



A & D. I. G. ARNOLD RANCH DISTRICT
35385 U. S. Highway 40, Steamboat Springs

Brothers Ernest, Irving, and Walter Arnold, and their sister, members of a Nebraska farming/cattle family, came to Northwest Colorado circa 1915. After returning from World War I, on May 2, 1919, Irving purchased the 160-acre Hay Meadow Ranch, originally homesteaded beginning in 1899 by Elizabeth Hutchinson. The District presently consists of six structures: the one-story main house, built in 1917; an adjacent coal shed; a 1929 bunkhouse; a non-contributing but rather unique cinderblock barn, built post-1945; a machine shed, and a pole livestock shed. The original barn and chicken coop no longer exist. The home is Vernacular Wood Frame Hipped Box Style, and is characterized by large porches and minimal ornamentation. Man-made features include three irrigation ditches and wooden split-rail, picket, and post-and-barbed wire fencing that delineate pastures from other uses. The built environment typifies the needs and land use practices of high country farming and ranching operations during the development period of Routt County, and the architecture reflects the importance and success of agriculture in the region. The property is currently owned by the City of Steamboat Springs, which leases grazing land and hay meadows and, after restoration, might use the house for extended office space.

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Elizabeth Doggett Hutchinson

Pioneer Rancher of Steamboat Springs

Elizabeth Doggett Hutchinson was the first woman rancher of Steamboat Springs. As such, she may have been a victim of a land grab.

Not much is known of her early life. She was born in Maysville, Mason County, Kentucky, in 1832. ¹ She married at a young age and the couple purchased a small parcel of land near Hannibal, Missouri, which they set about farming. In due course Elizabeth bore two daughters, Martha and Katherine.

When the Civil War broke out, Elizabeth's husband enlisted in the Confederate Army. Elizabeth continued to farm their land and raise her daughters alone. It is not known when or how her husband died, however, by war's end, Elizabeth was a widow at the age of thirty-three.

Within a year Elizabeth hired a man to help her with the menial labor of the farm. It would prove to be a fortuitous decision.

Frisbie Dewey Hutchinson was born in Canaan, Columbia County, New York, on June 6, 1844. The son of Benjamin Baldwin and Clarissa Dewey Hutchinson, he was named for his mother's first cousin, Navy Admiral George Dewey. Frisbie received his formal education in Canaan, after which the family moved to Michigan, where Benjamin engaged in farming. ²

As soon as Hutchinson turned eighteen he enlisted in the Seventeenth Michigan Infantry, on July 21, 1862. Hutchinson was a private soldier serving with Company C. He and his fellow soldiers saw action in seventeen battles including one that earned them the moniker of the "Stonewall Regiment." On May 12, 1864, Frisbie Hutchinson was taken prisoner at Spottsylvania Courthouse in Virginia. He was incarcerated at the Andersonville prison in Georgia until the close of the war. In April 1865, when the war ended, Hutchinson had been imprisoned for eleven months. Following his release Hutchinson was sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, for medical attention as his health had severely deteriorated. He was mustered out of service on June 10, 1865. ³

Returning to Michigan, Hutchinson furthered his education. He enrolled in an auctioneer school and eventually learned the trade of stonemason. Apparently neither trade allowed for a decent living or Hutchinson grew bored. In any case, by 1866 Hutchinson found himself in the employ of Elizabeth Doggett.

While Hutchinson managed to perform his farm chores, he did suffer from weakness from time to time. During one particular health crisis, Elizabeth nursed Hutchinson back to health, staying by his side through the ordeal. As often is the case, the two grew close and on October 10, 1867, Elizabeth Doggett married Frisbie Dewey Hutchinson. The bride was thirty-four and the groom was twenty-three.

The couple continued with the farm. To help make ends meet Hutchinson took a variety of jobs, including auctioneer work, and selling life insurance for the German Life Insurance Company of Rockford, Illinois, as well as the Home and Phoenix of New York.

In 1881 the Hutchinson family traveled to Colorado where Frisbie's parents had relocated in 1872. The couple stayed with his parents in Montezuma, for three months. So encouraged by the improvement of his health, Elizabeth and Frisbie returned home to make plans for a permanent move to Colorado. Three years later, Hutchinson traveled alone to Colorado where he rented a ranch ten miles north of Denver. Here he lived for over a year, learning how farm irrigation worked in an arid state, managing topsoil crops, and the economics of western farming.

Finally, in 1885, the Hutchinsons sold their farm and made the permanent move to Colorado. A

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year later, Frisbie Hutchinson preempted a section of land six miles southwest of Yampa, Colorado. He would later file a homestead claim on an additional one hundred and thirty acres.⁴

It is interesting to note that at this time Elizabeth was living in Steamboat Springs. She began investing in several businesses as well as acquiring land in Routt County. Elizabeth either paid cash for these acquisitions or managed to obtain bank loans. This sudden influx of cash and credit leads one to believe she and Frisbie possibly separated and Elizabeth received a cash settlement. In any case, the two are never again linked together despite both living in the same county.

Elizabeth purchased a very successful coal mine in the Twentymile area of Oak Creek, southwest of Steamboat Springs. Elizabeth's Hutchinson Mine provided her with enough income that soon she was independently wealthy of her own accord. This allowed more investments which brought more wealth.

In 1890, Elizabeth's older daughter, Martha, along with her husband, Bud Hoskinson, and their three daughters, Meda, Murl, and Mona, moved to Steamboat Springs. Elizabeth must have been thrilled to have family, particularly her granddaughters, with her in Colorado. With financial security and family at her side, Elizabeth filed for divorce in Routt County in 1893. Her divorce was granted on September 20, 1893. ⁵

Elizabeth filed a homestead claim in 1898 with the intent of operating a ranch. The land, one hundred and thirty acres, was located one mile south and west of Steamboat Springs. Within a year she had proved up her claim and received title to the land. While Elizabeth built out buildings and hired men to plant hay, the Hutchinson Ranch was strictly a working ranch, thus Elizabeth did not live on the property.

After the first successful hay crop, Elizabeth sold her ranch in 1900. So successful were subsequent hay crops that the land became known as "The Haymeadows." Herbert J. Kilburn purchased the property and continued with its hay operation.

Sixty-seven year old Elizabeth was not done investing. ⁶ With the proceeds she purchased additional parcels of land including a section of land in the Fairview Addition of Steamboat Springs. On September 15, 1904, Elizabeth filed on one hundred thirty acres in Township 1 North, Range 85 West, Section 26, in Routt County.

Shortly after the purchase of additional property various real estate groups, such as the powerful Yampa Valley Land and Cattle Company, and land owners began to file lawsuits against Elizabeth. The town of Steamboat Springs was booming and ranch land in Routt County commanded premium prices. Therefore, Elizabeth's land holdings were a desired commodity. While Elizabeth vigorously fought the lawsuits, her finances quickly dwindled. It most likely that this was the desired effect by those who sued her. Eventually, they got her land.

It was also during this time that Elizabeth began to suffer from ill health. She moved in with her daughter Martha and her family. Unfortunately her health did not improve. It is possible Elizabeth suffered from the diseases of Alzheimer's or dementia as she would wander off from Martha's home and be gone for days. Over the years Elizabeth's condition worsened. Eventually, after years of unsuccessful medical attention, Martha was forced to take drastic measures. In 1910, Martha presented her mother's case to a Routt County judge in an effort to have Elizabeth judged insane.

Judge Charles A. Morning agreed to hear the case. The inquest procedure was conducted in the small county courthouse facilities at Hahns Peak, the county seat of Routt County. Because court cases dealing with the insane were extremely rare, the Routt County newspapers covered the procedures on their front pages. An example is the June 24, 1910, issue of the *Yampa Leader*. Under the headline, "Mrs. Hutchinson Insane" the following article appeared:

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“Mrs. Elizabeth Hutchinson of Steamboat was taken to Hahn's Peak by Sheriff Campbell yesterday, and an inquisition is being held today to pass upon her sanity. It is said that for some time her mental condition has been going from bad to worse, and it was decided best to place her in an institution where she can have proper medical attention. Mrs. Hutchinson is an old timer in Routt county, and for many years was the owner of the famous Hutchinson coal bank in Twenty-mile park. She is the mother of Mrs. Bud Hoskinson of Steamboat, and at one time, from 1890 until 1892, she resided near Yampa.”

After hearing testimony from Elizabeth's daughter, son-in-law, and one granddaughter, Judge Morning agreed to impanel a jury to pass judgment on the mental case of Elizabeth Hutchinson. Apparently due to a recent large fire in the region, the judge was unable to find six men within a few miles of Hahn's Peak to serve as jurors. Therefore he summoned six women from nearby farms and ranches to serve at the hearing. This caused a sensation as women had not yet been given the privilege by the state to serve on a court trial. To get around this, Judge Morning claimed a county hardship and temporarily suspended the all-men practice. This sensational trial was being talked about across the state.

The *Telluride Daily Journal* printed the *Associated Press* coverage of the trial on the front page of their paper dated June 24, 1910.

*“Women Compose Jury Which Says Another Is Insane
By Associated Press, Hahn's Peak, Colo.*

Unable to find a sufficient number of men eligible for jury duty, Judge Morning of the county court suspended the custom of men and summoned a jury composed wholly of women. With a true sense of the responsibilities imposed on them, every one of the women of the venire responded, and with the same sense of duty apparently when their deliberations of the evidence proved one of their own sex insane, they returned the verdict of guilty without hesitation. Only six are required on an insanity case jury. After all had qualified, their names were submitted as follows: Maud Keller, Mrs. M. Q. Starr, Marry Creswell, Kate Pulley, Emma McCormick and Mrs. Alice Ryan [sic]. The defendant was Elizabeth Hutchinson. Evidence was given by relatives and other witnesses, and when the case was submitted to the jury the court gave these brief instructions. ‘

I don't know whether to address you as the jury or a juress, but in either event the evidence is now submitted to you, and fate of the defendant is in your hands. Consider the evidence in an unbiased and impartial manner, and when you are able to agree on your deliberations do not permit the sex of the defendant to prejudice you in rendering a verdict.’

The jury was out only a short time, and returned a verdict of guilty, then left the courtroom to return to their household duties. Since the fire [at] Hahn's Peak, the county seat of Routt county, [sic] has less than thirty inhabitants, and there were not enough eligibles in Judge Morning's entire district to form a venire.”

Also on June 24, 1910, The *Routt County Sentinel*, under the headline, “Pioneer Goes to Pueblo,” ran a story on the insanity trial:

“There is something new every minute at Hahn's Peak. This week Mrs. Elizabeth Hutchinson was tried for lunacy before a jury in the county court. Owing to the scarcity of men Judge Morning was up against it, as the street urchin would say, for jurors, and he did not know how to relieve the dilemma.

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Finally one of the women at the Peak suggested that he secure a jury composed entirely of women. This caused the popular judge to go through every leaf in the statutes. He could not find where the female sex was barred from jury duty, and he got the sheriff busy at once. Here is the list: Mrs. Marshall Starr, foreman; Miss Maud Keller; Mrs. Mary Crisswell, Mrs. Kate Pulley, Mrs. Emma McCormick, Mrs. Alice M. Reagen. The jury whispered to the judge that Mrs. Hutchinson, according to evidence, was simple minded and that she should be taken care of. The court did the rest and the lady, accompanied by the sheriff and her grand-daughter, Miss Murl Hoskinson, started for the asylum at Pueblo this morning. Mrs. Hutchinson had a splendid home with her daughter, Mrs. Hoskinson, but frequently would wander off and remain away for days. This caused considerable alarm, and it was thought best to place her where she could receive protection and perhaps recover her mind. Several years ago Mrs. Hutchinson owned considerable property, among which was the Hutchinson coal mine in Twenty Mile from which she received a splendid income annually, but through foolish litigation owing to the hallucination that others were trying to beat her out of her possessions, she lost everything. As she has but a short time to live on account of advanced age her many friends in Routt county hope that she will pass the last few days in comfort.”

On the morning of June 26, 1910, Elizabeth Hutchinson was admitted to the Colorado State Insane Asylum in Pueblo, Colorado. Elizabeth’s admission record lists her occupation as “Housekeeper.”⁷ Elizabeth would have been given hospital clothing, personal hygiene supplies, and shown to her room.

On June 29, 1910, the *Steamboat Pilot* printed a follow up story on Elizabeth’s plight.

“Judge Morning Has Jury of Six Women Mrs. Elizabeth Hutchinson was Thursday adjudged insane before Judge Morning in the county court and will be brought down today. Tomorrow she will be taken to Pueblo, being accompanied by her granddaughter, Miss Murl Hoskinson, who will give her attention on the trip. The trial held before Judge Morning yesterday was unique in the annals of the state, for the jury was composed entirely of women. The following ladies qualified and performed the duties of citizens with credit, showing that women do not shirk any of the responsibilities which go with the ballot: Mrs. Kate Starr, Mrs. Emma McCormick, Mrs. Kate Pulley, Mrs. Mary Creswell, Miss Maud Keller and Mrs. Reagen. It was a novel scene during the important trial with the jury box filled with women to pass upon the sanity of one of their sex, and it sets a new standard and precedent for women throughout the United States, and will be a powerful argument in support of women suffrage.”

While this early observation may have had merit in future cases, it did not necessary help Elizabeth. Held at the state’s insane asylum, perhaps against her will, she would spend the rest of her life at a drab, cold, and often uncaring facility.

A physician or assistant would have seen her at a prescribed time every day. The female matron oversaw the duties of service personnel on the female ward such as changing bedding, cleaning and diet of the patients. While Elizabeth would have been able to receive visitors, it is not known if anyone did visit her.

Elizabeth Hutchinson, aged seventy-nine, died alone at the insane asylum in Pueblo on January 2, 1913. She was buried at Pueblo’s Roselawn Cemetery.

Today, Elizabeth’s Hutchinson Ranch is listed on the Routt County Register of Historic Places. Owned by the City of Steamboat Springs, it is operated by the local Yampatika group. Named for a local Ute tribe, the Yampatika group hosts tours of the ranch as well as open-space management in

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conjunction with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. **8**

A fine tribute to Elizabeth Hutchinson, the pioneer woman rancher of Steamboat Springs.

Notes

1. 1880 Census, Ralls County, Missouri. Elizabeth lists her age as 48.
2. Biographical entry found in Progressive Men of Western Colorado, A.J. Bowen & Co., 1905. 3.
3. Hutchinson family history written by great-grandniece Rebecca Goodwin, located in the archives of the Tread of Pioneers Museum, Steamboat Springs.
4. *ibid.*
5. Routt County Court Records and the Colorado Divorce Records.
6. 1900 Census, Routt County, Colorado.
7. Records held in the archives of the Colorado Mental Health Institute, formally the Colorado State Insane Asylum. Sheila Farizio, Medical Records Department.