

Booster Days Among the Hustling Residents of Central Wyoming



'LADY BOOSTERS' OF LANDER.



MISS MABEL SPAUGH OF LUSK—A GENUINE ROUGH RIDER.



LIVE STOCK EXHIBIT AT LUSK.



SHOSHONI PEOPLE WHO WELCOMED OMAHA.

WHAT Archimedes said when he discovered a way for finding out how much of the gold of King Midas's crown had been alloyed is said to have been "Eureka," and he, perhaps, coined a new word. But words new and old, failed to express the feeling of surprise and satisfaction of the 300 Omaha business men who traveled over Converse, Natrona and Fremont counties in Wyoming and arrived in Lander, at the end of the Northwestern railroad, early on the morning of May 28.

Though not deserving or claiming the credit of discoverers, almost every booster in the Tri-State Trade excursion party felt all the satisfaction and pleasure of the day before, which may have been enjoyed by the early pathfinders when they located on the desert and fertile valleys of the Wind river for the first time. It is difficult for one who has not traveled in the far west to imagine Lander, the city half old and half new, the stage office on one side of the street and the railroad depot on the other; the fonda for inn and road house not far from where a fire-proof brick and steel hotel is being erected; the bank with its armor-plated counter in comparison with the newer institution with polished golden oak; the добы houses, comfortable and ancient, by the side of the freshly-painted modern frame houses.

Then the only highway, which was formed only a stage road, has been straightened to run through the growing city, but it still shows that it has come by its rivals but recently, for not a great while ago it was not just "Main" street, but the only street. Now it has modern streets on all sides of it for the railroad has come and Lander has been planned like all western cities, with the firm determination to grow larger. There is a Washington street and a Broadway, a First and a Second street, and others named after almost all the fathers of history. Some of these may not be preserved, but they are marked out just the same and run almost to the timber line on the mountains. Instead of being numbered from the temple, as they are in the Zion of the Mormons, they begin at the spot where daring old Bill Pone, a man dear to legend, started his horses for the governors or to the Union Pacific, his miles away.

This was Lander, a city with old and strong foundations for the prosperity of a large population and taken on new life since the railroad connected it more intimately with the world. But it shows plainly that it has never been dependent on any railroad and was a thriving and contented city long before the long lines of shimmering steel were thrown across the great plains to parallel the stage road. Since the Northwestern line pushed into Lander a Carnegie library costing \$20,000 has been erected and houses with paint and ornaments on them have been built, but when the town was three days old it had a railroad and an old school house, erected fifteen years ago, and scores of fine houses, with whitewashed sides and green shutters, and surrounded by high board fences.

While Lander has perhaps been built by sheer want, the city is proud of the fact that it has been modeled by courageous women, and is now enjoying and prospering under woman's reign.

The energy of the women of Lander is concentrated in an organization known as the "Lady Boosters," which corresponds to the Commercial clubs, boards of trade and business men's associations now organized in almost every wide-awake town and city. The "Lady Boosters" met the Omaha trade excursion and to their enterprise and skill at entertaining the 300 business men was one of the most interesting times of the whole excursion, if not one of the opportunities of a life time for realizing the possibilities of Wyoming.

The "Lady Boosters" simply drew the curtain of the future back a little and allowed the Omahans to see a few years ahead, the well-developed valleys of the Wind and Big Horn rivers.

Carriges and spirited horses trained at mounts and stages road crews were provided and members of the Omaha party were taken to "Capitol Hill," over a mile from Lander and high above the town, where they had an opportunity to learn an excellent geography lesson.

From Capitol hill the guests of the Lady Boosters looked down upon what seemed to them the garden spot of the world, much green intricate country and the splashing streams from the mountains behind them; seeing to the southwest the continental divide which turns rivers to the Pacific ocean and the Gulf of Mexico; to the northeast the Big Horn mountains, which appear to be very near, but with their main range form the boundary between Johnson and Big Horn counties; to the southeast the Antelope hills, arid lands only spotted here and there with gardens like fields of alfalfa and grain; while on the other hand, looking across the Shoshone reservation, the Wind range could be seen, with the white peak of Fremont peak rising 12,000 feet, rising far above the tops of Mount Webster and Mount Cheyenne, and from what the guests knew looks down on the great Yellowstone and Ute county beyond.

Life in the shadow of these mountain ranges goes rustically forward about Lander. Bears, antelope, deer, trout fishing,

oil gushers, mining, rattlesnakes and the possibilities of irrigation when it becomes necessary, are the staple of men's talk. Agriculture has only begun in the valley, and though in a few years the whole valley doubtless be smiling with farms, the people frankly tell visitors that things so far have been left very largely as they were when the Creator finished His work.

Yet in the meantime the people are happy and prosperous. Everything they plant in the Little Wind river valley grows; every place they dig for mineral, they find it; and to stop the gushing wells of oil is beyond human power. Everything is so plentiful, from trout to a winter's meat, which can be secured in exchange for a day's hunting, that the people in the valley go sauntering about their business as in the days before the flood, when there was neither master nor servant, millionaire nor pauper.

To look from Capitol hill the valley has the appearance of the great reserves everywhere held for disinterred Indians. Now

and then a patch of ground is torn up along the side of the hill, and corn grows. Another patch is broken and alfalfa thrives under the clear skies at such a rate that the crops cannot be cut fast enough.

The waters of the Little Wind river, which can be depended on by Lander for a source of supply when it is ten times its present size, are clear and cool. They tumble down the continental divide on the east side, while the great Snake river is being formed by the same snows on the western slope of the continent. The Big and Little Wind rivers, which in turn reaches the Yellowstone, and after circling the mountains and bad lands feeds the Missouri river. No one who stands and watches the Wind rivers in Wyoming or tastes of their water will ever say again that the Missouri river does not contain decent water.

About Lander twenty rivers and streams have their source. The Snake river is fed by the Hoback, Black Rock, Ventre and John Day's river, and these tumble toward

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It was while standing on Capitol hill that members of the Tri-State Trade excursion party were shown the spot selected for the "Lady Boosters" park, and when the Omahans learned of the enterprise made up to assist in assisting in buying the park, which is a small shaded piece of ground on the banks of the Little Wind river, just below Capitol hill.

Mayor Johnson of Lander told the story of the park and gave the "Lady Boosters" credit for their elevation on a "high horse." Perhaps never before did high horses have just the same meaning which it possessed when the women nailed the plank into Mayor Johnson's platform.

When this platform was constructed by the women and some of the business men Lander had seventeen saloons of the type which flourished in the glorious stage coach robbery days when "road agents" stopped the drivers who were coasting along the edge of eternity with human life and gold on board. These saloons paid but \$10 per year as a license and did not always pay that. Lander needed money to lay out and improve some of the streets which had been named and the women said the city also needed a better class of saloons.

Mayor Johnson was elected on the platform which demanded the payment of \$100 to the city and \$100 to the county by each saloon. The women's saloons gave Lander a 50 per cent reduction in saloons and a 50 per cent increase in license fees.

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