

The Kelley Family
An Informal History
By Roger Carrier

The Kelley Family

An Informal History

[Virtually all of the quotations used in this work are from stories told by Medora Alice Kelley (1882--1952). Some incidents are obviously from my imagination. My purpose has been to put some emotion into the dry facts of history, not to offend anyone.]

When my grandmother was eighteen, her father said, "If you marry Albert Shelton, you'll never have anything but a house full of kids and a yard full of dogs." Dr. Christopher Greenup Kelley was then a mature man of sixty who had witnessed the deaths of two wives. My grandmother, Medora Alice Kelley, was the seventh of his eighteen children, four of whom had died in infancy. Dr. Kelley had known pain and wanted the best for his daughter.

He tried to reason with her. "The Sheltons are three

things," he said. "They're as good as gold, as pretty as dolls, and as lazy as sin." But blue-eyed, brown-haired Medora was star-struck by the man who had come to dig a well for her father, one of the wealthiest men in the hamlet of Eagle Rock, Missouri. Only half-listening to her father, Medora remembered her first sight of Albert. She had looked out the window of her father's two-story house, then turned to her sister and said, "That's my man if I can get him!"

It was a beautiful spring day, and Albert had worked up a sweat digging the well. His black hair glistened in the morning sun, his hundred-and-ninety pounds riding snug on a six-foot-one inch frame. Although twenty-four, he didn't have much of an education, but Medora later saw a keen intelligence in his brown eyes. She smiled at how hard Albert had worked. I'll never have a yard full of dogs, she thought. What could a sixty-year-old man tell a young woman who had come of age with the new century. It was 1900, after all.

Medora and Albert's romanace grew, and at last Dr. Kelley ran out of objections. The young couple were married in Eagle Rock on December 23, 1900. At five-foot-two, Medora looked small beside her new husband, but she was well attired. Dr. Kelley had seen to that. Dressmakers had come to his home and made nine dresses. Four were for everyday, and four were tight in the back and loose in front. The last was Medora's wedding dress, a white gown with imitation pearls and a seven-foot veil.

The young Shelton couple got off to a reasonably good start with the help of Dr. Kelley. He gave his son-in-law a

cow, a horse, and two sows. Medora was happy with her new relatives, too. They weren't rich, but that wasn't everything. She came to believe that her father-in-law, Benjamin Franklin Shelton, was "one of the best men that ever walked in shoe leather." Even if she had moved down, socially speaking, she was happy and soon had to wear one of her loose dresses. Then on October 16, 1901, she first child, Earl Benjamin Shelton, was born.

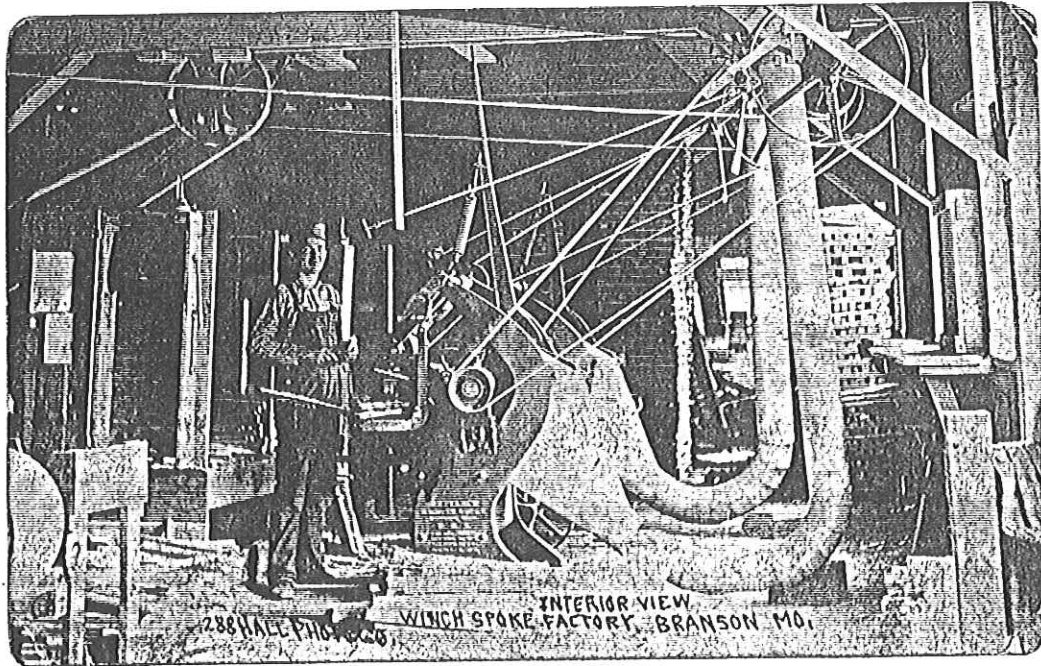
For about ten years, Albert and Medora lived in Eagle Rock, where three of their eight children were born--Earl (1901), Kate (1905), and Ernest (1908). And when the time came, Dr. Kelley, an ordained minister in the Christian Church, baptized Earl and Kate in the Roaring River that ran through the town.

To Dr. Kelley's relief, Albert proved to be a good provider for his family, and when opportunity knocked, the Sheltons moved to Branson, a large town some thirty miles away. Albert, at thirty-four, was tired of farm life and got a job in a factory that made wooden spokes for wagon wheels. Albert worked hard and after a while became a foreman.

A new job in a new town, and then a new baby. Alma Pearl Shelton, my mother, was born in the spring of 1911 in her parent's rented house. The train tracks ran next to the narrow dirt road in front of the small home, and out back, the porch opened onto the White River, whose banks and surrounding hills were covered with huge maples, oaks, and other hardwood trees.

In the meantime, Medora's sister Daisy, whom everyone called "Mabel" after her middle name, moved west to Salt Lake

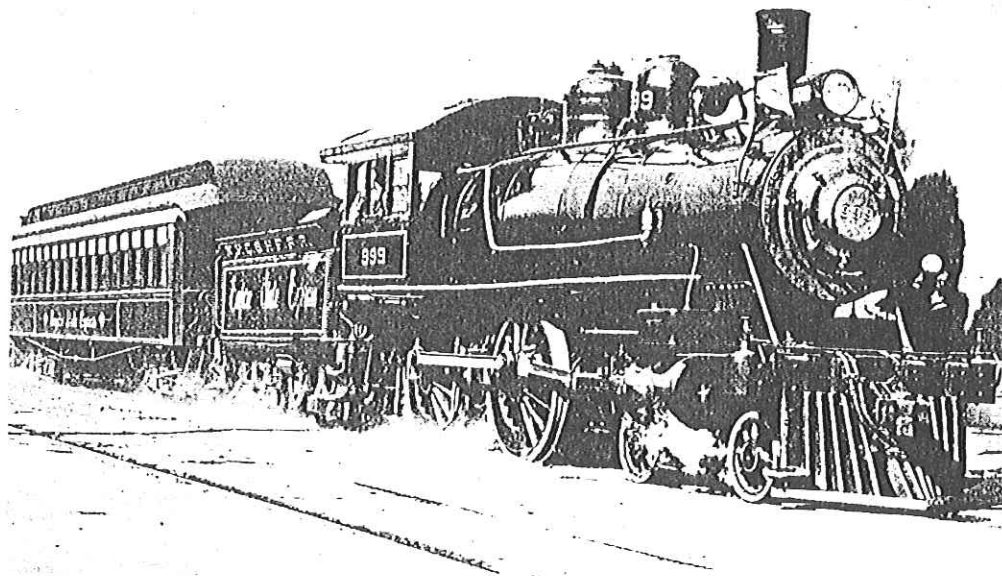
Photo stamped May 18, 1909.



"Dear Father," Dora wrote, "I will send you a post card. This is Albert and where he works. Come down if you can this week. Your loving daughter, Dora."

Albert Shelton worked at the Winch Spoke factory in Branson, Missouri for several years before he pulled up stakes and moved west to Salt Lake City in 1913. He started a new life and job at age thirty-seven.





RAILROADS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR. In the decades after the Civil War the railroads introduced more powerful locomotives for both passenger and freight traffic and provided improved and often lavish services for passengers. The famous locomotive No. 999 established a world speed record in 1893 when it hauled the Empire State Express at 112 miles per hour. This was a startling contrast to the thirty miles per hour speed of railroads in the 1850's. Passengers on the crack trains enjoyed through Pullman service, sleeping and dining cars, and lounges. Electric lights were substituted for gas illumination by 1900. (ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS)

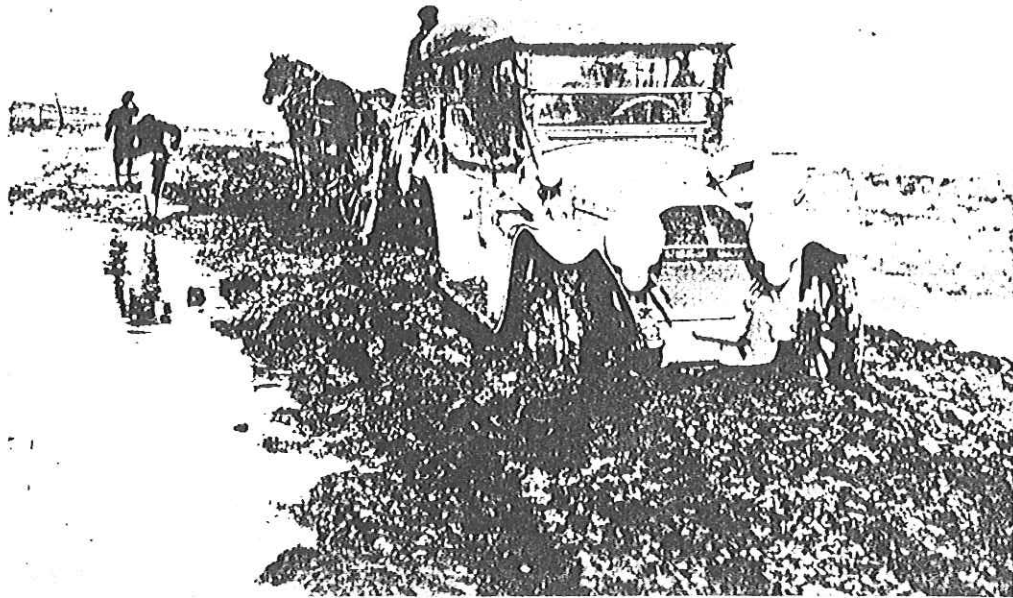
The Sheltons came to Salt Lake City on a train like the one above. It was pulled by a steam engine. The trip took four days and five nights because of the frequent stopovers on the cheapest fare. Dora took a bushel basket of food for the trip.

City, Utah. Mabel's husband, Charles Davis, had become a professional gambler and naturally gravitated to the Alta Club Gambling House, where he became one of the managers. Mabel worked as a cook at the nearby Salt Lake Tennis Club. Things were finally going well for the Davis', who had lost their first-and-only child to diphtheria in 1904 when they still lived in Missouri.

Perhaps it had been the death of his son that prompted Charlie's move west. Of course, Mabel had been hearing about life in the Rockies since her half brother, Sylvester Marion Kelley--Dr. Kelley's son by Cordelia Howard--had moved to Moscow, Idaho in 1892. A few years later in 1895, Sylvester and his wife, Delilah, took up homesteading on land opened up on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in northern Idaho.

Sylvester's praise of Idaho soon lead his sisters, Mary Ladona Kelley, and Cordelia Christina Kelley, to move west. They came to Idaho with their husbands, two brothers named Skelton, in the 1890's. Thus, three of Dr. Kelley's five children from his second marriage had already left Missouri. Then his oldest daughter, Mabel, by Violet Elvira Weaver, headed for Utah. Dr. Kelley's family by his third-and-last wife was beginning to leave the nest.

The same type of letters that brought Mary and Cordelia west were now beckoning their half-sister Medora. Salt Lake City was a great place, Mabel said. "A smart man like Albert could really make something of himself here." The picture Mabel painted of the Mormon capitol finally looked so good that



STUCK ON THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY IN 1915. Many of the leaders in the movement for better roads could speak from personal experience. Henry B. Joy, president of the Lincoln Highway Association, and A. F. Bement, vice president, wished it made a transcontinental highway. On their way to the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco in 1915, they became marooned in this mud-hole on the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska. (BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

When Albert Shelton and Medora Kelley came west to Salt Lake City, they were wise to take the train. Scenes such as this were typical on the nations "highways" in 1913.

Earlier, in the 1890's, Sylvester Marion Kelley with Dililah Lough, Mary Ludona Kelley with Henry Skelton, and Cordelia Kelley with Elisha Hyde traveled at least part of the way from Missouri to Idaho by stagecoach or horse-drawn buggy. There were no automobiles to get stuck in the bad roads in those days.

Albert quit his job in Branson and took the train to Salt Lake City in January of 1913. And in no time, his brother-in-law Charlie got him a job at the Alta Club pumping the player piano.

Albert, who had grown up in rural Missouri, was fascinated with life in the relatively big city of Salt Lake. But like his wife, Medora, he had been raised in a very religious home, and he didn't quite know what to make of his new job. On the first day of work, people kept putting money in a glass bowl on the piano. Charlie smiled when Albert asked him what he was supposed to do with the money. "That's your tips," Charlie said, lighting up a cigar. Albert just laughed. Even at thirty-seven, he had a lot to learn.

Albert saved his money, and after about three month, he sent for Medora and the children, who arrived in April of 1913. But the Alta Club wasn't for Albert. He soon got another job for the railroad and then the Garfield Copper Smelter before finding permanent employment at the Utah Ice and Storage Company.

Medora (she later used "Dora") had planned well for the trip to Salt Lake. Since she didn't have enough money to eat in the dining car, she took a bushel basket of food along with her other belongings. The trip lasted four days and five nights because she bought the cheapest fare and had to change trains in major cities. And it wasn't an easy journey for another reason. Baby Alma had the whooping cough, Ernie had an abscess on his leg, and Kate was still getting over the mumps. (Ernie's abscess had been drained in Missouri.) Only twelve-year-old Earl was well.

Medora was somewhat fearful of moving across the country. Not only would a big city have saloons, gambling houses, and prostitution, there would be a strange dominant religion--one not unknown, however, since Dr. Kelley's grandfather had been a Mormon. Like her father, Medora considered Mormonism to be a non-Christian cult. And now they were heading for a big city where polygamy had been practiced until just recently and was still practiced secretly, it was said.*

Medora's seven-year-old Kathleen had also heard the stories. It was said that "Mormons had horns," and Kathleen couldn't wait to see them. When the train stopped in Salt Lake, Charlie was there to meet the family since Albert was at work. "Where are the Mormons!" Kathleen cried as she ran to her uncle. "I want to see their horns." "Shush," Charlie said, embarrassed at the loud question in public, "there are Mormons all around us and they don't have horns."

Later, Medora laughed at the funny incident that occurred in her first moments in Salt Lake City. But in her letters back home, she also had other things to tell. The train trip had introduced her to the modern world. She saw her first automobile up close, her first airplane, and also a "new race of

*Polygamy, or "plural marriage," as it was called by Mormons, was banned by the church in 1890. Its practice had held up statehood for Utah until 1896. The concept, though, was never repudiated by the L.D.S. Church; rather its practice was suspended.

There are today some 50,000 individuals living in polygamy in Utah. They are members of various groups that have broken away from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (L.D.S.).

people." Some men were working on the tracks, and Medora thought they were Indians. "No ma'am," the conductor said, "those men are Mexicans." "Well, I'll be," Medora sighed.

To Medora, who arrived in the west from the green woods of Missouri, Utah was indeed a strange and barren land. She didn't like the climate at first. "It never gets warm till the Fourth of July, and then its so hot you can't stand it," she wrote. But she had said good-bye to her old life, and it wasn't until 1930 and again in about 1947 that she returned for brief visits with relatives in Missouri and Oklahoma.*

Medora's new life in the West was full of hope. Her first child born outside Missouri was Mable Ruth Shelton (1914), named after her sister Mabel. Medora was well on her way to having

*Medora's sister, Katherine "Kate" Elvira Kelley, married Roy Stryker, and lived in Vinita, Oklahoma. They did well for themselves. Roy and Kate owned a furniture store, and Roy was elected mayor of Vinita in the 1930's.

*Medora also visited her half-sister, Rosa Leuna "Unie" Kelley, who married Noah Adams. Noah had been raised by Dr. Kelley and Elvira. He had come to the Kelley home as an orphan of fourteen. Noah's son, Ora Adams would later become a preacher for the Christian Church in Wichita, Kansas.

*Medora's half-brother John Hiram Kelley also lived in Missouri. Dr. Kelley probably moved from Eagle Rock in 1912 to be close to his son John in nearby Newton County. John had ten daughters, and they formed a singing group called "The Ten Kelley Sisters." They sang on the radio in the late 1920's and 30's, their voices raised in gospel hymns each Sunday on the Missouri airwaves. John only had one son--James E. Kelley.

that house full of kids Dr. Kelley had mentioned, but at least Albert had a good job. By 1915, he was working for the Utah Ice and Storage Company, and with Medora's encouragement, Albert had plans to improve himself. Medora sent for a set of books about refrigeration engineering, and since Albert was uneducated, she sat down and taught him out of the books until he could pass his tests. And at a time when a good job paid three dollars a day, Albert was making five at the ice plant.

But with these good events came bad news for Medora. In February of 1915, she received a letter that her mother had hanged herself. Violet Elvira Weaver, Dr. Kelley's third wife, was only fifty-six. After some thirty years in Eagle Rock, she and Dr. Kelley had moved to Neosho, Missouri in 1912. The move, the dreary weather of winter, and Elvira's fear of going blind had probably all contributed to her depression. Elvira had tended both Dr. Kelley's parents, who had gone blind in their old age. Also, Dr. Kelley was then, himself, an old man. He died at the age of seventy-six, just eleven months after the tragic death of his beloved Elvira.

Other bad news followed. In November of 1918, Medora's sister Grace Cardin Kelley died at the age of twenty-eight in the flower of youth. Pretty Gracie lived with her husband, Elmer Henson, in Commerce, Oklahoma when she was swept away in the Great Flu Epidemic of 1917-18. Medora rocked her infant daughter, Dorothy (born in February) as she wept for her sister.

Thus within five years of moving from Missouri, Medora lost her mother, her father, and then a sister. These events, of

course, hit all of the Kelley children hard. Mabel, who had moved back to Missouri for a time, had been the one to find her mother hanging from the banister in Dr. Kelley's home in Neosho.

Later a tragedy befell Mabel, herself. She and Charlie Davis separated, and when Charlie returned to ask Mabel to take him back, he became distraught at her refusal. He then walked into the bathroom, pulled out a pistol, and shot himself in the head. He died instantly.*

Dr. Kelley never lived to know about the tragedy in Mabel's life or the death of his daughter Gracie. When he and Elvira moved to Neosho in 1912, he was seventy-two. It was a time of reflection on a long and eventful life. Dr. Kelley missed his children, but he could never move far away. He loved Missouri. "This morning," he wrote, "as the beautiful sunshine has spread its glorious beams over hill and dell and making the birds sing their sweet songs, I am thinking of you all."†

Dr. Kelley remembered when he came to Missouri as a teenager in 1855. His father, Nathan Hiram Kelley, had been a farmer in Johnson County, Illinois in the far southern tip of that state near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

*It would be interesting to locate the death certificate for Charles Davis (1878?--1916?). He may have died in Missouri or Utah.

†From a letter dated January 15, 1912, Eagle Rock, Missouri, to Mary Ladona Skelton, who lived in Lookout, Idaho. Mary was Dr. Kelley's oldest child--the daughter of Cordelia Howard.

It was a place to meet and talk to a whole generation of people moving west in search of a better life. With the rising of the sap each spring, gentle zephyrs blew a message across the land--
"Go west, young man."

And at thirty-three, Nathan was still a young man. His wife, Caron, about whose birth there still lingers a mystery, was thirty-five. Dr. Kelley's parents had felt the pioneering spirit at an early age. Setting out from Robertson County, Tennessee in a horse-drawn wagon, they crossed through Kentucky and rode on up into southern Illinois. It was only a journey of a hundred-and-fifty miles, but it took a week. Caron and Hiram, still in their teens and unmarried, had traveled with their parents.* They were

*Speculation based on the following. Nathan and Caron were married as teenagers in Illinois, but were both born in Robertson County, Tennessee. Families often moved together in those days. There were only some 800,000 people in Tennessee in 1840 and less than 500,000 in Illinois. The financial panic of 1837 may have prompted the move. The nation was still in a depression in 1840 when Dr. Kelley was born.

Nathan's parents, Benjamin Franklin Kelley (1784-1850) and Nancy Yancy (17__-18__) were both born in Nashville--certainly not much more than a fort around 1790 when the first U.S. Census listed 35,000 whites in Tennessee. The "Volunteer State" was not admitted into the union until 1792. Thus, Benjamin and Nancy had lived at the edge of the frontier all their lives.

Benjamin's parents were Richard Kelley, who came from Ireland in 1773, and Maria Gibbs. Nancy's parents were Austin Yancy (Aug. 29, 1752--April 5, 1836) and Sarah Garrison (1756-18__). They were married on February 11, 1775, just five months before the American Revolution. They were from North Carolina, which may mean this branch of the Kelleys could go back another generation in America.

married as teenagers (Hiram, sixteen-and-a-half, and Caron just eighteen) in 1838 in Vienna, Johnson County, Illinois.

It was a time to challenge all Nathan's old ideas, even his religion. His father, Benjamin Franklin Kelley, had been outside working the field when a family pulled up in a wagon and asked directions to a Mormon settlement to the north. Benjamin let them water their horses, and they rested a couple days at his farm. In the evenings, they talked religion, and caught up in the zeal of a church that promised a Restoration of the Gospel on earth, Benjamin was converted. His whole family was baptized, and his son Nathan was married to Caron in a Mormon ceremony.*

Then came the rumors. Mormon officials were practicing polygamy. Could it be? Caron, whose background was the Christian Church, was uneasy. But when her first child, Christopher Greenup Kelley,⁺ was born on January 1, 1840, she marked the rumors off to the bad times. Illinois and the nation were in the

*This pure speculation accounts for the two marriage records (one in 1838, the other 1842) for Nathan and Caron. However, Benjamin was, in fact, converted to Mormonism in the late 1830's. See the account of the name "Caron" in another section of this book.

⁺I am assuming that at least one of Dr. Kelley's parents was a member of the Christian Church, founded incidentally in the same year as the Church of Christ (1830), which after a few years became known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (L.D.S. or Mormon Church). It is possible that Dr. Kelley became a minister in the Christian Church from contacts other than his parents.

In 1823, Alexander Campbell began publishing the Christian Baptist newspaper in Brush Run, Pennsylvania. Campbell strongly

grips of a depression. Northward, Mormons were fleeing mobs in Missouri, moving back across the Mississippi to found a new city called Nauvoo, some two-hundred-and-fifty miles upstate from

(note continued)

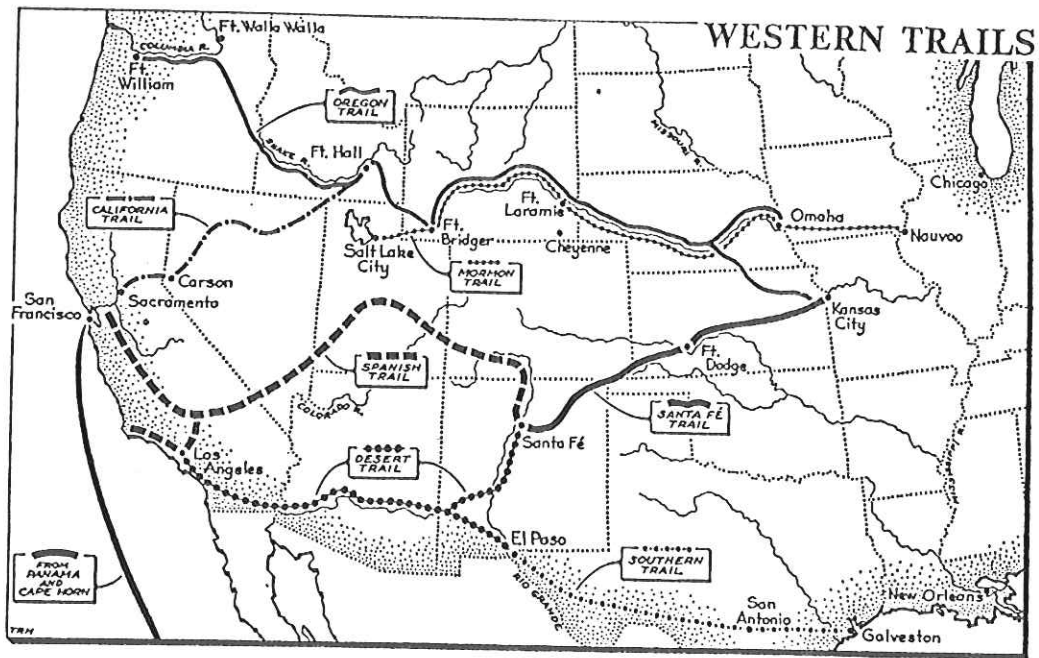
opposed infant baptism and held that baptism by immersion was the only correct form. The Campbellites, as they were known, gradually separated themselves from the Baptist Church, and out of their movement came the Christian Church.

Interestingly, Campbell had used the New Testament offices of apostle, elder, priest, deacon, teacher, and partriarch in his church. These titles came to Joseph Smith's young church via Sidney Rigdon, a famous Campbellite preacher. Rigdon converted to Mormonism in October of 1830 and took his whole congregation in Kirtland, Ohio with him. They had been practicing a form of New Testament communism, which under Joseph Smith became the "United Order."

Rigdon, a well-read preacher, may have further influenced Joseph Smith (age 25) by recommending two books. The first, A Dissertation on the Coincidence Between the Priesthoods of Jesus Christ and Melchisedec (Philadelphia, 1810) by James Gray provided the intellectual foundation for establishing another preisthood in Mormonism. The ~~S~~second, The Philosophy of A Future State (Brookfield, Massachusetts, 1830, 2nd edition), by Thomas Dick provided the "degrees of glory," "eternal progress," the planet of God, and "the celestial intelligences" common in Mormon theology. The Church of New Jerusalem had been teaching that marriage continued into heaven, and this idea came into the Mormon Church in the form of "marriage for time and eternity" in 1840.

The famous "Word of Wisdom" was an expression of popular ideas about health in the 1820's. In 1829, the Journal of Health came out against smoking and the drinking of coffee and tea. There were seventy-eight anti-drinking societies in New York alone by the time of the founding of the Mormon Church in 1830.

* All this is important background since Dr. Kelley's grandfather Benjamin was a Mormon, and Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Christian Church (1830), was the first prominent public figure to denounce the Book of Mormon as the work of Joseph Smith's imagination. In the name of Campbell's newspaper, The Millennial Harbinger, one finds a reflection of the times--the belief that the end of the world was very near, within twenty years or so. In 1831, William Miller, the founder of the Adventist movement, predicted the end of the world for 1842.



When Christopher G. Kelley was ten in 1850, the way west was by overland trails. The transcontinental railroad was nineteen years away.



MIGRANTS CROSSING THE PLAINS. Migrants on the Western trails traveled in canvas-covered wagons. Some of the heaviest wagons weighed from 3,000 to 7,000 pounds, and required the pulling service of ten or twelve horses or oxen. Smaller wagons of the type shown in the print weighed about 2,500 pounds. A wagon train of migrants operated under the direction of a captain who assigned each wagon a position. An average day's trip for a train was from fifteen to twenty miles. (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

the Kelley farm.

Still the rumors persisted, and Nathan asked his uncle Richard, who was "one of the leading members"* of the church in southern Illinois, if the stories were true. They were just anti-Mormon slander, he said. But the stories continued until a crisis developed in the family. Harsh words were exchanged. And like the religious climate of the state, there was no middle ground. Caron stamped her foot. She and Nathan must disassociate themselves from even the hint of these sinful relationships. She insisted they be remarried in a civil ceremony and the vow be public. With so many Mormon relatives, it was important that Nathan say he would cleave to no other woman "as long as you both may live."

Thus they were remarried in 1842, just twenty months before the flames of religious intolerance reached their peak with the murder of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith in 1844. By then, people on both sides had been burned out and murdered, the Mormons' great enemy ex-Governor Boggs shot dead a year earlier. In all this turmoil, Nathan and Caron clung to the Christian Church, while Nathan's father, Benjamin, remained a Mormon. This association with non-Mormons eventually led Christopher Greenup Kelley⁺ to become a minister in the Christian Church.

*Quote from History of the Church. See document in this book. These questions were often asked, so the speculation has a probable basis in reality.

⁺Dr. Kelley was probably named after both his uncle Christopher Kelley and Christopher Greenup, the third Governor of Kentucky in the 1790's. Governor Greenup was famous for his experience in Indian warfare.

The Mormon Kelleys, however, rejected polygamy and stayed in Illinois and Missouri when Brigham Young led the great exodus west to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. These Kelleys became members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Nevertheless, by 1855 the Mormon issue no longer filled the headlines, and Nathan and Caron had other problems. Their farm wasn't doing well, and Nathan had a family to consider. So at the age of thirty-three, he packed up his family, leaving hallowed ground.* It was a hard trip for Caron, then about to have her eighth and last child. Nathan and Caron's children were:

1. Christopher Greenup Kelley, born 1840, a year before the first emigrant wagon train left Independence, Missouri for California.
2. Parmelia Jane Kelley, born 1842, the year of the beginning of the settlement of Oregon via the Oregon Trail.
3. Orson Hiram Kelley, born 1844, the year Mormon Church founder and prophet Joseph Smith was murdered by a mob at Carthage, Illinois.
4. Nancy C. (?) (Caron?) Kelley, born 1846, the year the Mormons abandoned their great city of Nauvoo. It was also the year the Donner party passed through Salt Lake Valley and crossed the Nevada desert to meet disaster in the Sierra Mountains.

* Nathan's father, Benjamin Franklin Kelley, died in 1850 and was buried in Williamson County, just north of Johnson County, Illinois. Did Benjamin's wife, Nancy Yancy, go west with her son Nathan? She died in Kansas in 1859.

5. Margarett E. (?) Kelley, born 1848, the year after Brigham Young lead the Mormon Pioneers into the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847.
6. Henry Charles Kelley, born 1851, two years after the California gold rush.
7. Amanda M. Kelley, born 1853, the year after Harriet Beecher Stowe published her great anti-slavery novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin.
- *8. Rhoda A. Kelley, born 1855, four years before John Brown and his abolitionists seized the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The Civil War began in 1861.

The Kelley family traveled north out of southern Illinois and crossed the Mississippi by ferry to St. Louis, Missouri.⁺ From there they traveled by wagon about eighty miles west into Montgomery County. Had they traveled further north, they could have crossed the river from Rock Island, Illinois to Davenport, Iowa on the Mississippi's first bridge, just completed for the railroad in that year--1855.

Politically speaking, the Kelleys had moved from the pot into the fire. Armed clashes between pro-and-anti-slavery forces were occurring next door in Kansas, and Missouri was a divided state. When the Civil War came in 1861, Missouri was a slave

*Note: The years of birth are based on a list made by Dr. Kelley. A few are at odds with other information I have seen.

⁺A deduction based on the study of a map.

state that remained with the Union. Thus both sides had strong followings. President Lincoln even replaced the governor in an attempt to secure the state's position in the union.

Christopher, who had married at the young age of sixteen, left his wife, Kitty Noble, to join the Union forces, and though still in his early twenties, he rose to the rank of Captain in Company C of the enrolled Missouri Militia. He served from August 15, 1861 in four enlistments until the end of the war.* His brother and brother-in-law Henry Dell were in the same regiment and marched down into Arkansas to fight in the great battle at Pea Ridge, where the Union stopped a major Confederate advance.

The Civil War had just begun when Christopher's wife, Kittie, died in childbirth.⁺ This tragedy left a lasting impression on Christopher, who could do nothing as the baby had to be cut to pieces to be removed. But with the war consuming the nation, there was little time to think about the past. The young captain would behold many scenes as horrible as his wife's death. So much was being swept away forever.

In the midst of the war in 1862, Christopher married Cordelia Howard, originally from West Virginia. She and Christopher were both about twenty-two, and they were to have five children.

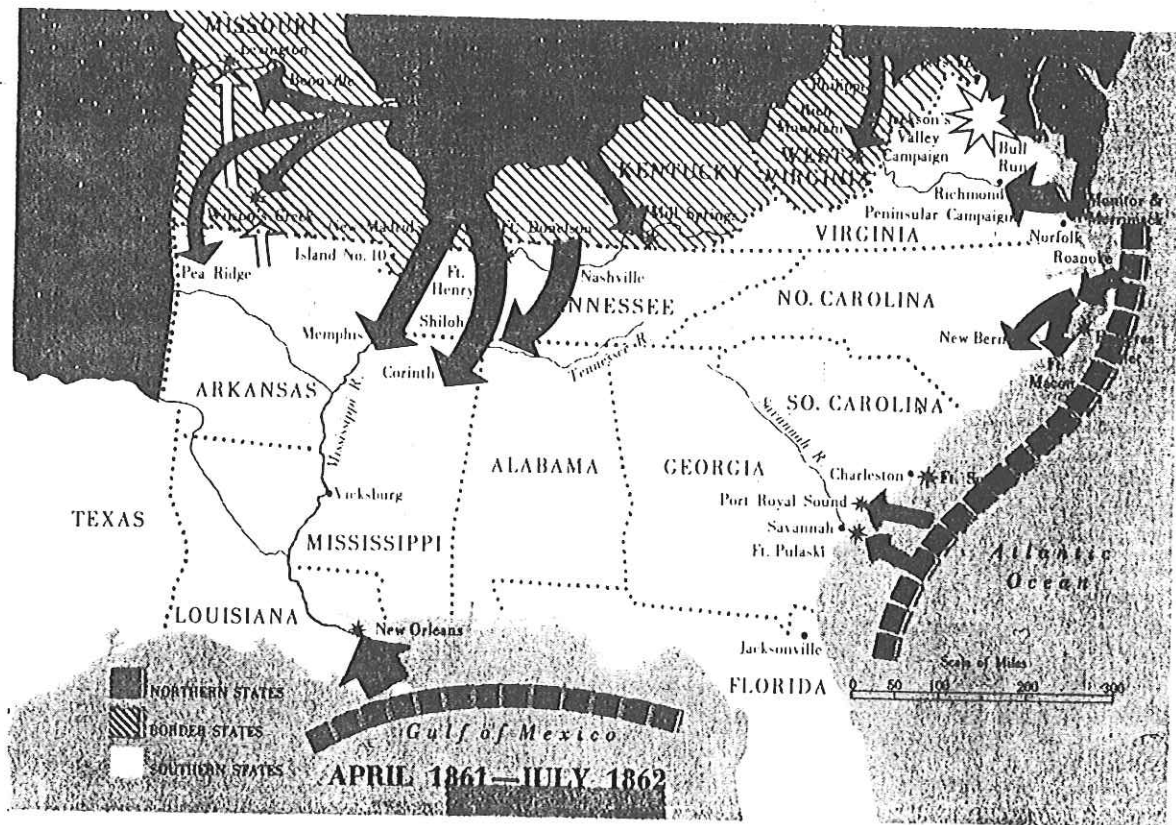
*Christopher wound up fighting for the Union even though his grandfather Benjamin Franklin Kelley (1784-1850) had been a slave overseer in Tennessee (?) or Illinois. See the notes by James Kelley (1987) on Dr. Kelley's four separate enlistments and discharges.

⁺Dr. Kelley married Kitty Noble in 1856, and she may have died only a couple years later in her first childbirth. That may have been before the Civil War in 1861.

1. Mary Ladona Kelley, born 1864, during the Civil War, the year before Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.
2. Sylvester Marion Kelley, born 1867, the year the United States purchased Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars.
3. Rosa Leuna Kelley, born 1870, the year after the golden spike was driven at Promontory, Utah to celebrate the completion of the transcontinental railroad.
4. Cordelia Christinia Kelley, born 1872, the year Congress founded the first national park, Yellowstone in Wyoming.
5. John Hiram Kelley, born 1875, the year of the first Kentucky Derby. A year later in 1876, General George Armstrong Custer and 264 troopers were killed by the Souix at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone in 1876.

Christopher and Cordelia were married at the home of Cordelia's parents in Lincoln County, Missouri,* although they settled in neighboring Montgomery County, where Christopher and Kitty had lived. But with the end of the war, Christopher decided to start a new life in a new place with his wife and baby, Mary. He remembered his march far to the south into

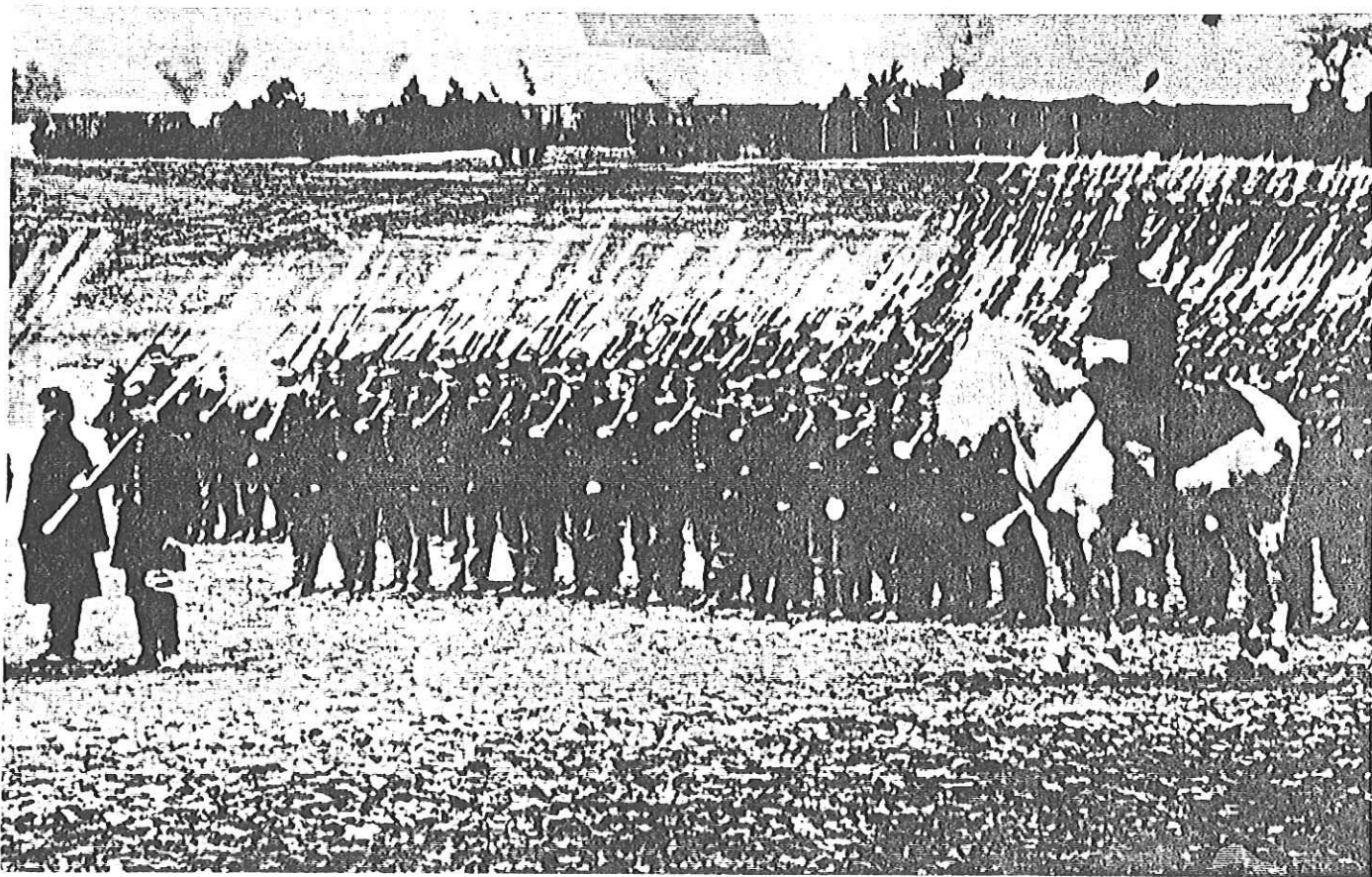
*This guess was confirmed after I wrote this history. Dr. Kelley (see document) said, "We were married at her father's house on October the 6th, 1862."



"I served three months," Dr. Kelley wrote, "in the 5th Regular Missouri Volunteers as a private in Company C, and then I was elected Captian of Company C, 67th Regiment of the Enrolled Missouri Militia, which position I held till the close of the Rebellion."

Capt. Kelley probably marched across Missouri according the battle lines drawn here. He lived in Montgomery County, about 75 miles west and a little north of St. Louis.

As a boarder state and a slave state that stayed with the Union, Missouri was never a safe place during the "War of Rebellion."



As a captain in his company and a drill master of his regiment, Christopher G. Kelley probably stood in the position of the man next to flag carrier (far left). This photograph shows members of the 2nd Rhode Island infantry with their bayonets flashing in the sun. The regimental commander is on horseback.

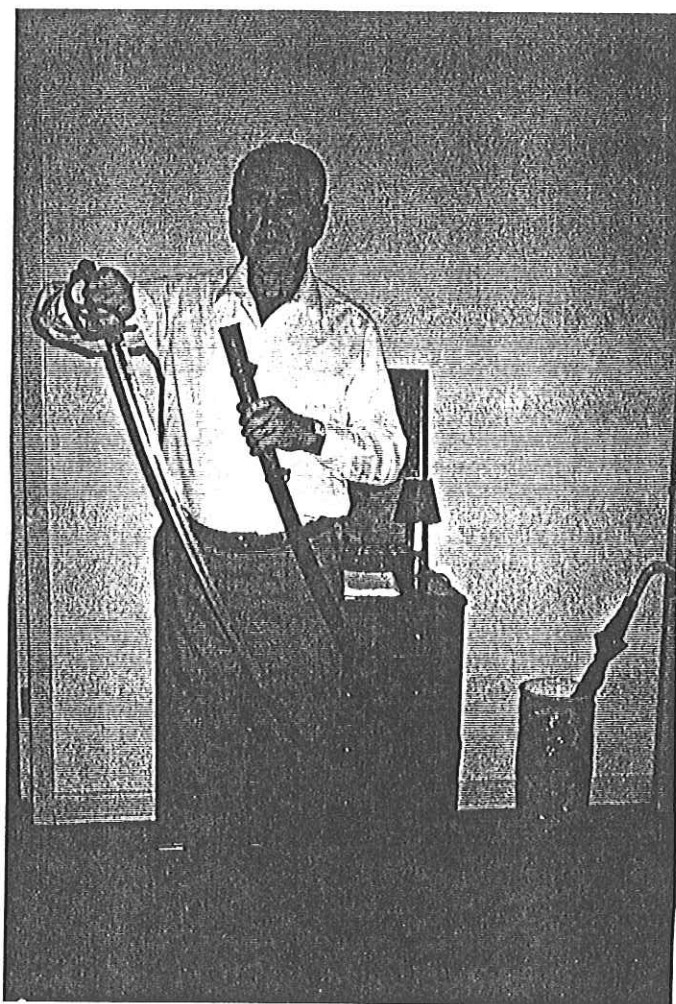
Christopher, then in his early twenties, was popular enough with the men and officers to be elected as captain of his company. Later Dr. Kelley referred to the Civil War as the "Rebellion." More Americans were killed in the Civil War than in any other war.



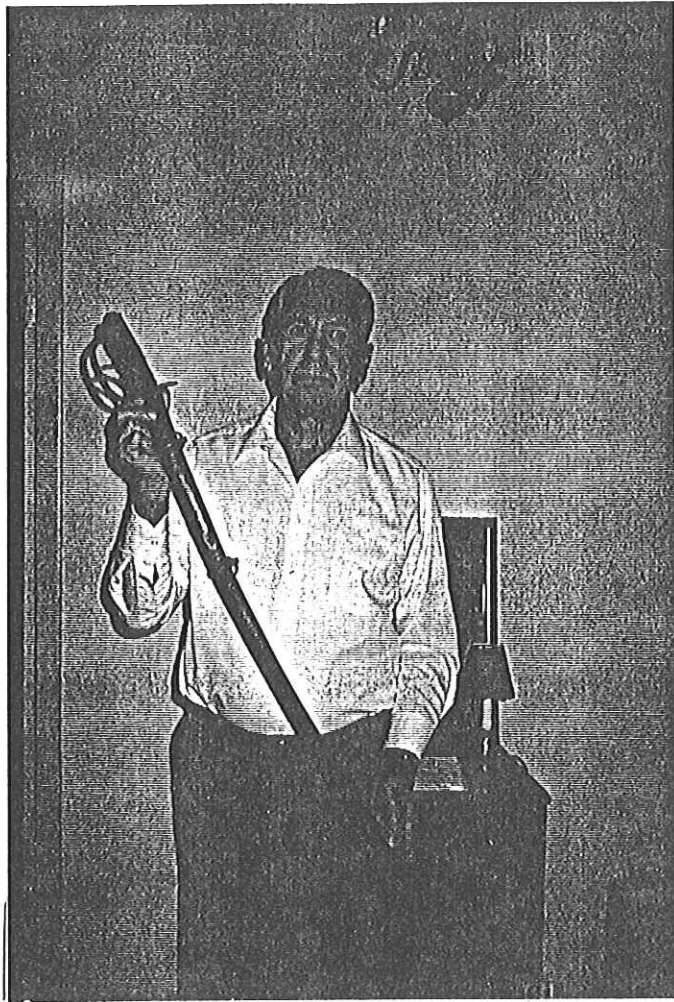
Capt. Christopher G. Kelley saw many scenes such as the one above. Wounded men are resting at a Union hospital at Fredericksburg. The high incidence of amputees shown here was typical since little was known about sterilization and anti-biotics did not exist.

The death of his wife, Kitty, and the suffering he witnessed during the Civil War, eventually led Christopher Kelley to become Dr. Kelley.

*Photo copied from magazine owned by Roger Carrier.



James E. Kelley of Huntsville, Alabama holding the sword carried by Christopher G. Kelley in the Civil War. Christopher gave the sword to his son John, who passed it down to his son, James.



James Kelley in a photo taken in 1986. Now that Dr. Kelley's sword and flag have been found, there remains one major mystery-- the whereabouts of Dr. Kelley's medical certificate.



Captain Christopher G. Kelley: Then a man in his early twenties, he is holding a rifle with a bayonet, and tucked in his belt is a pistol. The belt has a large buckle. Captain Kelley is wearing a cape over his uniform. The locket photo has been added by the author.



Above: William Marion Kelley with the American flag that Christopher Greenup Kelley (1840-1916) carried during the Civil War. Also in the glass-covered box is a metal spear point for the flagstaff. William Kelley was 83 years old when this picture was taken in 1983. William is the son of Sylvester Marion Kelley (1867-1954), who was the son of Christopher Greenup Kelley.

In 1983 when I visited William, he lived at 1910--11th Avenue, Lewiston, Idaho. He planned to give the flag to his son, a pharmacist.

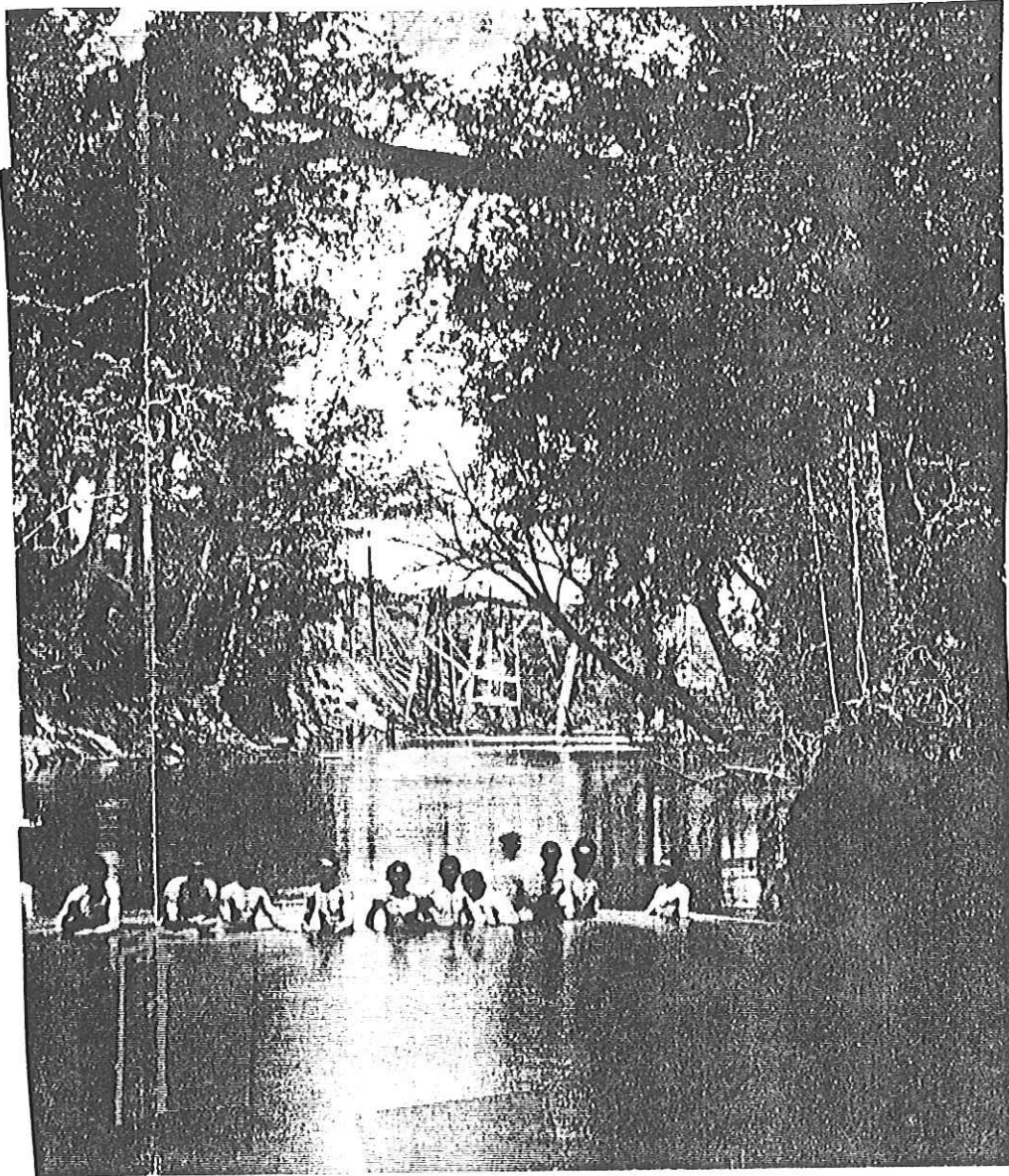
western Missouri. He had passed through beautiful Barry County just to the north of Pea Ridge, Arkansas. So many men had died there; yet the countryside was rich and green and full of wild-life. Yes, Kitty would have wanted him to move. He laid some flowers on her grave and that of his first child, then got into the wagon and tapped the reins. A mourning dove cooed.

Christopher, Cordelia, and little Mary slept in their wagon under the stars on their two-hundred-mile journey south and west. The dirt roads were worse in some places than others. When the family arrived in Barry Country, Christopher got a job as a carpenter and then a wagon maker. But his real interest was in medicine. The death of his first wife and the war had left him with a strong desire to become a doctor.

The future Dr. Kelley worked hard at his trade during the 1870's, providing for his young family of two boys and three girls. Then in 1877, his sweet Cordelia died in childbirth.*

Christopher did his best to care for his little ones and make a living, but it was a lonely time. What life have in store for him? He missed his dear wife. Then one day he decided to visit some relatives in Council Grove, Kansas. His grandmother, Nancy Yancy, had died there in 1859. First, though, he and the children rode the wagon over the border into Benton County, Arkansas to visit his mother and father. Nathan and Caron, then about sixty, had a farm in Rollens Ridge. They were

*Two years or less had passed since John was born, and considering the spacing of the children, Cordelia was probably pregnant in 1877, the year of her death.



Federal troops swim in the North Anna River in Virginia, probably just a short time after the battle which raged along its banks in May of 1864. Some soldier-fishermen are visible on shore at left. Others can be seen under the bridge.

Capt. Kelley, a drill master for his regiment, probably saw similar scenes long the Roaring River in his march to the Battle of Pea Ridge. He probably went for a swim himself.

doing fine except for Caron's "sore eyes."*

The two-hundred-mile trip from Arkansas to Council Grove, Kansas took several days. Perhaps a relative had plotted it all to play matchmaker. Nevertheless, Christopher soon met Violet Elvira Weaver, daughter of John Newton Weaver and Violet Louiza Pringle.⁺ John, a farmer, had fought for the Union in the War of Rebellion. His daughter Elvira, one of twelve children, had been born in Pocahontas at Randolph County, Arkansas in 1859.

⁺Both Nathan and Caron went blind (from cataracts?) in their old age. Caron is listed in the 1880 Census of Rollens Ridge as having "sore eyes." Nathan was "well." Interestingly, that census lists the birthplace of Nathan's parents as "Va" (Virginia), not Tennessee as other information on Benjamin Franklin Kelley indicates. However, the birthplace of Caron's parents is left blank--an evidence in support of the "doorstep" story.

⁺Elvira's grandfather was born in "Germ" (Germany), according to the 1880 Census of Kansas. The dash in the column for the birthplace of her grandmother probably indicates she was also born in Germany. They were the parents of Violet Louiza Pringle. John Weaver's parents were born in "Tenn" (Tennessee).

Thus, the descendants of Dr. Kelley and Violet Elvira Weaver would have to go back to roughly 1820 to find an immigrant. We grew up with the United States as Americans, and our oldest known ancestor, Richard Kelley, came to America in 1773--three years before the Revolution. It is not known if Richard met his wife, Maria Gibbs, in Ireland or America.

It would be interesting to trace the Weavers back to Germany. The name "Von Pringle," as my grandmother said it was before being changed to "Pringle," should appear on the passenger list of some ship arriving in Boston or New York between 1810 and 1830.

Christopher, then a mature man of thirty-eight, realized his life could begin again with pretty Violet, whose red hair caught the light of the fall sun. They were married on November 4, 1879 in Council Grove. At only twenty-two, Violet was quite a young woman to have suddenly thrust upon her the care of five children--Mary (age 15), Sylvester (age 12), Rosa (age 10), Cordelia (age 7), and John (age 5). The big job of child rearing was compounded by the fact she became pregnant right away. So with winter fast approaching, the newly married couple and their children returned to Missouri.

The Kelleys lived in Lawrence County for several months, then moved down into neighboring Barry County, where Daisy "Mabel" was born on July 28, 1880. Christopher continued to make wagons, but soon set his sights on his life-long dream. And by 1887, he found himself listed in the Medical and Surgical Directory of the United States as "Rev. C. G. Kelley." Not only had he become a doctor, he was also an ordained minister in the Christian Church.*

Dr. Kelley and Elvira Weaver made their home in Eagle Rock, a small hamlet divided by the Roaring River. They raised a fine family of sixteen children. Five children were from Dr. Kelley's

*Is it possible that Dr. Kelley received his medical training at a school connected with the Christian Church. Kathleen Shelton, a daughter of Medora Kelley, remembered that Dr. Kelley had a medical certificate on his office wall. He may have gained some experience in medicine during the Civil War.

Where is the certificate today? And what was the extent of Dr. Kelley's formal training? He did have instruments to perform surgery.

marriage to Cordelia Howard, and nine, who lived to maturity, of of their own children. In addition, they raised an orphan boy named Noah Adams. Elvira worked long hours each day to manage the big bustling household. Her own children were:

1. Daisy Mabel Kelley, born 1880, a year before President James A. Garfield was shot in Washington.
2. Medora "Dora" Alice Kelley, born 1882, a year Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust became the world's first industrial monopoly.
3. Vesta Pearl Kelley, born 1884, a year after the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, and a year before the British General Gordon was killed at Khartoum in the Sudan.
4. Katherine Elvira Kelley, born 1886, the year the Statue of Liberty was dedicated. It was also the year Geronimo, the Apache Indian chief, surrendered.
- 5-6. Nanetta (Nancy) and Rozetta, twin girls born in 1888. They died at birth.
7. Grace Cardin Kelley, born 1889, a year before Sitting Bull was killed in a Sioux uprising.
8. Joseph Benjamin Kelley, born 1892, the year the Diesel engine was patented--also the year of a violent labor strike at the Carnegie steel mill in Homestead, Pennsylvania.
9. Nanetta (Nancy) Rozetta Kelley, born 1894, the year the Sino-Japanese War began--also the year Thomas Edison's motion pictures were first shown in public.

10. William Orson Kelley, born 1896, the year William Jennings Bryan delivered his famous "Cross of Gold" speech at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.
11. Christopher Cornelius Kelley, born 1899, the year the Boar War began in South Africa, and the year the United States declared the "Open Door Policy" toward China.
12. Leonard Kelley, died at birth in 1901, the same year President McKinley was shot and Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as his successor.

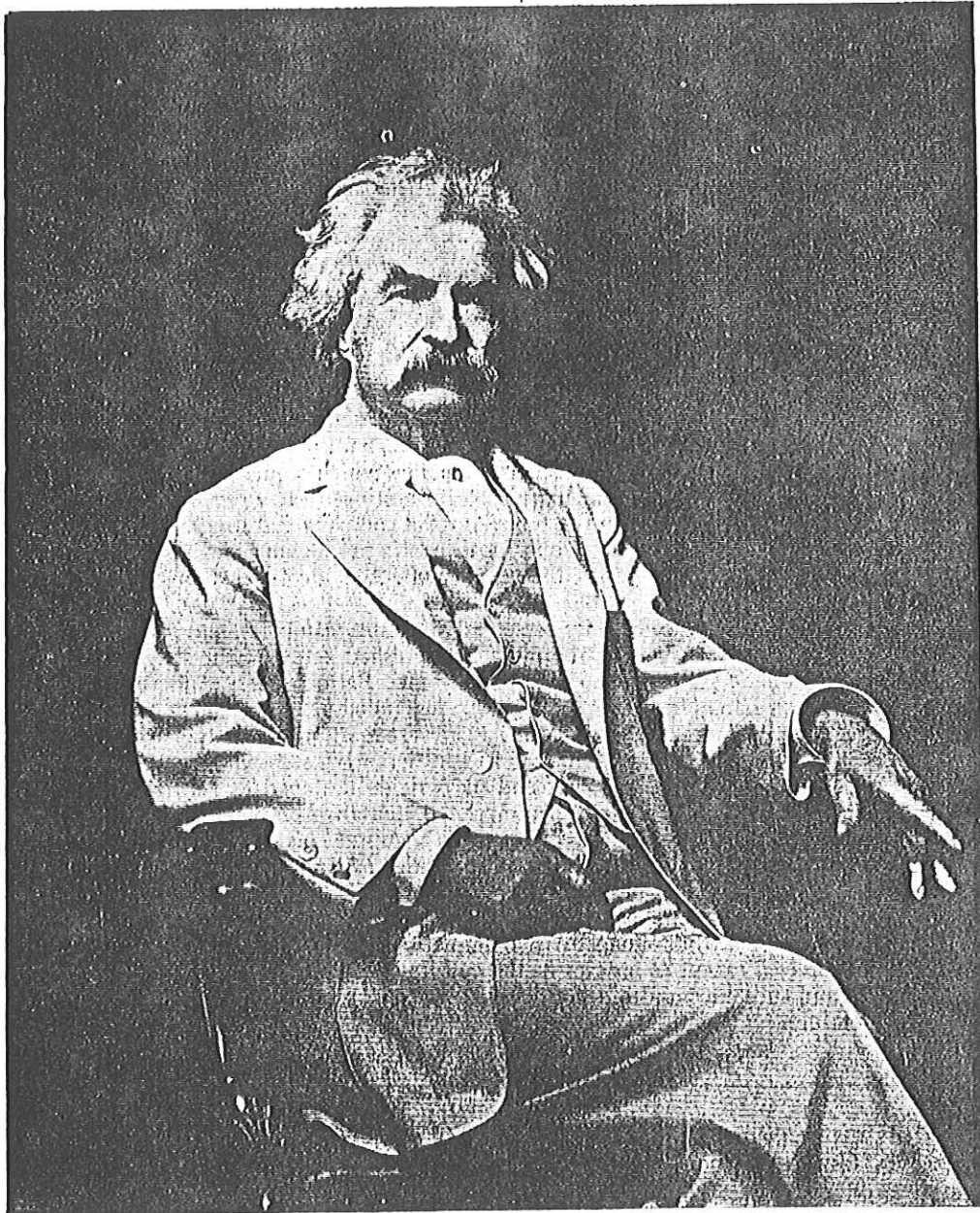
Although they lived in rural Missouri in more of a hamlet than a town, Dr. Kelley and Elvira saw to it that their children had good educations. The girls learned to play the piano, and at least one, Daisy Mabel, learned to play the violin. And Katherine Elvira, "Kate," became a school teacher for while. Because of Dr. Kelley's travels to tend the sick, the family was well known in Barry County. They were considered well-to-do for the area and time.

Dr. Kelley did, of course, have some problems. In the early 1890's, a great fire in Washington D.C. destroyed most of the 1890 Census along with many Civil War records as well. Later, Congress authorized pensions for Union veterans of the Civil War, and Dr. Kelley made out an application. But when he opened the reply, his anger flared. His application had been rejected!

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS		
1870-1910		
	1870	1910
Number of pupils enrolled in public schools of all types	6,871,520	17,813,850
Total expenditures on education	\$63,000,000	\$214,000,000
Annual per-capita expenditure for education	\$1.64	\$4.64
Average number of days in school session	132	157
Average per person years of education	4	6
Rate of literacy	80%	94%

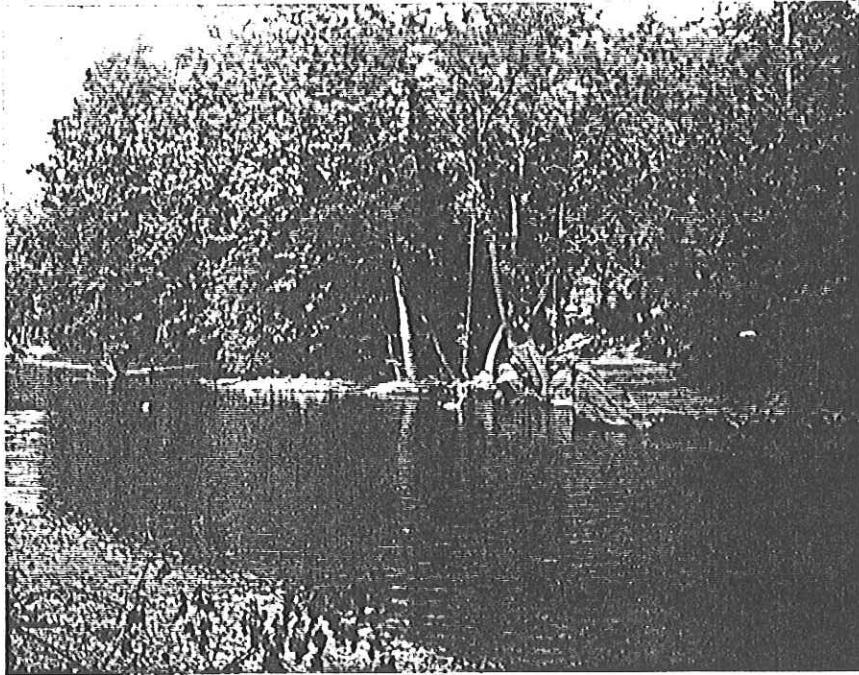
There were some 67 public schools and two high schools in Barry County, Missouri when Dr. Kelley began raising his second family in 1880. Dr. Kelley, who only "received a common schools education," knew the value of education. According to Dora Kelley, her father strongly supported public education, and it was through efforts of citizens like him that America laid the foundation of modern society.

*The quote is from the family-history form completed by Dr. Kelley in 1905. See document.



MARK TWAIN. William Dean Howells called Twain "the Lincoln of our Literature." Other critics have said that he was primarily a story-teller who failed to become a great artist. He made more money from his books than any of the earlier writers, but he spent heavily, invested unwisely, and ended up in debt. After paying off his obligations, he entrusted his financial affairs to a friend, H. H. Rogers of the Standard Oil Company. In his later years he always wore a white suit. (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

Mark Twain (1835-1910). When the Kelleys were living in Eagle Rock, Missouri, they probably heard of two new best selling books--Tom Sawyer (1876) and Huckleberry Finn (1884). The area around Eagle Rock eventually became part of the Mark Twain National Forest.

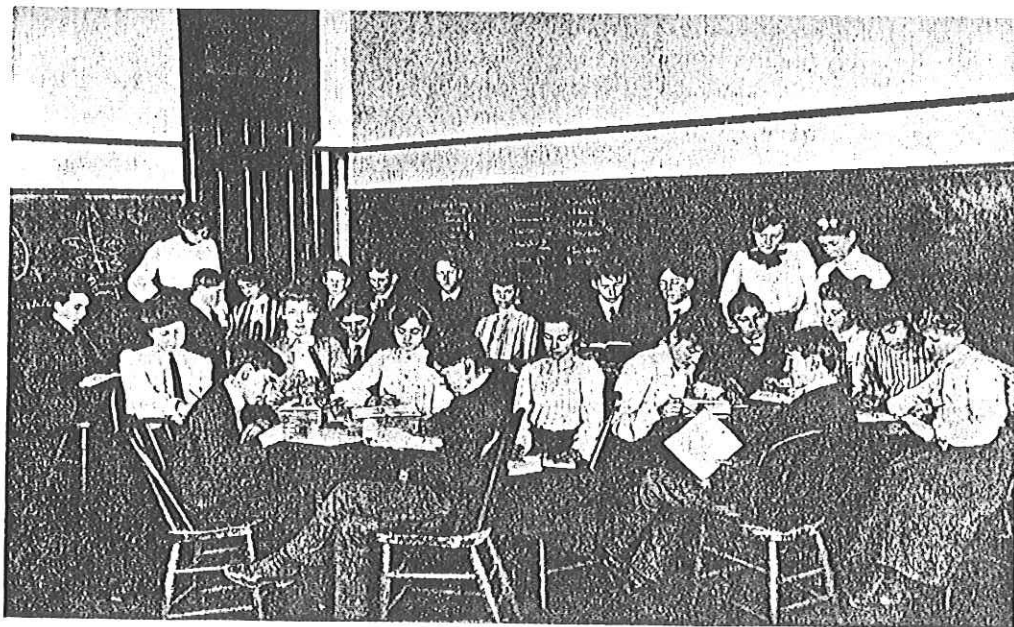


The Roaring River flows through the middle of the small town of Eagle Rock, population now less than 200. The name of the river derives from the noise made as it bubbles up out of the huge spring some ten miles away. The noise is now gone but the name remains.

The clear water of this swimming hole must have been the scene of many good times for the children of Dr. Kelley and Elvira Weaver.



CHANGES IN EDUCATION. By 1900 there was a trend, in the larger towns and cities, toward the kind of education represented by the high-school botany class pictured below. Many country schools, however, were still quite similar to those that had existed a century earlier. In these institutions pupils of all ages and grades studied and recited together under the direction of a single teacher. The rural schoolground generally lacked play equipment. Recreations were simple and unsupervised, as shown in Winslow Homer's 1872 painting, "Snap the Whip" (above). As a rule, Homer chose his subjects from the world of nature rather than the world of man. He excelled at watercolors and paintings of the sea and the woods, which were popular with his middle-class contemporaries. (THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY)



Dr. Kelley had been a victim of the fine print in the law. Some units of the Missouri militia were not eligible for pensions because they had served the State rather than the Federal Government. Aware of this restriction, the former Capt. Kelley fired off a letter to explain that he had only served a short time with those units. The reply was disappointing. His records could not be found. Fortunately, the law was changed several years later, and Dr. Kelley received his pension for service in the Army of the Republic.*

By 1904, Dr. Kelley was well enough known to be drawn into politics. He ran as a Republican for the Missouri State Legislature and was elected to represent Barry County (13th District). Violet beamed with pride as plans were made for a trip to Washington D.C. to attend the Presidential Inauguration Ball for "Teddy" Roosevelt as part of the Republican victory celebration. Although Violet didn't make the trip, her husband and daughter Mabel traveled by train to Washington, where Mabel played the violin

*Since there was no Social Security or Welfare System in those days, a pension was important for a man nearing sixty. Many old people simply wound up in the county "Poor House." In fact, Dr. Kelley had saved his own parents from that fate by taking them from Arkansas to Eagle Rock to live with him until they died! (Hiram died at age 77 in 1899, and Caron at age 88 in 1907.) Even a fairly well-to-do man could watch his money dwindle away in his old age.

Dr. Kelley is listed in the 1910 Census as having a pension.

at the ball.*

All this was history, a reflection on a long and eventful life, as Dr. Kelley sat on his porch in Neosho, Missouri. He had just moved there from Eagle Rock in 1912. He thought about his new granddaughter, Alma Shelton. Medora's children, Earl, Ernest, and Kathleen had all been baptized, but he hadn't had a chance to bless Alma before Medora and Albert moved to Salt Lake City. Dr. Kelley had been upset and said, "I should have taken care of that right away." He would write a letter, he thought, and remind Medora to have it done.

The news was full of the great event of the day--the completion of the Panama Canal. Dr. Kelley smiled as he watched the fire flies in the dark. He had seen so much--the frontier times, the Civil War, the railroads, airplanes, and now this. At his side on the porch swing sat Elvira, whose hair was still red at fifty-five. Earlier in the day she had been going through a box of old photographs, and she mentioned their children and how they were doing in the far reaches of the country.

"You know, I wish we'd been smiling in that picture of our

*I assume that Dr. Kelley went with his daughter. However, if she played the violin at Roosevelt's 1904 ball, Mabel would have been twenty-four and married. Did she go with her husband, Charlie Davis, and leave her little boy, Aaron, home? Even if the story refers to President McKinley's Inauguration in 1900, Mabel would have been married with an infant son. She was then twenty.

It is possible the story refers to McKinley's first inauguration in January of 1896. Mabel would have been fifteen-and-a half at that time. I wonder? As a Republican, Dr. Kelley would certainly have voted for McKinley. Examine the photograph.

house in Eagle Rock. The girls would have looked so much prettier."

"Oh, you all looked just fine," Dr. Kelley chuckled.

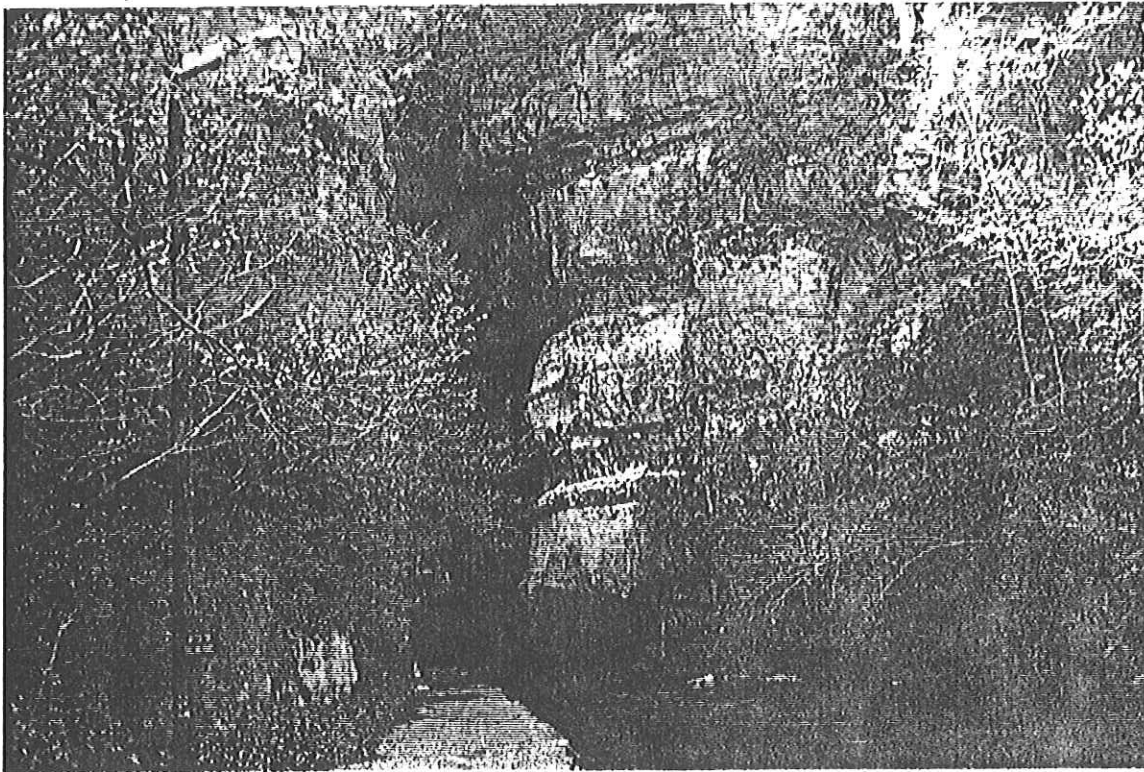
Elvira touched her soft hair. "Yeah, Pa, those were sure good days."

"Yep, they sure were." Dr. Kelley remembered a picnic one spring day at the headwaters of the Roaring River. The whole family had been there. It was such a pleasant time--the green hills, the river bubbling up out of the grotto, the blue sky, the games the kids played. The women had outdone themselves with the food.

"Pa, you ever wonder if somebody'll ever write about those days. You know, us and the family?"

"Who knows," Dr. Kelley smiled,

-End-



The Roaring River bubbles up from a large spring in this grotto. The water is clear, and the river is home to lots of trout. There is a path that leads into the grotto, and there are paths on the hill and clift above.

Earlene Mitchell and Roger Carrier visited this beautiful place in 1986. The photo is from a visit by James Kelley in April of 1987.