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In the 1880's the northeast corner of New Mexico Territory was a microcosm of the western range-cattle industry. Fine grasslands were interspersed with sheltering canyons that cut through the plains, while in the west end were excellent summer pastures among the mesas and foothills of the often snow-covered Sangre de Cristos. Diverse also were the cattle outfits to be found there. They varied from single-man, single-brand operations of limited range to the big spreads over thousands of acres run by individuals of the cattle baron stamp, and from small partnerships to corporate giants. Grazing was mostly on the public domain, with the major exception of a confirmed Mexican land grant, and financial backing was local, eastern, or foreign—the latter being British or Dutch.

Prominent among the big cattlemen was Stephen Wallace Dorsey, a Vermont-born, Ohio-raised, Union veteran and later a Republican politico and carpetbag senator from Arkansas (1873-1879). In Arkansas the experience he gained during his presidency of the Arkansas Central Railroad helped shape the course of "a lifetime looking for speculative opportunities." Senator Dorsey became interested in an alleged Mexican land grant of January 1, 1839, made to Salvador Bernal and Tomás López, which, if confirmed, would provide a large area (ca. 600,000 acres) of contestable range and water—an ideal situation for someone hoping for high profits in the developing western cattle industry. Commonly known as the Uña de Gato (cat's-claw) Grant, and officially designated as claim No. 94, it was said to be between a stream known as the Uña de Gato and the sprawling extinct volcano,
Sierra Grande, to the east. In 1878 Horace Abbott, an early-day sheepman in the area, met Dorsey in the vicinity of Sierra Grande while the latter was looking for watered locations. The senator was traveling in a coach drawn by four mules and was accompanied by two men, one of them a Mr. Lewis Kingman, a surveyor and civil engineer who made an early map of northeastern New Mexico.

When the grant turned out to be a fraud, Dorsey moved quickly to preserve his control in that area by securing titles under the public land laws through persons in his employ or (it was suspected) by using fictitious names. Beginning in early 1879 a number of warranty deeds appeared in the public record conveying to Dorsey one-hundred-and-sixty-acre tracts with water at various places within the fake grant. Those entries helped him to dominate many thousand more acres of public domain. There were doubts about whether the claim had been formally returned for public entry, and in 1881 the Uña de Gato was still listed for delinquent taxes amounting to $625.00.

In 1877 Dorsey chose a site for his home place about twenty miles east of the present town of Maxwell. The two-story log dwelling may already have been there, and adjoining it he built a rather flamboyant house of red sandstone, with an extensive garden, a large fountain, and the name of his wife Helen spelled in flowers. Several miles southeast of the location is Point of Rocks, a well-known spot on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. Today the Dorsey place is usually referred to as the Chico Springs Ranch, probably because the U.S. post office of Chico Springs was in the commissary building of the ranch for many years. Several contemporary sources, however, seem incontrovertible on the point that the fine residence really was on the Mountain Spring Ranch.

During his early years in New Mexico Dorsey remained a part of Republican officialdom, serving as secretary of the party’s national committee in 1880. Then in 1883 came an episode which would tarnish his reputation in the eyes of some people, rightly or wrongly, for the rest of his life. He had been indicted and was tried and acquitted in the notorious Star Route mail fraud cases. Best
known of his defense lawyers was Robert G. Ingersoll, later to achieve a degree of fame as an agnostic.\textsuperscript{11}

The litigation was expensive, and Dorsey drew upon his New Mexico real estate and livestock as security for money borrowed. For a loan of $50,000 he mortgaged much of his range land in northeastern New Mexico to James W. Bosler, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{12} One contemporary source says that in 1881 Dorsey had the largest individual range in the territory—about forty miles square just east of the Maxwell Grant.\textsuperscript{13} The public record describes “The Dorsey Ranch and Range” as including: (1) Kiowa Springs Ranch; (2) Chico Springs Ranch; (3) Apache Ranch; (4) lands along Ute Creek; (5) Kingman Ranch and Pasture; (6) lands along Palo Blanco Creek; (7) Martinez Ranch; (8) lands along Don Carlos Creek; (9) lands on Perico Creek; (10) lands along Cieneguilla del Burro Creek; (11) lands on San Rafael Creek; (12) lands on Corrumpa Creek; (13) ranches about Sierra Grande; (14) ranches on Gallegos Creek; (15) Clutton Ranch; (16) Lower Chico Ranch and Pasture; (17) Eagle Tail Ranch; (18) Blosser Ranch; (19) Mountain Spring Ranch. With the exception of the last three (the Mountain Spring Ranch being Dorsey’s home place and headquarters) the above properties were leased in May of 1882 to the new Palo Blanco Cattle Company, incorporated on January 23 by Dorsey, James W. Bosler, and John H. Bosler and capitalized at $300,000.\textsuperscript{14}

Soon the Senator’s manager, Harry Gray, and his Triangle Dot brand were familiar to stockmen in eastern Colfax County, where the Triangle Dot herd and others ranged with the longhorns of the Cross L brand belonging originally to pioneers William and Nathan Hall. In 1881 the Cross L became the property of the giant, British-owned Prairie Land and Cattle Company, Ltd., which had an estimated 60,000 head of cattle in New Mexico and rather grandiosely advertised the range of its [Dry] Cimarron Division as Colfax, Mora, and San Miguel Counties.\textsuperscript{15}

About 1879 Governor Ozro A. Hadley, one of Dorsey’s political associates in Arkansas, came to New Mexico. He had been acting governor (1871-1873) following the election to the United States
Senate of Governor Clayton Powell and Stephen W. Dorsey. On October 23, 1882, at Dorsey's Chico Springs Ranch the articles of incorporation of the Eagle Tail Cattle Company were signed by Dorsey, Hadley, and Adelaide Danforth. The new venture was based on the Eagle Tail Ranch, one of the properties reserved from Dorsey's lease to the Palo Blanco Company. Capitalization was set at $100,000, and the company's range was on Eagle Tail and Tenaja Creeks. Another outfit of which Dorsey was an incorporator and director was the Tramperos Land and Cattle Company, organized in 1883, with its principal office in the new town of Raton and its range presumably on Tramperos Creek, Colfax County. The other incorporators were Colonel John Love (formerly Dorsey's private secretary in Washington) and James Gamble. Nothing more about the company has been found; it may have existed only on paper.

The Palo Blanco Cattle Company seems to have been quite prosperous, although, in view of later developments, its management may not have been harmonious or, perhaps, wise. Robert G. Ingersoll, Dorsey's attorney in the Star Route matter, put money into it and built a large house of peeled and oiled logs a couple of miles from Dorsey's place. In November of 1884 Colonel Ingersoll was given a reception in the town of Springer because he had "become a citizen of Colfax County." But the pastoral life was not for him, and he and his wife seem to have stayed there only part of that summer. He maintained his long investment in cattle, however, and was joined by others. Among them was John B. Alley, a director of the Union Pacific Railroad and a former (1859-1867) Republican representative from Massachusetts, who evidently bought out some of the Boslers' interest.

The ex-senator was the spark of the outfit. In spite of the uncertainty of newspaper accounts, something of his activity with the company may be gauged from them. In the fall of 1884 it was reported that Dorsey had sent thirty-two cars of cattle to market, and that the beef crop of the Palo Blanco Company might come close to a half million dollars that year. A little later it was said that he would send 12,000 head of cattle to eastern markets, which, at
an estimated $30 per head, would bring in $360,000.22 Was the disposal of so many from the Palo Blanco herd of a piece with the big sale from the Prairie Company herds in 1883 which brought criticism because it cut severely into the means of future increase for the sake of present dividends? The practice was common enough.23

Early in 1885 the Palo Blanco Company showed signs of internal disagreements. At “Dorsey’s earnest request” Governor Hadley became manager, while retaining the same position with the Eagle Tail Company. Hadley moved his family to the Mountain Spring Ranch, and the Dorsey and Ingersoll families planned for a lengthy sojourn in Europe. At that time Dorsey sold nothing and stayed on as vice-president of the cattle company.24 But in the summer of 1885 it was suddenly announced that the Palo Blanco would be broken up—its ranges and cattle to be divided between Senator Dorsey (holding nine-twentieths of the stock) and John B. Alley, Robert G. Ingersoll, and Murray Nelson, of Chicago, jointly holding eleven-twentieths.25 Dorsey and Alley (the latter having been described as “the ways and means cow partisan of the Palo Blanco”)26 were the major factors, and the disbandment apparently was the result of difficulties arising between them. In an interview with the Colorado Livestock Record, Alley said:

Since Mr. Dorsey and myself divided our landed property and cattle I have been much better pleased with my monied investment in the west. George Washington admonished his people to ‘beware of any entangling alliances,’ but when I invested in the Palo Blanco concern in New Mexico I paid but little heed to the advice of the father of my country. However, I have extricated myself and will go on to make money while the grass grows on the hills of Colfax. . . . When Dorsey, Bob Ingersoll and myself went into the cattle business together we had 43,000 head of cattle on the Palo Blanco ranch. We disposed of 10,000 head last year and will have 40,000 head to divide now we have separated. I do not regret my investment in land and cattle in the west. It cannot help but lead to fortune.27

Dissatisfaction was mutual. In an interview with Colonel J. T. Grayson, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft’s representative, Dorsey
said he consented to the breakup because he could no longer work with such disagreeable partners. He then doubted that he would ever go into a partnership again. Subsequent transactions cast doubt on the statements of both men. Theirs was an unstable, speculative world, where companies were easily created and abandoned and mortgages were piled high without much reflection of reality.

Acting as arbitrators were two prominent cattlemen of the area. Joseph W. Dwyer was a Marylander who in 1876 had settled on Uña de Gato Creek, the main range of the Delano-Dwyer Cattle Company. He also was president of the Territorial Cattle Growers' Association. The other was T. H. Lawrence, general manager of the Dubuque Cattle Company, an Iowa-based concern ranging on Tramperos Creek in Colfax and Mora Counties and extending into the Texas Panhandle. Agreement was reached on November 6 at a meeting in Dorsey's ranch office. John B. Alley, president of the Palo Blanco Company, presided, and O. A. Hadley moved that the president and the secretary pro tem (a stockholder and director named W. S. Bush) be authorized to deliver a quitclaim deed to Dorsey for all company lands east of the Range line between Townships 29 and 30 East. Dorsey seconded the motion, which was passed and attested to by notary public John Love. In return Dorsey agreed to deliver 8,850 shares of Palo Blanco stock any time before December 22. The Triangle Dot brand became his again, and he retained the Mountain Spring Ranch as his residence and headquarters. Operations of the reduced Palo Blanco Company were to be managed by O. A. Hadley from the Lower Chico Ranch. The Raton Comet said that of the 44,000 head of cattle involved, Dorsey would receive from 15,000 to 17,000 head. He also sold his nearly one-half interest in the Eagle Tail Cattle Company to John B. Alley, who remained as president of the Palo Blanco Company with Robert G. Ingersoll as secretary.

But Dorsey did not remain in unencumbered possession of his cattle or land for long. On December 15 he and his wife granted a deed of trust to John B. Alley (who evidently was not fully alienated) of land to secure payment of eight promissory notes totalling...
$54,080. The notes were held by George W. Swallow, former Trinidad banker, then of Denver, to whom Dorsey on December 22 gave a chattel mortgage on about 15,000 Triangle Dot cattle, the notes with interest payable in two years.\textsuperscript{33}

Harry Gray, who had left Dorsey’s employ prior to the Palo Blanco breakup, came back as manager, and John C. Hill stayed on as range superintendent. With his cattle now ranging in what is present Union County, in the extreme northeastern corner of New Mexico, Dorsey’s Triangle Dot steers were trailed northward to Lamar, Colorado, where they were shipped directly to Kansas City on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.\textsuperscript{34}

Overgrazing, competition for ranges, and increasing numbers of small farmers and ranchers stimulated reactions on the part of the big stockmen that were perhaps quasi-defensive, but certainly questionable. Fraudulent entries under the public land laws became commonplace in Colfax County, and apparently there was official connivance with the Palo Blanco, Prairie, and Dubuque Companies as well as with Senator Dorsey personally. A special Land Office agent, John M. Dunn, had reported in 1883 that the holdings of the three companies under the public land laws were quite in order and recommended that no further action against them be taken.\textsuperscript{35} For some people Dunn’s statements were too facile, and in 1885 Inspector Frank D. Hobbs went out to New Mexico to trace Dunn’s footsteps, as it were. Inspector Hobbs was very critical of Dunn’s appraisals and, in fact, of his tactics in the circumstances. That illegally entered land had come into the hands of Dorsey and others was pretty convincingly shown by Hobbs.\textsuperscript{36} Some allegations went back to the time of Dorsey’s early interest in the \textit{Uña de Gato} tract. Some of the range-land pressures were the result of illegal enclosures by cattle companies and individual stockmen. The Dubuque was especially notorious in that respect, but also named in the charges were the Palo Blanco Company, Delano and Dwyer, Stephen W. Dorsey, and others.\textsuperscript{37}

Complications on the public domain revived Dorsey’s attraction to the idea of a cattle ranch based on a Mexican land grant. The Maxwell Cattle Company (a New Mexico corporation) had had a
lease of most of the Maxwell Grant's 1,714,764 acres since 1881, but it was being liquidated in the reorganization of the Maxwell Land Grant Company (a Netherlands corporation). There was reason to believe that the Dutch owners might sell the grant, and Senator Dorsey formed an association of men to buy it. Some were local cattlemen whose livestock, like part of Dorsey's, already grazed on the grant because the east boundary of the estate was not fenced. Two of them were Dorsey's old friends, Governor Hadley and Joseph W. Dwyer. A Springer businessman, D. A. Clouthier, who also had cattle on the grant, was a member of the syndicate as was Melvin W. Mills, prominent Springer lawyer, who at one time briefly owned the Maxwell through a tax sale. H. H. Officer and two other men had banking interests in Raton, and from Trinidad, Colorado, were banker George W. Swallow and Delos Chappell, former banker and investor in coal lands. Also in the group was Thomas P. Gable, of Santa Fe and formerly of Raton. All were Dorsey's political or business friends.

Maxwell Grant officials were skeptical yet open-minded when Senator Dorsey went to Europe early in 1887 to promote the idea of purchasing the property. About the time he went abroad, Congress passed an Alien Real Estate Act to severely restrict landholding by foreigners; the measure had a paralytic effect on the London market. Going first to Holland, Dorsey met with little encouragement from the Maxwell Land Grant Committee. When he realized that the Dutch, who never seriously doubted that they could get around the Act of Congress, were really interested in buying cattle to stock the grant, he said that he and his friends would take 60% in bonds of the reorganized company and 40% in cash for their cattle and ranges. But the Maxwell people did not want more land, and it appeared that they planned to fence the east boundary of their grant. Some of the ranchers in the Dorsey group opposed the fence because it would deprive them of water long used by their cattle. The discussions in Holland presumably were private, but items that appeared in the Raton Range (especially the one on March 18 on the impracticality and risks of a fence along the
Maxwell east line) bespoke a leak which Maxwell officials there attributed to Dorsey via Joseph W. Dwyer.⁴³

Although the Dutch were basically reluctant to do business with Dorsey, either they did not flatly reject his proposal to buy the Maxwell, or he thought that a little promotional success with the British would make the Dutch more receptive. He went to London, where he hoped to attract buyers for “a tract of several millions of acres in New Mexico” belonging to “an Amsterdam Company.”⁴⁴ The reference to “several millions of acres” probably was inadvertent, unless he was including his own and other holdings on the public domain. An Associated Press dispatch from London to The New York Times also said that Dorsey had given “a great and ostentatious dinner” there to assist his scheme, but that his timing was inauspicious:

The detailed provisions of the [American] alien land act, which were only known here this week, created the greatest excitement in financial circles. One great city speculator tells me (?) that not less than three hundred big American land schemes are knocked in the head by it. For years London has been full of American promoters of all sorts—mines, ranches and estates, to sell or float in companies—these ranging all the way from millionaires to needy adventurers [sic]. These gentry are now conscious that they have received a grievous set back.⁴⁵

That appeared on April tenth, and the next day’s edition of the Times carried comment about the demoralizing effect of the Alien Land-lords Act and then made an interesting but imprecise observation: “Dorsey’s great ranch has been shorn of some of its outlying principalities. At the command of the President he has taken down fifty miles of fence by which he had enclosed a great tract to which he had no title.”⁴⁶

Dorsey’s plan to buy and sell the Maxwell was dead by mid-May, having succumbed both to the threats of the alien land act and the not misplaced confidence of the Dutch that they could hold on to the property—a feeling that was strengthened in April
by the Supreme Court decision upholding the Maxwell patent. \(^{47}\) With the scheme went hope of improving financial conditions that had worsened because of speculation, depression in the cattle industry, high winter losses, and the inflow of settlers with their barbed wire and windmills. On the latter point the governor of New Mexico said that "the 'granger' has struck New Mexico." \(^{48}\)

Changing course, Dorsey and his wife on July 1 issued $100,000 worth of 8% mortgage bonds to the American Loan and Trust Company of New York in denominations of $1,000 payable semi-annually, July 1 and January 1. Security given was 25,000 head of cattle (presumably Triangle Dot) and 11,000 acres of land. Curiously enough the company's chairman was Dorsey's range superintendent and its secretary was his crony, John Love. \(^{49}\)

The failure of Dorsey's Maxwell proposal did not remove him from the orbit of land-grant controversy that plagued New Mexico. Approval of the Maxwell patent by the Supreme Court aroused the anti-grant movement to a new pitch rather than stifled it. Dorsey was no stranger to the movement's intricacies, nor was he unfamiliar with the stratagems of the intrepid anti-grant leader, O. P. McMains. \(^{50}\) But whatever the internal feuds of the small group of men and companies wheeling and dealing in land grants, they usually closed ranks against their enemies. Anti-grant hopes still were buoyant from McMains' success in 1885 in getting the Nolan Grant No. 39 open to public entry by order of the Secretary of the Interior in President Cleveland's administration. The plats of the Nolan No. 39, in other words, were restored to the General Land Office. \(^{51}\)

Grover Cleveland's choice for Surveyor General of New Mexico was reform minded and outspoken George Washington Julian (former Free Soiler and Republican congressman from Indiana), \(^{52}\) who severely jolted the world of Mexican land grants in 1887. In an official report, dated July 20, Julian censured "distinguished [unnamed] senators and representatives" for being sympathetic to S. W. Dorsey, S. B. Elkins, and their confederates (the Santa Fe Ring), saying that only their fear of the President kept them from acting more directly. Then Julian castigated Dorsey for illegal use
of the homestead and pre-emption laws to secure control of the fraudulent Uña de Gato Grant. And in that same month of July came publication of the surveyor general's article on "Land Stealing in New Mexico" in the *North American Review*, which made common knowledge of the charges made in his report to the secretary. The criticism was too public to be ignored, and Dorsey wrote a general defense and justification which appeared in the October issue of the *North American Review* as "Land Stealing in New Mexico, A Rejoinder." Undoubtedly because of the personal attack on him, Dorsey was chosen to express the position of the land-grant interests and to destroy the credibility of the surveyor general. The whole controversy had strong political overtones, which often characterized land problems in New Mexico.

Even though in late 1888 Dorsey inquired about obtaining thirty or forty thousand acres in the southeast corner of the Maxwell Grant not far from his home place, the chief focus of his interests in Colfax County had shifted back to the public domain. In April of that year he, with John Love and John C. Hill, incorporated the Sierra Grande Ranch Company, to which he and his wife deeded land (for 2,500 shares of company's 7,500 shares of stock) and sold all the Triangle Dot cattle as well as horses, wagons, tools, and other parcels of land. About the same time Dorsey was active in the Clayton Land and Investment Company, a townsite promotion headed by John C. Hill, the name of the place having been suggested by the senator in honor of his son, Clayton, who was named for Dorsey's old senatorial colleague from Arkansas, Powell Clayton. Their hope for a real estate boom was sparked by construction of a railroad across the northeastern corner of New Mexico; Dorsey's friend, General Grenville M. Dodge, was a major figure in the railroad project. The town, of course, was expected to become an important shipping point for the stockmen of the region.

Towards the end of the 1880's western cattlemen more and more had to deal with the big eastern meat-packing companies that many thought were monopolistic enough to set prices injurious to the cattle growers. At a meeting of the International Range Association
at Denver in February 1887 a countermonopoly was proposed. In the debate that followed, R. G. Head, president of the Association and former manager of the Prairie Land and Cattle Company, was the chief spokesman for those who wanted to set up a complete vertical monopoly. Dorsey's friend and associate, O. A. Hadley, was a leader of the stockmen who thought it would be better to concentrate on control of transportation and packing and not try to be all-inclusive. Head's view carried the convention, and the American Cattle Trust came into existence that May. It never was a success.69

In direct reaction to the American Cattle Trust, the American Meat Company was incorporated in the summer of 1888 by Stephen W. Dorsey, Ozro A. Hadley, and Joseph W. Dwyer. Arrangements were completed in New York City, and the next step was to secure strong backing for floating the new company's stock. The basic plan was to consolidate major ranches in Colfax and Lincoln Counties, New Mexico, along with large properties in Old Mexico; in order to create a company powerful enough to no longer pay tribute to the "grinding Chicago syndicate."60 To get a strong slate of officers and directors took time, but in March of 1889 the following announcement was made: J. H. Flagler, head of the Cotton Oil Trust, president; J. O. Moss, of the same Trust, vice president; Charles E. Coon, secretary; Jennings S. Cox, treasurer; Ormond Hammond, Jr. of Baltimore, the well-known dressed beef man, general manager; Alexander Green and Robert G. Ingersoll, counselors; John Davis and Company, New York, bankers. Among the directors were Edwin C. Converse, president of the National Tube Works, and Siegmund Lindauer, manager of the Lindauer Cattle Company, of Deming, New Mexico. Lindauer probably was an important figure in the plan because Deming was to have the company headquarters, with branch offices in New York City and the Republic of Mexico. Also on the board were Dorsey, Hadley, Dwyer, and others.61

Announcement of the officials turned out to be premature, Flagler and Moss declining to assume their new positions. It was Joseph W. Dwyer's opinion that Philip Armour, of the Armour Packing
Company, had threatened to stop buying from the Cotton Oil Trust unless Flagler and Moss refused the top offices in the American Meat Company. At any rate, the company really never became operational, and the Colfax County ranches (and doubtless the others) that were to have been parts of the organization continued on their own. 62 O. A. Hadley still managed the Palo Blanco Company, Delano & Dwyer stayed in business, and Stephen W. Dorsey planned to ship 3,500 Triangle Dot steers to market that fall. 63

The course of Dorsey's Triangle Dot brand is interesting but not easy to follow. His promissory notes ($54,080) held by George W. Swallow, and secured by Triangle Dot cattle, were not paid on their due date of December 22, 1887. Swallow did not push, but he finally took steps to foreclose two years later. Dorsey paid $17,000 and secured another year's postponement, but the final outcome is not a matter of public record. 64 It should be recalled that all of the Triangle Dot cattle in Colfax and adjacent counties had been sold by Dorsey and his wife to the Sierra Grande Ranch Company, which had become Dorsey's principal cattle operation in early 1888, when those cattle presumably were still the security for the chattel mortgage held by Swallow. And the Sierra Grande Company, to which the Dorseys had transferred their real and personal property, figured in some curious maneuvering concerning the $100,000 worth of mortgage bonds (secured by 11,000 acres of land and 25,000 head of [presumably Triangle Dot] cattle) in 1887 that were issued by Dorsey to the American Loan and Trust Company of New York. At a meeting in Clayton on May 30, 1890, officials of the loan and trust company denied having assumed any of the bonds as trustee. No bonds were sold at the time of the Dorsey transfer to the Sierra Grande Company, and any sale or pledge of the bonds had been done by unauthorized persons. The bonds were declared to be a nullity and no obligation on the American Loan and Trust Company. A resolution embracing those points was passed and signed by John C. Hill and John Love as chairman and secretary of the loan and trust company, Stephen W. Dorsey (no official capacity listed), and H. H. Officer, acting secretary of the Sierra Grande stockholders. 65 It must be assumed
that the original mortgage bond transaction was obliterated by the
agreement reached among those men, all of whom were part of the
infrastructure of Dorsey's ranch holdings in Colfax County. The
reader may recollect, for example, that Hill, the head of the
American Loan and Trust Company, also was manager of the
Triangle Dot herd and an incorporator of the Sierra Grande Ranch
Company.66

Yet another company was organized by Dorsey, his wife, and
H. H. Officer (Raton banker and Sierra Grande stockholder) in
1890. On August 15 they signed the articles of incorporation of
the Mountain Spring Ranching Company. The senator's son,
Clayton, recently graduated from Yale University, was made secre­
tary and business manager of the concern, which was also known
locally as the Chico Springs Ranching Company—another inter­
change of Mountain and Chico in the name of Dorsey's home
place. It appears that Dorsey intended to remain in the cattle
business, several hundred Colorado cows and calves being bought
for the new company,67 but it probably was related to an incipient
deal for the sale of the Sierra Grande Ranch and the Triangle Dot
herd to Charles Springer, a transaction that was completed in
early 1891.68

By then Dorsey's interest in New Mexico cattle ranching was
diminishing. He had always had other business involvements, but in
the summer of 1891 his attention was especially taken by a huge
irrigation venture in Colorado. He became active in a syndicate
that aimed to take over vast properties of the Traveler's Insurance
Company and the Henry Irrigation Company based on six big
ditches in northeastern and central Colorado. That was accom­
plished at a cost of $2,500,000 through the American Land and
Canal Company, largely Dorsey's creation in 1892, which would
have offices in New York City, London, Amsterdam, and Berlin.69

Dorsey's turning to irrigation projects in Colorado may have
been prompted in part by his failure, for whatever reasons, to get
in on the ground floor of similar developments in Colfax County,
New Mexico. By the late 1880's big canals were cutting across
parts of that county, foretelling an influx of small farmers, but
many of the irrigating projects were promoted by the Maxwell Land Grant Company, which had resisted a threatened Dorsey take-over. In 1888 Joseph W. Dwyer noted the changes and concluded that the day of the big ranches was over. Two years later the governor of New Mexico, L. Bradford Prince, in his official report for 1890 pointed to the same trend, with particular reference to Colfax County. 70

Dorsey made a novel conversion of some of his New Mexico real estate by incorporating the Chico Springs Ranch and Resort Company on October 17, 1892—a plan to develop the big house into a tuberculosis sanitarium under the direction of Dr. Frederick W. Seward, of New York City. 71 Helen M. Dorsey the next day conveyed 1,280 acres to the new company, and much of what was left of his cattle range was to be a sheep run. Sheep raising was increasing, with even the huge, British-owned Prairie Land and Cattle Company planning to go into that business quite extensively. 72

These changes provide a suitable termination point for this paper, which is concerned primarily with Stephen W. Dorsey’s career as a New Mexico cattleman. The writer has made no attempt to relate in detail other facets of his life then or later, or to chronicle the final disposition of his properties in the territory. But in order to avoid the impression that Dorsey was an absentee landlord, it is appropriate to point out that, although he often was away for business and other reasons, he was active in many territorial and local affairs. He was a stalwart of the Republican party and was regarded as at least a peripheral member of that remarkable combination known as the Santa Fe Ring. 73 Also he was on the executive committee of the Territorial Stockgrowers Association, and his Civil War experience was in the Raton G.A.R. post and in the National Encampment of that organization. 74 As a founder of the Colfax County Stockman (published at Springer) in 1881, Dorsey’s views pervaded the northeastern part of New Mexico, and later Raton newspapers—first the Guard and then the Range—admired and defended him. 75 And perhaps the most durable of all memories of Senator Dorsey was his life style at his big
Mountain Spring, or Chico Springs, house, which was a focus of social life for many miles around.

Stories and anecdotes about Stephen W. Dorsey still circulate in northeastern New Mexico. The tale about his having the cattle he gave to Robert G. Ingersoll, in payment for legal services, hair-branded in the winter with the lawyer's brand so that the Senator's Triangle Dot would reappear when the hair dropped off in the spring, has the flavor of malicious gossip. And the one about running the same bunch of cattle several times around the mesa to provide a deceptive count for buyers is also told about the JJ outfit, the Prairie Land and Cattle Company's Arkansas division in Colorado. But that is not to say that the senator was a model of ethical behavior.

There is no reason to believe the legend that Dorsey left New Mexico practically broke. He doubtless sustained loss when he closed out his ranching interests, but he had investments in other enterprises, mining particularly. In the Maxwell Land Grant Company correspondence there is an intriguing letter (1887) in which Harry Whigham, receiver of the company, said he met Senator Dorsey on the train in company with Jesse Grant (presumably the late President's son). Another member of the party told Whigham that Dorsey recently had made a great deal of money from his Bessemer company and probably would make more. Dorsey's shift from open range ranching in New Mexico to irrigation and farming in Colorado was quite consonant with the changing times and attests to his astuteness and flexibility.
NOTES


5. Documents pertaining to the grant apparently were forged.


8. Certain architectural features make it probable. The writer is indebted for this information to Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins, Deputy for Archives, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.


10. Colfax County (New Mexico) Deed Record E, pp. 167-70; *Raton Guard*, May 4, 1883, p. 4, and May 18, 1883, p. 8; *Raton Range*, Dec. 29, 1889, p. 1. Actually, the house was known by either name then. There is evidence of an official post office at Chico Springs as early as 1872, but the U.S. post office there was established May 14, 1877, and remained in service until 1895, when the name was changed to Chico. The office was closed in 1956. Rizzari, p. 334; Sheldon H. Dike, *The Territorial Post Offices of New Mexico* (1958), alphabetically listed. That Dorsey's headquarters place was the Mountain Spring Ranch is graphically shown on a Sectional Map of Colfax and Mora Counties (1889) based on plats in the surveyor general's office and private surveys by the Maxwell Land Grant Company.


12. Colfax County (New Mexico) Mortgage Record B, pp. 140-44.


15. Trinidad Weekly Advertiser, March 3, 1884, p. 4; *Raton Comet*, July 24, 1885, p. 4; Las Vegas *The Stockgrower*, Nov. 20, 1886, p. 18; Thompson, p. 72.


17. Colfax County (New Mexico) Miscellaneous Record D, pp. 98-99; Las Vegas *New Mexico Stock Grower*, Sept. 19, 1885, pp. 12, 13; Western Range Cattle Industry Study, List of New Mexico Cattle Corporations, No. 57. The latter source is in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, and hereafter will be cited as WRCIS. The *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, April 18, 1882, p. 3, described Hadley's Eagle Tail.
ranch as being on the northeast side of Eagle Tail Mountain, eight miles northwest of Oscar Troy's place. It had the finest spring in the country, a large number of water holes, an excellent range, and a large hay vega. On the place were good log and adobe buildings and 800 to 1,000 cattle.

18. Colfax County (New Mexico) Deed Record E, pp. 490-92; WRCIS No. 179; Thompson, p. 144; Las Vegas Daily Optic, March 23, 1885, p. 4.


20. Ingersoll was secretary of the reorganized Palo Blanco Cattle Company in 1886, and he was counsellor of the American Meat Company (a Dorsey venture) in 1889. Colfax County (New Mexico) Mortgage Record C, pp. 153-54; *Raton Range*, March 8, 1889, p. 4.


23. Thompson, p. 76; Atherton, p. 196.

24. *Raton Guard*, Feb. 13, 1885, p. 4. As it turned out, the Dorseyes did not go to Europe, the Senator being taken ill with pneumonia in Washington. Las Vegas Daily Optic, Feb. 17, 1885, p. 4; April 7, 1885, p. 1; April 24, 1885, p. 4.

25. *Raton Comet*, July 24, 1885, p. 4; Porter to Chase, June 29, 1885, Henry Miller Porter Papers, Letter Book I, pp. 259-60. The Porter collection is in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, and will be cited as HMP.

26. Las Vegas Daily Optic, June 3, 1885, p. 4. Alley also was owner of the John B. Alley Cattle Company, with ranges in Sierra and Socorro Counties, New Mexico, and he was an incorporator and director of the Western Union Cattle, Land and Irrigation Company, WRCIS, No. 199.

27. Las Vegas New Mexico Stock Grower, Sept. 19, 1885, p. 2.


29. *History of New Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 709; Colfax County (New Mexico) Miscellaneous Record E, pp. 140-43; *Raton Comet*, June 19, 1885, p. 4, and July 24, 1885, p. 4; Las Vegas New Mexico Stock Grower, Sept. 19, 1885, p. 19; Atherton, p. 192.

30. *Raton Comet*, July 24, 1885, p. 4; Las Vegas New Mexico Stock
Grower, Sept. 19, 1885, p. 12; Colfax County (New Mexico) Deed Record F, pp. 139-42; Atherton, p. 192.

31. Colfax County (New Mexico) Miscellaneous Record H, pp. 469, 470-75. Several years later the Raton Range, Dec. 7, 1888, p. 4, said that Dorsey sold the Palo Blanco Company for $750,000, an unsubstantiated figure that was not explained.

32. Raton Comet, July 24, 1885, p. 4. The Las Vegas Daily Optic, July 6, 1885, p. 1, put it differently, saying that Dorsey received eight cattle for every eleven going to Alley, Ingersoll, and Nelson. Dorsey's total was about 25,000 head. The discrepancies in the two newspaper accounts are obvious, but the reasons are obscure.

33. Colfax County (New Mexico) Mortgage Record B, pp. 568-78, and Mortgage Record C, pp. 1-2; Springer Colfax County Stockman, Oct. 12, 1889, p. 4.

34. Raton Comet, July 24, 1885, p. 4; Las Vegas The Stockgrower, Nov. 20, 1886, p. 5.


37. Westphall, p. 155.


39. Ibid., pp. 73-74.

40. Pels to the Maxwell Land Grant Committee, March 3, 1887, Maxwell Land Grant Company Letter Book, Mar. 3-Nov. 7, 1887, pp. 1-5. Maxwell Company records hereafter will be cited at MLG.


42. U.S., Statutes at Large, vol. 24, pp. 476-77; Maurice Frink, W. Turrentine Jackson, and Agnes Wright Spring, When Grass Was King: Contributions to the Western Range Cattle Industry Study (Boulder, 1956), pp. 250-52.

43. Porter to Green, June 26, 1886, and Porter to Springer, March 5, 1887, HMP Letter Book 4, pp. 407-08, 460-63; Whigham to Pels, March 22, 1887, MLG Letter Book 5, pp. 25-27; Pels to Whigham, April 23, 1887, MLG Letter Book, Mar. 3-Nov. 7, 1887, pp. 64-67; Las Vegas New Mexico Stock Grower, Sept. 19, 1885, p. 8; Raton Range, March 18, 1887, p. 4, and April 1, 1887, p. 4.

44. New York Times, April 10, 1887, p. 1; Frink, et al., p. 252; Raton Range, April 22, 1887, p. 1.
When Territorial Chief Justice William A. Vincent appointed Stephen W. Dorsey as one of the jury commissioners to select jurors in Colfax County (1885), the choice aroused strong anti-grant opposition because of Dorsey's interest in some of the land-grant matters that might come up for judicial action. O. P. McMains led the attack, and the upshot was the suspension of Judge Vincent by President Cleveland. Dorsey naturally was furious and there was much bitter controversy in the local press. References here are to articles in the Las Vegas Daily Optic, Oct. 19, 1885, p. 4; Oct. 22, 1885, p. 4; Nov. 2, 1885, pp. 1, 4; Nov. 21, 1885, p. 1.


56. Keleher, p. 131; Westphall, pp. 54-55.

57. Colfax County (New Mexico) Miscellaneous Records G and H, pp. 121-22, 84-85, and Deed Record I, pp. 631-34. Love's daughter, Nellie Louise, married John C. Hill in September 1888, and for a while they lived in the Ingersoll house near the Dorsey place. Thompson, p. 144; Raton Range, Sept. 28, 1888, p. 5. The Raton Range, June 29, 1888, p. 8, stated that Major Donnelly, acting Land Commissioner for the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (recipient of a federal grant of land and taken over by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe), had sold 200,000 acres to John C. Hill, Dorsey's manager, and that 15,000 head of Dorsey's cattle would be moved to the tract. The grazing land would have been somewhere west of Isleta, New Mexico, but, assuming the report was not just rumor, this transaction seems not to have been completed; sales and rentals of the railroad's lands were small and slow. Westphall, p. 93.


59. Gressley, Bankers and Cattlemen, pp. 259-66; Gene M. Gressley,

60. *Raton Range*, Dec. 7, 1888, p. 4; WRCIS, No. 8A.


62. *Ibid.*, Dec. 7, 1888, p. 4; March 8, 1889, p. 4; April 19, 1889, pp. 1, 4; July 12, 1889, p. 5.


64. Springer Colfax County Stockman, Oct. 12, 1889, p. 4; *Raton Range*, Dec. 6, 1889, p. 4.

65. Colfax County (New Mexico) Mortgage Record C, pp. 251-53, and Deed Record H, pp. 107-08.

66. At this time he was also president of the Keystone Cattle Company. *Raton Range*, May 3, 1889, p. 1.

67. Colfax County (New Mexico) Miscellaneous Record H, pp. 110-11; WRCIS, No. 18; *Raton Range*, Aug. 29, 1890, p. 2.


69. *Raton Range*, Aug. 7, 1891, p. 3; March 18, 1892, p. 3; July 28, 1892, p. 2; Sept. 29, 1892, p. 3; Trinidad Evening Chronicle, Oct. 3, 1892, p. 6.


71. Rizzari, p. 336; Colfax County (New Mexico) Deed Record M, pp. 598-600, and Miscellaneous Record H, pp. 471-73; *Raton Range*, Oct. 27, 1892, p. 3. The Raton paper said that Dorsey was president and a director, and the other directors were Joseph W. Dwyer, Frederick W. Seward, Thomas W. Collier, and Clayton C. Dorsey.

72. Colfax County (New Mexico) Deed Record M, pp. 598-600; *Raton Range*, Oct. 27, 1892, p. 3.


75. *History of New Mexico*, vol. 1, p. 473; *Raton Guard* and *Raton Range*, passim.

76. The story reached print in Agnes Morley Cleaveland's *Satan's Paradise* (Boston, 1952), pp. 71-72.

77. Whigham to Pels, Nov. 1, 1887, MLG Letter Book 4, pp. 185-86.