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ONE

EARLY WOMEN

(PRE-HISTORY-1858)

In the southwest corner of Colorado lies Mesa Verde National Park. For centuries, its cliff dwellings lay silent and empty until a rancher stumbled upon the site. Even then, it was years before the place buzzed once again with human noise and activity.¹ In centuries past, the dwellings snuggled beneath the overhang of cliffs were bustling with activity. Archaeological excavation and studies have helped to paint a picture of the lives of ancient cliff dwellers. Living high above the canyon floor, they threw what they did not want down the slope. Their garbage pits have provided scientists with an array of artifacts to study.²

Stone *metates*, *manos*, and remnants of corn, beans, squash, and cotton indicate the existence of agriculture. Crops were planted on the flat mesas above the cliff dwellings. In front of the homes, kiva roofs created open courtyards where daily routines took place. Ancient Puebloans wove yucca plant fibers into sandals and mats for sitting, kneeling, or sleeping. In the

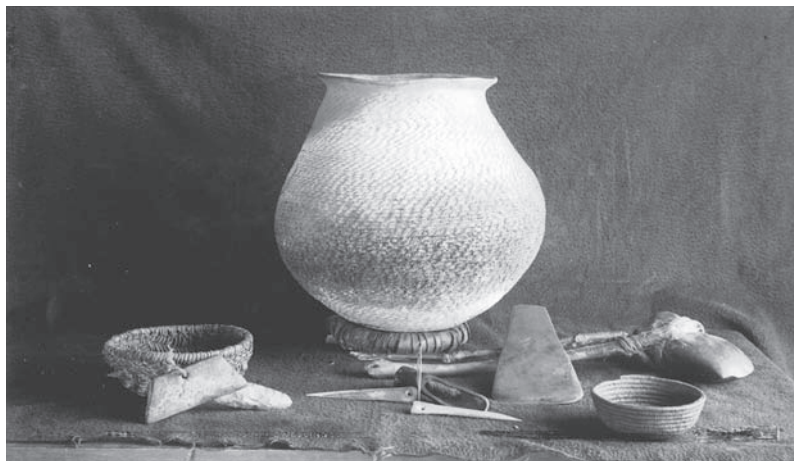


FIGURE 1.1 *Ancient Puebloans of Mesa Verde produced baskets and pottery. Awls, axes, and scrapers were forged from bone and stone. Courtesy, History Colorado, (William Henry Jackson Collection, scan #20100739), Denver.*

hands of a skilled basket weaver, strands of yucca formed an airtight basket.³ Pottery was also made. Over the years, quality improved and pottery designs changed. The most recently found shard is of a distinctive black-on-white design. Long strands of clay were circled from bottom to top on a stone slab to form the sides of a pot. A woman used a stone tool to scrape the inside and outside of the clay vessel. Every so often she dipped the stone scraper into a small bowl of water. With the moistened scraper, she smoothed, shaped, and thinned her creation. She inspected, polished, and painted the pot before placing it in a campfire.⁴

PALEOINDIANS

Living in the southwestern corner of the state, the Ancient Puebloans of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were only the latest people to occupy the region later known as Colorado. The first people to arrive came from the north and west, moving south and eastward, approximately 12,000 years ago. They hunted herds of Columbian mammoths and mastodons for food, clothing, and shelter. Using stone-tipped spears, Paleoindians also competed with and hunted carnivorous saber-toothed cats, lions, bears, and wolves who feasted on plant-eating giant ground sloths, camels, mastodons, and mammoths. For thousands of years, the people followed the migrat-

ing herds. Perhaps a change in climate altered their habitat, resulting in extinction, or Paleoindians themselves brought about their demise through over-hunting.⁵

Whatever the reason, by the time of the Folsom peoples—so named because of their distinctive tools discovered at Folsom, New Mexico—the mastodons and mammoths had given way to *Bison antiquus*, giant buffalo standing nine feet tall at the shoulders, as well as deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, and elk. Rabbits, prairie dogs, and rodents were also hunted. Although several hunters in extended family groups could fell most animals, it took a communal effort to dispatch enough bison to provide plenty of food and skins to last through the winter months. In the fall, bands of Paleoindian hunters gathered together at one site to kill dozens and even hundreds of bison at a time. Hunters stampeded the animals into a ravine or over cliffs, forcing the panicked bison to fall on top of one another. Next came the grueling work of butchering and processing tons of meat, fat, bone, and hide for food, tools, clothing, and shelter. Paleoindian women used stone tools to scrape, cut, and soften hides. They fashioned bone awls to pierce leather and sewed with thread of animal sinew.

After the butchering and processing of hides, the large group split up, spending most of the year in small bands of family members (mother, father, children, grandparents, perhaps aunts, uncles, and cousins). In this way they could forage for other foods to supplement their meat supply. Women and young children gathered chokecherries, raspberries, and wild cherries that were combined with meat paste and fat to form pemmican, an ancient portable “energy bar.” Dandelions, prickly pear cactus, wild rose, and cattails were gathered and eaten, as well as piñon pine seeds and juniper berries. For medicine, Paleoindians gathered sagebrush and sweet grass that grew abundantly on the high plains.

Foraging for wild plant leaves, roots, and fruits; hunting; and food processing and cooking consumed the lives of Paleoindians. They traveled by foot and outfitted their domesticated dogs with a wood-framed travois to carry heavier items. Woven baskets of native grasses and reeds were used as storage containers, carrying vessels, and pots. For cooking, fire-heated stones were placed in water in a basket.

By around AD 1000, the Apishapa culture developed in today’s southeastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico. Modern man, zipping through this region in an automobile, scarcely notices the Arkansas River and its tributaries carving wide arroyos and deep, rock-lined canyons into the prairie grasslands. But for the Apishapa people this was home. Like earlier

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Paleoindians, the Apishapa traveled with the seasons, returning to certain camps over and over again. Extended families hunkered down under rock overhangs and between outcrops formed by the rivers and streams. Using rocks to create round enclosures, they added posts, brush, and mud to build shelters. They gathered wild plants and hunted small and large game using projectile points and bows and arrows. The Apishapa chiseled or carved petroglyphs and painted pictographs on canyon walls. Around AD 1400 the Apishapa disappeared from southeastern Colorado. Theories abound, including the idea that they and their unique culture were simply assimilated into other tribes.⁶

ANCIENT PUEBLOANS

Agriculture in the Western Hemisphere developed in Central America before spreading north and south into the rest of the Americas. People in the Southwest farmed as early as AD 500.⁷ In the valleys of the South Platte, Arkansas, Purgatoire, and Republican Rivers, people built earth-lodge villages and planted gardens in the bottomlands along the streams. They wandered in search of game and wild plants during the summer, returning to harvest their crops in the fall. In the Southwest, the Ancestral Puebloans slowly exchanged their nomadic life for an agricultural one with the planting of corn and squash. For the next twelve or thirteen centuries, their civilization advanced through four stages. During the first era, the Basket Maker Period (approximately AD 1–450), they lived in caves. The men hunted deer, mountain sheep, and mountain lions aided by an *atlatl*, an arm extender, to help them throw the spear farther. They also hunted rabbits, mice, gophers, badgers, and birds. Women farmed with wooden planting sticks and processed animal hides. The Basket Makers built pit houses as they made the transition from large animal hunting to agriculture. With only primitive tools, the Basket Makers laid the foundation for future civilizations, using “their own ingenuity to wrest the necessities of life from a none too favorable environment.”⁸

The Ancient Puebloans of the Southwest were short people with coarse black hair and brown skin. They usually wore little clothing; however, the cool evenings and winter months required fur blankets. Another important item they wore were sandals, woven of yucca fiber cord, double-soled, with heel and toe loops of human hair to attach them to the foot. Women hacked off their hair for these sandals. Burial sites yielding remains of Basket Maker men with ornaments in their hair elicited this observation from

Hannah Marie Wormington, one of Colorado's earliest and most respected anthropologists:

This preoccupation with ornamentation might suggest some degree of vanity, and it is probably true that Basketmaker men gave a good bit of time and thought to their personal appearance. Basketmaker women, however, seem to have been a practical lot, far more concerned with material for their weaving than with their own appearance. The hair of female mummies is hacked off to a length of two or three inches. Of course cutting with a stone knife could hardly be expected to provide a particularly glamorous hair-do, and the fact that strands of hair seem to have been cut off at different times, presumably as the need for weaving material rose, added nothing to the general effect. While Basketmaker women would hardly furnish "pin up" material according to our standards, they presumably seemed attractive to Basketmaker men which, after all, was far more to the point.⁹

Women carried their young in cradleboards they made by creating a frame of sticks, padding the frame with juniper bark, and covering the frame with fur-cloth blankets. A mother tied her baby to the cradle with a soft fur cord. In this way she could carry the cradle on her back, hang it on a branch, prop it against a tree or rock, or lay it on the ground as she worked.

Following the first Basket Maker Period was the Modified Basket Maker Period (AD 450–750), characterized by a more sedentary life and the establishment of regular communities. They began making rudimentary pots in addition to their woven baskets. The following Developmental-Pueblo Period (AD 750–1100) was a transitional period. Pit houses evolved from dwellings to specialized ceremonial structures. Cotton was grown; axes and hoes were developed. Women also changed the cradles they used for their young. Instead of a wooden frame covered in juniper bark, the new cradle was a wooden slab that flattened the infant's soft skull, giving earlier scholars the mistaken idea that these were an entirely new people and not a group descended from the earlier Basket Makers.

During the Great Pueblo Period of the twelfth and thirteen centuries, Ancient Puebloans built terraced communal houses in open areas and in caves. Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde, one of the best-known examples, is tangible evidence of a civilization at its peak. Clay or packed earth was laid upon the stone floors to make them warmer; doorways were T-shaped to allow a person with a load on his or her back to enter. Openings were cut to ventilate the space and allow smoke to escape. Niches and shelves were cut to store things. Dry farming and crude irrigation were used to grow beans, corn,

squash, and cotton. Turkeys were raised for food. Their feathers were used for ornamentation and their bones for tools. The cliff dwelling settlements grew and prospered until the mid-1200s when, for reasons still unclear to archaeologists, the Ancient Ones abandoned the sites, perhaps to establish settlements in Arizona and the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico.¹⁰

UTE INDIANS

Sometime after the Ancestral Puebloans deserted southwestern Colorado, bands of Ute Indians from the Great Basin migrated east and south into Colorado. Having acquired horses by the late 1600s, the Utes lived off the bounty of the forests, killing elk and deer during the summer and fall. Originally limited to the Western Slope, mounted Utes were able to conduct large bison-hunting expeditions on the eastern high plains where they competed with Plains Indians. With the acquisition of horses, the Utes came to resemble their enemies in many ways while still retaining some aspects of their Great Basin culture. Their clothing was similar to that of the Plains Indians, except that they also wore woven blankets of rabbit-skin strips. Women, who made most of the tribe's clothing, wore short skirts of shredded bark as they had done in the Great Basin. Men made some of their own ceremonial and hunting clothing and accessories. Vegetable fibers were used for clothing, shelter, blankets, basketry, and footwear. Women made sandals of yucca fiber, sagebrush bark, or muskrat hides tied together at the toes and heels and lined with softened sagebrush bark. In winter, leggings provided warmth.

A woman's most laborious chore was tanning hides. To do that, she scraped the inner surface clean of fat and flesh with a chisel-shaped flesher of antler or bone. Then she hung the hide on a slant pole frame to continue scraping. She stretched heavier buffalo hides on the ground. Working together, several women washed, soaked, rinsed, and wrung out the hide and then thoroughly rubbed boiled animal brains into it. After drying the hide in the sun for a few days, they again soaked, rinsed, and wrung it out by twisting it with a stick before hanging it out to dry. The long, tedious process of stretching by holding the hide with the feet and pulling it toward the body took half a day or more. Heavy hides might be further softened by rubbing them with a stone or pulling sinew rope back and forth over the surface, while lighter hides might be chewed. A woman left hides for her clothing white, but she smoked the hides used for men's clothing, tepees, and various bags. She hung the hides by a tripod over a fire for fifteen to thirty minutes.

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This was done early in the morning when the air was still, and different types of wood were burned. Greasewood turned skins yellow, willow dyed them brown, and pine resulted in a light yellow coloring.

Originally, Utes lived in wickiups—small, round shelters of poles and brush—like their Great Basin kin, but after acquiring the horse they adopted the tepees of the Plains Indians. The tepee was the woman's responsibility. She made it, put it up, took it down, and moved it from camp to camp. Dogs and, later, horses that were owned by women were used for riding, packing, and dragging the travois that carried the heavy tepees when camp was moved.

To make a tepee, a woman sewed together a dozen elk or fewer buffalo hides. Twelve tall poles from lodgepole pine were preferred, but Utes also used aspen and cedar poles. Four poles were bound together with a rawhide rope. Three women usually set up a tepee. Two women raised four poles to a vertical position and separated them to form an inverted cone. Slowly, one woman opened them out to full diameter, with the exception of two poles that were left about two feet apart to form the entrance. Directly opposite these, a pole on which the top of the canvas had been firmly fashioned was raised. The rest of the poles were then placed in position, supported by the crotches of the tied poles. A hide was stretched over the poles. Just above the entrance, two triangular-shaped flaps were used for ventilation and as a smoke hole. At this point, one woman would go inside the tepee and move the poles outward until the hide was tautly stretched over them. The lower edge was securely fastened to the ground with wooden pegs.

When breaking camp, women dismantled the tepees. They tied six poles on each side of a horse, laid the folded cover over the extension of the poles that dragged on the ground behind the horse, and then stacked their belongings on top of the extension. The dragging of the poles on the ground made a very broad track that was used year after year until the path became a well-worn "road." These "lodgepole trails" became wilderness highways followed by later explorers, prospectors, and freight wagons. Many of these old Ute trails—like Ute Pass, which runs from the plains through the Rockies near Colorado Springs—evolved into the routes of present-day roads and highways.

In the winter, fortified by the bounty of bison, Utes returned to the western river valleys to avoid harsh alpine conditions. Women and children gathered roots, pine nuts, acorns from dwarf oaks, and different kinds of berries. Some were eaten immediately; others were mashed with or without their seeds, dried in the sun, and stored. Women and young children



FIGURE 1.2 *The introduction of horses significantly changed the lives of Native Americans. Horses that dragged the tepee-laden travois were the property of Ute women. Courtesy, Special Collections, Pikes Peak Library District, 001–295, Colorado Springs.*

gathered seeds of grasses and flowers by brushing the seeds into baskets or onto pieces of buckskin with willow branches or small woven fans. Seeds were parched on flat basketry trays by placing a handful or two of powdered charcoal or ash over them. The ashes and seed were then tossed in the air so the chaff was carried away by the wind or blown away by the mouth. A day's labor could result in about a quarter of a bushel of clean seeds, which were roasted in a tray.

Utes used a variety of methods to preserve food. Buffalo, deer, and elk meat were cut into thin strips and hung on racks to dry. Small fires under the racks kept insects away, added flavor, and hastened the drying process. Strips of dried meat were stored in *parfleches*, an Indian rawhide "suitcase." Doing double-duty, *parfleches* were also used to store clothing. Utes ate piñon nuts raw or parched over hot coals to remove the shells. What was not immediately eaten was ground into meal for later use. Women added water before baking the mixture in ashes or on hot rocks.

In addition to making and setting up tepees and gathering, processing, and cooking food, Ute women made basketry items. They coiled willow twigs to form baskets used for collecting, processing, and storing food;

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added pine sap to make baskets watertight; and constructed sleeping mats of willows laid in rows and twined together. Although baskets were an integral part of Ute life, pottery was rare, consisting mostly of water cups and cooking utensils.

While Ute women were occupied with their own chores, the men of the tribe spent the majority of their time hunting, fishing, and making the tools necessary to pursue and capture game. Rabbits, antelope, deer, and elk were stalked or ambushed by an individual hunter. Men, like women, made their own tools and weapons for hunting: bows and arrows, arrowheads, knives of obsidian or flint, quivers, and shields.

Although everyone had a general knowledge of plants used for cures, medicine women were the tribe's pharmacists. They gathered as many as 300 plants with therapeutic properties. Sage leaves were used for colds, split cactus or pine pitch for wounds and sores, powdered obsidian and sage tea mixture for sore eyes, grass to stop bleeding, and teas from various plants to treat stomachaches.

PLAINS INDIANS

Nomadic Plains Indians—Apache, Kiowa-Apache, Comanche, and Cheyenne tribes—depended on the buffalo for most of their basic needs. Men wore shirts, leggings, aprons, and breechcloths of buffalo hide. Women wore long one-piece dresses that stretched from their necks to their ankles. The dresses covered their upper arms but had no sleeves. Both men's and women's clothing was decorated with elk's teeth, paintings, porcupine quills, and trade beads. Buffalo bones were used to fashion tools, while buffalo dung provided fuel for warmth and cooking. Surplus hides and meat were traded with the Pueblo Indians for maize and cotton cloth.

As the Utes moved eastward into the region, bands of Athabaskan-speaking Indians moved south from Canada into present-day Colorado. Moving along the base of the Rockies, Apache tribes reached the plains of Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico by the early 1500s. The Navajos settled into southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, encountering the descendants of the Ancient Ones. The relationship among the three groups ranged from trade to raids. By 1720 the Utes roamed much of the region, having driven the Navajo and Apache tribes into New Mexico. By 1820 the Shoshone hunted in the far northwest while the Arapaho, Kiowa, and Cheyenne roamed the northeast. Utes claimed the west, and the Comanche controlled the lower southeastern corner along the Arkansas River.

THREE CULTURES MEET

Meanwhile, cataclysmic changes were occurring far south of the Arkansas River. In the 1500s Spanish conquistadors stormed the beaches of Central America. Hernando Cortés, with the help of superior weaponry, horses, and native allies resentful of Aztec subjugation, defeated this great civilization. Other Spanish explorers and conquistadors defeated indigent tribes in the southern part of the Western Hemisphere. Within a short time, Spanish invaders had conquered and enslaved the native populace on plantations and in silver mines, built cities, and established Catholic missions. Explorers journeyed as far north as present-day Colorado and Kansas. In their wake came settlers who faced a number of obstacles in forming successful villages, mainly the dry climate and native tribes who refused to be Christianized. Although New Spain (basically present-day Mexico) thrived, the northern provinces suffered from governmental neglect and Indian attacks. Periodically, Spanish troops swept into the region to root out the American or French presence but did little to bring in more settlers from the south. When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the new government encouraged populating these provinces to bolster their claims as a new danger arose from the north and east. But while Americans from the southern states eagerly joined Stephen Austin in Texas, the land of New Mexico continued to languish. Villages remained small agricultural communities far removed from the rest of the Mexican nation. However, trade with American cities along the Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi Rivers would soon affect Mexico's northern provinces in the Southwest.

William Becknell, a Missourian, was the first American trader to realize the change in Mexico's attitude toward American trade goods and influence. In 1821 he traveled the overland trail to Santa Fe, sold his goods, and returned to Missouri five months later laden with Mexican silver. Within three years, caravans had replaced Becknell's small pack train; four years later, 100 wagons completed the journey. With the market for beaver pelts on the rise, mountain men and trappers established themselves in the southern Rockies. Ceran St. Vrain and Charles Bent formed Bent, St. Vrain and Company. With Charles's brother William, they built Bent's Old Fort to take advantage of the trade among Santa Fe merchants, mountain men, and Indian tribes. Located between present-day La Junta and Las Animas on the north side of the Arkansas River, the fort was constructed of adobe bricks made by Mexican workers brought in from Taos. Adobe walls three feet thick and fourteen feet high formed the back walls of a ring of dormitories, workrooms, and storerooms surrounded by a large courtyard. The slightly

slanted roofs were made of poles covered with a foot of mud. As many as 100 employees worked at the fort. Some lived there; others camped outside the adobe walls.

One such resident was Owl Woman. The oldest daughter of Tail Woman and White Thunder, a Cheyenne sub-chief, Owl Woman had caught Bent's eye. Marriages between European or American traders and native women were nothing new. French trappers had cemented business relations with many Canadian tribes in the same way. We may not know for certain the advantages for the women involved, but for the men, it was a very fortuitous relationship.

The rising trade in buffalo robes had drastic social and economic consequences for American Indians, especially the women. Trading posts such as Bent's Fort on the Arkansas and Fort Union on the Missouri River offered the men of buffalo-hunting tribes a variety of goods paid for with tanned hides. As the demand for hides increased, a man needed more wives to prepare them. The average number of wives per lodge rose from three to five. Because tribes were unable to provide enough women, intertribal warfare increased in an effort to acquire more women. The power, prestige, and wealth from the robe trade flowed to the men of the tribe, eroding women's social position. For some Native American women, an alternative was marriage to a white man, who usually took only one wife and lavished attention and baubles on her. The disadvantage was the loss of the company of her tribal sisters. Some white trappers and traders abandoned their Indian wives and children after years together. Still, some native women freely married or shared their lives with these men.

Along with Owl Woman, her sister came with the marriage to Bent, following Cheyenne custom. Although Bent was reluctant to agree to that part of the arrangement, he compromised by accepting Yellow Woman into his family, although not as a second wife. Owl Woman sometimes stayed within the fort confines overnight, but she generally stayed outside the fort walls with her Indian kin. Accustomed to a tepee, when she did stay in Bent's quarters, she slept on the floor.¹¹ Owl Woman and Bent had four children—Mary, Robert, George, and Julia—all named after Bent's siblings. As was customary for Cheyenne mothers-to-be, when it came time for her to give birth, Owl Woman stacked skins on the ground, knelt or squatted between the stacks, and grasped them. Either an Indian midwife or a female relative—in Owl Woman's case, probably her sister, Yellow Woman—assisted with the birth. In 1847 Owl Woman died following the birth of her third child. Within two years, Bent married Yellow Woman; they had one son, Charley.

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In addition to the Indian wives of Anglo traders and trappers, other women lived at Bent's Fort. Some were the wives of the Mexican laborers brought in to make the original adobe bricks, who stayed on as livestock hands and maintenance crew members. Today, at the reconstructed fort, one can see their quarters on the lower level. Religious art and crosses adorn the thick walls, while chilis hang near the fireplaces. One carpenter's wife, Rosalie, of French and Indian heritage, is remembered for her dancing. Another woman received more praise and notice than most because of her race and her position at the fort.

Charlotte Green, her husband, Dick, and his brother, Andrew, were slaves of Charles Bent, who had brought them to the fort from Missouri. "Black Charlotte," as she was known, was the fort's cook. Her pies and holiday feasts were widely praised by many who dined at the fort. She also reputedly loved *fundagoes* on nights when the fort was celebrating.¹² For army officers, trappers, and traders accustomed to lonely nights on the trail or in the mountains hunting, the opportunity to partake of Green's culinary productions and to be her or Rosalie's dance partner was especially memorable. For her meals, Green relied on buffalo, venison, and other meats provided at the fort. She spiced her dishes with herbs such as citron and sage, as well as chili peppers and fresh vegetables from the garden. Fort visitors quaffed "hailstorms" at dinner and in the billiards room while enjoying a post-dinner cigar. A mixture of whiskey, sugar, mint, and "something special," the drink sounds suspiciously like a mint julep. Considering Bent's Missouri heritage, that seems likely.

SUSAN SHELBY MAGOFFIN

As more Anglo-American men traded at Bent's Fort and further south at the Mexican settlements of Taos and Santa Fe, it was only a matter of time before the fort would welcome female Anglo-Americans. Well-known because she left behind a diary of her travels is Susan Shelby Magoffin, the nineteen-year-old bride of trader Samuel Magoffin. Shelby was born near Danbury, Kentucky. She spent her childhood on the family plantation in a sheltered upbringing. Although Samuel was twenty-seven years older than she, the two fell in love and were married in November 1845. In June 1846 they began their journey westward to Santa Fe. Magoffin's wealth provided his wife with a journey less arduous, but no less an eye-opener, than the one thousands of women would experience along the overland trails beginning in the 1840s. With Jane, her personal attendant, a dog, "grand accommoda-

tions,” and plentiful provisions, it is no wonder the bride found camp life “a good deal.”¹³

Magoffin spent time when the wagons were stopped for the noon meal (“nooning it” in trail parlance) collecting pebbles, roses, and other flowers to keep as souvenirs. She delighted in many of the new sights, such as the way the prairie dogs resembled humans in the manner in which they “ran to their doors to see the passing crowds.”¹⁴ “Millions upon millions” of mosquitoes swarming about her drew her to compare the experience as “equal to any of the plagues of Egypt.”¹⁵

In spite of the pests, Magoffin was usually content with trail life, but illness altered her view.¹⁶ As the days passed, their party was overtaken by two other companies, one of which included a doctor. By the end of the week, Magoffin was so sick that her husband sent a man ahead to bring the doctor back to their wagon train. Dr. Measure, a Frenchman from St. Louis, was reputed to be an excellent physician “*especially in female cases.*”¹⁷ Magoffin was pregnant, and her “sickness” worsened as they drew closer to Bent’s Fort. Suffering from morning sickness, Magoffin neglected her diary. When she returned to it, she likened the fort to an ancient castle, albeit one of adobe with high, thick walls. The twenty-five rooms had dirt floors that were sprinkled with water several times a day to prevent dust from accumulating. In addition to bedchambers, there was a dining room, kitchen, store, blacksmith’s shop, barbershop, and icehouse. On the south side was an enclosure for stock. Their room had two windows, a bed, chairs, washbasin, and table furniture. While waiting for their room to be ready, Magoffin met *las senoritas*, the wife of George Bent, and other women of the fort. One woman’s dressing of her hair surprised Magoffin when “she paid her devoirs to a crock of oil or greese [*sic*] of some kind, and it is not exaggeration to say it almost *dripped* [*sic*] from her hair to the floor. If I had not seen her at it, I never would have believed it greese [*sic*], but that she had been washing her head.”¹⁸

Although Magoffin liked the fort well enough, her sickness continued to plague her, and she began to regret having made the journey west. Perhaps if she had been in her hometown with her mother or had another American woman to talk to on the Santa Fe Trail and at Bent’s Fort, she may have been more informed about her plight and symptoms. After a week’s break from her diary, she wrote that what should have been a joyful event—her pregnancy—had tragically resulted in a miscarriage.¹⁹

On the evening of August 7, 1846, the couple left Bent’s Fort, bound for Santa Fe. Their departure was a mixed blessing. Magoffin was anxious to be away from the fort, the site of the loss of her baby, but she left the fetus

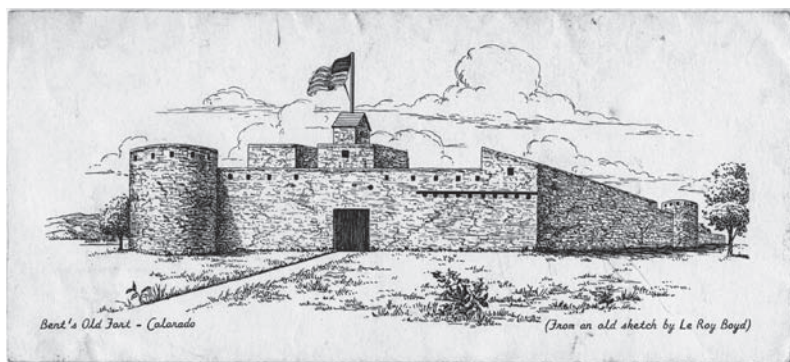


FIGURE 1.3 *Bent's Old Fort, founded in the 1830s, was an important trading post along the Santa Fe Trail for Americans, Indians, and Mexicans. Courtesy, Special Collections, Pikes Peak Library District, 208-9283, Colorado Springs.*

behind in a grave.²⁰ Devastated, she waited a month before writing to her mother about the miscarriage. Even then she could not bear to be blunt, simply calling it her “sickness.”²¹ The Magoffins stayed in Santa Fe for six weeks, then continued on to other destinations.

Although her diary ended on September 7, 1847, it is known that Magoffin again became pregnant but lost a son. When her husband retired from the Santa Fe trade, they returned to the United States. She gave birth to a daughter in 1851. However, her ill health continued, and after the birth of their second daughter in 1855, Susan Shelby Magoffin died. She had not lived to her thirtieth birthday.

EL PUEBLO

Bent's Fort, although famous and successful, was not the only settlement in the southeastern region. Five years before the Magoffins' journey, an eclectic group of farmers and traders moved north to found El Pueblo, at the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River. It is now the site of the city of Pueblo. Teresita Sandoval was among the group. Born in Taos, New Mexico, she married Manuel Suaso at age seventeen. Known for her stubbornness and hot temper, Sandoval was also intelligent and courageous. She eagerly embraced new challenges and worked hard to help support her family. She also was not hesitant to leave her husband for another man. The couple had four children before moving to Mora, New Mexico, in the 1830s to settle a land grant. There she met Mathew Kinkead from Kentucky. Kinkead

had become a Mexican citizen to avoid the Spanish colonial government's law forbidding foreigners from establishing businesses in Mexico and New Mexico. In 1835 Sandoval gave birth to a baby boy who was baptized Juan Andres Suaso, although the baby's real father was Kinkead. Sandoval left her husband to live with Kinkead, with whom she had a daughter, Rafaela. Between 1841 and 1843, Kinkead and Sandoval ran a buffalo farm. Every April or May the two went out to the plains with a few milk cows to lure newborn buffalo calves away from their mothers. When they were a year old, the calves were sold to frontier settlers in Missouri for \$100. In 1842 the family moved to the American side of the Arkansas River, where they joined others and founded El Pueblo. The settlement survived until 1854, when Ute and Jicarilla Apache Indians massacred or kidnapped all of the settlers in desperate retaliation for the loss of their land.

Later, when gold was discovered in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, a new Fort Pueblo was constructed. In the meantime, British trader Alexander Barclay, who had served as a sutler at Bent's Old Fort, saw Sandoval one day as she returned from the river with a bucket of laundry on her head. Years later, still haunted by that image, he drew the only known portrait of her. It shows her in traditional Mexican clothing—ankle-high moccasins, a bright red skirt, a white off-the-shoulder chemise, white stockings, and a long blue *reboso* that covers her shoulders and reaches nearly to the ground. Her dark hair is parted in the center, looped behind her ears, and secured with ribbons. Two years after Barclay first saw her, Sandoval left Kinkead for him. In 1844 the two moved to Hardscrabble. Sandoval was thirty-three years old and a grandmother. When Barclay learned that the US government was planning to build a fort in the region, he figured he would build one first and then sell it to the United States. But the climate in the place he chose (east of present-day Pueblo) was extremely harsh, making farming and the raising of livestock practically impossible. The failed endeavor increased the strain between Sandoval and Barclay. After ten tumultuous years together, the two separated. It was then, in 1853, that he sent a copy of the portrait to his brother, George.²² Once again unmarried, Sandoval went to live with her daughter and son-in-law, who supported her until her death in 1894 at age eighty-three, by which time she had witnessed Colorado's gold rush, statehood, and even woman's suffrage.