

# Site of the First Stake

By LE ROY ELLINWOOD

The first stake founding Colorado Springs proper was set in place July 31, 1871. The monument marking this place was erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution. It is located at the southeast corner of Pikes Peak and Cascade Avenues, across from the Antlers Hotel.

Previous to this were two years of planning and hard work on the part of General Palmer. As a result of his work of supervising the construction of the Kansas Pacific Railroad (now the Union Pacific), he came to the Pikes Peak Region in July, 1869. At the time the end of the track of the railroad was at Sheridan, Kansas. He had occasion to ride across the country towards the mountains via stage-coach. He was greatly impressed with the natural beauty of the region.

A month later he again made the trip to the Pikes Peak Region in company with Colonel Greenwood, Chief Engineer of the K. & P. Railroad and Dr. W. A. Bell. Plans began to take form in General Palmer's mind for a railroad to be built from Denver towards the south, and the location of a city east of old Colorado City. Arrangements were subsequently made for the purchase of 10,000 acres of land which included also the land surrounding the mineral springs at Manitou.

In October, 1869, he came to the Region again with a party of eastern men including N. C. Meeker who later established the Greeley colony. Mr. Meeker looked over the Colorado Springs site, but rejected it because he did not believe that there was water enough in the streams to suit his project. Apparently the problem of securing enough water for the community is a perennial one.

As soon as General Palmer was assured that the Denver and Rio Grande was going to

be built to Colorado City, he began planning the City now known as Colorado Springs. The Mountain Base Investment Fund was organized for the purpose of raising money for the railroad in December, 1870. This was the parent of the Colorado Springs Company which was organized six months later. The purpose of this company was to raise capital enough to construct the irrigation ditches, lay out the farms and towns, plant trees, aid the building of hotels, and even that of dwellings in some cases. It was planned to sell the tracts and lots to new arrivals on small payments distributed over several years. About one-half of the capital of this company was raised in America, chiefly among Palmer's friends in Philadelphia, and the remainder in Europe, chiefly among the associates of Dr. W. A. Bell.

Colonel Greenwood was employed to lay out the new town, appraise the lots, and start business. Shortly afterward the services of General Cameron, of Greeley, were procured to initiate and take charge of the infant colony. About fifty people came with the latter, settled on the tract and began building homes.

The city plat contained 70 blocks, each 400 feet square. The first dwelling was commenced on August 15, 1871. During this same summer the "Fountain Colony of Colorado" was organized with General Cameron as the leader. This was a subordinate to the Colorado Springs Company. Its holdings included villa sites on 480 acres of land around the mineral springs in Manitou Springs. Thus two townsites were laid out, one at Manitou Springs and the other at Colorado Springs.

(Next week, the founding of the first school in Colorado Springs).