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THOMAS SIMPSON CARSON, NEW MEXICO RANCHER

LOWELL H. HARRISON

A NUMBER OF BRITISH citizens were attracted to eastern New Mexico during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Among them was Thomas Simpson Carson who spent a decade or more in that region. Only a handful of New Mexico citizens can remember Carson today, but, unlike most visitors, he left a written account of his stay, as well as of his travels to many other parts of the world. Almost unknown today, his two books give an interesting account of New Mexico as it appeared to an intelligent Scotsman during the final years of the last century.¹ While Carson's account cannot be substantiated in every detail by available evidence, he appears to have been reasonably accurate in recounting his experiences.

A native of Scotland, Carson began his world travels just before the Franco-Prussian war, when he went to Germany to study the language. In 1876, when he was twenty-two, he journeyed to India to become a tea planter. Young Carson worked on plantations in Sylhet and Cachar, but he also found time to develop a fondness for polo and nature study. After four years in India his own illness and the death of his father obliged the young man to return home. Six months later, his health restored and family affairs put in order, he decided to seek his fortune in the United States. "Having no profession and hating trade in any form," he explained, "the choice was limited and confined to live stock or crop farming of one kind or another." For either endeavor the United States was touted as the land of opportunity for young men.²

Carson spent some three months at a British settlement at LeMars, Iowa, but he soon became dissatisfied with his countrymen who lived there. "Sport, not work, occupied their whole time and attention. Altogether it seemed that this was no place for one who had to push his fortunes."³ So he moved on westward into New Mexico Territory where he stayed for a time with an Australian sheepman. But the more Carson saw of cattle raising, the less attractive the sheep ranch became, and he soon left it.⁴ His next stop, however, was Las Vegas, where he spent six months. Las Vegas, he said, was then a true frontier town.

It was "booming"; full of life and all kinds of people; money was plentiful; saloons, gambling-dens, and dance halls were "wide open." Real Estate was moving freely, prices advancing, speculation rife; and—and infectious. A few successful deals gave me courage and tempted me further—to become a real gambler. On some deals tremendous profits were made. A saloon and gambling-hall which paid a huge rental and gave me drinks free became mine! The world looked "easy."

Not content with Las Vegas I ventured into other towns; had some deals there, and spent the evenings playing poker, faro, and monte, with the best and "toughest" of them. Santa Fe, the capital, was then as much a "hell" as Las Vegas.⁵

The young Scot was especially impressed by the widespread gambling, and years later he recalled the gambling halls in vivid detail.

Let me try to describe one of these gambling resorts. A long, low room, probably a saloon, with the pretentious bar in front; tables on either side of the room, and an eager group round each one, the game being roulette, faro, highball, poker, crapps, or monte. The dealers, or professional gamblers, are easily distinguished. Their dress consists invariably of a well-laundered "biled" (white) shirt, huge diamond stud in front, no collar or tie, perhaps a silk handkerchief tied loosely round the neck, and an open unbuttoned waistcoat. They are necessarily cool, wide-awake, self-possessed men. All in this room are chewing tobacco and distributing the results freely on the floor. Now and then the dealers call for drinks all round,

perhaps to keep the company together and encourage play. But poker, the royal game, the best of all gambling games, is generally played in a retired room, where quietness and some privacy are secured. Mere idlers and "bums" are not wanted around; perhaps the room is a little cleaner, but the floor is littered, if the game has lasted long, with dozens of already used and abandoned packs of cards. At Las Vegas the majority of the players were cowboys and cattlemen; at Socorro miners and prospectors; at Albuquerque all kinds; at Santa Fe politicians and officials and Mexicans, but Chinamen, always a few Chinamen, everywhere; and what varied types of men one rubs shoulders with! The cowpunchers, probably pretty well "loaded" (tipsy), the "prominent" lawyer, the horny-handed miner, the inscrutable "John"; the scout, or frontier man, with hair long as a woman's; the half-breed Mexican or greaser elbowing a drone of pure Castilian blood; the men all "packing" guns (six-shooters), some in the pocket, some displayed openly. The dealer, of course, has his lying handy under the table; but shooting scrapes are rare. If there is any trouble it will be settled somewhere else afterwards.⁶

New Mexico at that time, Carson felt, was "probably the most lawless country in the world." Almost everyone who ventured into that area boasted of meeting the most notorious outlaw of all, and Carson was no exception. His alleged encounter with Billy the Kid—a brief and peaceful one—occurred at Fort Sumner.⁷

When he abandoned real estate as a way to quick wealth, Carson found himself with just about as much capital as he had possessed before embarking upon his speculative ventures. Now he reverted to his plan of becoming a cattle rancher. He became acquainted about this time with two Englishmen, experienced cattlemen from the north, who wanted to move to New Mexico. They needed more capital, so Carson joined them in a partnership that lasted for a dozen years without ever becoming a financial success. Part of the agreement was that the inexperienced Carson would leave the entire control and management of the enterprise in the hands of his partners.⁸ This provision would later lead to some dissatisfaction as Carson acquired experience but found himself powerless to determine policy which involved his investment.

When the senior partner became dissatisfied with prospects in

New Mexico, they moved to Arizona where they ranched near the headwaters of the Little Colorado River. They were successful for a few years, then other cattlemen and sheepmen began to move into the region. Soon, Carson reported, "The grass was eaten down, over-grazed, droughts came, prices broke, and so the end." During the decade he spent in Arizona Carson ceased to be a novice, but under the terms of the partnership agreement he had no voice in the management of the property. Thus he was glad to accept an offer from a Scottish Land and Mortgage Company to manage its New Mexico property. Carson left Arizona in the early 1890's to take up his new post.⁹

He returned to the Fort Sumner area with which he had become familiar during his first stay in New Mexico. Carson came to like the plains country in which he lived for the next several years, although it was far different from the Arizona mountains or his native Scotland.

These Staked Plains (Llanos Estacodos) are so called because the first road or trail across them had to be staked out with poles at more or less long intervals to show direction, there being no visible landmarks in that immense level country. They are one continuous sweep of slightly undulating, almost level land, well grassed, almost without living water anywhere, but dotted all over with depressions in the ground, generally circular, some of great size, some deeper than others, which we called "dry lakes," from the fact that for most of the year they were nearly all dry, only here and there, and at long distances apart, a few would hold sufficient muddy water to carry wild horses and antelope through the dry season.¹⁰

When Carson returned to New Mexico the Scottish Company was interested in enlarging its holdings, and he was active in acquiring several herds and ranches for the organization. One of the most important acquisitions was the Maxwell herd, for its horseshoe brand became the Company's brand, and in years to come the "Horseshoe Outfit" was the Company's most commonly used name. The purchase of Henry McBroom's cattle and Coniva ranch, some thirty-five miles southwest of Tucumcari, gave the Company its new headquarters.¹¹

Carson's early association with the Company involved some difficult tasks and some measure of danger. One of his first assignments was to foreclose on an unnamed cattleman who had paid no interest on his loan for several years.¹² This gentleman had no intention of relinquishing control, and Carson's efforts to secure either the property or legal evidence that force had been used to prevent his taking possession of it earned him the title of "that damned Scotsman." With the aid of the sheriff Carson halted an effort to drive a herd of steers across the line into Texas where they would be safe from seizure. Carson's opponent soon "threw up the sponge" and turned over the property. This success aided Carson in making later foreclosures on other ranches with less difficulty.¹³

Years later, long after he had left New Mexico, Carson described his ranching operations with considerable pride.

Eastern New Mexico, the country over which the Company's cattle ranged, was a huge strip of territory some two hundred and fifty by one hundred and fifty miles, with no fences and no settlers, occupied only by big cattle outfits owning from eight thousand to seventy-five thousand cattle each. The way the cattle were "worked" was thus: The spring round-up began in March far down the River Pecos, and slowly worked north to our range near Fort Sumner. The Company's wagon, one of many more, would join the work some one hundred and ten miles south, but I sent some individual men to even greater distances. The work continued slowly northwards, branding the spring calves, and each outfit separating its own cattle, and driving its own herd. Twelve or more wagons meant some three hundred riders and about three thousand saddle horses; so the operation was done on a grand scale, thousands of cattle being handled every day; altogether such a big round-up was a very busy and interesting scene. Intricate and complicated work it was, too, though not always apparently so to an outsider; but under a good round-up boss, who was placed over the bosses of all the wagons, it was wonderful how smoothly the work went on. A general round-up took a long time; and was no sooner over than another was begun at the far south border (the Mexican line) and the thing repeated. Our own cattle had got into the habit of drifting south whenever winter set in. It took us all summer to get them back, and no sooner back than a cold sleet or rain would again start them south. In fact in winter few of

our own cattle were at home; the cattle on our range being then mostly those drifted from the northern part of the territory.¹⁴

Although many of the cattle in the trail herds which passed through the Company's property were driven on northward, Carson always drove the cattle for which he was responsible to the Texas Panhandle. There they were either delivered to the buyer or held until they were sold. Amarillo was only a small settlement in the 1890's, but Carson became impressed by its potential, and it was to Amarillo that he retired after leaving the ranching business. Before his retirement Carson even made an effort to establish his own ranch in the Texas Panhandle, but when the effort failed, he continued with the Scottish Company.¹⁵

The new manager soon discovered that many of the stock horses had been allowed to run free and had mingled with the wild mustangs. A horse roundup was soon undertaken; it was complicated by the quarrel with "M—" over the foreclosure on his ranch.

We took out with us some hundred of the gentler mares, the idea being to graze these round camp, and on getting round a bunch of the outlaws to drive them into this herd and so hold them. Nearly every bunch we found had mustangs amongst them. The mustang stallions we shot whenever possible. They were the cause of all our trouble. These stallions did not lead the bands, but fell behind, driving the mares in front and compelling them to gallop. When pressed, the stud would wheel round as if to challenge his pursuers. He presented a fine spectacle, his eyes blazing and his front feet pawing the ground. What a picture subject for an artist! The noble stallion, for he does look noble, no matter how physically poor a creature he may chance to be, wheeling round to challenge and threaten his pursuer, his mane and tail sweeping the ground, fury breathing from his nostrils and his eyes flashing fire! Is he not gaining time for his mares and progeny to get out of danger? A noble object and a gallant deed! Then was the time to shoot. But, yourself being all in a sweat and your horse excited, straight shooting was difficult to accomplish. We worked on a system; on finding a band, one man would do the running for six or eight miles, then another would relieve him, and so on, the idea being to get outside of them and so gradually round them in to the grazing herd. We had special horses kept and used for

this purpose, fast and long-winded, as the pace had to be great and one must be utterly regardless of dog and badger holes, etc. This kind of work we kept up for a couple of weeks, some days being successful, some getting a run, but securing nothing. We made a satisfactory gathering of all the gentler and more tractable mares, but some of the wilder ones we could not hold.

At last we started homewards, meaning to separate the properties of the two claimants; but M— owned the only proper horse-separating corral in the whole country, and from obstinacy and cussedness would not let us use it. Here was a pretty go! To drive to any other corral would mean taking M—'s horses off their proper range and the law forbade us doing so, and he knew it. So we were compelled to do what I reckon had never been done or attempted before—separate the horses on the open prairie! First we cut out and pushed some half a mile away all mares and young unbranded colts to which the Company's title could not be disputed; also the stallions and geldings of like nature; then came the critical and difficult part of the operation—to cut out and separate mothers from their unbranded colts and branded colts, some even one or two years old, from their mothers. And not only cut them out, but hold them separate for a full couple of hours! No one can know what this means but one who has tried it. I had done a fair amount of yearling steer-cutting; but hard as that work is, it is nothing compared with the separating of colts from their dams. The only way was to suddenly scare the colt out and race him as hard as you could go to the other bunch. But if by bad luck its mother gave a whinny, back the colt would come like a shot bullet, and nothing on earth could stop him. Fortunately I had kept a fresh horse in reserve, a very fine fast and active cutting pony. I rode him myself, and but for him we would never have accomplished what we did. When we got through our best horses were all played out. But it was absolutely necessary to move our own mare band to the nearest corral at Fort Sumner, a distance of thirty miles, which we did that evening. To night-herd them would have been impossible. The title to many of these colts, branded and unbranded, was very mixed up, and indeed still in the Courts. Nevertheless, I prepared next morning to brand them for the Company. The fire was ready, the irons nearly hot, when up drove M— in a furious rage. I do not think I ever saw a man look so angry and mean. He held a shot-gun in his hand, and presenting it at me, swore he would kill me if I dared to proceed any further. My foreman, who knew him well, warned me to be careful; there seemed no doubt that he meant what he said; he was too mad to dispute with, and so! Well, his bluff, if it

were a bluff, carried the day and I ordered the mares to be turned loose. As it turned out afterwards it was well I did so, as further legal complications would have resulted.

The next and last time we rounded up the stock horses I left the wilder ones alone, and gave a contract to some professional mustangers to gather them up at so much per head. These men never attempt to run them down. They "walk" them down. A light wagon, two mules to pull it, lots of grain, some water and supplies, are what you need. On sighting a band you simply walk your team after them, walk all day and day after day, never giving them a rest. Keep their attention occupied and they will neglect to feed or drink. Gradually they become accustomed to your nearer presence, and finally you can get up quite close and even drive them into your camp, where your companions are ready with snare ropes to secure them, or at least the particular ones you want to catch.¹⁶

According to his account, Thomas Carson spent eight years with the Scottish Company. His duties carried him to every part of the extensive range, as well as to Las Vegas and Amarillo for supplies or to transact business. There is no way to estimate accurately the miles he covered as he tried to supervise all phases of the operation. Although the work was demanding and often dangerous, Carson appeared to enjoy it.

My life during these eight years had its pleasures and its troubles; certainly much discomfort and a lot of disagreeable work. During the working season, April to November, my time was mostly spent with the round-up or on the trail, with occasional visits to our head office in Las Vegas, and also to Amarillo on business matters. To cover these immense distances, near 300 miles (there were few or no desirable stopping-places), I used a light spring wagon or ambulance, holding my bedding, mess-box, grain for the team, some water, stake ropes, and a hundred other things. I nearly always camped out on the prairie, of course cooked my own meals, was out in all kinds of weather—sun, rain, heat and drought, blizzards and frightful lightning storms. My favourite team was a couple of grey ponies. From being so much together we got to understand each other pretty thoroughly, and we had our adventures as well. Once on going up a very steep hill the ponies lost their footing. The wagon backed and turned over, and ponies and wagon rolled over and over down the hill among the rocks till hung up on a cedar stump. I was not much hurt, but found

the ponies half covered with stones and rocks that had rolled on to them, the wagon upside down and camping material scattered everywhere. Cutting the tugs and rolling the stones away the ponies jumped up miraculously little injured, and even the wagon still serviceable, but I had to walk a long way to get assistance. Then we have fallen through rotten bridges, stuck in rivers and quicksands, and all sorts of things.¹⁷

His responsibilities may have led to strained relations with "M—," but Mrs. Lillie Gerhardt Anderson of Tucumcari recalls Thomas Carson as a friendly man who loved to tease her when he stopped at the Gerhardt ranch to visit and to rest his horses. Carson delighted in asking her in German, "Can you skate?" The answer had to be negative, for the little girl had never seen a skate except in pictures. The Scotsman was also fond of eating cold boiled chicken for lunch during his long drives, Mrs. Anderson recalls. "On one occasion he brought in a dressed hen and asked me to boil it for him. I told him I couldn't. (I was nine years old.) Mother was glad to take over the task for him, and he was pleased." Mrs. Anderson's memories of Thomas Carson "are all pleasant ones."¹⁸

Sometime in the 1890's the Scottish Company decided to sell its New Mexico holdings. Carson explained, "The range was, however, much too heavily stocked, the rains irregular, severe droughts frequent, and the annual losses yearly becoming heavier, so heavy in fact that owners only waited a slight improvement in prices to sell out or drive their cattle out of the country."¹⁹ He began the slow process of selling off the cattle, but years before the task was completed he had severed connections with the organization.²⁰ Despite earlier failures to establish his own ranch, Carson was determined to try again. Since he had not accumulated sufficient capital to purchase the eastern New Mexico land he wanted, he had recourse to the fine old frontier practice of exercising squatter's sovereignty.

Seeing that it was quite hopeless to run cattle profitably on the open-range system, and having longing eyes on a certain part of the plains

which was covered with very fine grass and already fenced on one side by the Texas line—knowing also quite well that fencing on public land in New Mexico was strictly against the law (land in the territories is the property of the Federal Government, which will neither lease it nor sell it, but holds it for home-steading)—I yet went to work, bought a lot of wire and posts, gave a contract to a fencebuilder and boldly ran a line over thirty miles long enclosing something like 100,000 acres. The location was part of the country where our stock horses used to run with the mustangs, and so I knew every foot of it pretty well. There was practically no limit to the acreage I might have enclosed; and I had then the choice of all sorts of country—country with lots of natural shelter for cattle, and even country where water in abundance could be got close to the surface. In my selected territory I knew quite well that it was very deep to water and that it would cost a lot of money in the shape of deep wells and powerful windmills to get it out; yet it was for this very reason that I selected it. Would not the country in a few years swarm with settlers (“nesters” as we called small farmers), and would they not of course first select the land where water was shallow? They could not afford to put in expensive wells and windmills. Thus I argued, and thus it turned out exactly as anticipated. The rest of the country became settled up by these nesters, but I was left alone for some eight years absolutely undisturbed and in complete control of this considerable block of land. More than that the County Assessor and collector actually missed me for two years, not even knowing of my existence; and for the whole period of eight years I never paid one cent for rent. On my windmill locations I put “Scrip” in blocks of forty acres. Otherwise I owned or rented not a foot.²¹

Carson’s ranch was called “Running Water,” although he commented wryly that the stream which gave it its name never ran except immediately after a heavy rain. A headstream of the White or Blanco River, Runningwater Draw rises in Curry County, New Mexico, and cuts the Texas-New Mexico boundary a few miles north of Farwell.²² Because Carson’s use of government land eliminated one of the major costs faced by most ranchers, he was able to carry on his operations with little recourse to borrowing. As a result, he was free from the usual pressures to sell cattle at the most inopportune times in order to meet debt payments. For several years the ranch was quite successful.²³

The headquarters house which Carson built was adobe with walls two-and-a-half feet thick. The roof was boarded over, covered with three inches of mud, and topped with sheets of corrugated iron. The rock foundations were laid so deep that even the most persistent skunks never succeeded in burrowing their way underneath the house—"which is quite a consideration," Carson declared. There were no trees or shrubs within miles of the house, until one day Carson brought home a cottonwood shoot which he planted in the center of the courtyard where it was nourished by the "soap-suddy washings" thrown upon it. "When the tree did grow up, and it thrived amazingly, its shade became the recognized lounging-place. With a few flowering shrubs added, the patio assumed quite a pretty aspect." Carson also planted a small orchard and made an effort to grow vegetables. He tried a bit of general farming, and in some years he harvested "good crops of Milo maize, Kafir corn, sorghum, rye, and even Indian corn." The constant problem, of course, was water. It was "too scarce to do the plants justice . . . no matter how much water you irrigate with, one good downpour from Nature's fertilizing watering-can is worth more than three weeks of irrigation." One drought was so severe that a nester complained that "for two years nothing was raised, not even umbrellas!"²⁴

Carson had spent enough time in arid portions of the West to be acutely aware of the importance of an adequate supply of water, and he took great pride in the fine wells which supplied most of the water at his ill-named "Running Water" ranch.

My wells were deep, none less than 250 feet, the iron casing 10-inch diameter, the pipe 6-inch or 8-inch, and the millwheels 20 feet in diameter; this huge wind power being necessary to pump up from such a depth a sufficiency of water. The water was pumped directly into very large shallow drinking wooden tubs, thence into big reserve earthen tanks (fenced in), and thence again led by pipe to other large drinking-tubs outside and below the tanks, supplied with floating stop-valves. This arrangement, arrived at after much deliberation, worked very well indeed; no water was wasted, and it was always clean; and in very cold weather the cattle always get warm,

freshly-pumped water in the upper tub, an important matter and one reason why my cattle always did so well. But oh, dear! the trouble and work we often had with these wells! Perhaps in zero temperature something would go wrong with the pump valve or the piston leather would wear out, or in a new well the quicksand would work in. Neither myself, foreman nor boy was an expert or had any mechanical knowledge; though continued troubles, much hard work, accompanied by, alas! harder language, was a capital apprenticeship. In bitter cold freezing weather I well remember we once had to pull out the rods and the piping three times in succession before we got the damned thing into shape, and then we did not know what had been the matter These wells and mills afforded any disgruntled cowhand or "friendly" neighbor a simple and convenient opportunity of "getting even," as a single small nail dropped down a pipe at once clogged the valve and rendered the tedious operation necessary. I had altogether five of such wells.²⁵

This bitter cold was one of the cattleman's worst enemies; few things could cause the loss of cattle more quickly. Carson recalled later the cold of the winters when dread northers swept relentlessly across the bleak rangeland.

The temperature on these plains sometimes went so low as 20° below zero, with wind blowing. There was no natural shelter, literally nothing as big as your hat in the pasture, and several men advised the building of sheds, windbreaks, etc. But experience told me just the opposite. I had seen cattle (well fed and carefully tended) freeze to death inside sheds and farms. Also I had seen whole bunches of cattle standing shivering behind open sheds and windbreaks till they practically froze to death or became so emaciated as to eventually die of poverty. If you give cattle shelter they will be always hanging around it. So I built no sheds or anything else. When a blizzard came my cattle had to travel, and the continued travelling backwards and forwards kept the blood in circulation. There were a few cases of horns, feet, ears and mammae frozen off, but I never had a cow frozen to death and never lost any directly from the severity of the weather. More than that, I never fed a pound of hay.²⁶

Another of Carson's major dangers was fire which could swiftly destroy the grass even if the cattle escaped. In that flat country

there were few obstacles to check the course of the flames which could get started in so many ways.

Lightning might set the grass afire; a match carelessly dropped by the cigarette-smoker; a camp fire not properly put out; or any mischievously-inclined individual might set the whole country ablaze. Indeed, the greatest prairie fire I have record of was maliciously started to windward of my ranch by an ill-disposed neighbor purposely to burn me out. He did not quite succeed, as by hard fighting all night we managed to save half the grass; but the fire extended one hundred and thirty miles into Texas, burning out a strip from thirty to sixty miles wide.²⁷

Carson made extensive use of fire guards which he created by plowing furrows some one hundred feet apart and then carefully burning out the grass in between. He estimated that he constructed some fifty-five miles of such guards.²⁸ Yet there were times when they were not enough to check the flames.

In such cases it was at first our practice to catch and kill a yearling, split it open and hitch ropes to the hind feet, when two of us mounted men would drag the entire carcass over the line of fire. It was effective but an expensive and cumbrous method. Later I adopted a device called a "drag" composed of iron chains, in the nature of a harrow, covered by raw hide for smothering purposes. This could be dragged quite rapidly and sometimes had to be used over miles and miles of encroaching fire. The horses might get badly burnt, and in very rank grass where the fierce flames were six to eight feet high it was useless.²⁹

From the outset Carson decided to upgrade his herd by using only registered, pure-grade Hereford bulls which he purchased in the eastern part of the country. The bulls were penned during the winter, so that the calves would all be approximately the same age and thus easier to handle. In the early spring Carson put all of his weak and poor cows in a separate pasture, where he fed them two pounds a day of cottonseed meal with almost amazing results. As a consequence of his efforts to improve the herd, he was able to boast that he "every year got the highest calf-brand or crop amongst

all my neighbors; and soon, with prudent culling of the cows, my small herd was the best in the country; and my young steers topped the market, beating even the crack herds that had been established for twenty years and had great reputations."³⁰

Carson had a number of other interests, including traveling, and he spent a great deal of the year away from the ranch, often in Amarillo, Denver, San Francisco, or somewhere in Mexico. Although he was usually at home to supervise the roundup and branding activities, his total stay probably did not exceed a month a year. Carson gave his foreman a great deal of independence and relied upon him to execute general orders. Since the foreman was allowed to run his own small herd with Carson's, he had a personal interest in seeing that everything ran smoothly. "I do not think that a calf was ever stolen from me," Carson asserted.³¹ For several years matters went smoothly and the ranch prospered.

The weakness in the enterprise was the fact that Carson owned only a few of the acres which he used. He must have realized from the outset that it was only a matter of time until he was found out and ordered to desist. Still, when the time came, he found it difficult to leave, and he clung to the property as long as possible.

"Kind" friends, and I had lots of them, reported the fences to Washington; a special agent was sent out to inspect, ordered the fence down and went away again. I disregarded the order. To take the fence down meant my getting out of the business or the ruin of the herd. Next year another agent came out, and said my fence was an enclosure and must come down. Seeing still some daylight I took down some few miles of it, so that it would not be defined as an enclosure, but only a drift-fence. During the winter, however, I could not resist closing the gap again. Next season once more appeared a Government agent, who in a rage ordered the fence down under pains and penalties which could not well be longer disregarded. Cattle were up in price; a neighbour had long been anxious to buy me out; he was somewhat of a "smart Alick" and thought *he* could keep the fence up; he knew all the circumstances; so I went over and saw him, made a proposition, and in a few minutes the ranch, cattle, fences and mills were his. Poor man! in six months his fence was

down and the cattle scattered all over the country. He eventually lost heavily by the deal; but being a man of substance I got my money all right.³²

According to Carson it was about 1902 when he sold his ranch and left New Mexico. After some deliberation he moved to Amarillo and invested most of his capital in erecting a commercial building there. The rentals were sufficient to allow him to make extensive trips abroad, including at least one journey around the world in 1908-1909.³³ Carson sold this property about 1910 and left Amarillo. There is no indication that he ever returned to the High Plains region in which he had spent nearly two decades of his life.



NOTES

1. *Ranching, Sport and Travel* (London, 1911), and *The World As Seen By Me* (London, 1923). The second volume is more comprehensive than the first but repeats much of the same information on Carson's American experiences.

2. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 13, 38-46, 65; *The World*, pp. 13-28.

3. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 42-43.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

5. Carson, *The World*, pp. 28-30.

6. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 44-45.

7. Carson, *The World*, p. 30. Carson was very careless in citing dates, and it is impossible to fix the exact chronology of his movements. He recalled meeting Billy the Kid about 1883 although that young man was killed in July 1881.

8. Carson, *Ranching*, p. 46.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 61-62, 115-16.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26. While there is no absolute agreement on the origin of "Llano Estacado," there is no doubt but that Carson's explanation falls into the realm of folklore. The most probable explanation is that it refers to the stockaded or palisaded appearance of the cliff-like formations. "Estacado" may have been a corruption of "destacado," meaning to detach from the main body, to elevate, to raise, to stand out. That is, it is a term descriptive of the terrain which impressed the first Spaniards who entered the region. See H. Bailey Carroll, "Llano Estacado," in Walter Prescott Webb, ed., *The Handbook of Texas* (Austin, 1952), vol. 2, pp. 69-70.

11. Lillie Gerhardt Anderson, "The Scottish Loan Company," NMHR, vol. 31 (April, 1956), pp. 155-56; Mrs. Anderson, Tucumcari, to author, March 16, 31, 1966; H. H. Moncus, Tucumcari, to author, March 16, 1966; C. C. Clancey, Albuquerque, to author, March 19, 1966. Mrs. Anderson's information is based upon information supplied by her husband, Lorin Anderson, her brother, Carl J. Gerhardt, and her own recollections.

12. Carson identified the troublesome rancher only as "M—." Mrs. Anderson recalls that Carson bought cattle from Peter Maxwell, Judge Magill, and Henry McBroom; it is not known whether one of them was "M—" or whether it was someone else.

13. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 117-24, 133.

14. Carson, *The World*, pp. 49-50.

15. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 136-37; *The World*, pp. 50, 172-74.

16. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 126-32.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40. A broken leg, incurred at a roundup, nearly cost Carson his life when it became infected. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49.
18. Mrs. Anderson to author, March 16, 1966.
19. Carson, *Ranching*, p. 133.
20. It has proved impossible to ascertain just when Carson left the Company. Mrs. Anderson recalls that the Horseshoe Outfit began to sell its stock about 1901; the sales were completed about 1906. Anderson, "Scottish Company," pp. 155-56. Carson, vague on dates as usual, reported in 1910 that he had ended his ranching activities in 1902, and that he had had his own ranch for eight years before this. He started his ranch a year or two before terminating his employment with the Company, so, by his statement, he was not with the company after approximately 1895. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 170, 195.
21. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 170-71.
22. Carson, *The World*, p. 60; Webb, p. 516.
23. Carson, *The World*, p. 60.
24. Carson, *Ranching*, pp. 174-75, 199.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-86.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
27. Carson, *The World*, pp. 60-61. This fire may have been the famous one of 1894 which started in New Mexico in November and crossed into XIT range in Texas near Farwell. J. Evetts Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas* (Norman, 1929), p. 175; Cordia Sloan Duke and Joe B. Frantz, *6,000 Miles of Fence* (Austin, 1961), pp. 45-59.
28. Carson, *The World*, p. 61.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-93.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-95.
33. Carson described his trips in some detail in his books. When the second one was published in 1923, he was apparently living in Great Britain. Inquiries in Great Britain have failed to disclose any later information about him.