

Proprietor's Mark

# DEMING GRAPHIC.

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## LUNA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

A Serial Story of Its History, People, Stock, Mining and Commercial Industries, Railway Facilities and Educational Advantages.

### PART I. Introduction.

The increased interest which is being exhibited by eastern people in the south west and the numerous inquiries that are constantly being received throughout our territory as to the inducements offered to settlers by this region we are fully convinced that it will be of great benefit to our community to have a thorough and accurate description of our county written up and illustrated at this time so that it can be distributed through the east where these inquiries originate.

It is our intention to have these articles written by people who are thoroughly posted on the various subjects and have them give the exact condition as they see them without exaggeration so that should any one be led by them to come here and investigate they would find conditions as represented and not be disappointed.

It is with this object in view, and for the sole purpose of bringing the advantages of Luna county before the people who are looking for a location that we have undertaken this work.

#### History of County by Edw. Pennington

In the early fall of 1881, eager eyes were anxiously turned toward southern New Mexico watching the progress of railroad building and guessing where would be the junction of the two great trans-continental railways which were building toward the Golden Gate of the Pacific. In October of that year someone got a private "tip," and shared the scoop with a few of the select. The Southern Pacific builders reached a point just east of the Mimbres river three miles west of the present site of Deming, made a short halt for some reason; the knowing ones took the hint, and in a day or two, or three at most, the roaring western town of "New Chicago" was a reality, with really soaring skyward, though no title worth mentioning was shown in the abstract. Title is a consideration that troubles boom town builders but little, and it did not these. Title was an after consideration to be tackled by the lawyers and the future. The boomers ran their street lines, set their lot stakes and had Colt and Winchester documents to hold the stakes in place. A city of tents sprang up like magic, and nearly every "house" had for a door plate "Lodging," "Beds," "Dance Hall," "Club Room," "Saloon," principally the latter. Business was booming and the citizens of New Chicago were sure "it is good to be here."

But a change came over the spirit of their dreams. The A. T. & S. F. railway had passed the east point of the Cook's Peaks mountains and taken a dip to the west that looked suspicious, when, by all accounts it should have kept on directly south to the New Chicago. A delegation of the leading citizens went a little west to investigate, and only three miles west of their promising little town with the glorious future found men with transits and levels, sticks like barbers' poles and little flags not made for guidons, very busy. A town was being laid out and they

were not "in it." Their report to the mass meeting at the future metropolis was paralyzing. But western town builders don't paralyze for long, and that night, just four weeks from the birth of their town, they

folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stole away, and by night of the following day, about November 15, 1881, a city of canvas sprang into existence along the line of the S. P. right of way, with its business center about where now stands the office of the El Paso and Southwestern railway, and resembling in many particulars as to architecture and leading citizens the ex-town of New Chicago. A new town was born and it was christened Deming, in honor of the family of one of the promoters of the great S. P. system. True, the town of Deming proper was nearly a quarter section south of this point, but western towns like to be in the smoke of the locomotives; the A. T. & S. F. had not yet made the junction, and it was yet a case of "quien sabe" where it would make it, so the park land was a safe ground for the time being.

Within a very short time after the S. P. had built to and passed beyond this point the A. T. & S. F. made the junction, and although its surveyors and graders kept right on across the S. P. tracks and into the west, all doubt as to where the big town was to be was set to rest. Soon an army of mechanics was busy erecting round houses, station houses, railway tenements, putting down the big wells; switching yards three miles long were laid out; soon the handsome and commodious depot hotel was in course of construction—then the finest railroad building between Kansas City and San Francisco—Deming, the division point for both roads; lay-over station for all Pullman employes, train crews and express messengers; everything indicated that here the railroads would make the great town of the southwest, and it was surely "good to be here."

At the advent of the town the population was of the usual well assorted kind—good, bad and not indifferent—for the indifferent don't come until the town is established. The men who start a town in the west are always one kind or the other—good or bad. Here were Charles Roberts and Doc Gilpin, Bob Campbell, — Garrison, Jim Wilson, Henry Hulgate, Jake Raithel, Pat McGeehey, John Galvin, C. H. Dane, Esidor and Harry Fishman, Cap. Crouch, Doc Kane, T. A. Carr, H. B. Olcott, John Watson, Haynes, with the Blinn Lumber Co.; Gates and Jim Howe, Doc Warren, D. C. LeRoy, the scout; Col. McGrorty, Hale, Haas, A. H. Thompson, — Kelly, the Randall Brothers, Simons, with his lodging house; Dan Tucker and Billy Burns, Agent Comfort, Manager Bunton, Bud Styles and his partner, Boone, Pap Case, Barney Martin and about 500 others.

A little later on came Armstrong with his big mercantile establishment, and Walt Wilkinson for clerk; P. Allen with dry goods and Newton Bolich for clerk; John Quinn, with Gardener and Gilles; John Corbett with a soda

water outfit; J. E. Curren with a wheel barrow load of type with which he got out a lively little paper; Laird a Kerrigan, A. Laird and Tom Collins, W. Berg, Dr. Keefe and a host of others to numerous to mention, and early in 1883, J. A. Lockhart Bob and John Hupper, Louis Altman, Postmaster Caness, Signor & Robinson, C. W. Greene, and Ed. Pennington with the Tribune; Thurman & Shephard with the Cabinet saloon; Steve Birchfield and his "Bullhead" John Worden and Andy Price, the Hopkins family, J. A. Mahoney and Dr. Byron, C. Bellerin Judge Field; Aaron Frost with his insurance portfolio, Chambers the lawyer, Drs. Proctor and McChisney, Julius Elby and Ed Merz, Charley Rorahr, J. E. Burchard and McLaughlin, H. C. Van Norman, who built the first two-story hotel in the park. Swede Nelson and his rough house on Gold avenue, Julius Rosch and Otto Leupold, Sig. Lindauer and Ed. Walters with the biggest mercantile house south of Las Vegas, Bauchman, Kid Bowman and many an other old timer that this old timer can not think of.

Judge Warren Bristol was our first District Judge, and put up the first two story residence in the town. Vermilion was the first Justice of the Peace, and dealt out Justice according to a code of his own making. Judge Rilea succeeded him and suited the place so well that he died in office. D. Tucker and E. Gilpin were the first police officers, and when business was dull used to go gunning for each other, then every body else hid out. Gilpin went gunning one afternoon in '83 and ran up against Charley Roberts by mistake. The coroner had a job that night and Gilpin was given an old timer's burial in Boot Hill next morning. Charley Roberts followed Doc shortly after, dying with the same disease that killed Gilpin.

Chas. H. Dane was the first postmaster and was succeeded by Caness, who held the office but a short time and was succeeded by J. P. Byron. Dane, at the birth of Deming, was a Wells Fargo express agent and had his office in a box car alongside the S. P. track. By energy and perseverance he became a leading citizen of the new town and finally President of the two worst-wrecked banks in the southwest.

The first cemetery was located in the park just in front of where W. J. Wamel now lives. It was known as "Boot Hill," because all of the first citizens located there died without removing their foot wear. The formal inauguration of the cemetery did not occur for some little time after it had been decided to devote the ground to burial purposes. The first subject buried there was a Chinaman who had a misunderstanding with a customer as to the payment of a meal, but this was not considered suitable material for the inauguration, and he was planted without ceremony. Shortly after this Andy Price killed a white man and the event came off with great ceremony. Bob Campbell delivered the funeral oration, Nell Gilpin lead the singing, and the principal citizens of the Park affliction to the town acted as mourners. In 1887 or 1888, this spot was abandoned as a burial ground, and most of the bodies were removed to the new cemetery east of town; but many an unknown or forgotten one still sleeps under the sod of Boot Hill in graves unmarked and locations obliterated.

No western town is fairly and fully inaugurated in an up-to-date manner without its vigilance committee, but this detail was neglected until 1883. About this time a man named Brown made a killing in Tom Collins' saloon, about where the Lindauer mercantile establishment now stands, on Pine street, but before the committee could get into shape Brown vanished and was never seen in these parts after. Something had to be done, however, to keep the committee in working order, and when a long-haired gentlemen, who came here without introduction inserted a knife between the ribs of one of our citizens, he was promptly taken in hand and escorted down to where the Merrill lumber yard now stands, and with due formality suspended from a telegraph. He was given a decent burial in Boot Hill, all who took part in his taking off officiating at the funeral. Walt Wilkinson took charge of the funeral obsequies. The man who was cut did not die just then, but that made no differ-



Interior View of J. A. Mahoney's Furniture Store.

ence—the intention constituted the crime. The committee was so well satisfied with the job that no further business was attempted until 1881. The good citizens of Deming proper had been, for quite a while, incensed at the efforts of a lot of adventurers to jump the property in the park claimed by the railroad companies. This attempt gave the town its first setback—in fact, it looked for a time as though this was a knock-out blow to our prosperity. I was decided to oust these park jumpers, and the executive committee got together one evening to clean out the park or have a hot time. Some one on the committee suggested that a conference be had with Judge Bristol as to the proposed proceeding and this was reluctantly agreed to. The judge listened to the arguments of his visitors and took a strictly legal view of the matter. While admitting the necessity of doing something to avert the calamity of incurring the displeasure of the railroads, the proposed proceeding was an extraordinary remedy not warranted by common law or the statute and unfair in chancery, as the chances were all against the accused. The judge did not say just this, but did advise that only legal measures followed and believed that in time the courts would settle the matter to the satisfaction of our people and the railroads. So the matter was dropped. The committee disbanded and never reconvened.

(Continue I.)

### PART II. Business and Biographical Sketches

Closely allied with the growth of the county is the name of J. A. Mahoney, who came to Deming in May 1882 and three years later went into the grocery business at the corner of Gold Avenue and Spruce streets, the sight of his present large establishment. Fourteen years ago sold out his grocery business and opened up a hardware store and a short time afterwards a stock of furniture was added. These two departments of his business increased steadily as the town grew in size until now his place occupies the whole of the great block and during the past year a fine brick building was constructed in the rear of the main building and fitted up into an elegant set of undertaking parlors entirely separate from the main store. In addition to these buildings Mr. Mahoney has erected a block of brick store buildings on the opposite side of Gold Avenue, and a brick office building on Spruce Street which is just being finished and will be one of the neatest and most comfortable in the town and is beginning the construction of a large warehouse to meet the demands of his constantly growing trade which now comprises heavy and light hardware, pumps, all classes of sheet iron work, and general furniture and house furnishing supplies. Some years ago Mr. Mahoney built a beautiful suburban residence which is surrounded by fine grounds and shade trees and is one of the prettiest in this region, but it being out some distance from town he felt that it was too far away from his business, so it was sold to Mr. Al Watkins some months ago and now Mr. Mahoney has plans for a new home where it will be more convenient to the business part of town.

Edward Pennington was born in New York City, where he lived until seven years old, at which time he moved with his parents to California. He remained there until the Civil war broke out,

and served in the quartermasters department of General Conner's brigade in the Rocky mountains and on the plains until 1886, when he was honorably discharged from the service of his country. A short time after leaving the army he went to Little Rock, Arkansas, and began newspaper work with the Little Rock Gazette, where he remained four years, going from there to Fort Smith, in the same state, he was employed for eight years on the Herald of the place, most of which time he was editor-in-chief. His health failed in the deming and unhealthy climate of Arkansas he sold out his business there and again came west stopping for a short time at Las Vegas and then came to Deming. Although his health was very poor at that time his



Edward Pennington.

active, energetic nature would not permit of his remaining in idleness, any length of time, and once more he started into his chosen occupation as editor and publisher of the Deming Tribune. At that time there were two other papers in the town, but it was only a matter of 18 months until the Tribune absorbed the Democrat and shortly afterward the Headlight was bought by Mr. Pennington and the two consolidated under the name of the Headlight, which he continued to publish until 1889, at which time he sold out and went to California for a visit, remaining nearly a year. On his return from California he was elected secretary of Deming Land & Water Co., which position he held for some years after which he was employed as book keeper for the Lindauer Mercantile Co., until, at the time Luna county was formed, he was appointed by Governor Otero to the office of assessor for the new county and in January last was elected, on the republican ticket, Justice of the Peace for the town of Deming, which honorable position he now holds.

Dr. S. D. Swope is having rock hauled for the foundation of a fine brick building at the corner of Gold Avenue, fronting on the railway. The building will have thirteen rooms and is being built with a special view to use either as a lodging house or, in case he should find that there is a demand for it a hospital and sanitarium. This building will be an ornament to our town and is only one of many which are now in process of construction or planned for the near future in our town.

Deming After the Fire of 1889.

