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Early History of School Bands in Western Colorado:  
The Legacy of Cleon Dalby

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COLORADO

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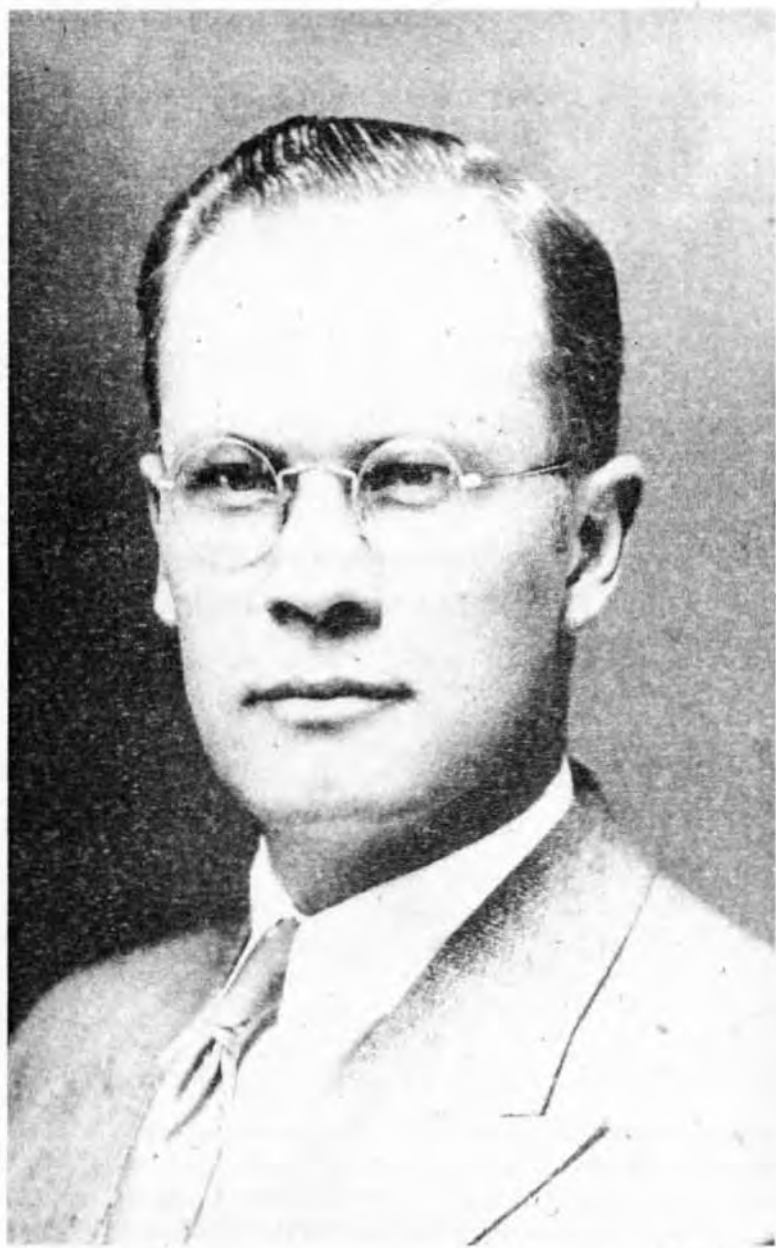
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*Cleon E. Dalby*

(Photo courtesy of Max Dalby.)

**Early History of School Bands in Western Colorado:  
The Legacy of Cleon Dalby**  
by Max F. Dalby

Editor's note: This article is a personal remembrance in honor of a dedicated music teacher who left a lasting impression on the Grand Valley. Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not those of the staff of the *Journal of the Western Slope*.

This is the story of a music-loving man who dreamed of being a cornet soloist with the John Philip Sousa Band. However, through financial necessity he came to the Grand Valley where he carved out an unusual professional life, developing a highly successful career without adequate academic qualifications and discovering through trial-and-error effective ways to achieve his goals. He was often at odds with authority figures who disapproved of his methods, and was never appointed to the position he wanted most. Nevertheless, he always moved forward, selflessly shaping the musical experiences of his young pupils. He found his unique gift early, and it defined his life: the ability to teach high-level musical performance skills in school band rehearsals and fostering a commitment to excellence in his students during private lessons. The affection of hundreds of pupils and their lifelong love of music is the heart of his legacy, which extends to western Colorado bands of today. This man was my father, Cleon Ezra Dalby.

Dad was a faithful diarist and daily recorded his teaching activities and those of his private life. His sixty diaries are the primary source of information for this history, which I, Max Dalby, inherited in 1978 when he died at the age of eighty-three in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Additional materials used include programs and copies of various articles published in *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, *The Palisade Tribune*, and *The Delta Independent*.

From 1926-1936 Cleon Dalby organized and conducted six school bands in western Colorado: Delta, Palisade, Fruitvale, Grand Valley, Collbran, and Clifton. He also directed the Mt. Lincoln school band (located between Palisade and Clifton) for two years and developed a band class that enjoyed a brief life in Grand Junction's Hawthorne School. In addition, he taught many students privately from music programs in Grand Junction, Fruita, Appleton, and DeBeque. After moving to Denver in the summer of 1936, Dad organized Aurora's first school band. All of these groups are flourishing today, some under different names: Fruitvale and Clifton have become unified as Central High School; Collbran has become Plateau Valley; Fruita has become Fruita Monument; and Grand Valley has become Parachute. Palisade High School has absorbed Mt. Lincoln and, as with Delta, retains its original name.

Cleon Ezra Dalby was born in Levan, Utah in 1894, but grew up in Rexburg, Idaho, where his father, Ezra Cleon Dalby, was Principal of Ricks Academy, a Latter Day Saints School. Dad began his cornet studies in 1906 with the local band leader as his teacher. Soon he was "solo" cornet and began playing for dances at church, school, and community affairs. This was the period when Sousa's "Washington Post March" was a favorite two-step. In 1913 Dad enrolled as a freshman at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, where he played in the school's twenty-one piece band. This was his only college training in music, although during the summer of 1914 he attended music classes at the University of California, Berkeley. At the end of the summer Dad returned to Idaho and signed a contract to teach at Teton High School in Driggs after receiving his Idaho State Teaching Authorization. He took responsibility for the high school band after its former director resigned during the first term.

In 1915 Dad's father leased the local movie theater and employed Dad and his brother, Lisle, to run the projector. Ethelwynne Griggs, seventeen-year-old daughter of Maude Pratt and James Griggs, played piano in the theater to accompany the silent movies of the period. This was an ideal environment for love to develop. Cleon and Ethelwynne were married in October of 1917. In August of 1918 Dad was drafted into the Army. The Armistice was signed while he was on a transport ship in Newport News, Virginia, waiting to embark for France. He returned to Driggs after being discharged from the Army in January of



1919. Dad finished the school year teaching in Darby, a village three miles southwest of Driggs, riding a horse to and from the school each day.

During the summer of 1919, Dad was contacted by Utah officials and offered a position at the Utah State Industrial School (SIS) in Ogden, Utah, to organize a boys' band. He accepted this opportunity and moved his family. After its first year of organization, the SIS band played for many dances and patriotic functions in the Ogden area. Two graduates of the school achieved notable recognition: Ed Patterson became a tubist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, and Herbert Krause, a.k.a. "Spud Murphy," was one of the popular dance band music arrangers of the late thirties.

In December of 1920, Dad began cornet study with Hyrum Lammers, an Ogden native and former trombonist with Sousa's Band. From Lammers, Dad learned practice discipline, effective rehearsal procedures, and the proper interpretation of traditional band music. In 1923 Hyrum founded the Lammers's Band School, and Dad left his position at the Industrial School to join "Hy" Lammers's teaching staff.

Discouraged with the dimming prospects of the Band School enterprise, Dad moved with his wife and two sons, John Philip and Max Foreman (myself), to Victor, Idaho, a small town south of Driggs. He had been employed to teach seventh and eighth grades in the local school. During his one year in Victor he organized another school band. In January of 1925 the family was completed with the birth of another son, Glen Allan. The three sons later became members of the Palisade Band, and all followed in their parents' musical footsteps.

We moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, in the summer of 1925 where Dad joined his father-in-law in a music store venture located in suburban Sugarhouse. The Dalby-Griggs Music Store opened its doors in the fall of the year. One of Dad's first activities was to organize a community band which held weekly rehearsals in the store. This project was only marginally supported by local businessmen, which made the band's future doubtful.

In the same year, Dad's former employer, Lammers, became director of the Ogden High School Band. The 1926 High School Band Contest was held in Fostoria, Ohio, and Lammers's Ogden ROTC Band of fifty-six young men won third place in the Class A division. This brought Hy special recognition, and he was elected president of The National School Band Association at the contest site.



*Cleon Dalby and sons, left to right,  
Glen Allan, Max Foreman, John Philip*

(Photo courtesy of Max Dalby.)

The Dalby-Griggs enterprise was failing by August of 1926 when Dad received a telegram from Audrie Stong, Director of the Grand Junction, Colorado, High School Band. The telegram informed him that Lammers, who had been engaged to teach a two week class for brass instrument players in Grand Junction, had become ill early in his work. He had recommended Dad to complete his obligation. Dad was promised twenty students and, desperately needing money, left immediately on the train to Colorado to take over Lammers's class. As it turned out, the financial rewards promised were optimistic, but more importantly a professional connection had been made.

After finishing his commitment in Grand Junction, Dad returned to Salt Lake City to resume his obligation in the music store business and as cornet soloist with the Salt Lake Municipal Band. A few weeks later another telegram arrived from Audrie with news that a recent attempt to form a band at Delta High School had been a failure. Consequently, the band director position was open and Audrie, armed with his considerable influence in the musical affairs of the area, had recommended Cleon to fill the vacancy.

After being interviewed for the job, Dad was employed at fifty dollars per month. His agreement with school officials specified that he spend all day Monday, and Tuesday mornings working with the Delta band and its members. This meant staying overnight in Delta. During the remainder of the week, he was expected to teach members of Grand Junction's school band program. He traveled between Grand Junction and Delta by bus, train, or the occasional private auto. His private studio was in the store leased and managed by G.W. Stong, Audrie's father. Delta school officials authorized Dad to order instruments needed for the band, and *The Delta Independent* announced a "New High School Band soon to be organized." As Dad's teaching progressed in the fall of 1926, money became available to enable his family in Utah to join him in Grand Junction. A suitable house was found at 115 Grand Avenue, and on October 13 we arrived in Colorado where John Philip and I found ourselves enrolled in Hawthorne School, in the second and first grades, respectively.

During the next few weeks Dad appeared as cornet soloist with the Grand Junction Municipal Band, and later with the Civic Orchestra. He was also soloist with the High School Band. Open air concerts were held in Lincoln Park, and in the next four years Dad continued to play at many local functions. He also performed with pit orchestras, both at the

Majestic (Mesa) and Avalon Theatres for such silent classics as *Ben Hur*, *What Price Glory*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and *Wings*. He was eventually offered, and accepted, the position of City Band Director.

Among Dad's private cornet students at the time was Charles Nicholls, who later organized the Fruita High School Band. Nicholls's assistant was Blen Wilson, clarinet and saxophone teacher, who also taught privately with my father in Grand Junction, Delta, and eventually Palisade.

It should be noted that the "town band" tradition was alive and well at the end of the nineteenth century when most Western Slope communities were settled. The Grand Junction Municipal Band was probably the oldest of these organizations. Palisade also had such a group whose performances were recognized in *The Palisade Tribune* at least as early as 1903. This band played community concerts until 1925. Montrose also had a local band, which was conducted in the late twenties by Loyde Hillyer, the local high school band director. Dad served as guest conductor of this Montrose civic band twice during one of our years in Colorado. Loyde's brother was Grand Junction's Carl Hillyer, pianist, music theory teacher, and orchestra director at fledgling Mesa College.

The school band movement had developed out of the town band heritage and gained considerable impetus in the 1920s as parents searched for ways to give young people wholesome activities and a sense of cultural purpose. There was also a strong sentiment for team sports' rivalry among schools of the time, which expanded into school music activities. Dad's journal suggests that Grand Junction's band, as well as other Colorado school bands, were extremely competitive in the early days of their history.

At this time problems began to develop with Dad's new professional career. Progress with Delta band students was slow, and there were serious disagreements with school administrators, who were less than pleased at having an itinerant band director who was not available during three days of the school week. There was also resentment when Dad scheduled occasional Sunday evening rehearsals. Further, Dad was permitted to teach private students on school time, a policy to be allowed later in his other band organization plans. Needless to say, this was not popular with teachers of regularly scheduled classes. School officials, however, seemed to realize that adequate individual instruction could not be obtained during band rehearsals, and that the extra money would

be an attraction to a competent band director. Dad obtained his Colorado Teaching Certificate by periodic travel to Denver where he took examinations at the State Office of Education.

According to Dad's diary, Grand Junction hosted a Band Tournament (Contest) as early as 1926. During the May 1927, Contest, Delta placed second in class B. The Rifle band, a two-year-old group, won first place. The reaction in Delta to the competition was apparently positive since several new students joined the band program. A successful future seemed assured. In October of 1927 Dad was engaged at seventy-five dollars a month to organize a high school band in Palisade. It required that he spend three days a week there, which curtailed his teaching activities in Grand Junction. His salary was soon augmented by private instruction. Forty-three students exhibited interest in joining the new Palisade school band. Of these, twenty-seven obtained instruments and formed the nucleus of the first group. Individual instruction, sectionals, and full band rehearsals began in October.

There was distraction in November, however, when the high school band director position in Rifle became available and Dad was asked to apply. He decided to stay with Palisade. A few months later he was offered the band job in Durango. He was persuaded by Palisade School Superintendent George Stebbins, Principal A.E. Taylor, plus parents, community supporters and, above all, the band members to remain with Palisade. Dad's income was increased by a series of Saturday evening school band concerts paid for by the city. These were played during the summer on a platform built on the southeast corner of Main and Third Streets. In later years the programs were played in the city park.

Dad realized that if a band program was to succeed, a primary responsibility of the band director should entail moving beginning players from elementary levels to high school competence, a process not understood by many directors. Another challenge typical of all school programs was to provide balanced instrumentation for the high school band. In National Competition points were deducted for incomplete instrumentation. Consequently, high school bands from small schools in western Colorado, through necessity, included players from the fifth grade through the eighth; for example, I was in the Palisade fifth grade when I became a member of the high school band. All of this took place before the consolidation of Mesa County Schools in 1951. Large schools in the early days of band organization were fortunate to have Junior High School preparatory programs as well as dependable financial resources. Small schools in rural areas, such as Palisade, were at a disad-

vantage since consistent monetary support was often lacking. This became a serious matter during the Depression when band programs were sometimes eliminated so that school districts could save money for traditional classes. Much of the early support for small school band programs came from the organization of "Band Booster Clubs" consisting chiefly of mothers of band members. Through various money-making enterprises these groups provided uniforms, music, travel money, instruments, and sometimes subsidized the band director's salary.

During the April 1928 Tournament, the Palisade band placed second in Class B. Delta was third in Class A, a disappointment. Dad's last check from Delta was made out in May. The school administrators there had decided to employ a band director who could live in Delta, become a full-time faculty member, and devote all his efforts to developing a "winning" band.

In June of 1928 Dad began talks with administrators regarding beginning a band program in Fruitvale. In September, after gaining approval from all concerned, he began recruitment and rehearsals. Another organizational opportunity presented itself when Luther Brown, a band instrument supplier with Denver music store connections, moved to Grand Junction. Dad severed his relationship with the Stongs and joined forces with Brown, who connected Dad with patrons in Grand Valley (Parachute) who were anxious to form a band in their school. He began weekly travel to Grand Valley in November, driving over the road that split off from the Collbran route at the Mesa intersection. The roads of the time were dirt, seldom graveled, and almost impassible in bad weather. Dad spent many miserable hours driving between his teaching commitments.

The Grand Valley band members received instruction on Mondays. Dad gave private lessons in the boiler room; the sound traveled throughout the school, disturbing classes on the floors above. In those times there were few rooms designed for music classes. During the balance of the week, Mrs. Flarty, a teacher at the school, continued with daily rehearsals. This arrangement did not prosper, and at the end of one year this school also decided to turn the band over to a full-time teacher. Unfortunately the person selected did not inspire the students, and they lost interest in the program.

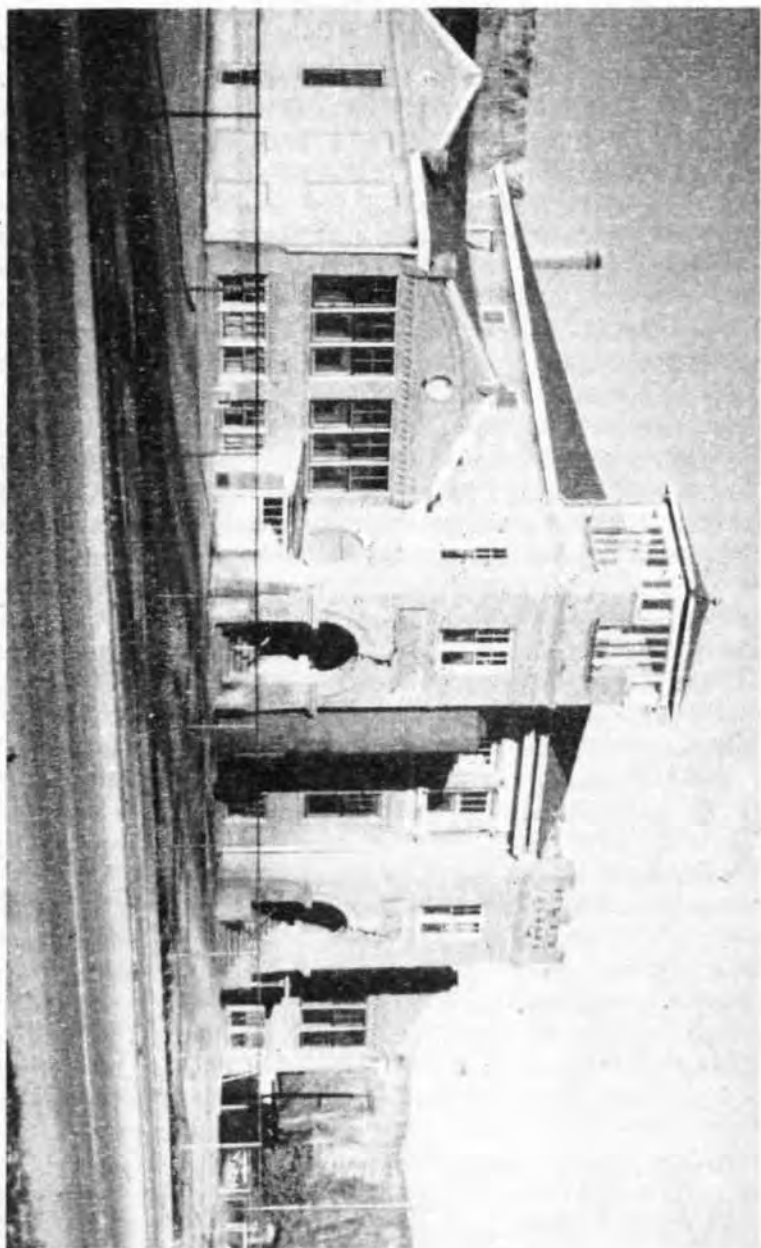
Dad was now obligated to three schools—Palisade, Fruitvale, and Grand Valley—plus several private students he taught in a studio now located in our house in Grand Junction (actually our front room). In the first weeks of the new year, 1929, the Palisade and Fruitvale bands

played concerts in their schools and communities, and began preparations for the April Tournament. Soon, another problem surfaced; many of the Fruitvale and Palisade supporters were not pleased that both bands were uniformed alike, wearing black coats, white duck trousers, and caps identifying the groups as "Dalby Bands." To some, this was no doubt construed as professional, if not personal, arrogance. They would rather see them in traditional uniforms displaying school colors. Later, the Collbran band was outfitted in the same "Dalby" mode, and, as time went by, uniform design became a point of serious contention.

Herbert L. Clarke, former cornet soloist with the Sousa band and for several years conductor of the Long Beach, California, Municipal Band, was engaged as the 1929 Contest adjudicator. Dad entered ten soloists and his three bands. Palisade won first place in Class B and Fruitvale won first in Class C. Palisade also won the second place marching trophy. This beautiful music trophy, won for the first time, could not be kept permanently until won three times. Band interest in Palisade was at an all-time high and it was decided in May, after an attractive fare offer by the D&RG Western Railroad, to send the band to Denver to participate in the National Band Contest being held there. The young Palisade band did not play well and was rated below most of the other Class B bands. Surprisingly, this became a motivating experience, and the band, with its director, returned to Palisade optimistically determined to raise performance levels and instrumentation standards.

On August 22, Audrie Stong announced that he was leaving Grand Junction to become director of the Pasadena, California, Junior College Rose Bowl Band. The job at Grand Junction was open, and Dad had high hopes of being considered a candidate. Superintendent Tope's son, Kenneth, was a trumpet student of Dad's, and his father was well aware of Dad's success as a band director, but it was not to be. With no college degree Dad could not be considered as a full-time teacher in the Grand Junction School System. This academic deficiency was to haunt him all the days of his professional life. In October, recent college graduate Frank Hall was named to succeed Audrie Stong.

During the summer of 1929 Dad and Delta's new director, Ivan Miller, became good friends. In addition to his local responsibilities, Miller had been helping four other young bands in Delta County, probably Paonia, Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, and Crawford. Dad had also developed another band interest: a beginning band at Hawthorne School in Grand Junction where my brother and I were in attendance. With the



*Palisade School where bands rehearsed, 1927-36.*

*(Photo courtesy of Max Dalby.)*



permission of Superintendent R.E. Tope, Dad met with the Hawthorne School PTA in November and made plans to start a band group after the first of the new year.

The Hawthorne group began rehearsals at our house on January 2, 1930. The first class numbered eight, but enrollment gradually increased to a total of twenty. Each member, not including the Dalby children, paid two dollars per month for instruction. The band met two or three times each week, either at the school or in sectional rehearsals in our home. During the next two months we played a short program at Washington school and another for the Hawthorne PTA. The culmination of our effort was our participation in the April Music Contest where we presented a noncompetitive demonstration program on the stage of the Avalon Theatre.

The planning committee for the 1930 Contest met on November 26, 1929. Present were Cleon Dalby, Frank Hall, Charles Nicholls, Loyde Hillyer, E.L. Long, James Rusk, and Russell Margrave. Required music for each class (A, B, C, and D) was selected at this meeting. First-year bands were traditionally placed in Class D. School enrollment determined a band's position in each of the other three categories, but it was permitted for a band to participate above its enrollment classification. The band directors soon learned, however, that all plans were subject to administrative approval but were often ignored.

Dad had prepared fourteen soloists for this Contest, nine of whom placed first. My mother played most of the accompaniments. In this event, Crawford won in Class D, Dad's Fruitvale Band won in Class C, and Delta, under its new director, won in Class B. The trophy was lost, "a bitter pill," as Dad reported in his diary. Carbon County High School from Price, Utah, won in Class A, and also won the Marching segment of the Tournament. The fact that Carbon included students from a developing Junior College was ignored. The judge for the 1930 event was H.G. Holmes of Chicago.

In response to early discussions with school authorities, Dad and Luther Brown traveled to Collbran to begin organizing another band on May 19. On the 25th, the Fruitvale Band helped recruitment along by playing a concert in Collbran that was attended by students, parents and faculty members of the high school. Walter Rosette, Palisade's prize-winning sousaphone player, was the featured soloist. Important school and community interest developed as the new band progressed. On June 28 we moved to Palisade. Our parents, after serious delibera-

tion, decided that Dad's future in Grand Junction would never include becoming the high school band director. They felt Palisade had the greatest long-term musical potential of the groups under his direction. Palisade had also demonstrated firm administrative and community support, and there was considerable band interest among students of the school with fourteen new members joining the program in the fall of 1930. Another bonus: two of the Dalby sons were now qualified to be in their father's band.

During August, Dad made several trips to Collbran where he eventually enrolled twenty-one students for the new band. Also in August he turned down the offer of the band director position in Glenwood Springs. In September, he began rehearsals in Fruitvale. In October Delta was placed in Class A. This was a big relief to the smaller schools. In November the Palisade band played a concert in the local Methodist Church, and the Collbran band played its first concert after just twelve weeks of instruction.

In December Dad served on a committee of school band directors that met in Grand Junction with The Western Slope Rhetorical and Athletic Association, an elected Board of Control consisting of representative school administrators responsible for scheduling and determining rules, standards and practices for all out-of-school activities, to plan the next Music Tournament. This official supervision of school music activities, an irony typical of the times, was later modified by the influence of The Music Educators National Conference. This organization, through a special Commission, developed guidelines for all interscholastic music activities taking place throughout the nation. For example, in 1934 all music contest participants were encouraged to change tournament formats to a Rating System so that more than one band could achieve recognition in its class. The original ratings were Superior (outstanding), Excellent (very good), Good (average), Fair, and Poor. This system was altered by some music directors anxious to avoid the lowest rating to Highly Superior, Superior, Excellent, Good, and Fair. There were to be no more "poor" groups, despite reality! The Rating System was not popular with band directors who had been winning first places under the "contest" format. Cleon was irate! Standards for adjudication, selection of music, instrumentation, etc., were also spelled out by the Commission. The argument for Ratings, long supported by Grand Junction Superintendent Tope, was based upon the easily defended logic that judging musical performance on an arbitrary point scale created unsolvable problems.

The big news in the western Colorado band world was the announcement that a series of band contests would begin in 1931, sponsored by the Price, Utah, Chamber of Commerce. This tournament was an attractive addition to western Colorado's once-a-year evaluation activities. The citizens of Price volunteered to host visiting students, and hotel accommodations were available for chaperones. Contest participation promised two exciting days of interstate rivalry. The trip by train was also an incentive since, for many band members, this would be a first-time experience. For band directors, the contest offered the opportunity to play before new audiences, and, for the winners, publicity in Salt Lake City newspapers.

This was the first of six Price contests in which Cleon Dalby was involved. Three Colorado bands participated—Grand Junction, Palisade, and Fruitvale. Palisade placed second in Class B and third in Parade, with Fruitvale winning Class C. Class A was won by West High School of Salt Lake City, Class B was won by Cyprus High School, Magna, Utah. The Price event occurred on April 10 and 11. The Grand Junction Contest followed on April 24 and 25.

The adjudicator for the Colorado tournament was nationally-known Joseph DeLuca, former euphonium soloist of the Sousa Band and, at the time, Director of the University of Arizona Band. Nineteen bands were entered, performing in the Avalon Theatre. The winners were announced at Lincoln Park on the final night at the Massed Band Parade and Presentation of Awards Ceremony. Three of Dad's bands won first place: Palisade in Class B, Fruitvale in Class C, and Collbran, at the end of its first year of competition, won in Class D. Fruitvale also won the Marching contest. As a direct result, Palisade acquired twelve new band members, Collbran ten, and Fruitvale twenty-eight.

On June 3, 1931, James Rusk, director of the Mt. Lincoln band, announced his resignation. On the 18th, Dad became director of this group, and now had four bands under his leadership. Rusk later became Superintendent of Palisade Schools.

Acting on Dad's advice, Lawrence Sardoni, Sr. visited Grand Junction in January of 1932 to determine interest in establishing a string program in the local schools. Sardoni, an excellent violinist, was Cleon's music teacher in his Ricks Academy days, and had to his many credits a beginning Violin Method published by Oliver Ditson. Sardoni's proposal met the approval of local educators, and Superintendent Tope pledged his personal support of the program, including release time dur-

ing the school day for instruction. The elementary school string program was the beginning of Grand Junction High School Orchestra's competitive ascendance in western Colorado. Appreciation of serious orchestral music began to develop throughout Mesa County when Sardoni's son, Brigham Young University graduate Lawrence, Jr., was appointed director of Mesa College-Community Orchestra in 1935.

The weekly teaching life of Cleon Dalby in 1932 began with a Monday spent teaching and rehearsing in Collbran. On Tuesdays he conducted a Fruitvale band rehearsal from 8:00-9:00 in the morning. This was followed in Palisade by sectionals at 10:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. and lasted until 4:00. Mt. Lincoln rehearsed from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00. This schedule, with inevitable school and community interruptions, was followed for the remainder of the school year.

Six Colorado bands appeared in the second Price Tournament: Grand Junction, Montrose, Appleton (conducted by Raymond Eddy), and Dad's Fruitvale, Palisade, and Mt. Lincoln bands. Train fare was raised by out-of-school projects. When everyone was finally aboard the special train leaving Grand Junction on April 15, Dad found himself responsible for 125 band members and three sets of patrons. At the contest, Dad's Fruitvale and Palisade bands placed second in their Classes. Montrose won in Class A. Cyprus won in Class B. South Sevier (Montroe, Utah) won in Class C, and Helper, Utah, won the Junior High Division.

In the Grand Junction Contest two weeks later, Miller's Delta band won first in Class A and Fruitvale third. Palisade won first in Class B and also won first in Parade. Dad's Collbran band was fourth in Class B. Cedaredge was first in Class C, followed in second place by Mt. Lincoln, Dad's fourth band entry. Palisade won the "big" trophy for the third time and could now display it permanently. The credit for the Marching trophy was due in large part to the drilling expertise of Major William Austin, a World War I Veteran. The trophy, with a photo and a brief biography of Cleon Dalby, may be viewed today in the trophy cabinet at the new Palisade High School.

In April the Fruitvale Band began a series of concerts played on Fruitvale Corner at the intersection of 30 Road and North Avenue. These were to continue for two years. Dad often used advanced players from each of his bands as supporting musicians to assist with summer concerts at Fruitvale and Palisade locations. Soloists and brass ensembles were also interchangeable. The Collbran band benefitted from this fam-

ily association, as did Mt. Lincoln, whose nearby members often joined the Palisade crew. One of the busiest ensembles was the Palisade brass sextet, which in October began broadcasting over KFXJ, Grand Junction's new radio station. On Palisade Day, July 22, a band of seventy-five players supported the festivities.

Late in May, it became known that the band director position at Grand Junction was again open. At the end of the summer, William Gould, a recent Western State College graduate was appointed. Dad found him "very personable, but inexperienced."

In August, the affects of the Depression were becoming serious, especially in small school districts. Dad reported, "Districts out of money... Fruitvale and Palisade Warrants no good." Fortunately for the Dalby family, Collbran was still paying with cash, but rumors persisted that its band would be discontinued. On September 8, Dad's diary read, "The District is broke. They do not know how they will carry on school this year." It appeared later that tax money was deposited to cover warrants, though many were often discounted.

On September 16, Dad wrote, "Mt. Lincoln will discontinue band." The small district was out of money. On October 7, the Mt. Lincoln Board approved the band parents' offer to keep the band alive by having each of the band members pay one dollar a month for instruction. By scheduling night and Saturday rehearsals, Dad was able to keep the band active for another school year. He was sometimes paid, however, with farm products in place of cash: butter, cream, sausage, chicken, etc.

To celebrate the first year of broadcasting, the Collbran and Palisade bands played programs on KFXJ in January of 1933. In February the Palisade band played its sixth annual concert. In April, Palisade, Fruitvale, and even Mt. Lincoln raised money for their bands' trip to Price to attend the annual contest. DeLuca was again the adjudicator. Because Palisade was playing the selected musical number required for Class A, Dad was able to place the band in competition with the single entry in that class, Carbon County High School. Palisade came within one-third of one percent of tying the Price, Utah, band for first place. This was an interesting example of difficulties inherent in the point system of adjudication. Fruitvale, under Dad's direction, placed first in Class C and second in Parade. Carbon won the Marching trophy. Mt. Lincoln played, but did not compete.

In this third Price Contest, a new element, sight-reading, had been added to performance requirements and soon became an official



*Palisade High School Band at Price Festival, April 1936.*

(Photo courtesy of Max Dalby.)

segment of adjudication results. This came as a shock to many band directors, but Cleon had long included this activity as a basic part of band rehearsals. The requirement of ability to read new music at sight was intended to discourage band directors from spending inordinate time preparing the required three pieces of music for contests. This practice, considered reprehensible by responsible directors, ignored the process of teaching "counting," which is fundamental to being able to play at sight a variety of musical styles, keys, and tempos.

The awards announced at Lincoln Park in the 1933 Grand Junction Contest resounded with news of a Delta sweep. Under Ivan Miller, the Delta orchestra and band won first in Class A. The Delta band also won first in Marching, with Palisade placing fourth. Fruitvale was first in Class B, and Dad's Fruitvale second. In view of these results, it was acutely embarrassing to the Palisade band, and my father, when a delegation from Utah appeared during the Award Ceremony to award a special trophy for the "tying" of Carbon High School for first place in Class A at the recent Price Tournament. In retrospect, Dad thought this may have been a political move to keep Colorado bands interested in returning to the next Price event.

Following the Colorado Contest, there was serious trouble ahead in Fruitvale. All of its band problems seemed to come to a head. Dad wrote, "My success was working against me." The new Board was agitating in opposition to the band as it existed, in favor of a full-time faculty band director. A headline in the August 16, 1933, issue of *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* announced: "Dalby will continue in charge of Palisade and Collbran bands: Has remarkable record in competition," then continued:

Because of a desire by school directors that Fruitvale be in the hands of a faculty member, he has resigned that post and will confine his time to the Palisade and Collbran organizations and to other instruction. In seven years of band leadership on the western slope, Dalby has compiled the most imposing record in competition of any director in the region. His bands have captured, in those seven years, nine first places, tied for another, eight second places, and three third places in the western Colorado tournaments here and in the Utah tournaments in Price. His bands have made a total of 28 tournament appearances during the period.

The article added a complete history of Dalby band winnings in contests both in Colorado and Utah, and ended with, "Fifty soloists and numerous small ensembles have won places in the western Colorado and Price tournaments. During his seven years here, he has given instruction to 555 pupils in his bands." The new Fruitvale director, J.N. Farquehar, an oboe player and a graduate of Denver University, was hired to teach band, organize an orchestra, have charge of the Boy's Glee Clubs, direct the high school operetta, and teach languages. The final Fruitvale concert under Cleon's direction was given in Lincoln Park on August 17, 1933.

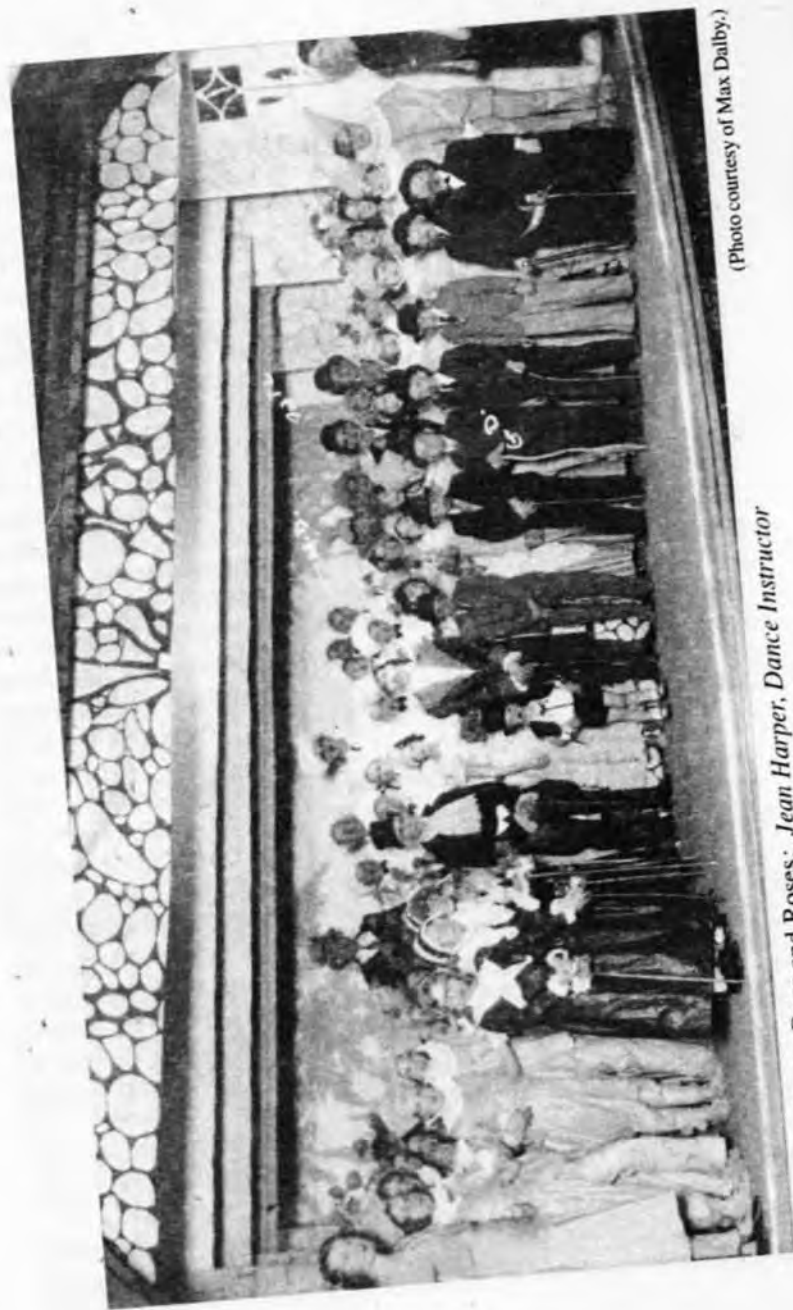
In July 1933, Dad arranged to take the Palisade brass sextet, now a septet with son Phil on trombone, to the Salt Lake area for a five day playing tour. Cleon and Ethelwynne had longed to live closer to family in Utah, and Dad hoped to use his Palisade ensemble to open doors to new employment opportunities. The septet performed in churches, parks, and twice at Schneitter "Hot Pots" in Midway. This was a rewarding experience for his students, but nothing encouraging came of it so far as Cleon was concerned.

In September Dad again began teaching private students in Grand Junction. There were twelve from the local band program recommended by Director Gould. In November the first Band Clinic was organized by Directors Dalby and Gould to introduce music appearing on the new approved contest list. A select group of students was invited from surrounding schools to play in the band; most of them were from Dalby organizations. Attending directors were invited to conduct in an effort to keep interest united in the project.

The Band Clinic idea developed from that of a band consisting of invited members of Dad's advanced private student classes. This group met occasionally in Grand Junction, in a room over an automobile agency, as I recall, to read through music from Dad's personal library that was too difficult for us to play in our "home" organizations. I remember being introduced to band arrangements of Liszt's *Les Preludes*, Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, and Goldmark's *In Springtime*. These were the days when our menu of serious music was mainly orchestral transcriptions, or pieces of music written for orchestras, but newly arranged for bands.

1934 began with Dad's usual band work in Collbran and Palisade. There were also ten private pupils in Collbran and fifteen in Grand Junction. In February my mother and father put together an Operetta in





(Photo courtesy of Max Dalby.)

1934 cast of Penny Buns and Roses: Jean Harper, Dance Instructor on left; Ethelwynne Dalby, Music Director on right.

Palisade called *Penny Buns and Roses*. They had produced this opus years ago in Victor, Idaho. For Palisade, it turned out to be an ambitious affair requiring the aid of a dancing instructor and several seamstresses. Dad, with the help of his sons, painted the scenery, and Mom rehearsed the singing and played piano accompaniments. Nearly every Palisade student from the eighth grade to the high school senior class participated. The local audience was appropriately amazed. This production would never have been possible without involved band members, already disciplined and willing to work under Cleon's influence. Photographs taken at the end of the performance are treasures of the long ago past.

In March of 1934 the Board of Control, meeting in Delta, officially adopted the Rating System, taking some of the "fun and games" out of the contest. Now it became an innocent "Music Festival." Even some of us students were disappointed with this sign of progress. However, we all eventually realized that the Rating System would do away with traditional animosity among schools and band directors, and that it was really a more civilized approach to attaining musical goals to which we all theoretically subscribed. It is interesting to note that many bands and their audiences of today have returned to the competitive attitudes of those bygone days, and are striving mightily to "beat" rivals in marching band contests!

Three Colorado bands attended the fourth Price Contest, April, 21-22, 1934: Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade. First division ratings were earned by several Utah bands. Palisade also received a first division rating in Playing and Parade from judge Harold Bachman of Chicago. Utah bands appearing at the Grand Junction Festival on April 28-29 included Carbon, Notre Dame, Helper Jr., and Moab. In the "A" event, Dad rated Grand Junction "Fair," Delta "Good," Price "Excellent," and Montrose "Superior", his own opinions. Officially, Palisade rated "Excellent" in Concert, "Superior" in Marching, and "Excellent" in Sight-Reading. Collbran's rating was "Fair" in Playing and Sight-Reading. The judge, again DeLuca, told the band directors that Palisade had the best brass section (trombones, baritones, tubas) he had ever heard in a high school band. This compliment did nothing to dispel disappointment in the "II" rating DeLuca gave our band.

In June the famous Dotsero cutoff was finished, and the D&RG Western Railroad invited the Montrose band to play at the Dedication Ceremonies at Fraser, near the western portal of the Moffat Tunnel. Loyde

Hillyer graciously invited members of the Grand Junction and Palisade bands to join his band to play at this important event. Walter Rosette, John Mulvihill, Raymond Reese, John Philip, and I were the fortunate Palisade guest musicians. We were picked up at our home locations, issued red capes and caps to go with our whites, and soon found ourselves near the top of the Rockies.

After several weeks of recruitment and band instrument sales, Dad's newest band, Clifton, began rehearsing on June 18, 1934 with seventeen players enrolled. The band played its first concert six weeks later on July 29. When school began, Dad divided his time more or less equally among his responsibilities in Palisade, Collbran, and Clifton. Saturdays were spent teaching in Grand Junction. In November the Clinic Band again met to preview music for the coming Festival.

In 1935, The Music Educators National Conference, through its NIMAC arm (National Interscholastic Music Activities Commission), wisely decided to abandon traditional National Contests that involved excessive travel for participants. A new plan divided the country into ten regions, each of which would sponsor its own Festival. Region Ten included Utah, western Colorado, western Wyoming, southern Idaho, and eastern Nevada. Provo, Utah, was selected as the site for the 1935 Region Ten Festival. Each group wishing to participate was required to qualify by receiving a Division I Rating in a previous festival or competition.

Palisade hosted the annual regional solo festival on April 5, 1935. The adjudicator was J. DeForest Cline, band director from Colorado State Teachers College in Greeley (now the University of Northern Colorado). At the conclusion of the solo playing, five of us, all earning "I" Ratings, were offered eight-week scholarships to play a series of concerts with the College Summer Band. Students selected were Palisade's Walter Rosette, sousaphone, and John Philip Dalby, trombonist; also selected were clarinetists Robert Hillyer, Grand Junction, Cloyce Stokes, Mt. Lincoln, and Max Dalby, Palisade. Performances were scheduled in Greeley, Estes Park, and Denver. After rehearsals on campus in Greeley, we played two concerts each week and became familiar with an extensive library of good band music. This was a marvelous band, mostly college players, a delightful experience for five young musicians.

There were now three festivals scheduled in close proximity: one in Provo, April 18-20, one in Grand Junction, April 25-27, and another in Price, May 3-4. Dad attended the 1935 Provo Festival and

commented upon "the wonderful Class A bands," but left no record of band ratings. There were no Colorado bands in attendance. In the Grand Junction Festival, which for the first time had performances disc recorded, Cleon's bands were disappointing. Collbran in Class B and Clifton in Class C rated "Excellent," and Palisade in Class A received a "Good" rating.

Five Colorado bands appeared at the Price Festival: Grand Junction, Fruita, Palisade, Collbran and Carbondale. A special feature of the Festival was a high school "honor-band" assembled from members of participating groups. A.R. McAllister, festival judge and director of the nationally famous Joliet, Illinois, High School Band, rehearsed and conducted a short concert. This program also featured a few outstanding ensembles and soloists. Those selected included the Palisade brass sextet and Robert Lambert, euphonium soloist from the Collbran Band. Dad's student, Lambert, later became euphonium soloist with the U.S. Marine Band in Washington, D.C., during World War II, and then became associate first trombone of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and later the principal trombone of the Chicago Symphony. The Palisade and Collbran Bands redeemed themselves at the Price Festival, earning "Highly Superior" Ratings.

In August an event of great importance to the Grand Junction band program, and incidentally to other bands in the area, was the arrival in Grand Junction of Charles Steen, a Chicago flutist and woodwind specialist. Steen had studied clarinet with Clarence Warmelin, one of the nation's premier clarinet teachers, and his private teaching began to produce remarkable improvements in clarinet and other woodwinds playing in the area. Steen occupied the studio formerly held by my father, who had moved his private teaching operation to the high school music room. William Gould now had the brass and woodwind teaching assistance he needed to bring the Grand Junction band to the pinnacle of performance it demonstrated in the 1938 Region Ten Festival in Provo, Utah. I was there. A wonderful band, the best of the four Colorado Bands to place in Division I, the others being Montrose, Delta, and Fruita. The only Utah band to place in Division I was South Cache High School from Hyrum, near Logan. In the next year, when the Festival was held in Pocatello, Idaho, A.A. Harding of the University of Illinois was the adjudicator. Grand Junction, in Class A, and Helper Junior, Utah, in Class C, were the only bands in the Festival to receive "I" ratings.

The Palisade Junior Band, which had been organized on May 15, 1935, played its first concert on June 19. For the first time there were sixty band students in Palisade, thirty in each of two bands. The groups rehearsed separately until the 1936 Music Festivals. In November I conducted the Junior Band in a PTA performance prepared by my father. That was my first experience as a band director.

1936 was the beginning of discontent with the band program in Collbran. It was described by detractors as being out of balance with academic concerns. Problems were exacerbated by the basketball coach's complaint that the band used up more than its share of time in preparation for public performance. Dad was beginning to feel serious concern regarding his financial future and had already made inquiries concerning possible openings in Utah.

The band situations in Palisade and Clifton were moving along smoothly. In the first month of 1936, the Palisade Band broadcasted on KFXJ and played a concert in the Grand Junction Methodist Church. Dad was now teaching twenty members of the Grand Junction High School band, but he was upset by Gould speculating about a full-time brass teacher. Incidentally, 376 students had studied privately with Dad in western Colorado since September 1926.

In February Cleon was invited by George Damson, Chairman of the Gunnison Music Camp, to be the director of the "B" Band during the June Camp. H.A. VanderCook of Chicago was to be conductor of the "A" Band. This was an honor in recognition of Dad's work and was of some comfort amid the conflicts surfacing concerning the Collbran band. The Gunnison Camp had been founded the year before and was beginning to attract school music people from several states.

In April of 1936, Palisade hosted sixty students in town again for the solo part of the yearly music festival. At the end of the day of adjudication, Dad put together a massed band of all the soloists, and we played a short concert.

The Price Festival was April 17-18. The Palisade Brass Sextet and the Woodwind Quintet were chosen to appear in the "outstanding" concert. Bob Lambert was again the featured soloist. The Sextet was also invited to play at the night Awards festivities. The Palisade Junior Band received a "Superior" rating in Sight-Reading, an "Excellent" rating in Marching, and a "Highly Superior" rating in Playing. Clifton was "Excellent" in Sight-Reading, "Superior" in Playing and "Excellent" in Marching. Collbran was "Excellent" in Sight-Reading, "Supe-

rior" in Concert and Marching. The Palisade Senior Band was "Highly Superior" in Playing, Marching, and Concert and "Outstanding" in Sight-Reading. The band was highly complemented by judge Harold Bachman.

In the Grand Junction Festival, Collbran, Clifton, and Palisade Junior did well, rating as they did in Price. Palisade again rated "Highly Superior" in Playing and Marching, and "Outstanding" in Sight-Reading. Judge LeRoy Robertson was so pleased with this performance that he asked Palisade to come back and read the Class A music.

On May 11, 1936, Dad received a letter from the Collbran Board dismissing him from his position as band director. On the same day he was offered a job in Helper, Utah, at \$1800 per year. He reluctantly signed a contract. On Sunday, May 24, Dad's four bands put on a festival in Palisade Park. Each band played three numbers and then the four bands combined and played four numbers. Dad wrote, "Following this, we had a photo taken and then had a picnic with all those who came with the respective bands. A lot of work for me, but a grand day which furthers the cause of band music. My last day in Palisade."

#### About the Author:

Max Dalby was the second son born to Cléon and Ethelwynne Dalby. He earned his Ed.D from Utah State University. Dr. Dalby established the instrumental music program of the San Diego Diocese school system in 1946, administering it until 1950. For twenty-eight years, beginning in 1957, he served at Utah State University. While there, in addition to teaching, he was Head of the Music Department, Director of Bands, Coordinator of Music Education programs, and conducted the Cache Chamber Orchestra, the USU Symphony Orchestra, the Alumni Band, and the Musical Theater and Opera Orchestras. Dr. Dalby was named Professor of the year in the USU College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in 1975-1976. He received the Distinguished Service Award from Utah State University in 1989 and in 1994 was named Utah State's Alumnus of the Year.



### Book Review

*The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross.* By Virginia McConnell Simmons (Niwot: University Press of Colorado 1999, second edition, Pp.364. Softbound, \$24.95)

The first edition of *The San Luis Valley* appeared 1979, and filled the need for a thorough and scholarly history of one of Colorado's least known areas. I had reviewed the first edition, and wondered what changes had appeared in the 20 years that intervened between the first and second editions. Virginia Simmons kept the basic structure of the book, but continued researching and revising it, making the second edition an indispensable source for anyone interested in Colorado history.

I enjoyed reading the second edition, and when I reached the "Epilogue," I realized what a sensitive—almost poetic—biographer the San Luis Valley had found in Virginia Simmons. Here is that four paragraph epilogue.

On the church at La Garita is a cross. This is not the usual religious emblem with arms pointing in only two directions from the central support. The cross at La Garita has two additional horizontal arms, set at right angles to the others, so that one sees a complete cross from any side of the structure.

One wooden arm extends toward the hazy hills and mountain passes beyond Saguache. Another points across the churchyard's picket fence to the lonely cemetery and the Sangre de Cristos, shimmering far across the valley. Southward pastures and potato fields are sighing in the wind. Behind the church rise La



Garita Mountains and the trails of ill-fated explorers and solitary sheepherders. Upward the main staff beckons toward the impalpable, blue, Colorado sky, and downward it clings to the belfry and the alluvium of eroded earth.

This six-armed cross seems symbolic of a concept of place which is not indicated by the traditional points of the compass but which is all-embracing. Like the Indian concept of space, which is unconfined and limitless, a place is neither two- nor three-dimensional but four.

At what particular moment and at what particular spot did this valley and its story begin? When and where will it cease? Perhaps there is no beginning and no ending but a continuum of time and place to which all life belongs. In this valley finite concepts of time and place seem inadequate. The most recent occupant is brother of the earliest, and unknown feet will walk within the changing valley tomorrow.

These paragraphs convey much about the San Luis Valley that every native of the area will appreciate. References to the Sangre de Cristos and the blue sky denote much about the sense of place, remarks about "ill-fated explorers" bring names like John C. Fremont to mind and remind people that nature can be unforgiving in this high mountain valley. Images of potato fields waving in the wind and lonely sheepherders suggest the rural heritage of the valley. The symbol of the six-armed cross captures the mystical and religious aspects of the valley which began with its Indian and earliest Hispanic inhabitants and continues until the present. All this indicates that Virginia Simmons understands and appreciates the San Luis Valley to a degree that an outsider could never attain.

Virginia Simmons ranks among the best in writing the history of Colorado, and is the dean of scholarship about the San Luis Valley. She has lived there for over two decades, and worked with the *San Luis Valley Historian* in a number of capacities. She has written hundreds of vignettes about the history and culture of the area while serving as a correspondent for the *San Luis Valley Courier*. A collection of 60 of these articles on Hispanic culture, on file at the Southern Peaks Library in Alamosa, is a treasure trove for scholars. Her *Valley of the Cranes: Exploring Colorado's San Luis Valley* (photos by Robert Rozinski and

Wendy Shattil) is an elegantly written and beautifully photographed tribute to the San Luis Valley. As for work outside the San Luis Valley, her work *Bayou Salado: The Story of South Park* remains the standard work on that part of the state. Simmons has also recently published *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico*.

The *San Luis Valley* is a complete history, beginning with the physical setting and then examining the procession of people who have occupied this great mountain valley. Indians, explorers, soldiers, trappers, miners, railroaders, ranchers, and farmers are among those whose stories Virginia Simmons tells. Perhaps those portions of the book which make the strongest contributions are those dealing with water, religion, and Hispanic Colorado. Chapter 15, "Manassa Was Strong on Religion," provides an excellent history of the Latter Day Saints and the vicissitudes of bringing large scale irrigation projects to other portions of the valley, such as Hooper. Chapter 8, "In Voices of Gladness" and chapter 16, "They Do It in Good Faith," are the best short surveys of Hispanic Colorado in print. Those readers wanting some drama and bloodshed should turn first to Chapter 11, "Bring in their Heads," and read about the Espinosa brothers.

The second edition of *The San Luis Valley* consists of 16 chapters, an epilogue, and appendix, bibliography, additional suggested reading, index, 5 maps and 88 photographs. The bibliography contains the most complete guide to works on the San Luis Valley that I have seen, and the "Suggested Reading" is an essential guide for anyone planning to do research on southern Colorado. The appendix, "Hispanic Place Names of the San Luis Valley" is a valuable source for those curious about early Hispanic Colorado.

This book belongs in the library of every person who is interested in the history of Colorado. Those who live in the San Luis Valley will savor the details in it, while those from outside the valley will find it an indispensable introduction to the area. Scholars cannot ignore the book. Readers on the Western Slope will discover an area with a similar history, and familiar attitudes about a rural lifestyle, isolation from Denver, and water issues. The book is suitable for adoption in courses on Colorado history. In short, *The San Luis Valley* by Virginia Simmons is required reading for everyone who wishes to be informed about our state.

Paul Reddin

Professor of History, Mesa State College

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| Mr. & Mrs. Wm. M. Ela, Hotchkiss            | Mr. Robert P. Schulte, St. Louis Park, MN  |
| H. Pat Elsberry, Grand Junction             | Steve & Tracy Shulte, Grand Junction       |
| Abbott E. Fay, Grand Junction               | James E. Stafford, Grand Junction          |
| Henry Filip, Palisade                       | Mr. & Mrs. R. V. Sternberg, Cincinnati, OH |
| Mr. & Mrs. David E. Flatt, Grand Junction   | Bill & Ann Stopper, Grand Junction         |
| Mr. & Mrs. Earl Fuoco, Grand Junction       | Nicholai Sweet, Grand Junction             |
| Calvin W. Gower, St. Cloud, MN              | Mr. & Mrs. John Tomlinson, Grand Jct.      |
| James R. Grisier, Grand Junction            | Mr. & Mrs. Tope, Albuquerque, NM           |
| Joseph Hambright, Grand Junction            | Mr. George E. Wheeler, Grand Junction      |
| Lydia Herron, Fruita                        | Mr. Michael White, Grand Junction          |
| Holiday Inn of Grand Junction               | John & Roxana Wolcott, Grand Junction      |
| Dale & Phyllis Hollingsworth, Grand Jct.    | Pat & Zang Wood, Flora Vista, NM           |
| Diana Jones, Fort Kent Mills, ME            |  |
| Frank Keller, Grand Junction                |  |
| Richard W. Kimmel, Jr., Dayton, OH          |  |
| Don MacKendrick, Grand Junction             |  |
| Dennis R. Mathews, Jr., Grand Junction      |  |