveloped the original Lennox cabin. The Lennox house and property were sold to the Otis family in 1888. In 1950, the Cogswell's took ownership of this beautiful Pine Valley estate. Hester-Jane told me about the Lennox diary and historical material that she discovered in the home and subsequently donated to the Colorado College Tutt Library special collections.

John and Agnes Lennox and their four children moved from Iowa City, Iowa to Colorado Springs in April of 1872. 14 year old Elizabeth was the youngest of the four children. She enjoyed capturing daily activities in a detailed journal. Her initial impressions of their arrival to the "wild and woolly west" were anything but pleasant. During the move, wife and kids headed to Colorado Springs as dad remained in Denver arranging to have their household goods shipped via railroad from Denver. Agnes and her children checked into a hotel in the Colorado Springs colony. The temporary home was a crowded open bay type hotel located where old Colorado City is located today. They had no privacy; most of the hotel's customers were men. One day while walking through town Agnes and the kids found themselves in the middle of a wild gun fight. Quite a first impression! Luckily, they managed to stay far away from the flurry of flying bullets. Soon dad arrived from Denver and things got better.

Shortly after rejoining his family, John Lennox purchased a log cabin from several bachelors who built the cabin and were currently occupying it. The cabin consisted of three small rooms and one large room. The family named their new home and property Glenwood Ranch. They moved in on 12 May 1872.



Lennox Home - 1880 timeframe (Blodgett Peak in background)

Glenwood Ranch was located on the mesa west of the trail and south of where Air Academy High School is today. Their first night was memorable according to Elizabeth, but no gunfights broke out! Back during their short stay at the hotel, the Lennox kids had to fend off their share of bugs...and wanted no more of these little creatures! They asked the bachelors if there were any bed bugs and the men replied "not a single one". Elizabeth wrote that the bachelors somewhat quibbled with the regard to bugs. Well, on that first night, guess what they discovered? She wrote, "we found that, as my brother John put it, there wasn't a single one, but they all were married and had large families." The Lennox family declared war of the bugs and eradicated them over time.

Glenwood Ranch was described as being "in a lovely valley, in the midst of pine woods, with a spring and a clear sparkling stream running through the place coming from the mountains just back of us." Furthermore, Elizabeth shares that "at night the whispering of the pine trees was soothing, and lulled one to sleep." But it wasn't all lovely, as Elizabeth described a "fly in the ointment" in the form of rattle snakes and prairie dogs forming somewhat of a pesky alliance. One particularly scary episode when "to our horror one day to see our pet prairie dog coming up the steps into the house with a three foot rattler following close after it" Yikes!

The Lennox family was dedicated to attending church on Sundays. They would usually ride horse back to a church 8 miles north in Divide, which is what Monument area was called back then. Occasionally they used a horse drawn wagon. Rarely did Elizabeth's diary reflect missing church on a given Sunday. On one occasion while heading north to attend church, Elizabeth, her brother John, and sister Agnes were on a lonely, somewhat desolate stretch of road when they came upon a tribe of Indians. One of the young male Indians fell behind his group and joined John and his two sisters to discuss an idea. It seemed the young Indian felt that John needed "only one squaw, and that

he must give him one.” Well the young Indian's idea of course didn't sit well them. Nervously, they watched as the main group of the Indian party rode on. John had to think fast and be persuasive in convincing the young Indian that arriving at church with only one sister would not be a good thing. The young Indian finally rode off to rejoin his group...without a squaw. Whew!

Elizabeth and her siblings were very hard workers. I have no doubt that if they lived today they would be cross country runners. Given that they lived nearby where Air Academy High School is located, they'd be Kadet harriers! Their discipline, perseverance, and strength are reflected in each of Elizabeth's diary entries. Her entries capture various chores and work efforts around the Glenwood Ranch as well as getting studies done (she mentions having two algebra books and plenty of paper). The Lennox family had many construction projects going on immediately after taking possession of Glenwood Ranch. They started to add rooms to the original structure and their home grew rapidly in size. They built a milk house, a covered stable for horses and cows, and a root cellar for keeping vegetables. They also built roads, dug ditches to control the flow of water through the ranch, and hauled a lot of posts and lumber. They purchased their lumber from Calvin Husted, who had a lumber mill up near where the north gate of the AFA is now located. There were a lot of fences to erect and some days Elizabeth kept track of how many holes she dug, the maximum I saw was 35! She also teamed up with neighbor Will Blodgett and helped a neighborhood team build a bridge over the Monument Creek. Elizabeth and her siblings helped plant all sorts of crops including carrots, corn, beets, cabbage, and potatoes, and harvested them in the September-October timeframe. She often accompanied the adults to round up cattle, find horses, and hunt buffalo and antelope. Elizabeth Lennox was a very tough young lady whose work ethic, dedication to task, and sense of adventure were truly amazing.

Elizabeth took time out for fun. She would often go hunting or would venture down to the West Monument Creek to try some fishing. She didn't have much luck at either. However, in late December, she accompanied a hunting party on the plains and shot a buffalo! She fished on the creek several times, but did not mention any success in her diary. She also enjoyed visiting the Teachout's (Teachout Ranch was featured in my first article in this series) to enjoy socials, dances and dining. Elizabeth was a prolific writer and precisely tracked each letter she wrote to friends whose names she consistently mentioned in the diary. She made a special effort to document each trip to the Post Office to mail or receive a letter. It is not clear to me where the post office was that Elizabeth went to, but I suspect it was a mail drop at a small railroad station near where Edgerton would eventually be established.

On February 19, 1880 Elizabeth Lennox was married to William Grinnell at a wedding held at Glenwood Ranch. They eventually moved to Minnesota and had three children. Elizabeth died November 2, 1945. I found her diary to be mesmerizing and it gave me wonderful insight into what life was as a pioneer girl. Elizabeth Lennox was quite a remarkable young lady!

Next time we'll spend some time with the Young family who built a cabin and

established a ranch about 2 miles northeast of where the Lennox family lived. Mary Eliza Young kept a diary that captured family events and the adventures of her two children Marian and Russell. Next time we'll meet Marian, whose photo is provided by her great grandson Mr. Roger Davis, curator for the Lucretia Vaile Museum in Palmer Lake. You'll get to experience Marian and Russell's adventures along the trail. We'll also learn about her dad William as he builds a very unique cabin for his family.

