

THE CALL OF THE WEST

Many succumbing to the lure of the broad rolling prairies and tales from frontiersmen, caught the western fever and headed beyond the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to the land of promise. Several colonies from the East came to Colorado during the 1860's and settled in western Weld and eastern Larimer counties. A colony from Chicago, Illinois, founded Burlington, which was the beginning of present-day Longmont. Another, Union Colony, founded Greeley. A St. Louis colony became Loveland. Other pioneers congregated in unnamed settlements. One of these later became Hillsboro, which was on the western edge of present-day Milliken, Colorado. Among the men who helped develop this area of Weld County were George Sanderson Hill, Bruce F. Johnson, Jared Conry, Jared L. Brush, John M. Brush and William Wesley Brush.

George Sanderson Hill and his family left Iowa in 1861 and arrived in the Big Thompson Valley in 1864. Traveling in a prairie schooner, they probably were part of a wagon train as was usual for that time. One account told of a wagon train that consisted of twenty-two ox teams loaded with provisions, bedding and cooking utensils, with each wagon carrying from four to five people. A guard of men rode ahead and at the sides of the wagons in the daytime as protection from the Indians. At night, for protection, the wagons were arranged in a circle to form a corral and the cattle placed inside. This was the method used when the Brush brothers left Ohio in 1859 and crossed the Missouri River to reach Fort Laramie, Wyoming.

The Brush brothers, Jared L., John M., and William Wesley, came to Colorado in 1859 and moved to Weld County in 1860. They owned land along the Big Thompson and South Platte River Basin, and east of Greeley to an area which later became Brush, Colorado.

The Hill family settled on a ranch northwest of Johnstown which soon grew to be a stopping place for travelers and became known as Hillsborough. George W. Foote and V.W. Stoddard operated a stage line that ran between Greeley and Loveland, stopping at Hillsborough. Two round trips a week were made. Bruce F. Johnson had been a schoolteacher in New York when he joined an emigrant train and came to Colorado in the spring of 1859. He settled on a ranch south of the one belonging to the Hill family.

The Brush brothers were involved in area politics and on October 25, 1877, Brush, Colorado, was named after Jared L. Brush. He served as Lieutenant Governor of Colorado from 1894 to 1898. The Brush brothers obtained land by a Homestead Patent north of Milliken along Highway 257 and County Road 48 1/2.

William Wesley Brush was killed August 23, 1868, by Sioux Indians who were led by Chief Swift Bird. The Chief had made a Peace Treaty in Denver with Governor Hunt and then traveled down the Platte River. William and a cousin, Jared Conry, and a hired man were cutting hay near the mouth of Crow Creek east of present-day Greeley. At noon they fed the Indians. When William and the two men returned to work the Indians killed and scalped them and took their horses. A posse from Greeley, Colorado fought the Indians who were overtaken near present-day Hardin, Colorado. A few Indians were killed and the horses belonging to the Brushes were recovered. The three men were put in