

# The Optimist: Pitt Abraham Wade

By Loron T. Wade

## Chapter 1

### First, a little pre-history

Pitt's father, **Loron Wade**, was born January 10, 1822, in New York state, to Abraham Wade and JoAnn Munger Wade. Abraham Wade was born March 26, 1787, also in New York state, and Abraham's father, Edward Wade was born in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, on March 30, 1766.

Loron was the eighth of eleven children, ten brothers and one sister. Eight of the brothers were Baptist preachers. Loron was one of these and he was also a physician. We know very little about his early years. In 1846 "Loron Wade" was listed as a student at Kingsville Academy, a secondary-level institution in Kingsville, Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

Uncle Ben, Loron's younger son, stated that their father studied at Oberlin College,<sup>2</sup> which is also in Ohio. Oberlin was the forerunner of many good things in education. Among others, it was a center of abolitionism. One of its founding principles was that "slavery is America's most horrendous sin that should be instantly repented of and immediately brought to an end."<sup>3</sup>

Loron reflected this attitude. Uncle Ben recalled: "Father had a very interesting experience in his early life as a preacher. He traveled in Virginia, and he would seek out the plantations where they wouldn't allow the negroes to go to church or to have any religious meetings. But he paid no attention to that. He went and gave it out that he was going to preach to them. One man said, 'If that preacher ever comes to my plantation, I am going to kill him.' Well, Father had a horse and a sulky.<sup>4</sup> One time he was driving along and met up with this man who had threatened to kill him. Father had a habit of putting his hand inside his shirt as he rode. The man not only didn't kill him; he turned out of the road completely and let him pass. Afterward, people asked the fellow, 'Why didn't you kill him?' And he replied, 'Well, what could I do? He had his hand on his derringer<sup>5</sup> the whole time.'"



**Loron Wade, the silk-hat preacher**

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<sup>1</sup> Kingsville Academy. Kingsville. *Catalogue of the Officers and Students* (Ashtabula, 1846), page 8.

<sup>2</sup> A promising research possibility would be to look for his student records at Oberlin.

<sup>3</sup> Oberlin was the first college in America to admit black students to mixed-race classes (1835), the first to enroll men and women to study together and the first to grant a B.A. degree to a black woman. Cited in Wikipedia from Morris, J. Brent (2014). [Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism: College, Community, and the Fight for Freedom and Equality in Antebellum America](#). University of North Carolina Press. .

<sup>4</sup> Sulky: A light two-wheeled cart with a seat for just one person that is often used in racing.

<sup>5</sup> A "derringer" was a one-shot ball-and-cap pistol. John Wilkes Booth used a derringer to kill Abraham Lincoln.

That was not the only place where Loron was threatened. Uncle Ben also recalled: “A man I met once told me that when Father lived at Boscobel [Wisconsin] he would go to places where they had no minister or church and give out that there would be preaching in a saloon or any place that was available. There was a saloonkeeper who said, ‘If that silk-hat preacher ever comes to my saloon, I’ll put his hide out on the fence.’ There were rail fences in those days. There is always somebody to carry that kind of story, so Father soon heard about it. The next thing he did, this man told me, was to drive down there, tie his horse at the rail fence and go into the saloon. People knew what the saloonkeeper’s boast had been, and they all pushed back because they expected to see a fight. Father walked up to the bar, put his hat on it, tapped on there, and said, ‘Silence, please! Next Lord’s Day, the Lord willing, there’ll be divine services in this room.’ Then he put his hat back on and walked out. The man told me that the saloonkeeper joined the church and there hadn’t been a saloon in that town from that day up until when he was talking to me, and that must have been at least 25 years.”

We have no information about Loron’s medical education. When Abraham Lincoln wanted to become a lawyer, he “read law.” That is, he spent days reading the law books of the state of Illinois, then he took the state bar examination and passed. After that, he worked as a junior partner with an established lawyer and later with a different one. Loron may have become a physician in a similar way.

The book *History of Grant County*,<sup>6</sup> published in 1881, includes the following paragraph in the section about the village of Potosi.

**LOREN WADE, M. D.,** Rockville, Penn.; born in New York in 1822; son of Abraham and Joanna (Mungar) Wade, of Vermont and Massachusetts; came to this county twenty-two years ago, and after one year removed to Lima, where he practiced medicine and had charge of the Baptist Church at that place for six years, and removed to Lancaster, and was three years in charge of the Baptist Church there, and, after a residence at Patch Grove, where he followed his profession, he removed to this village, where he has a large and increasing practice. On June 21, 1860, he was married, by Rev. William Wallace, to Margaret, daughter of Edward and Phaniah (Barr) Halferty, of Westmoreland Co., Penn.; had six children—Phaniah, born Aug. 2, 1861, teaching school in Ellenboro; Flora, Feb. 11, 1864, died Sept. 2, 1865; Eva, Aug. 28, 1866; Pitt A., Aug. 23, 1868; Ben O., Nov. 1, 1870; Smith, Feb. 14, 1872, died at 6 months of age. Mr. Wade had previously married on July 4, 1857 (by Esq. Horsefall, of Millerville, Grant Co.), Marchia, daughter of John and Mary (Nye) Ellis, by whom he had one son—Loron Ellis, born March 21, 1859; she (Marchia) died April 13, 1859. Mr. Wade spent a short time mining at Leadville, Colo.; he is a successful physician, and makes a specialty of diphtheria and kindred diseases; owns six acres of land.

We do not know the year when Loron came to Wisconsin. According to the above note, “he came to this [Grant] county twenty-two years ago.” Twenty-two years before 1881 would have been 1859. Two years before that, on July 4, 1857, Loron married “Marchia” [really, Marcia] Ellis in Crawford County which borders Grant County on the north. At the time of their marriage, Loron was 34 and Marcia was 14. On March 21, 1859, Marcia gave birth to their son, Loron Ellis, and three weeks after that, she died. She was 16. At that time, around 20,000 women died every year in the United States from puerperal fever, a streptococcal infection contracted during childbirth.

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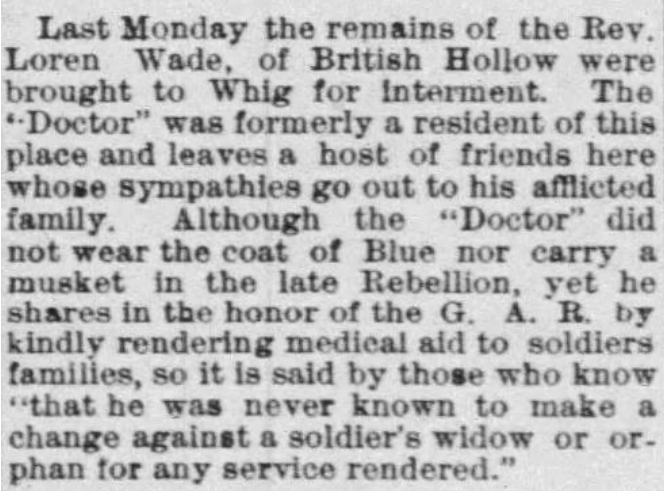
<sup>6</sup> Costello N. Holford, *History of Grant County, Wisconsin: Including Its Civil, Political, Geological, Mineralogical, Archaeological and Military History, and a History of the Several Towns Reprinted by Columbia University, 1900. Grant County, Illinois, is at the southwest corner of the state. Its western border is the Mississippi River, and to the south is Illinois.*

Immediately after telling about the death of Marcia, the biographical note states that “Mr. Wade spent a short time mining at Leadville, Colorado.” If Loron’s sojourn in Colorado took place while he was mourning the loss of Marcia, it would have happened in 1859. That was the year of the first major gold strike in Colorado, known as the Pikes Peak Gold Rush. If he went at that time, it was before Leadville existed, because that city was founded in 1877 after it was discovered that there was more money in mining lead and silver than in gold. The 1859 gold strike was centered at California Gulch, about three miles from where Leadville was later founded. Loron may have mentioned Leadville to the biographer because it was better known. It does not seem likely he would have left his wife and seven children and his medical practice to hunt for gold in 1877 or later.<sup>7</sup>

On June 21 of 1860, Loron married Margaret Halferty who was 18. She became a stepmother to Ellis and the mother of six more children.

Fania Ann, “Dove,” August 2, 1861  
Flora, Feb 11, 1864, died in childhood  
Eva Joanna, Aug 28, 1865  
**Pitt Abraham**, August 23, 1867  
Benjamin Orlando, Nov 1, 1870  
Smith Obed, Feb 21, 1872, died in childhood

Loron’s grave marker in the British Hollow [Wisconsin] Cemetery indicates that he was born in 1822 and died September 23, 1886.<sup>8</sup> The obituary of Margaret Wade in *the Cañon City Record*, August 1, 1904, states that “she was the widow of Dr. L. Wade, who died from the effects of exposure to a blizzard in Wisconsin.”



Last Monday the remains of the Rev. Loren Wade, of British Hollow were brought to Whig for interment. The “Doctor” was formerly a resident of this place and leaves a host of friends here whose sympathies go out to his afflicted family. Although the “Doctor” did not wear the coat of Blue nor carry a musket in the late Rebellion, yet he shares in the honor of the G. A. R. by kindly rendering medical aid to soldiers families, so it is said by those who know “that he was never known to make a change against a soldier’s widow or orphan for any service rendered.”

Obituary of Loron Wade

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<sup>7</sup> A curious detail is that lead mining was also practiced in Potosi. The village was founded in 1845 after lead was discovered in a cave near there. Grandfather, Pitt Abraham, recalled that in his boyhood he would hunt for lumps of galena, a bluish-grey mineral (lead sulfide) that could be sold for pocket money.

<sup>8</sup> Information on the “Find a Grave” website.

## Chapter 2

### Pitt on His Own

In the spring of 1887, 19-year-old Pitt spent eight days in Chicago. "It was my first trip from home, and it was quite a change from a small village to the grandest city in the U.S.," he reported. From Chicago, he returned home briefly and then went to La Crosse, Wisconsin, to look for work.

I recall a story he told about this experience: He arrived in La Crosse, found a place to stay in a rooming house and began going from business to business, looking for work. At noon, he rested and ate his lunch while seated on the grass in an attractive park. That night he was tired but found it nearly impossible to sleep because of frantic itching. He was amazed that such a nice rooming house would be infested with bedbugs. Indignantly, he took his things and went to another place, but with no better luck: the next night he was again tormented by itching. He could no longer hold his peace, and in the morning, he told the landlady what he thought about her bedbugs.

"Show me your bites," she demanded. When he complied, she said, "Those are not from bedbugs; you have chiggers." The grass where he had happily rested at noon was infested with the little pests. It seems that while active and moving around during the day he was not as aware of the problem.

Telling about this reminded him of a story: An American boy received a visit from his English cousin. Everywhere they went, no matter what they saw, the cousin said: "We have bigger ones in England." At last, the American boy could stand it no longer. So he got a snapping turtle and put it in his cousin's bed. That night when they went to bed, the turtle snapped onto the cousin's toe. He held up the toe with the turtle attached and asked, "What's this?"

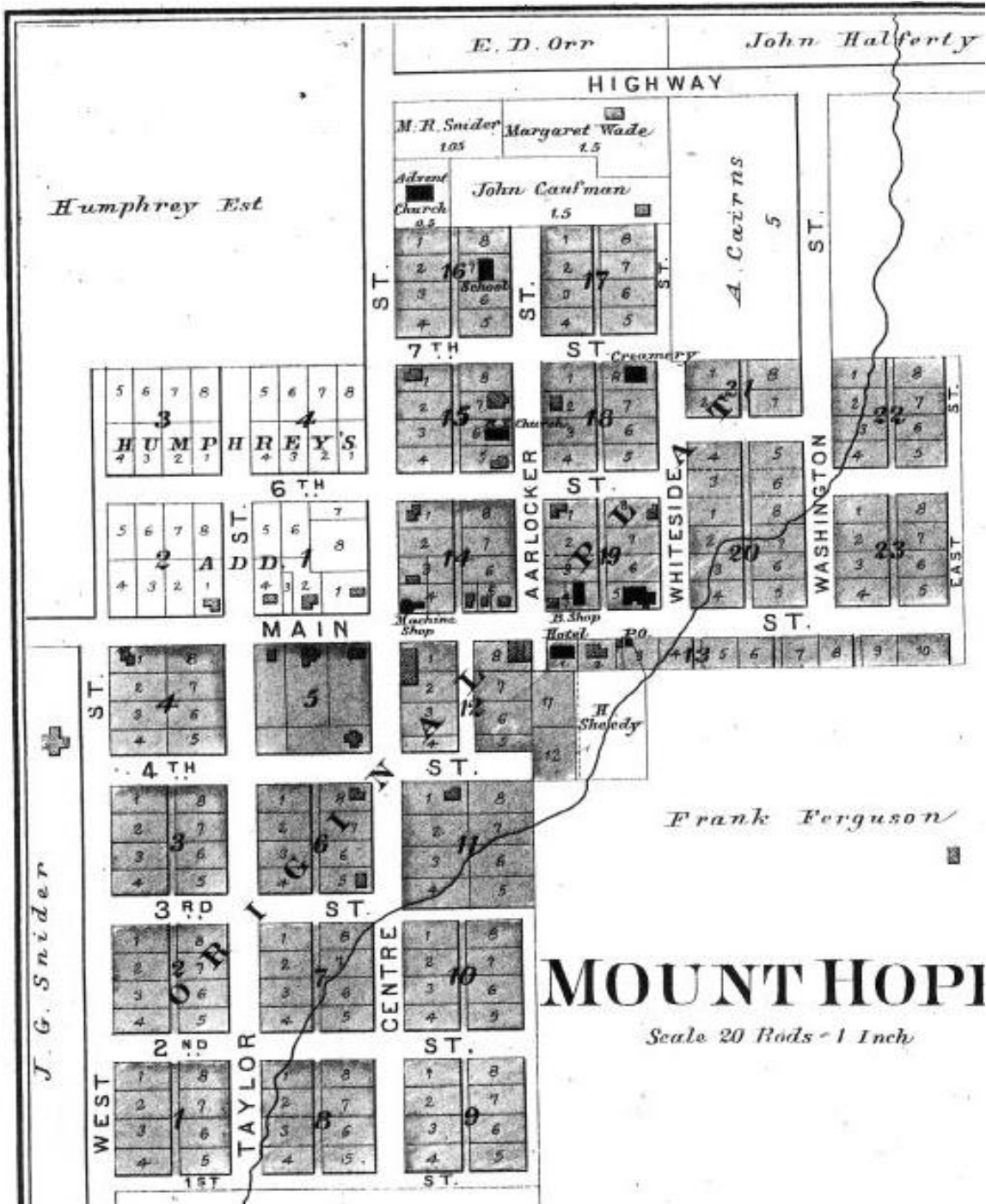
"Oh, that's an American bedbug," was the reply. "Do you have bigger ones in England?"

In 1960, not long after arriving in Mexico for the first time, I heard this story again, but this time, it was an American boy who said everything was bigger in the United States, and a Mexican boy who told him about the local bugs. I later heard versions of the story in several other places.

Before long, young Pitt was hired to work as a shoe salesman by J. H. McCormick, manager of Brockton Boot & Shoe Co, on 122 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

A story he told about that time is that McCormick's elderly mother lived alone out in the country. Someone discovered a pile of bloody clothing, and it seemed that a gruesome murder had taken place. Naturally, the old lady was terrified, so McCormick asked young Pitt to go out and stay with her at night. It was dark by the time he started, and he could imagine someone with a dagger waiting to leap out of every dark shadow. His fear turned to terror when he heard footsteps in the dead leaves beside the trail. It was not an echo because they did not exactly coincide with his steps. But when he stopped, the footsteps stopped and there was dead silence. When he started, they began again. Someone was stalking him. Trying to show more bravery than he felt, he called out, but there was only silence. So he picked up a large stone and hurled it with all his strength. Then there was a loud *Moo!* and the footsteps went running away. It was a lonely cow that had been keeping him company as he went along the trail.

It seems the employment with McCormick did not last long because by July 18 he was writing to Ellis, who had married and was living in El Moro, Colorado: "I was working in a shoe store in this city, but I had to lay off for six weeks, and so I engaged to work for a young man that is traveling through this city taking orders to enlarge photographs. I have only worked 2 ½ days and have taken 17 orders. I expect to travel with him but do not know as yet. I can go to work again in the store that I was in about the first of Sept. My old boss gave me a good recommendation. It was worded as follows: 'To whom it may concern. The bearer, Mr. Pitt Wade, has been in my employ for some time. I have always found him Steady, Reliable, Prompt, Industrious and Sober. He is a



# MOUNT HOPI

Scale 20 Rods = 1 Inch

first class salesman as well. Anyone in need of a first class salesman will find him as recommended.' So you see, I did not get the G.B.”

From this distance, we cannot know for sure if he was, in fact, getting a polite “G.B.” [goodbye?]. What we do know is that he really was a first-class salesman, and he used this skill in nearly everything he did in life. According to Uncle Pitt, “My father probably could have sold ice cubes to Eskimos. He was a very, very persuasive salesman. Maybe that's why he was a good doctor. I think he talked people into getting well. He sold them on the idea of getting well, and they got well.”

Pitt’s letter to Ellis continues: “Saturday—July 16—was the hottest day that we have had this summer. It was 112 above 0 in the shade. There were 4 deaths in this city from the heat. I was sick yesterday and today from being over heat Sat. but am feeling lots better this evening so much so that I will start to work tomorrow again. A man cannot afford to lay around much when he pays \$5.00 per week for board.”

The *La Crosse Republican and Leader* newspaper of Saturday, July 16, 1887, had a front-page headline: “HOTTEST DAY IN THIRTEEN YEARS. ONE HUNDRED DEGREES IN THE SIGNAL SERVICE OFFICE AT FOUR O’CLOCK. Standard instruments held within ten feet of the ground denoted one-hundred and four degrees in the shade of large buildings at two o’clock.” It seems the heat was somewhat less than the 112 degrees reported by Pitt—he was not prone to under-exaggerate—but the newspaper account does agree with his information that several people died from the heat.

Turning to news from home, Pitt tells Ellis: “We have bought a little house in Mt. Hope and the folks have got almost moved there.” Other family sources indicate that when Margaret’s parents were no longer able to farm, they moved to Lancaster, the county seat. Later they moved with Margaret to the village of Mt. Hope where their son John purchased a house for them. There they stayed with Margaret, and at times with John, until Edward died in 1891 and Fania in 1901.

On the previous page is a plat<sup>9</sup> of Mt. Hope from that era. At the top and center is the property of Margaret Wade. Her brother John Halferty had land across the highway and to the right. Notice the “Advent Church” around the corner to the left.

Ruth Ann and I have been to Mt. Hope and have seen the house that probably is the one where Margaret lived with her parents.<sup>10</sup> The “Advent Church” building is still there, too. It is a private residence now, but the form of the building and the shape of its windows reveal its churchly origins.

The next information we have about Pitt is that in 1890 he went 200 miles due south to Bushnell, Illinois, and began working there to earn money for college. On December 17, 1891, he enrolled in Western Normal College in Bushnell for the school term that ended in April of 1892. In the summer of 1892, he worked recruiting students for the College. On November 10, 1892, he enrolled for another term which lasted until April of 1893.

### **A change of direction**

It was about this time that an important life event took place: Pitt joined a debating society. The young people in this group would choose topics of general interest and divide into two teams to debate them. On one occasion, they decided to debate Saturday versus Sunday as the true day of rest. Pitt’s team was assigned to defend the observance of Saturday. We do not know which group

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<sup>9</sup> A surveyor’s map

<sup>10</sup> We have no information about when the Adventist church began in Mt. Hope. The Adventist journal *Youth’s Instructor* of June 18, 1879, reports a Sabbath school with 35 members in Mt. Hope.

was judged to have won the debate, but by the time it was over, young Pitt was convinced on the subject. Pitt's grandparents Edward and Fania Halferty had become Seventh-day Adventists around 1881. Pitt was 13 years old then, and the son of a Baptist preacher. He must have heard the subject discussed more than once. After the debate in Bushnell, it became a personal conviction, and he made a life-long commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

### **Recommendation, please!**

The winter of 1893-1894 found Pitt in Battle Creek, Michigan, studying science courses at the Adventist college. By this time, his decision to study medicine was clear, and these courses were part of his preparation.

He spent the summer of 1894 in Texas visiting physicians as a representative of Van Specialists and Surgeons of Dallas. In the fall, he joined a group of fellow students from Battle Creek who had gone to Texas to sell health books written by John Harvey Kellogg.

Below is a letter telling about this experience and the events that followed. It is dated October 14, 1895, and addressed to O. A. Olsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventists church:

Dear brother,

I have a little matter I would like to lay before you and if you would think, after you have weighed the evidence, that I am in the Lord's work, I would like to have you make a copy of the enclosed letter [of recommendation] and return it to me. I am fitting myself for a medical missionary. I started to take the course at the sanitarium. Was sent to Texas last fall with that company to canvas for Dr. Kellogg's books. The most of our company was taken down with typhoid fever. I helped nurse three of them without pay and by the time I could leave the last one, I had spent all the little money I had earned canvassing.

The physicians that attended the boys that were sick did not make any charges for their professional services because the boys were fitting themselves for medical missionaries. When I finished nursing the boys, I did not have any money left to go back to B.C. on, or to go to canvassing, even if the times had not been so hard. Every agent except one, even the state agent, left Texas because of hard times. The physicians offered me work, and as I had to do something to get bread to live on and I had asked God to open some place for me, I took the work and thanked God for it.

A little later they asked me to take a position as business manager for a journal. I accepted the position on percentage. I wrote to Dr. Kellogg and told him I was going to complete my medical education as soon as I got the money so I could, and that the physicians I was with were physio-medicalesse.<sup>11</sup> He wrote back and, notwithstanding all they had done for us when we were in need of medical help, called them quacks, and told me that if I had any love for my soul or the cause, I would have nothing to do with them. When I received his letter, I was already under contract with them because I believed I was doing the best possible thing to advance truth. If Dr. Kellogg had advised me to not

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<sup>11</sup> Physiomedicalism was a system of medicine developed in the early 19th century. It was based on the observations of a farmer named Samuel Thomson who emphasized the use of peppers and other spices that produce heat in the stomach that can be distributed throughout the body to cure disease. .

continue in the work without calling the men that had come day and night to see the boys when they knew they were not going to get a cent for it such mean names, I would have followed his advice, but when he slurred the men I was with, I could not help but see it because they were not allopathic regular.

About the middle of the summer God impressed me with the idea of going at once to college to finish my medical education, I told the Lord to give me evidence that I might know I had to be sure that He had called me and that as soon as I was shown clearly that He had called for me that I would cut loose and start trusting Him to provide for me

I was impressed with the idea of writing to a certain man, and that I would get my answer from him. I wrote to him and told him exactly how I had been impressed and asked him to take it to the Lord and get an answer for me. So he and his wife went to God for the answer, and they were directed to open the Bible and the answer would be shown them. And they opened to Isa. 1-2. The Lord hath spoken.

I will enclose a part of a letter from the brother that I wrote, and you can see how the Lord has provided for me so far. Please read the letter before you go any further with this letter. The way was opened for me to get to St. Louis free.

The Sect. of the medical college here [Barnes Medical College in St. Louis, Missouri] offered unsolicited to get me a free course at the college if I would get him a letter from the head of my church stating that I am a worthy person. I wrote to Dr. Kellogg and asked him to give me said letter. He answered and said that, as I was not under his jurisdiction, he could not do it. I showed his letter to Dr. French, sec. of the college, and he said that he did not expect me to be under their jurisdiction, only wanted a statement that I was a worthy person, and gave me a note to give to Dr. K. And he did not care enough for me to even dign to answer it.

You do not know me, but Prof Kelly knows me well. Please go to him and ask him about my Christian character. [underlined in the original] I was a student under him. After you have satisfied yourself that I am a Christian boy, then I ask you to make a copy of the recommendation I enclose and send it to me. Please sign yourself pres. of Gen. Conf. I must have the letter in a few days, or it will be too late to do me any good. God knows my heart. I am trusting Him to provide the means for me to go through this winter on.

I have tried to tell you both sides of this as near as I could. Pray for me. Please let me hear from you by return mail, if convenient. I am your brother in Christ. Pitt A. Wade, Barnes Medical College, St. Louis, Mo.

Pitt was definitely optimistic to ask for a recommendation from John Harvey Kellogg after he had defied the doctor's strong counsel to break off relations with the quack physicians in Texas. Furthermore, he was asking Kellogg to help him study in a secular medical school. On October 1, just two weeks before the date of this letter, Kellogg had presided over opening ceremonies for an Adventist medical school in Battle Creek. It would seem the doctor was showing restraint when he merely replied that Pitt was not under his "jurisdiction."

Having failed to get a recommendation from Kellogg, Pitt now sets his sights on getting one from the church president. He seems to realize it is a long shot since he is a complete stranger to Olsen, but he is hoping the pastor will ask Dr. Kelley about him.



It is hardly a coincidence that he writes, "I am fitting myself for a medical missionary." The name of the new school in Battle Creek was American Medical Missionary College.

On October 26<sup>th</sup> Pitt received a courteous reply from Olsen's assistant L. T. Nicola who stated that the pastor was traveling, but he promised to bring the matter to his attention when he returned. Nicola stated that he had spoken with Dr. Kelley and received a warm recommendation.

Encouraged by this friendly response, Pitt sent clippings from a series of articles he had written on the subject of religious liberty for a newspaper in southern Wisconsin, as further evidence of his commitment.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, Pitt wrote again to Nicola. He was obviously feeling some frustration because Olsen had returned briefly to Battle Creek and left again without sending the recommendation.

I do not want you to get the impression that I am getting impatient, but I fully realize how much depends on my receiving that letter from Eld. Olsen. I would not ask it if I did not believe I am worthy, ... but I believe I am worthy. A great deal depends on my getting that letter from Eld O. It not only means \$120 to me, it means my getting an education or without it, no education. Because it is impossible for me to go through college without unless God helps me in some way I do not see at present. ... It lays entirely in Eld. O power to put me in college here or to bar me out. ... I hope you will take a personal interest in the matter and see that I get an ans. of some kind as soon as possible.

Nicola does seem to have taken a "personal interest in the matter," as Pitt requested, because on November 27, he wrote again to reassure the young man that he would get an answer before long.

Pitt sent another letter on December 12, a brief message that reflects his growing unhappiness. He cannot understand why the matter is delayed. He reports that he is actively engaged in witnessing and has created a good deal of interest among the "college boys," referring to his fellow medical students. He wants Nicola to contact the local elder of the Saint Louis Adventist church who will vouch for him about this, and he includes the elder's name and address.

There is, however, something that seems puzzling: Pitt saved his class schedules from the medical school. Classes were spread out between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. It seems that if he had, somehow, been able to obtain an exemption from Saturday classes, he would have mentioned this. Some of the classes met only on Saturday, and it is hard to imagine that he could have continued in the program without attending.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, Nicola replied, but the answer was not the one Pitt so fervently hoped to receive

OFFICE OF THE  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
GENERAL CONFERENCE,  
207 West Main Street,  
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

G. A. CROSBY,  
President.

W. H. EDWARDS,  
Sec. Gen. and Treasurer.

L. T. NICOLA,  
Asst. Secy.

*Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.*

Dec. 15, 1895.

Pitt A. Wade,  
Barnes Medical College,  
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Brother:---

Yours of the 12th inst. received this morning, and contents carefully noted. I have been wanting to write you for several days. Elder Olsen, during his last visit here to this place, gave your matter a little attention, but thought it would be quite difficult for him to give you the recommendation you desired. He stated that he was not acquainted with you, although he had heard you favorably spoken of. He stated that he was not acquainted with the Barnes Medical College, and he wasn't in any situation to give you the recommendation that you asked. I suppose it will not be absolutely necessary for you to have what you proposed. Doubtless you will get along there all right without Elder Olsen's guarantee.

I am much interested in ~~what~~ you wrote concerning your missionary efforts. Doubtless you can do much to interest others in present truth. I hope that my failure to secure you what you requested will not cause you to be discouraged in any way. Every true man will remain true under every circumstance, and under disadvantages and even disappointments. Brother Olsen is very careful of his recommendations. If he were acquainted with you, and if he were acquainted with the Medical College there, he would know then just what to do about the matter.

You ask for the return of the printed slips. We inclose them herewith.

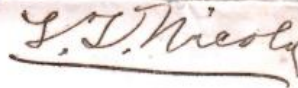
P.A.W.-2-

I will be very much pleased to hear from you frequently. I am interested in your success. Prof. Kelley's warm recommendation has created quite an interest in my heart for you. I know you are the surrounded by young men of the world. You will doubtless meet with many temptations, but you will probably be able to do much good there, more than you could do in some other schools; perhaps more good than you could do here in the new Medical School at Battle Creek. But of course it is not for me to say where you should go to school, and where you should not go.

We will send you a copy of the late General Conference Bulletin and also a copy of the Week of Prayer readings, which you doubtless will like to read.

Your brother in Christ,

C.



It is clear that this letter was not hastily written. Nicola must have labored over it, attempting to soften the blow. He writes hopefully, "I suppose it will not be absolutely necessary for you to have what you proposed. Doubtless you will get along there all right without Elder Olsen's guarantee." It seems the pastor was not convinced by Pitt's repeated claim that Olsen's reply would either "put me in college here or ... bar me out." And he adds: "I will be very much pleased to hear from you frequently. I am interested in your success."

Pitt, however, was in no way mollified by these friendly words. His reply filled 12 handwritten pages:

Dear Bro., Yours of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. received and I cannot express my disappointment. I am discouraged and disheartened. I do not know what to do.

It seems to me that Eld. Olsen's reason for not granting my request is very slim. ... It seems to me that the references I gave Eld. O. and the papers I sent him were gilt-edge. As far as his not knowing me is concerned is very thin, because even if I had lived under his roof as long as he considers me a Christian brother, I am entitled to be treated as such. I am a human being like yourself, with the same feelings and passions as you have. ... Eld. Olsen would rather see me either plunge \$120 in debt or give up the work than to write me a little piece of paper. He did not have to stand security that I would ever do any missionary work but only say that he understood that I was preparing myself for the work. It would have been such a small, small act on the part of the Gen. Conf. yet it meant so much to me.

I offered myself to the work—it was all I had. Do you think if I had offered \$40,000 to the work, I would have had to wait almost ¼ of a year and then would have received an answer stating that as they did not know me they did not believe I was in earnest.

I am thankful that God knows my motives and that he will vindicate them. To me from now on the title brother is a misnomer. Actions speak louder than words. A brother may deceive and spitefully use you, a friend never will. (Prov 17-17)

I suppose I will have to leave here in a few days. Do not know what I will do but expect I will get a position as travelling salesman for some wholesale firm, the business I gave up when I accepted the truth. I am very loathe to leave the interest I have here and this work, but I cannot think of plunging myself in debt \$120 at this stage world's history.

God knows I was and am willing to do the work it may be that that is all he will require of me.

I know a traveling man has a great many temptations but I shall trust God to help me. I do not like the work, especially the associations, but I plainly see I can expect no help from the people I had believed would be friends to me

The money I will earn may be of more value to the cause than I would be. But then I do not believe the Gen. Conf. would accept any money from me even if I would write to them and tell them that I had consecrated it to the Lord. They would tell me that as they were not personally acquainted with me they were afraid I was lying to them but that would not prevent me from using it to advance the 3rd angels message.

Bro. Nicola, you know the difference between right and wrong. You are capable of laying all prejudice aside and judging a case fully and clearly on its merits. You are quite well posted as to the treatment that I have received.

Please square my case by the plummet of justice and see what you think of the spirit that has been manifest by those that are calling for the common people to put their hard earned money into their hands. You need not tell me what your decision is, I know. It can be but one thing.

Truth is eternal. Right is right and can not be wrong.

Pitt had read the journals that Nicola sent, and he found in them further ammunition:

I saw in that article a complete description of the treatment I had received, the leaders are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting. ... Do you realize what that statement means.

Please open your Bible to 1 Peter IV-17 and read the text. ...

We are living in a grand and awful age. Through the thick clouds that darkened the political horizon, above the groans of agony, beyond the gloom that enshrouds this age, I see the opening the new era with its eternal destruction for one class and immortal bliss for the other class. When time is swallowed up in eternity and the pleasures of this world are eclipsed as the sun eclipses the tallow dip. Oh how I long to be there and with God's help I am going to be. ...

You state that you are interested in my success. Are you interested enough to make a copy of the letter I enclose and return it to me by return mail?

Wait! Is he asking again for the letter of recommendation? He is. And, for the third time, he writes out the recommendation he would like to receive. He wants the pastor to copy and return it, adding, as he had before:

If I do not get it by return mail it will do me no good.

If I get it, it will save me the humiliation of going to the faculty here and telling them that my church, after looking my case up and taking three months to investigate it, had decided that they could not even recommend me to your board and that I would have to sever my relations with the college unless they (the college) exhibited more of an interest in me than my own brother had.

Brother Nicola please do not keep me waiting on this but answer at once. If you do not think I am in earnest please state it in plain words.

You either you do or you don't, I am always plain and express my feelings and I like to have other people do the same to me. Expecting to hear from you by return mail

I am your friend,

Pitt A. Wade

No longer does he sign off as, “your brother,” because that term has become a “misnomer.”

We have no information about what Pitt did next or what he said to his mentors at Barnes Medical College. What we do know is that he did not have to drop out of school or “plunge” hopelessly into debt. He continued to work in sales each summer to pay for his medical education. It was not easy: Uncle Pitt stated that one Fall his father visited his family in Wisconsin and returned with several bags of walnuts. That winter he lived mostly on stale bread and walnuts.<sup>12</sup>

The summer 1896 found him in the field as a representative of the Paul Paquin Laboratories, of St. Louis, visiting physician in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. In the spring of 1897, he worked for Alta Pharmacal Co., as a detail agent, interviewing and offering samples to physicians. He also was a salesman for the Pneu-ma-chemic Co. This employment and the former were probably simultaneous.

### **Five cents on the dollar**

At one point during that summer, he visited a man who was a manufacturer of medical equipment. He arrived just as another man was leaving and he found the executive very angry. “Did you see that fellow who just left?” the man shouted. “He is the biggest scoundrel that ever was!”

It seems the “scoundrel” was a distributor of medical equipment. He had placed several orders with this manufacturer. He paid for each one and sent in glowing reports of how well the products were selling. Then he placed a really huge order saying the equipment was already sold and that he would pay as soon as he received the goods. For a long time, the executive had been trying to collect on the promissory notes this man had given him, but he finally concluded that he had been scammed.

“I’ll buy those IOUs from you,” said Pitt.

“Ha! They aren’t worth the paper they are written on,” the man fumed.

“It doesn’t matter. I will pay you five cents on the dollar for them.” So, they made the deal.

When Pitt got back to Barnes Medical College, he wrote to the distributor and asked for a copy of his catalog. Then he got a number of his classmates to do the same and he wrote with enthusiasm about the good equipment they offered. He asked the medical college to give him a letter of recommendation. He preserved a letter, dated Feb 10, 1898, that was written by Pinckney French, M.D., secretary of the institution. It states, in part: “No student of the college occupies a more

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<sup>12</sup> Information in letter from Reta Wade Coville.

substantial position than Mr. Wade. He is a fine student, and his prospects are excellent.” This may be a copy of the letter he sent to the distributor.

After this groundwork, Pitt placed an order for a full complement of medical office equipment, including chairs, a desk and examining table; and numerous instruments, to be delivered to Barnes Medical College, with the assurance of payment in full upon delivery. Before long, the shipment arrived, and Pitt paid for it with the man’s own IOUs. In this way, he was able to set up his first medical office with equipment that cost him five cents on the dollar.

On April 13, 1898, Pitt graduated. In a letter from that time, he stated that this was the culmination of “seven long years as a student.” The medical course at Barnes was three years, so the seven years must have included his time of study at Bushnell and Battle Creek, and perhaps before that.

### **Moving ahead**

Among the letters Pitt preserved for posterity is one he wrote a few weeks later, addressed to a Dr. Harrell of Colchester, Indiana, who was retiring. In it, he offers to take over the older man’s medical practice.<sup>13</sup>

If I find I can hold as much of the practice as I can reasonably expect to, I will then buy your place at a fair figure. I really have no doubt about being able to command my share of the practice.

He was not lacking in self-confidence then or at any other time in his life. However, he admits:

I have not been able to close the deal here that I had expected to have closed and consequently I have no cash to pay in advance. I can and will not thus pay you very much. I will give you (5) five percent of my first (12) twelve months practice and call you in consultation when I need help and patients are able to pay for your services.

He adds, however, that he doubts he will need any help.

Dr. Harrell, for some reason, failed to accept this proposal, and a short time later, Pitt was in Battle Creek working, perhaps as an intern, at the sanitarium.

Pitt’s time at Battle Creek must have been especially pleasant because that is where Alice Zener was studying medicine at AMMC. He had met the three Zener [pronounced *Zee-ner*] sisters in the



**Pitt**

Saint Louis Adventist church. He first enjoyed the company of Mary, the middle sister who was lively and had a great sense of humor. She invited him to the comfortable family home on Clemens Avenue. There he got acquainted with Alice, the youngest of the three. She had reddish-brown hair; she was sweet, quiet, and somewhat shy, pretty much the opposite of his excitable temperament. The family story is that Mary never quite forgave him.<sup>14</sup>



**Alice**

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<sup>13</sup> PAW letter, June 5, 1898

<sup>14</sup> More information about the Zener sisters on pages 111-112.

After his time in Battle Creek, Pitt went to the Chicago Lying-in [maternity] Hospital<sup>15</sup> to get experience in obstetrics. The institution was a pioneer and world leader in the area. Its mission was to offer its services to the poorest women of Chicago and to train physicians and nurses in maternal care.<sup>16</sup> It was to a large degree due to its influence that puerperal fever ceased to be a threat in the United States.

I remember a story Grandfather told of something that happened during this time. He was called to care for a poor woman in a dark and dangerous part of the city. After the baby was safely delivered, he asked the neighbor who was with them how much she would charge to care for the mother and child. She offered to do it for two dollars.

“No, that’s too much,” he said.

Pretty soon they found someone who would do it for one dollar. But he said, This woman is so poor she can’t afford to pay even one dollar. He kept insisting until they found a woman who would take care of the mother and baby for twenty-five cents. With that, he was finally satisfied. So he cleaned up and put his instruments back in his medical bag. When he left, he had to walk down a dark alley and he was very much afraid. Then he looked ahead and could see three shadowy figures lurking in the dark. *I am about to be waylaid*, he thought, *maybe even murdered*. Raising his bag over his head he charged at them, yelling as loudly as possible. They fled in terror.

When he returned for a follow-up visit, and the young mother asked, “Why did you run at those men in the alley?”

“I thought they were going to attack me,” he explained.

“No,” she said, “they just wanted to see what a doctor looks like who would only accept a quarter for someone to care for a new mother.”

## Chapter 3

# Getting Started

### Off to a good start

After his time at the Chicago Lying-in Hospital, Pitt went to Cañon City, Colorado, where he would practice medicine for the next 44 years. The date is uncertain but if he arrived a year after graduating from Barnes Medical College, it would have been in April of 1899. He was thirty-one.

At that time, the younger generation of men was starting to be clean-shaven, but he felt that if people saw him with a beard, they would identify him as older and more experienced, so he let his beard grow.

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<sup>15</sup> Pitt’s obituary in the Cañon City newspaper stated that after graduation, he took an internship at the Battle Creek Sanitarium under Dr. J. H. Kellogg and then a three-year residency at the Chicago Lying-in Hospital. This is not accurate. There is a letter from Pitt stating that the total time in Battle Creek and Chicago was one year.

<sup>16</sup> See Wikipedia: [History | Chicago Lying-in Hospital \(uchicago.edu\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Chicago_Lying-in_Hospital).

Like all the other doctors in town, Pitt, at first, used a bicycle to get around and make house calls. If he had to see someone out in the country, he would rent a horse and buggy from the livery stable.<sup>17</sup>

At times, he would take his lunch with him to the office, and, at noon, he would call the stable and ask them to bring over a horse and buggy. When he could see it approaching from his second-story office windows, he would come running down the stairs with his medical bag in hand and leap into the buggy. He would then lash the horse into a mad run until they got out of town and came to a place where there was a large shade tree. There he would pull up, tie the horse to the tree, remove his lunch from the medical bag and relax under the spreading branches while he ate.<sup>18</sup> After that, he would go back to town at a leisurely pace and return the horse and buggy to the stable. The idea was to get people to notice him and create the impression that he was a busy doctor who was much in demand. Uncle Pitt's comment about this was: "I don't know if this strategy had anything to do with it, but the fact is that, before long, he did build up a busy practice."

### **Alice in trouble**

Back in Battle Creek, Alice was having a difficult time. The medical course at AMMC was tuition-free. The students paid for their education by their long hours of work in the hospital and by their commitment, under contract, to serve as medical missionaries upon graduation. But Alice found herself overwhelmed by the load of work and classes, and she began to feel that she did not really enjoy medicine at all.

On January 1, 1898, she shared her discouragement with her family:

Dr. Kellogg was here Tuesday. I talked with him while he was taking his dinner, and it sounded discouraging to me. ... He said if I hadn't come back this year, he was going to send someone down after me—which I put down as Fib No. 1 and I waited for number 2. I told him I hated it, and it took my appetite, and he seemed to think that was very encouraging, and said he couldn't eat nor sleep for ten years when he thought of his office work. I asked him if he wanted me to be miserable for ten years, and he said, Oh, you'll get over it before that.

We don't know the date, but it must have been some time in 1899 when Alice gave up completely. She withdrew from medical training in Battle Creek and went home to Saint Louis. In the latter part of 1899 she went to Colorado. Letters from that time indicate that she was not a patient at the Adventist sanitarium in that was located in Boulder. She may have been working as a volunteer and enjoying the cool mountain air while she got back her peace of mind.

A few years later, Alice had a change of heart and decided that she did want to complete her medical education, after all. By that time, her mother and sisters were living in Boulder, so she got in touch with the University of Colorado School of Medicine located in that city. It seemed that she might be able to finish in one year, so she wrote to Dr. Kellogg and asked for a transcript of her grades, but he refused to send it saying that Adventist young people should not study at worldly institutions. She resented this intensely. Aunt Dorothea recalled that her mother came to visit while she [Dorothea] was studying at the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles. On Sabbath, they attended church services at Paulson Hall, a large auditorium associated with the hospital. At some

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<sup>17</sup> A livery stable was somewhat equivalent to a car rental business today. It was a place where people could rent a horse and buggy, or a horse and saddle. Travelers could also leave their horses at the stable to be cared for while they were in town.

<sup>18</sup> Unlike the situation in Wisconsin, chiggers were not a problem in the area. I grew up not far from there and never heard of them except from Grandfather's stories.



point during the service, Alice got up, walked out and did not return. Afterward, Dorothea found her seated in a nearby park. She said that it was a warm summer day, too nice to be indoors—an astonishing statement coming from devout Alice. Then she added that she did not feel comfortable sitting there with a large photograph of J. H. Kellogg looking down at them from the wall on one side of the auditorium.

### **Love Has Its Way**

But back to the events of 1899: it is clear that love was in the air. Here is an undated letter Alice wrote to her parents from Colorado:

*I got your letter yesterday afternoon in which you inquired about things and what you should tell people. We had expected to be married about next week sometime. We thought of going down to Florence, as Pitt didn't like to do it here.*

Florence is a small town about 12 miles east of Cañon City.

*He didn't exactly fancy the idea of getting married that way anyhow. He had in his mind to take a trip home and see his mother and do things up in style, though he wanted to get married now too.*

Even for 1899, this seems like a remarkable letter. She writes: “Pitt didn’t like...,” “he didn’t fancy...,” “he had in his mind...,” and “he wanted...” It doesn’t sound like the wedding was something they were planning together. Then comes the clincher:

*So that was the way he had planted, but last week he and Mr. Kindred found it necessary to take an option on the Griffiths Oil Wells, right then and there.*

So ... the wedding is taking second place to what? To speculation on an oil well!

We should note that speculation was very much the spirit of the time: people were excited about railroads, oil, mining, manufacturing and many other things. It was a wildcat environment in which a lucky few were big winners and many more were going broke. With Pitt, it was a theme that would persist for years to come. As noted earlier, he was a world-class optimist, a trait that carried him through many disappointments. He was always expecting that the next scheme would be the big winner.

The letter from Alice continues:

*That was the deal he wrote me about before I came out. He expects to sell it in three or six months, but in the meantime, they have to meet payments on it, and he is afraid to get married now under the circumstances. I understand how it is with him, of course. I guess we won't set any time at all. We'll just see what turns things take. I like him and he likes me. He's not perfection but I don't care for that. I think he is very honest. I guess it is just as well perhaps to wait a few months. He will feel better satisfied to begin like he wants it to.*

There was a delay, but the day did arrive. Pitt and Alice said their wedding vows January 1, 1900, at the home of Adventist pastor Glen Sparks, in Denver. From there, they went to their first home in Cañon City, a modest frame house located at 724 Pine Avenue.

A few years later, they bought a place known as Fairview Terrace. This was a three-story brick home surrounded by 5 acres of lawn and gardens located at 1106 Park Avenue, in South Cañon. When Alice's father died, she applied her part of the estate settlement for this purchase.<sup>19</sup>

### **A Friend named Jennie M**

In due time, Pitt, of course, acquired a buggy of his own and several fine horses. One of these, a pacing mare<sup>20</sup> named Jennie M, came to occupy a special place in family history. According to Uncle Pitt, Jennie had been used in racing and was very fast, a champion on short runs, but she tended to injure herself in longer races as her rear hooves would strike the fetlock of her forelegs.<sup>21</sup>

Pitt learned that Jennie was for sale and knew that he wanted her, but he was afraid that if the sellers saw his interest, the price would go up, so he asked a friend to bid on his behalf and bought her.<sup>22</sup> She was beautiful, a teal brown and she became a beloved part of the household for many years.

There are two family stories related to Jennie:

### **Bridge Out!**

On the night of August 17, 1909, Cañon City was hit by one of the most destructive floods in its history. Three days of rain had already driven the Arkansas River to near the top of its banks, when at 7:00 PM the telegraph operator at the Denver and Rio Grande Railway depot was startled by a message that came clicking in over the wires.

In the mountains twenty miles west of Cañon, the steady downpour had turned into a cloudburst. More than three inches of water poured out of the sky within a matter of minutes. The resulting deluge raced over the already-soaked ground and poured into nearby Texas Creek, setting off a flash flood, a wall of water that plunged downstream bulldozing rocks off the canyon walls, clawing up trees by the roots and hurling them along on its crest.

When this aquatic battering ram entered the wider Arkansas, it lost some of its violence, but even so, the telegraph operator at Cotopaxi reported the river had risen rapidly and the crest was rushing down toward Cañon City carrying a heavy load of debris.

With this warning, the sheriff's department sprang into action and, around 9:00 PM, the last stragglers were leaving their homes along the river's edge, when the flood waters came pouring out of the Royal Gorge.

By 10:00 PM numerous structures near the river had been swept away and low-lying fields, factories and houses were awash. Before long, the ninth-street bridge, which had stood up under the onslaught of many a flood, started to sway as the river pounded it with tree trunks, boulders and other kinds of debris. Around 11:00, the south pier of the bridge gave way, and the surging

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<sup>19</sup> There is a letter from Alice to her mother in which she asks about her part of the settlement, stating that she needs the money because they are buying a house. It is unclear whether Alice's money paid the whole or part of the purchase price.

<sup>20</sup> According to Wikipedia, pacing "is a distinctive lateral gait in which both legs on the same side are lifted together. It is seen mostly in specially bred or trained horses."

<sup>21</sup> The "fetlock" is the joint just above the horse's hooves. **Again, quoting from Wikipedia:** "In thoroughbred racehorses, the fetlock is involved in roughly 50% of catastrophic racing injuries."

<sup>22</sup> A handwritten message from the seller, F. S. Grainger: "Jennie M, seal brown mare foaled 1901, sired by Diablo 209¼. Dam by Disrat 205½. ... She is the very finest mare in this state, and she is worth \$1200 today. I was very sorry to see this great mare sold for the low price of \$395 but glad she got into good hands."

waters caught the heavy steel structure and swept it around until it came to rest on the north bank about 100 feet downstream.

People who came out the next morning to survey the damage, found what seemed like a nearly unrecognizable new world along the edge of the river. Many familiar structures were gone. Fields and crops were buried under a thick layer of mud and the river channel, at some points, had moved as much as forty feet.

### **A Warning**

Several nights after this flood, Pitt was awakened in the night by a startling dream in which he saw himself about to cross some railroad tracks in his buggy. He saw boxcars that had been separated to allow traffic to go through and they were standing on either side of the roadway. Everything in the dream seemed unusually vivid. He noticed the color of the cars and the markings on their sides. Then he saw men come out from behind the cars on either side of the road and start to run toward him. It was clear their intentions were evil. Just as they reached him, he woke up.

Pitt lay in bed for a while thinking about this dream, but eventually went back to sleep. A short time later, he saw himself moving along in his buggy once again. There ahead were the two box cars and the entire scene was repeated exactly as before.

This time he was really impressed, and he wondered if the dream could be some kind of warning. Was a burglar trying to break into his house or the barn? He listened but could hear nothing other than the normal night sounds and Grandmother's steady breathing at his side. After thinking it over for a while and praying, he felt at peace and once again fell asleep.

Now for a third time, he had the same dream, but this time, just as the threatening strangers ran toward him, the silence of the night was shattered by the ringing of the telephone.

"Doctor, it's a shame to bother you at night like this, but my wife is terribly sick," said a frightened voice on the other end of the line. "Could you come?" The address was in North Cañon.

Pitt asked a few more questions and then he said, "Yes, I'll be right there."

What about the dream? Well, he would take every reasonable precaution, but he had never refused to care for a person in need, and this did not seem like the time to start.

First, he called the hired man and together they went outside, holding the lantern. They searched the premises carefully including the barn and stable area. Everything appeared normal. Then they put the harness on Jennie M and hitched her to the buggy.

He moved the reins lightly and they started off at a fine pace. At the end of Park Avenue, Pitt turned down the hill toward the river, heading for the ninth-street crossing. It was then that the realization struck him with full force. There *was* no ninth-street crossing. This meant that there was only one vehicle bridge across the river—the fourth-street bridge which ended at the rail yards. Was that where ...? Well, never mind, a desperately sick patient was waiting. Pitt turned his horse toward Fourth Street.

At the mare's good pace, he was soon at the entrance to the bridge. When he started to descend on the other side, Pitt felt every nerve of his body electrified. There it was: the whole scene! There were the tracks and the cars. He recognized them from the markings on their sides, exactly as he had seen them three times already that night. And, just as he had seen, men came running out from behind the cars on either side.

Pitt did not hesitate. He reached for his whip and applied it to Jennie's back. But before she could respond, the assailants were already there. One grabbed her bridle, and the one on the left reached for Pitt's arm, evidently intending to pull him out of the buggy.

The frightened mare neighed and reared, pawing the air. The man attempted to hold her, but only for a second. The flailing of those powerful hooves could crush a man's skull, and he jumped out of the way and fell back. The man on the left jumped back, too, out of the way of Pitt's buggy whip.

Just as he did, Jennie came down and took off. The buggy lurched and bounced wildly over the tracks and raced around the sharp corner just ahead. As they turned the corner, the front axle bent, but miraculously the buggy did not turn over. Soon they were out of danger, but it was a long time before Pitt could get Jennie to slow down, and it was a while before his own heart stopped pounding wildly and his breathing returned to normal.

I wonder how Pitt felt later as he reflected on the incident. Did he think he had been wrong to go out after the warning he had received? In any case, the dreams served a useful purpose. If he had reined in or hesitated, the story might have had a different ending.

**The old truss bridge at Fourth Street that Pitt crossed that night has been replaced by a modern structure, but instead of demolishing the old bridge, the city moved it a short distance west and it now serves as a foot bridge and a historical feature in a park.**



### **Another story about Jennie**

This one happened later when my father Theodore was an adolescent. One day he was riding Jennie bareback and crossing the restored ninth-street bridge. They were about half-way across, when along came a motorcycle. At the instant they passed, the cycle rider pulled in the clutch lever and raced his engine, making an extremely loud and startling noise. He did this intentionally to frighten the horse, and he succeeded. The next thing Father remembered was waking up. He was lying on the floor of the bridge, and a few inches away was the face of Jennie M. She had reared and thrown him to the ground leaving him unconscious, but instead of running off, she came back and seemed to be very much worried, maybe even sorry or apologetic. As soon as he was able to sit up, he put his arms around her neck, and she helped him stand. I don't know if he completed his errand or returned home to recover, but he always remembered Jennie's concern for him.

### **“Remember the Cow”**

This seems to be as good a place as any to share another animal story from Uncle Pitt:

One story that I grew up with: My father used to get very impatient, very unhappy with some of his children. When this happened, my mother would say something I didn't understand: “Remember the cow.” I think I was about 15 before the family let me in on what this saying was all about.

Back about 1918, there was a world-wide flu epidemic, and almost everybody in town got the flu. At the same time, a lot of the doctors had left to join the army because of the World War, so Cañon City was short on doctors and long on sick people.

As a result, my father was working something like 20 hours a day. He would come home to eat and maybe get a couple of hours sleep and then be gone again, because people were sick, and he would go and doctor them and heat some water for them and maybe fix them something to eat and then go on to the next place where people were sick ... your grandfather was a pretty nice person. Anyhow, my family, his family, got this flu. My mother got it, and my sisters got it and finally my brother got the flu.

Up to this point there had been a lot of contention in our house because my brother Ted, who was 14 years old, took an awful long time to milk the family cow and Father was complaining about it a lot. There was no reason for this, absolutely no reason. The boy was just slow and procrastinating, he just wasn't doing his work. It didn't take that long to milk a cow, because Father had milked many cows in his life, and he knew perfectly well that didn't take 30 or 40 minutes to milk a cow. This had been going on for quite a while. Ted had been trying to tell Father that that he couldn't help himself. That the cow was just hard to milk.

Well, as I said, along with the rest of the family, Ted got sick with the flu, so, on top of practicing medicine, my father had to milk the cow. After completing the task, he came back to the house and left without saying anything. Four or five days later, my brother got well enough to be able to go out and milk the cow. And, lo and behold, there was a different cow!

Yes! Amazingly, the cow had changed! It turned out that Father milked that cow just once. Then he went downtown and spent a couple of hours trading her off. Never said a word to anybody. He just brought in the new cow and continued to milk her.

So that was why my mother would sometimes say, when Father got upset with us, “Remember the cow.” Then he would usually smile and relax a bit.

## Chapter 4

# Power in Motion

*The following section is by Uncle Pitt. He was an aircraft mechanic and was always interested in machines and transportation:*

My father was the last doctor in Cañon City to buy an automobile. One of the reasons was that he had this horse called Jennie M, that was pretty rapid in movement, and at that time cars were not very reliable: they ran out of gas, they broke down, they boiled over and they sometimes didn't get you we were going, whereas a horse went right on through. It carried its own fuel, and it didn't mind snow and storms and ice and stuff that cars couldn't handle.

I was the last-born and didn't come along until 1917, but as I got the story, it wasn't until about 1918 that my father bought his first automobile.



Pitt at the wheel of the Moon in front of the Fairview Terrace home. The top of the car is down, probably just for the photo; it is not likely they drove with it down in cold weather. Julia and Theodore are in the back seat and Dorothea is on the other side. Do you see someone standing on the running board on the near side?

His first one was a baby Buick. He didn't keep it for more than about six months and then he bought a V-8 Oldsmobile, and he hadn't had that car too long when he bought a Moon which was probably larger than a Cadillac was at that time. It had a powerful six-cylinder engine. He had that for a couple of years and then he bought a ReVere<sup>23</sup> and after that a Stutz Bearcat. He took great pride in this latter car, I guess, because it was a very fast, a very rapidly moving automobile with lots and lots of horsepower and lots of performance.

These last four were fairly expensive automobiles. The Moon probably set him back a couple of thousand dollars. That was when Model T Fords were selling for two hundred dollars. I don't know what he paid for the Stutz, but I know he paid almost \$6000 for that ReVere. This, as I say, was back when the Chevrolets and Fords were selling for less than \$400. So \$6000 was quite a bit of money.<sup>24</sup>

He did this partly for advertising. He said that it was good for the business. Of course, the fact that he liked a good car, that he liked nice things, didn't hurt matters any. He thought that having one of the best and the most impressive cars in town would help him be the busiest doctor in town, and it proved to be pretty well true, because my father did make a lot of money over a good many years. Of course, he spent a lot, too, and he made some very poor investments, so he didn't end up with much, but as a physician he was highly successful.

*From Loron:* If Pitt got his first car in 1918, he was 50 years old when he started driving, but he went at it with great verve and enthusiasm, just as he did everything else in life.

### **Outbidding Mr. Briggs**

*From Uncle Pitt:* Your grandfather very thoroughly believed in his rights—I guess that is how you might put it. In the early days, in Cañon City there was one very, very rich man whose name was Briggs. He owned the bank and the lumberyard and a couple of other businesses plus a string

<sup>23</sup> See [www.caranddriver.com/features/a15082845/](http://www.caranddriver.com/features/a15082845/)

<sup>24</sup> According to [hemmings.com](http://hemmings.com), the base price for a new ReVere was \$3850. Although that is considerably less than Pitt's estimate, it was a high price at the time, equivalent to \$62,177 in 2022.

of buildings. He lived in a big house over on First Street and Griffin Avenue. It was a house that was even bigger than the one that we lived in, kind of a majestic building it is probably on the list of the historical buildings in Cañon City now, I would think, because it was a very stately building and kind of like a mansion.

Anyhow, this gentleman had a Pierce Arrow which was, of course, a pretty good-sized automobile. At that time, your grandfather had this Moon that I had mentioned earlier which was also a pretty good-sized car. It weighed two and a half or three tons—almost 6000 pounds. This Mr. Briggs always had the habit of driving up and down Main Street reading letters, reading papers. He was so important that he just didn't have time to take care of his business in his office. When he got in his car he would carry on his business as he went someplace. Well, everybody in town had been ducking him. In other words, they would get out of his road as he rode right down the middle of the street. My father had swerved many times to keep from hitting the guy. It finally got to him, I guess. Anyhow, on this particular day, my mother had called and asked him to stop at the grocery store and pick up some things for lunch. My father left his office and was driving down the street toward the grocery store when he saw this man coming down the middle of the street, as usual. In fact, this time he was completely on the left side of the street, and Father thought it was time to decide, to find out if this guy was bluffing or not.

Maybe this is kind of a dangerous thing to tell you about; and it's a dangerous thing to do, too, I suppose. But anyhow, he was driving along about 10 miles an hour and he decided that he could get just as busy as this guy, so he downshifted his Moon to the low gear, and he was driving, as I say, about 10 miles an hour and just when they got about 55 or 60 feet from each other, he reached over the back of the front seat to pick up his medicine bag. He said to himself, *I'm going to be busy and when I hit him, I'll have a reason* and when he straightened up, he was going to accelerate so that the bang would be good, but when he straightened up, the guy was back on his own side of the street. And he never had a problem with this gentleman again. When this man saw the Moon coming, he got on his side of the street. Believe it or not, that happened.



**The Briggs house is, in fact,  
now a museum.**

### **More about cars**

In 1921 Father went up to Denver with my older brother Ted to buy a car called a Holmes that had an air-cooled engine. While on the way back, he had a lot of trouble with it. Apparently, someone at the dealership had put in the wrong kind of oil. It was overheating, and he could hardly make it run.

He managed to get as far as Colorado Springs and there he parked this car and telegraphed his bank in Cañon City to stop payment on the check that he had given to pay for it. Then he notified the dealer that he was not going to buy the car, that it was in Colorado Springs where they could go and pick it up. They first tried to tell him that he had already bought it, but he explained that they had better check with their bank because the check was going to come up short.

Then he returned to Denver and bought the ReVere that I mentioned above. This was a pretty nice car. The engine and frame were made by Duesenberg. It had a four-cylinder engine. It was the body that apparently was made by the ReVere company so, it was called a ReVere.

The ReVere was a large touring car with an all-aluminum body. It weighed 6000 pounds so you can imagine the amount of steel it must have had underneath the aluminum to get that kind of weight. This car had a 120 mile an hour speedometer and a four-speed transmission. I have no idea how fast it could actually move in top gear. My father said he had taken it up to 85 miles an hour in third gear. It was faster on the highway than the Stutz Bearcat, but the Stutz did better on sharp corners and mountain roads because it had more torque and had a little shorter wheelbase and was more compact. He had both these cars at the same time.

The ReVere had two spare wheels. And they weren't just spare tires; they were spare wheels, the whole wheel. The hubs were what they called knock-on hubs; you had a 6-cornered wrench that you put into the hub cap, and you used a hammer to unscrew the hubcap. This took the wheel off. There weren't any lug nuts at all. The Stutz had the same type of wheel. And the wheels were interchangeable. So we had two cars with eleven wheels. This way, if we had a flat tire, there was almost always a spare wheel.

When Father started back from Denver with the ReVere, he couldn't get from Colorado Springs over to Cañon City because they were having a terrific storm that turned out to be famous as the 1921 flood. It inundated the downtown area of Pueblo up to the bottom of the second stories of the buildings on Union Avenue. I went to college in Pueblo when you were fairly young, and you could still see



Here is the Stutz Bearcat with Pitt in the driver's seat which was on the right side. This photo, obviously, was taken many years later than the previous one because that is Theodore with one foot on the running board.

the high watermark on those buildings between the railroad tracks and main street in Pueblo. I don't know whether you remember those marks or not. **[Yes, I remember the watermarks very well. They were still visible in the 1940s when I began to be aware of such things. I remember feeling a sense of awe when Mother pointed them out at the level of the second-story windows of buildings close to the river. Wikipedia has an extensive article about the 1921 flood.]**

My mother thought that my father was probably in that flood because he couldn't get telephone calls into Cañon

City until the next day. Then he was able to call and tell her that he and your father were all right, but that they were stuck in Colorado Springs and wouldn't be in until later.

The Stutz Bearcat had a big gas tank behind the seat and a spare tire in the rear, kind of like a Lincoln Continental today. This was a car with right-hand drive, The gear shift lever was on the outside of the car. My mother was never able to drive it because she couldn't press in the clutch. The spring was too stiff. When I was young it would take both of my feet to be able to press this clutch pedal down to the floor. I don't know how my father drove the thing, but he did. That was quite an automobile, Loron.

### “I'd Rather Walk”

*From Loron:* Here is another story that Grandfather enjoyed telling on himself: One night he was called to see a patient in South Cañon. After checking her condition, he concluded that she needed to be hospitalized. So he got the woman and her husband into his car and started out. The



road descended along the side of the bluff. About halfway down, there was a hairpin turn where the road doubled back and continued on to the river. When they came to this point, He pressed on the brake pedal, but they were going fast, and the brakes were not equal to the task. He could see a track that went straight ahead so he followed it, finally coming to a stop in somebody's yard amidst a great flurry of chickens and barking dogs. He got turned around as quickly as possible and continued to race on toward the hospital.

After he had checked in the patient and left orders for her care, he said to the husband, "OK, I'll take you home now." To which the man replied: "Oh, no thank you, doctor, I prefer to walk."

### **Another one**

*From Uncle Pitt:* One day Father got a telephone call from a party up in the Hardscrabble area, that is, from Cotopaxi up towards Westcliff. A man called and said his wife was bleeding badly and he needed a doctor. Father found out where he lived; and, of course, I think he knew the name of almost every farm in Fremont County, because at one time or another he had doctored these various people.

There was a nurse who had just moved to town. She had been by his office earlier and asked about the possibility of getting private duty nursing. Father thought that maybe she would be needed up there, so he called her, and she agreed to go.

Now you don't remember Cañon City very much, but my father's office was on Fifth and Main Streets. And Highway US 50 went down Main Street, turned south at Ninth Street, went down to the river, a distance of four blocks. Right at that point, there was a street called Vine Ave.

Well, Father asked this nurse to meet him at the corner of Vine and 9th because that was about 1/2 a block from where she was staying, and he said he would be right down. So, he threw his medicine bag in the car and started the engine. She was waiting on the corner. She got in the car on the left-hand side, and they came back up through town and went west out by the state prison up over the old Creek Canyon Road and over Eight-mile Park. It was a one-way road practically the whole distance, very narrow, very curvy. It went up to the top to Parkdale and came down through the River Road to Cotopaxi and turned left at Cotopaxi. That was a total of 27 miles from his office up to this house, and he made the entire trip in 30 minutes.<sup>25</sup> That gives you an idea of how he was driving.

When he got there, he went racing down the lane as fast as he could drive. He looked up ahead and he couldn't see the gate, so he thought: *That's nice; the man at least was considerate enough to come out this block or so from the farmhouse and open the gate for me*, but when he came up to the gate, he discovered that the top hinge was broken and the gate was leaning back, lying partway down. That's why he hadn't seen it. His first thought, at that point, was, *Oh boy! There goes my radiator!* because a couple of months before he had hit a calf and it cost him about \$80 to install a new radiator in the car. Well, the front end of the car climbed up this gate which was made out of metal. It rose up six or eight inches and then fell through with a great crash and clatter.

This nurse that was with him had just come from Missouri and she had never been in the mountains before. She never said a word all the way up there. Apparently, she had been petrified, but Father hadn't realized it. When they went through this gate with all the shattering and noise, she started to scream. She just went into total hysterics. So, his first problem, before he could go on to the house, was to get her calmed down.

The next problem, of course, was to get the woman's bleeding stopped. Well, amazingly, that very morning he had gotten in the mail a sample from Parke-Davis of a new blood coagulant that

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<sup>25</sup> Pitt's numbers are pretty hard to believe, but whether they are completely literal or not is beside the point.

they had put out. He was holding it in his hand when the telephone rang with the news that this woman was bleeding. So, he dropped that in the medicine bag and when he got up there, he got his syringe out and drew some of this liquid out from the vial and he injected it, and the hemorrhage stopped in about 5 or 10 minutes.

The aftermath of the story was that he didn't have to put a new radiator in the car. That was all right, but the man sued Father for the gate, and he never would pay him but because he said that the hemorrhage was going to stop anyhow, so he didn't need a doctor. This is a little example of what doctoring was like in those days.

### And one more

*From Loron:* This one happened about 1945 when my grandparents were in their retirement years and living at the cabin near Wetmore, Colorado. One day, while we were there visiting, Grandfather had an errand in Florence, a small town about 14 miles away and he invited Theodore and me to go along. Mother gave her consent and off we went.

A Mrs. Koker, who lived nearby, heard about this expedition after we had left and did not hesitate to express her views: "You have no idea what it's like," she said to Mother. "He goes racing around the corners. He pays no attention to the stop signs and goes right through the red lights." It is obvious that Mrs. Koker had been subjected to his driving and had come back terrified.

Of course, my brother and I were not told about this conversation until much later. Then, I assumed that if he drove badly, it was because he was old and had poor vision so he could no longer see the traffic signs. But, based on Uncle Pitt's stories, it seems that that was pretty much the way he drove all his life.



I certainly have no recollection of being frightened by his driving. The historical files contain an undated clipping from a Colorado Springs newspaper telling about an accident he had on the road between Cañon City and Colorado Springs that put Grandmother Alice in the hospital. According to the note, "Dr. Wade ... reported that the bright lights of an approaching car suddenly blinded him." Aside from that, I never heard about any other driving mishaps, so if he was a wild driver, it seems he mostly got away with it.

## Chapter 5

# Medical Practice

*From my father Theodore:* “My father I greatly admired, and I enjoyed sitting nearby and listening to him discuss politics and philosophical problems with people who would visit our home. However, he rarely had time to sit down and talk to me or my sisters. Nonetheless, I was not without paternal guidance. We would go around on our five-acre place and mend fences or make other repairs together. He would point out the most desirable way to perform these tasks and the reasons he liked it that way.”

Uncle Pitt recalled that the children loved to get in bed with their parents when they woke up in the morning. The first one to arrive would lie between the two parents, the next one would get in on the side of Father, the third, on the side of Mother. Whoever arrived last had to lie crossways at the foot of the bed. Then they would be together while Father kept them all laughing with funny stories and conversation.

Apparently, this happened on weekends and other times when their father did not go to the office, because Uncle Pitt also recalled:

Very often, before we got up in the morning, Father would be out making calls in Lincoln Park which is east and up on top of the hill from where our home was in Cañon City. He made his calls out there before breakfast. And then he came back home and had breakfast with the family, and then he went to his office downtown, and he would be in his office until noon. Then he came home and had lunch. And he would lie down, at least from the time I could remember, for about 45 minutes right after he ate. Then he would get up and go back to his office till evening. On the way home he would make more house calls, and after supper he went out and made still more, and he usually didn't get back until nine or ten o'clock.

Sometimes we would ride with him in the car while he made his house calls. We would wait in the car and visit while he was in the houses, and then he would come out and we would go to the next site.

I was 15 or 16 years old before I figured out how one is supposed to get into a house. It's kind of funny when you think about it, but I had never seen my father knock on a door. He would get out of his car and go to the house, not at a run, but at a very fast walk, medicine bag in hand, and he would just open the door and walk in. I assumed that that was the way to do it. Father's reason, I realized much later, was that he was in a hurry. He didn't have time to knock and wait for the people to open. He was going to get in there to see his patient and then get out and on his way as soon as he could, because he had lots and lots of patients to see.

I remember many times ... well, not hundreds, but a good many times, ... he would come out of a house, and he would say to my sister and me, You have to ride on the outside of the car to the next house. Then we would stand on the step. [**Note from Loron: Until around 1940, all cars had a “running board” which was a little shelf outside the door. That is what Pitt here calls “the step.”**] So, we'd stand on the step outside of the car until we got to the next house. You might ask, why outside? Because he'd been in a house that had diphtheria or smallpox or something else that was highly contagious, and he didn't want us to catch it. He thought he might be carrying germs and he wanted to make sure they had a chance to get blown off before he got too close to his family.

*From Loron:* My father also liked to take Theodore, Jr., and me along and have us wait in the car while he made house calls. We thought it was pretty boring, but he seemed to like it, so we

sometimes went. I now see that he was following his father's example. But he never asked us to ride on the running board. By the time we were old enough to have done so, running-board days were over.

### **Through mud and snow**

The following is from a letter written by Grandmother Alice. It offers further insight into Grandfather's medical practice. It was written January 27, 1919, and addressed to her mother and sisters who were living in Boulder. Pitt and Alice had recently purchased their first automobile, the "baby Buick" mentioned by Uncle Pitt, and it was still exciting for them to go somewhere in it.

**I had a ride the other day. Last Friday Pitt had to go up in the mts. to see a man with flu and pneumonia.**

January of 1919 saw the third wave of the terrible Spanish flu pandemic that infected approximately one-third of the world population and caused about 50 million deaths.

**He began to plan to go before noon, so I began to get ready to go along, but it was 3:30 when we finally left town. You remember, Mary, McKenzie's new house where we stayed all night in Hardscrabble Canyon?**

Hardscrabble Canyon is a place of exceptional beauty at the edge of the San Isabel National Forest. That is where our family had a cabin some years later.

**Well, it was 4 or 5 miles beyond that. We struck snow 5 miles or more this side of McKenzies' & it was hard going through & what with the two punctures and getting finally hopelessly stalled in a snowbank, we were until one o'clock getting back home.**

In 1919, automobile tires were improving, but they were still relatively fragile. They were made of natural rubber reinforced with cotton thread. Frequent punctures were expected.

Our punctures came early in the game, before dark, while we were floundering through dobe mud.

Dobe: pronounced *doh-bee*. This is a local term for adobe, a thick clay.

**It seemed quite a catastrophe when we discovered the first puncture & moved ourselves to get out & get it fixed.**

This may have involved putting on the spare tire, but in those days, it was common to remove the wheel and pull out the inner tube. After patching the tube and reassembling the tire, you would put it back on the car and air it up with a hand pump. Since she says, "get it fixed," it appears that this is what was involved.

**Then we started on and didn't go right & discovered the other back tire was down. So there was nothing for it but to get out again. I wanted to laugh, but I felt that Pitt's mood would not exactly**

appreciate a mirthful view of the situation so I restrained myself & smiled quietly until an old man came along whom we had passed perhaps an hour or more before & then he had passed us while we were engaged with the first puncture, then we sailed past him again & now he came plodding along, and as he went past he slapped his horses into a run, presumably to hide his ill-concealed amusement, for he was in my predicament and his face was wreathed in broad smiles, so then I laughed & so did Pitt.

This tells us something about the spirit of the people. They are in an open car, surrounded by mud and snow. While Pitt works on repairing the second flat tire, an old man passes them for the second time with his wagon and team of horses. Then Alice's cheerful spirit infects even her husband, and he laughs, too.

When we got to our destination, we found 5 people in a one-roomed house all down with the flu.

This case, with five people afflicted in a tiny house, was truly a tragedy.

I had to go in because I was so cold, but I didn't get the flu yet. So I guess Mayo's serum is all right.

Mayo's serum was an experimental treatment advocated by the Mayo Clinic and others. It involved injecting patients with convalescent blood products, serum from recovered patients. Two studies involving 1,703 patients showed a case-fatality rate of 16 percent (54 of 336) among treated patients and 37 percent (452 of 1,219) among controls.<sup>26</sup>

The serum was generally recommended for people who were already diagnosed with the flu, but in other letters, Alice tells her family that Pitt had the idea of using it for prevention. He injected himself and Alice and their four children with the serum.

At 8:30 we went up to this man's brother's cabin above for some supper. Two brothers batch together there ["Batch" is what bachelors do.] and they offered us pork & coffee & bread. I had carried along some sandwiches & celery, so we made out a meal & started home about 10. I had telephoned the children from Wetmore at 6 o'clock that we wouldn't get home till 10 or 11, so they went to bed and were all asleep when we got home.

Did Pitt and Alice leave their four children at home under the care of 14-year-old Theodore? It appears they did, because she writes, "I had telephoned the children ..." If there was an older person in charge, it seems likely she would have called that person. Pitt, the youngest, was one and a half. This reveals something about the serious and responsible character of young Theodore.



This letter also tells us something about the practice of medicine in those days. Doctors not only made house calls but sometimes traveled considerable distances to care

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<sup>26</sup> *Annals of Internal Medicine* 145 (2006), pp. 599-609.

for sick people in their homes. In this case, they drove 25 miles each way through mud and snow. It took them four hours to get there and three to return.<sup>27</sup>

### **Klan or Anti-Klan**

*The following is from Uncle Pitt:* At one time, Cañon City had the distinction of being the state headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan. The Grand Dragon of Colorado lived there, and Cañon became a very-much divided town.

*The Daily Record*, the paper that is still there, was anti-Klan. So the Klan started a paper they called the *Daily American*. There were also had two banks because the Klan started their own bank at Seventh and Main close to the Cañon Hotel. The Baptist Church became the Klan church, and the Catholic Church was identified as anti-Klan. A couple of doctors joined the Catholic Church just because they wanted people to know they were anti-Klan.

Doctor Shawn, who was a prominent doctor in Cañon City joined the Baptist Church because he wanted the Klan practice. He had his brother J. G. Shawn move into town to practice as anti-Klan. They had offices across the hall from each other. My father solved the problem by putting in two waiting rooms, one for Klan and the other for Anti-Klan people. His office nurse would call a patient first from one room and then, when that patient went out, she would go to the other waiting room and get the next patient. This seemed to work out pretty well. Father probably doctored as many Klan people as Doctor Shawn and as many anti-Klan people as the other doctors.

The Klan used have these night marches with a burning cross that they would carry down Main Street. We used to go down to father's office which was on the corner of 5th and Main above the drug store. The waiting-room windows overlooked Main Street, so we could sit there in the dark and watch.

It was kind of interesting because these people would come marching down the street with their flaming torches, their white cone-shaped hats and white robes; and my father would say, "Oh, there is Mr. Steinmetz." And then, There is Mr. So-and-so. See? And there's So-and-so.

Mother would be exasperated and say, "How do you *know*?"

And he would answer, "It's the walk. I recognize the walk. He's got a kind of a gig. I can tell. I recognize him," and it was interesting because he could probably recognize a third of those people in those white sheets. My father, I think, probably knew almost everybody in Fremont County. He knew their characteristics and their mannerisms, and when they would move an arm, he could almost recognize them just from that, by the mannerisms that they exhibited while they were marching down the street.

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<sup>27</sup> This story appeared August 25, 2020, in the *Adventist Review*.

## Chapter 6

# A sanitarium for Cañon City

From the start, Pitt and Alice shared a vision for doing something more than merely spending a lifetime seeing patients and making money.<sup>28</sup> They wanted to start a sanitarium where they could apply the principles of the hygienic diet and natural treatments promoted at Battle Creek.

In the fall of 1903, they left Cañon and went to a place in the mountains near Mt. Princeton where a resort hotel had been erected at a cost of \$96,000. The venture had failed, and the owner was willing to sell out for \$9,000.

As related in chapter 2, when Pitt did not succeed in getting a letter of recommendation from Dr. Kellogg, he attempted to get one from the church president. Now he got the idea of asking for a letter from Ellen White. In September, he learned that William White, who was her son and principal helper, would be coming through Denver, so he traveled there and spoke with him about the Mt. Princeton project. William suggested that Pitt write to his mother about the plans, and Pitt did so with characteristic enthusiasm, describing it as “the most wonderful opening I have ever heard of,” and expressing the hope “that you will feel free to write to me, if you get the time, and tell us what you think of the work that we are starting.” There is no record of his having received a reply.

### Back to Cañon City

The Mt. Princeton project fell through, maybe after Pitt and Alice realized that at that altitude a sanitarium could operate only six months out of the year because during the rest of the time it would be buried under snow.

They returned to Cañon City, but Pitt’s fervent desire did not diminish, and before long he took an option to acquire property near Cañon City where there was an artesian well. He reported that this well produced 280,000 gallons of hot water per day<sup>29</sup> and that there was a separate cold-water spring. The property included 200 acres and he believed these could be divided into lots and sold to pay for future development of the institution.

Pitt went about this project with his usual energy. He enlisted Willard Hills who was a physician and pastor, as his associate. He got a letter of endorsement from the state governor. On August 1, 1904, he met with the Cañon City Merchants’ Association and persuaded them to endorse the project. He named C. J. Frederickson, the county treasurer, and M. J. Evans, a banker, to his five-man board of directors. The other three were himself, G. F. Watson who was president of the Colorado Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Dr. Hills. The corporation he established was authorized to offer 200,000 shares of capital stock at \$1.00 each. He planned to solicit \$40,000 of the total amount from Adventist contributors. An endorsement from Ellen White would no doubt have been useful in getting this part.

While all this was going forward, a situation was developing in Boulder (Colorado) that would complicate things considerably. The Adventist sanitarium in that city had been struggling financially since its establishment in 1895, and the situation was made even more difficult when Dr. O. G. Place, a former manager of the San, opened a competing institution a short distance

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<sup>28</sup> Letter from Alice to her family, Oct. 23, 1903, and others.

<sup>29</sup> This amount is from Pitt’s letters at the time. That would be almost 200 gallons per minute. Pretty hard to believe!

away in Boulder.<sup>30</sup> In spite of this, under the able administration of F. M. Wilcox, in 1904 the institution was able for the first time to meet its own expenses, and even pay \$4,000 against its indebtedness.

At this point, just when things were starting to look more hopeful, Dr. Place offered to buy the sanitarium for \$50,000. The administrators of the institution had no knowledge of this proposal until the matter was brought up at the General Conference session in May of 1905. They were particularly dismayed to learn that the president and other officers of the Colorado Conference were in favor of selling out.

It is likely that Dr. Place's offer would have been accepted at that time if it had not been for the intervention of Ellen White. On May 29 she spoke to the delegates, objecting to the proposed sale. She said it was time to support the sanitarium and make it a success and she rebuked Dr. Place for his disloyal competition.<sup>31</sup> The delegates did not approve the sale of the sanitarium but neither did they completely reject the idea. Instead, they referred the decision to the Colorado Conference constituency meeting to be held in the month of August.

In this situation, it is understandable that when, on August 5, two Denver papers published an account of the Sanitarium project in Cañon City and it became known that the conference president was a member of its board, the leaders of the Boulder San saw this as one more stab in the back.

The General Conference named pastor George Irwin as its representative at the meeting. Aware of the tense situation in Colorado, the pastor went to the Elmshaven and spent several days there. He was given a compendium of the messages Ellen White had written regarding the matter. He brought these with him to Colorado, and during the meetings two more messages arrived by mail. These counsels reiterated the counsel given at the General Conference session and encouraged the church and its leaders to support the sanitarium and make it a success.

In her counsels, Ellen White also referred to Dr. Wade's project at Cañon City. She did not condemn it, as she had the institution established by Dr. Place, but she encouraged its leaders to hold off on their project and support the Boulder enterprise until it could be placed on a firm footing. And she added a curious remark, almost as an aside. She had been shown with the Cañon City sanitarium that there was a problem with regard to the "persons involved." But she did not elaborate.<sup>32</sup>

Pitt could not attend the constituency meetings in Denver due to a family health crisis.<sup>33</sup> He asked Dr. Hills<sup>34</sup> and his brother Ben, who had recently returned from mission service in Japan, to represent him. They reported to him daily by telephone about the discussions and the counsel from Ellen White. Pitt replied that he accepted what had been said and sent a telegram stating that he would comply. However, when his representatives returned from the meeting and it became clear that accepting would mean he would need to desist or delay the project, he was dismayed. He concluded that neither Ben nor Dr. Hills had been able to present his case as he would have done, and he thought that if Ellen White could get a true picture of the situation, she would urge him to go ahead with the project at once.

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<sup>30</sup> See E. G. White Biography, 6:33-43, Chapter 3: "Meeting Crises in Colorado."

<sup>31</sup> Letter 163, 1905 and Sp. T. Series B, No. 5, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> Further reading: EGW Letters 383, 385, 1905; SpTB05, 32, 36, 44-52; 6Bio 37-43.

<sup>33</sup> On August 23, Alice gave birth to Julia Margaret after a difficult pregnancy.

<sup>34</sup> Dr. Hills was dedicating full time to the project and was borrowing money to feed his family with the promise that he would be repaid as soon as the project was underway.



He had convinced the Mayor, the Banker, the Real Estate people and the Colorado Adventist leadership to support his project. He had a letter of support from the governor. He apparently saw Ellen White as one more person to be convinced. It is not hard to see what a letter of approval from her would have meant for his fundraising efforts.

So in September, Pitt took Dr. Hills with him and traveled to California. When they arrived at Elmshaven, Ellen White was not present, and after she returned, there was still some delay, but after 10 days of waiting, they were granted an interview which took place on Sunday, September 24. Ever the enthusiastic salesman, Pitt described the project in glowing terms. He had sent ahead a written description which she had already seen.

In her response, Ellen White emphasized that she had not received additional light that would justify her saying anything beyond what she had already written. She mentioned three points of concern that reflected her earlier counsel: 1. She said there was danger in linking up with “unbelievers,” referring to the non-Adventist members of the board, and those who would be controlling stockholders. 2. She did not want support drawn away from the Boulder Sanitarium until it could be established on a firm basis. 3. Regarding her third concern she spoke with more uncertainty. This one had to do with the people involved in the enterprise, but she wanted to be clearer before saying much about it.

In conclusion, Ellen White said: “The presentation is very favorable that you make. But why the matter should have been presented before me in the matter of warning, I do not know.” She promised to review what she had written on the subject and said that if she received any further light she would write.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Wade and Dr. Hills insisted that they were eager to comply with every point of counsel, but that under no condition could the project be delayed.

Pitt did not return to Colorado by the most direct route: he stopped for brief visits of spiritual encouragement with several cousins. While en route, he wrote two letters to W. C. White emphasizing how eager he was to receive the promised letter from Ellen White. She had made no promise to write, but only that she would let him know if she received further light. When Pitt arrived home and found no letter from Elmshaven, he sent off a third message with the same urgent request.

He did not know that a letter was already on its way. But when the message arrived, it was not at all the one he had hoped for.

Elmshaven, St. Helena, California October 2, 1905

Dr. Wade Dear Brother, —

I have not written to you before regarding the sanitarium enterprise with which you are connected; for I had received no light that would lead me to write anything contrary to that which was contained in the testimony read in Denver by Elder Irwin. But I am now prepared to speak positively. Last Thursday night [September 28, 1906] the matter was presented to me more fully.

I was shown that you need to receive treatment from the great Physician of soul and body. There is hope for you if you will consent to come under His saving influence; but until you feel your need of the services of the great Physician, you will never be purified by the blood of Christ.

Physicians are placed in positions of trial and temptation. But they may stand firm to their allegiance, if they will take hold of the strength that God offers them. He says, let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me. [Isaiah 27:5.] The Lord will be the helper of every physician who will work together with Him in the effort to restore suffering humanity to health, not

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<sup>35</sup> Manuscript 185, 1905. “Interview with Drs. Wade and Hills Regarding the Cañon City Sanitarium.”

with drugs, but with nature's remedies. Christ is the great Physician, the wonderful Healer. He gives success to those who work in partnership with Him.

My brother, you need a new spiritual life. You need to strip yourself of all selfishness. You should learn to seek the glory of God and the good of your fellow men. When you are truly converted, you will understand what I am now writing to you. For the reasons that I am presenting to you, I beg of you to keep free from the burdens that would come to you in connection with a sanitarium.

It has been plainly revealed to me that you possess some very objectionable traits of character which make it unadvisable for you to unite with your brethren in such an enterprise as you contemplate. Your disposition is such that you are not prepared to exert a healthful, wholesome influence in a sanitarium.

Were a sanitarium established by you, circumstances would arise that would injure the experience of others who might be connected with the institution. The matter has been made plain to me, and I am authorized to say that the men who are united in the matter of erecting and controlling a sanitarium in Cañon City are not qualified to do the best kind of work. Should they carry out their plans there would be disappointment and continual friction. Your lack of self-discipline forbids you to take upon yourself such responsibilities as you have contemplated. It means much more than you realize for one to assume that he is fitted for the management of a sanitarium.

My brother, you need to be converted and to become as a little child. You should be fearful of following your own judgment. Should you in any way become suspicious of one who does not harmonize with you, you would make trouble. When your will and way is crossed, bitter feelings arise in your heart. You cherish a feeling of hatred toward the one whom you think has made a mistake. You forget that when a brother has made a mistake, you should seek to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. We are out of place in cherishing bitter feelings toward any of the Lord's purchased possession.

God desires you to be sound in the faith, day by day manifesting in your words and spirit the righteousness of Christ. You may gain a valuable experience in the cultivation of that self-control which is essential for every Christian. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. [Matthew 5:5.]

The Lord desires all who profess to believe in Him to cultivate the heavenly graces. An unsanctified character is the greatest evil we have to meet in our work. Every soul is to be tested and tried. If self is not hid with Christ in God, human beings will do that which will hinder the work of God.

I am sorry that you do not understand the weakness of your nature. But remember that where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound. May the Lord strengthen His people and sanctify them unto Himself. My brother, there rests upon you a solemn obligation to overcome hatred. Those who have overcome their selfishness will respond to the efforts of Christ to purify their hearts.

In addition to this personal letter, a week later, she sent another more general one addressed to Drs. Wade and Hills, and a third one completing her counsels.<sup>36</sup>

Pitt's initial reaction appears to have been quite positive. He replied, expressing gratitude for the personal counsel and stating that he had told Dr. Hills, "We had better wait. I want to get everything out of my character that is contrary to the Spirit of Christ."<sup>37</sup>

In another message he stated that night after night he was spending "almost the entire night in prayer, asking Him to remove from my character everything that will in any way stand in my way from being used of him."<sup>38</sup> But, in this second letter, he made it clear that he has no intention of pulling back or delaying the sanitarium project. "If the work had been stopped before so **(continues on page 36.)**

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<sup>36</sup> Manuscript B 287, 1905. and Manuscript B 238 1905

<sup>37</sup> Pitt Wade to Ellen G. White, October 22, 1905.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., November 27, 1905.

The following account, from the *Cañon City Record* of February 26, 1980, offers further information about the property Pitt was hoping to buy.



## LANDMARK 'HOT SPRING'S INN'

By W.T. "Doc" LITTLE  
Record Staff Writer

Look Back Into History has had references in the past to the old Hot Springs Hotel, but from time to time readers ask that a new article be used — so here it is.

The old inn at the west end of Riverside Avenue near the approach to the Royal Gorge was a Canon City landmark for 77 years, dating back to territorial days of 1873.

The three-story hotel with a huge veranda that stretched all the length of the north side facing the Arkansas River was erected that year by Dr. J.L. Prentiss, a physician who had a lot of other business interests including a drug store and a jewelry store he operated in partnership with G.R. Shaeffer who built the Shaeffer Block in the 400 block of Main St.

The hot springs that bubbled from the ground had been used by the Ute Indians during the years they wintered in what is now Canon City. About 1870, J.P. Ring acquired the property and put up some little bath houses. Dr. Prentiss bought the area, razed the little bath buildings and began work on his hotel. He had visions of it becoming one of the finest health resorts in the nation. He put a little swimming pool on the main floor of the hotel and also offered private baths.

To serve the resort, the D&RG Railroad put up a little shelter beside its tracks and a swinging bridge was built across the Arkansas to link the tiny depot with the hotel. Passenger trains stopped to discharge passengers who had room reservations.

The hotel had a lobby, a larger room that served as a dining hall and ball room and 38 guest rooms. Total construction cost was \$38,000 which included furnishings.

In its earlier years, the establishment was a popular local social center although it never attracted a large number of out-of-town guests. By the mid-1890s, however, it reached its peak of popularity with many coming from the booming Cripple Creek-Victor mining district to spend anywhere from a weekend to a vacation of several days.

In 1893, Dr. Prentiss expanded his swimming pool and made other improvements.

But, by the end of the first decade of the century, business began to lag and the D&RG halted its schedule of stopping passenger trains. To offset the loss, the hotel began running horse-drawn hacks that met D&RG and Santa Fe trains at their Canon City depots and provided transportation of passengers to the hotel. The late Lloyd Egbers, who later was a partner in the Mitchell & Egbers Palace Drug Store, was the driver of the hotel hack for several years.

## A LOOK BACK INTO HISTORY

In 1905, C.J. Fredrickson, Dr. Pitt A. Wade and others formed the Canon City Hot Springs Sanitarium Association with the hope of making the hotel and pool into a health spa for patients with arthritis and similar ailments but business was not brisk and for a time the hotel closed.

Dr. William E. Justice purchased the property in 1925 for \$40,000, also with the idea of developing a health resort. His swimming pool did well financially for several years but few patients were attracted to the guest rooms. In 1947 he sold the hotel to an Oklahoma man for \$10,000 who offered it to the Church of God for an orphanage. However, the state refused to grant a license because of the danger of children falling in the river.

In 1948 the end came when the pool building was destroyed in a spectacular fire. The hotel was razed in 1950. The property today is owned by Mrs. Ann Brown.

This photo was taken about 1900.

The article notes that "the property today is owned by Mrs. Ann Brown." By remarkable coincidence, Ann Brown is my second cousin once removed on my mother's side. She is a great granddaughter of Minnie Perrine. We visited her in 2024. Water tables in the area have dropped and the spring no longer flows.

many different people had become involved financially, I would have thought want a Sanitarium at Cañon City.” He closed by asking for a reprieve. “Hoping that you will ask God to answer my prayers in this hour of great trial.”

A few months later, when no different message had come, Pitt’s initial spirit of acceptance had changed, as had his recollection of events. By June or July of 1906, he recalled that “in the interview with Mrs. E. G. White she told us (Dr. Hills and myself) that she thought we should take advantage of this most wonderful opening.” There is a stenographic transcript of the interview, and it is clear that Ellen White made no such statement. “We returned home overjoyed,” wrote Pitt. “Three weeks later we received a communication from W. C. White that killed the whole thing.” He is referring to the letter from Ellen White but attributing it to her son. He states that W. C. White and George Irwin, together with Boulder sanitarium manager F. M. Wilcox, were forging testimonies to “boost” projects that met with their approval and “crush” others. “This is a wicked, wicked work.”<sup>39</sup>

Apparently, he was unaware that he was validating the message he had received from Ellen White: “When your will and way [are] crossed, bitter feelings arise in your heart. You cherish a feeling of hatred toward the one who you think has made a mistake.”

It is not hard to see a similarity between his response in this case and his angry letter in 1895 when the church president did not grant his request for a letter of recommendation.

### **Another proposal**

In 1910, Pitt sent a series of six letters to the church president, who by that time was Arthur Daniells. He had heard that the Boulder Sanitarium indebtedness had now ascended to \$90,000, and he offered to take over as manager of the institution with the assurance that, under his administration, the sanitarium would be filled to capacity the year around, and, instead of being a financial burden for the church, it would rapidly pay off its debts and bring in a profit that could go to foreign missions and other good causes.

“I have figured this proposition out very carefully and I want to assure you,” he wrote to Daniells, “that there is no question about my being able to make the Boulder Sanitarium clear for the General Conference better than \$20,000.00 each year. If I were mailing you a check at the end of every year for \$20,000.00, I am sure it would not be returned to me, and this is what the proposition I am making, will amount to.”

What kind of math did he use to come up with these figures? “The Boulder Sanitarium has a capacity of 100. If it is kept full the year around at that an average of \$20 per week it will earn \$96,000.00. The whole proposition centers on keeping the sanitarium full year around. And, while this has never been done IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.”

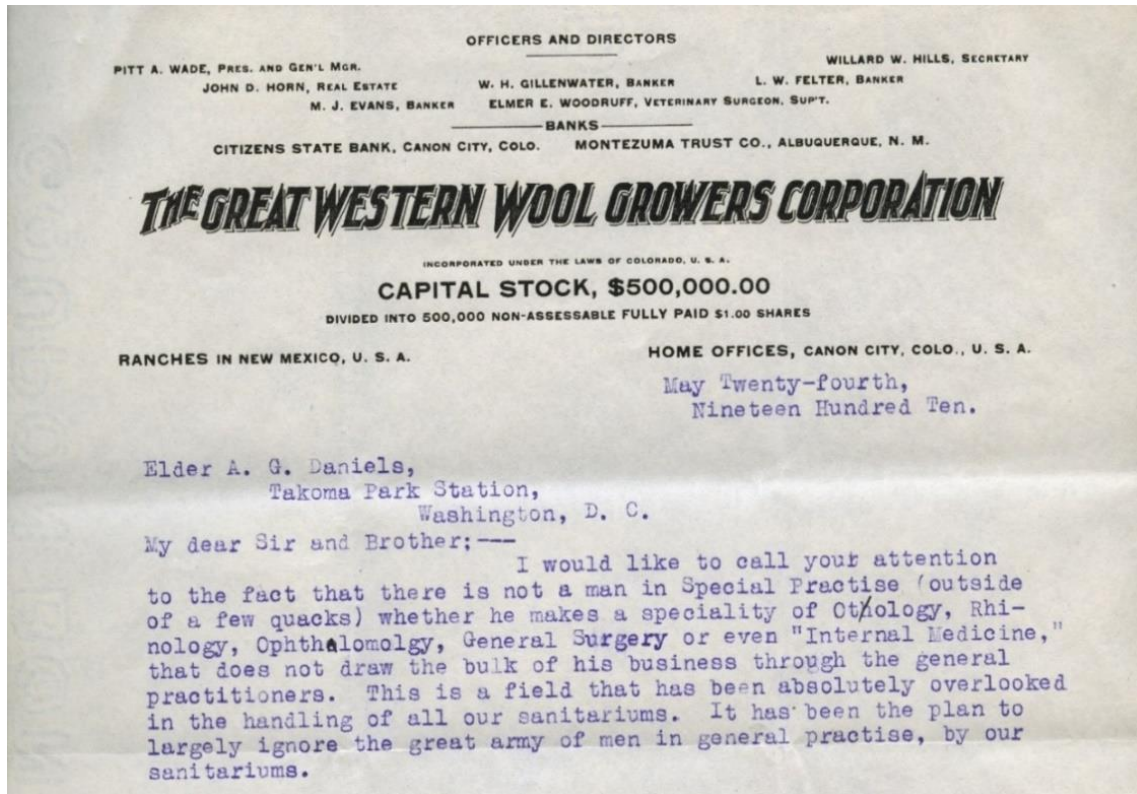
The key to success, he said, was to gain the goodwill of the general practice doctors who would then send their patients to the sanitarium for lifestyle treatments. “Our institutions,” he explained, “have felt it their duty to wean the patient from his home physician. The patients have arrived at the sanitarium, sometimes having been sent by their home physicians; when they got there, they were told that they had ‘been drugged to death’ etc. etc.” He believed that if the Sanitarium would change this negative attitude, it would start to get referrals from the general practitioners.

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<sup>39</sup> Undated letter in White Estate files and Pitt A. Wade to W. C. White, July 13, 1906.

Even if the general practitioners only referred one patient per year to the sanitarium, he explained, the institution would be filled to capacity at all times. He did not explain the strategy he would use to convince all these doctors that the sanitarium would no longer try to “wean” away their patients, but he was good at public relations and would no doubt have worked hard to make it happen.

Here is the opening paragraph of Pitt’s third letter to Daniells:



It is hardly a coincidence that he wrote the six messages on the impressive letterhead of The Great Western Wool Growers Corporation claiming to have a capital stock of \$500,000.00, an amount equal to more than 16 million in 2023. This is probably similar to the \$200,000.00 he had noted on the letterhead of the Cañon City Sanitarium Association. He was authorized by the state to offer that amount of stock for sale. It does not mean that he had already received that much money.

As evidence of his ability, Pitt pointed to his success in maintaining a busy medical practice in Cañon City. And he glued to this letter the clipping that appears at the right. He did not reveal that the message was written by himself as part of a brochure he had prepared to promote investment in the Wool Growers Association.

In fact, everything Dr. Wade takes hold of “turns into money.” This can be verified by looking over the investments he has made around here. He came here a few years ago a poor man; to-day he owns one of the nicest, if not the nicest, home in this part of the state of Colorado.

### Not the right time

Aside from the question of whether or not Pitt’s plan for the Sanitarium could have succeeded, did he really believe the church leaders would have forgotten or would overlook his

furious letters and accusations from four years earlier, and would now see him as the right man to place in charge the institution?


Furthermore, it was not an auspicious moment to bring such a proposal because John Harvey Kellogg was in the process of stealing the Battle Creek Sanitarium from the church. Pitt wrote: "One of the mistakes that has been made in all of our sanitariums is the fact that they have been run by non-medical men who could not grasp the real situation." This was similar to the language of Kellogg who complained about ministers on the sanitarium board who did not approve of his plans. It is not likely that those words would have been convincing to Daniells.

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### THE ROSY HUE.

It has been said that the whole world loves a lover. It is equally true that everybody admires the optimist, even though they may not see things as the optimist does. They like to hear good things said about them, about their home, their family, their city, county, state or country. In fact about anything in which they are interested. The people like to be jollied. It does them good. It makes them feel like there is something in life worth living for.

If you are feeling badly, have the dumps and don't care what happens, the optimist comes along, slaps you on the back and shouts in a hearty voice: "Cheer up old man. Cherries are ripe and there will be more of them next year and the next. Don't look like the fag end of a funeral procession. There are many good things in store for you." He jollies you along for awhile and his good humor becomes infectious. You leave him feeling like a new man, determined to face the whole world and win out. You wonder what could have happened to make you feel so down-hearted in the first place. There really was no cause for it. The world is good and pleasant to live in.

Not everybody can look through the glass of rosy hue of the optimist, but there is no excuse for anybody using the dark hued glasses of the pessimist.

If everybody in Canon City could view the future through the brightly colored glasses of Dr. Pitt A. Wade, the spirit of enthusiasm would bubble over and continue to bubble. The atmosphere would be ablaze with it and the force of it would cause this section to be known as the most desirable place in which to live in the wide, wide world.

In his speech at the massmeeting in the South Canon school house Tuesday night the doctor saw far into the future and predicted many good things for this section.

He saw Canon City and South Canon double their population within a short space of time.

He saw South Canon dotted with fine homes, with fine streets and beautiful parks. The fruit farms of Lincoln Park cut up into small tracts and every one of them occupied by a family.

He saw Canon City as the half way stopping point between the east and the west when the rainbow automobile road to the other side is completed and a constant stream of tourists visitors during the summer season.

What good things the doctor didn't see for this section are hardly worth considering. An electric line would connect Canon City with Colorado Springs and have lines running to all the important points.

Optimistic? Yes, indeed. But every one of them within the range probabilities. None of them will ever be secured through the knocker.

The booster must bear the burden of advancement in any section.

Dr. Wade is a booster who never gets discouraged. No set back can prevent him from going at it again. And with a number like him boosting for the advancement of this section, who is there to say that all—everyone—of the beautiful things be predicted in his speech Tuesday night for Canon City and South Canon will not become a reality?

The knocker—the pessimist—has kept Canon City down, he has kept South Canon down. Like the poor, he is always with us and will continue to reside in our midst until the people realize that to advance they must go forward, not backward.

There is an important difference between this effort and the previous one. When his proposal was not accepted, we have no evidence of angry letters and accusations,

### The Optimist

On the left is an editorial that appeared in a Cañon City paper referring to Pitt and the spirit that led him to undertake project after project. His plans for the Cañon City Sanitarium can be understood in this context.

We do not have a complete list of the many hopeful plans and ideas that he promoted during those years. The "Western Wool Growers Association," was a sheep raising enterprise that came up more than once. There were ventures in oil wells, in a swimming pool and several in mining. He bought a house in a ghost town called Gillette and hired someone to dismantle it and reassemble it in Cañon City. In 1926, he made a second attempt to promote the sanitarium project. And Father recalled that at one point he talked of remodeling their house to start the sanitarium there.

## Chapter 7

### **Problems in the Church: 1924**

*Theodore, Sr.:* My father was a natural leader and a vigorous promoter. Unfortunately, he was somewhat intolerant of those who dared to differ with him. He sometimes instructed me on the importance of being diplomatic, but he often ignored that counsel for himself when involved in a disagreement.

He loved the church and put quite a bit of energy into supporting it. He, at times, presented the Sabbath sermon and, for many years, taught a Sabbath school class that was well-attended. Maybe it was because of this close relationship that his most serious problems had to do with the church.

As the years passed, people came and went in our local church. One who came was Dr. Edward Cadwell, an osteopath. I would say that Dr. Cadwell acted properly, at least at the beginning, but his wife Mettie seemed to go out of her way to make disparaging comments about my father. And she made it a point to refer to him as “Mister Wade” while she always spoke of her husband as “the doctor.”

*From Uncle Pitt:* When Cadwell first arrived in Cañon City, Father welcomed him and the two started out on friendly terms. Then one day he invited Father to assist him in surgery. When the time came to do it, Father was prepared to don gloves, mask and gown and take other measures that are customary for sterile procedures, but Cadwell did not agree. “We osteopaths have proven that this theory about germs is a fallacy,” he explained. “No need to worry about that.” I don’t know how much of a discussion they had, but, anyway, Father walked out. He later said that this was probably the beginning of the trouble between them.

*From Theodore, Sr.:* A smoldering adversarial atmosphere developed that went on for years. Things came to a head after a man named Roger Brown and his wife Beth moved to town and transferred their membership. I think Brown had been a missionary and he may have been a minister. In Cañon he supported himself by raising fruits and vegetables. He was soon elected head elder. It is my feeling that he sincerely wished to see the Lord's work prosper. However, he tended to follow the example of shepherds who use dogs to bark and snap at the heels of the sheep to persuade them to go where the shepherd wants. I may be biased by kinship, but that is how it seemed to me.

Brother Brown was determined to straighten out the schism that was crippling the church in Cañon City. The conference leaders agreed with his concern. Finally, during my last year in high school, Eld. S. E. Wight, president of the Central Union and Eld. M. L. Rice, president of the Colorado Conference came to Cañon City to correct what, to them, seemed to be a nasty mess. There were lots of preaching services and much home visitation, but no apparent, meaningful resolution.

I will never forget one fateful evening. It was Wednesday at the time of the midweek prayer meeting.<sup>40</sup> I vividly remember that our family was sitting about three or four pews from the front in the right half of the church. Elder Wight made an earnest appeal for a demonstration of

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<sup>40</sup> June 4, 1924.

humility and reconciliation. Presently, Doctor Cadwell left his seat, walked over to where we were sitting and held out his hand to my father, suggesting that they leave their differences behind. To my chagrin, my father refused to shake hands. He declared that he would not touch such a dirty paw! The shock was accentuated by the fact that I had never heard him express any similar bitterness or antagonism.

Eld. Wight then announced from the pulpit that they had exhausted every possibility for solving the problem. The only option remaining, he explained, was to disband the church. At Eld. Wight's suggestion someone made a motion, and the church voted to dissolve itself.

*Loron:* I wrote to the Colorado [now, Rocky Mountain] Conference office to ask if they had any record of this event. Here is what they found. I recognize my grandmother's handwriting in the following note.

On the evening of June 4, 1924, a business meeting was called at the church with Eld. Wight in the chair, Eld. Rice and Eld. Brown also being present. After some discussion, a motion was made and carried almost unanimously, to disband the church.

Alice Wade, Church Clerk.

*Theodore, Sr.:* After the disbanding, the Conference leaders appointed a nucleus of members to reorganize the church. These individuals were tasked with admitting to fellowship such persons as they deemed worthy. Roger Brown was the leader of this group.

Mother was invited to rejoin if she would declare herself unsympathetic to my father. Not accepting that condition, she was not admitted. For many years, my mother had been the head deaconess and had prepared the bread for communion services. She had made the grape juice from the fruit of our own little vineyard, had boiled and sealed it in our kitchen. She was the church clerk and the organist and contributed in many other ways. From then on, the congregation sang a cappella because Mother was not allowed to touch the organ.

It took a few days for me to fully realize what had happened: I had been a member since my baptism at the age of twelve when Eld. Anglebarger baptized me in Rocky Mountain Lake in Denver. Now, the members of my family were no longer members of any church, although we continued to attend as we always had.

A few weeks later, I graduated from high school and that Fall, I enrolled at Union College, in Lincoln, Nebraska. During my first year at Union, I explained the situation to the pastor of the college church and was reinstated as a member on profession of faith. However, no one else in my family had yet become a member. My brother Pitt was only six when this dreadful blow struck our family. When he was old enough, Pitt was baptized and joined the church in Pueblo, but the Cañon City church refused a membership transfer.

*Loron:* About a year after the disbanding, the following note appeared in the Adventist church paper, the *Review and Herald*: "A Splendid Example. If others of our readers were to follow the splendid example set by Dr. Pitt Wade, of Cañon City, Colo., in the circulation of our church



paper, it would go into many Sabbath-keeping homes which are now deprived of its visits. Dr. Wade writes: ‘I called on twelve families of Sabbath keepers that were not taking the REVIEW. Ten families subscribed for it, and the others subscribed for one of our other papers.’”<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that Pitt’s loyalty and support for the church had not changed, but neither had his attitude about what had happened. My mother Zola Talbott was in nurse’s training at Boulder when her parents moved to Cañon City around 1929. From then on, she attended the church there on the brief occasions of her visits home. She soon noticed that any time Brother Brown was asked to pray in the church services, Dr. Wade would get up and walk out. As soon as Brown’s participation ended, the doctor would walk back in and sit down with his family. She admired Mother Alice who never lost her serenity.

*Theodore, Sr.:* My mother's disposition remained calm and unperturbed through the whole affair. To her steadfast loyalty to the Lord and to my father's persistent loyalty in spite of the bitterness which he manifested, I owe most of my continued faithfulness, which has been far less than perfect. My three siblings also died as members of the church. One of Mother's favorite texts and bits of advice given to her children was: “Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19). This, plus a sense of sorrow and frustration caused by such church problems has influenced my life. I have generally tried to avoid or diffuse threats of strife in the congregations with which I was connected.

*Loron:* Around 1990 I visited Cañon City and afterward sent to Uncle Pitt copies of photos I had taken of many scenes, including the old church building which, by that time, was owned by another denomination. With regard to that photo, he replied: “It is hard for me to see this picture. It brings back so many memories. One time a school friend invited me to go with him to his church. I couldn’t believe how they treated me. People looked me in the eye. They smiled and shook my hand. They welcomed me and told me they were glad to have me there.”<sup>42</sup>

The following letter was written March 31, 1931, by Alice to son Theodore who, by that time, had finished medical school at Loma Linda and was a surgical resident at Los Angeles County Hospital:

Your letter this morning expressed such thoughtful appreciation of Father. It did him lots of good. I know he was very much touched and pleased. He has worked so hard and untiringly and things have seemed rather to have gone against him of late. Our ostracism in church is sort of disheartening, though very little is said about it .... Fortunately, he is a cheerful optimistic temperament, and he doesn't grump, and I don't either, so we get along. He has been a good father, and it does him good to know you appreciate him and his efforts.

It had been seven years since the crisis in the church. Alice says that the ostracism “is sort of disheartening.” In another part of the letter, she adds that it would be wonderful if they could just move away, but that was not possible. When she wrote this, the Great Depression was heavy on the land, crushing people’s spirits as well as their pocketbooks.

A year later, the situation was worse: twelve million people were out of work; the unemployment rate had reached 24.6 per cent—higher than any ever before recorded. Again, Alice is writing to Theodore:

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<sup>41</sup> *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 5, 1925.

<sup>42</sup> My father records in his memories of this time that there were some in the church who continued to be friendly and work for reconciliation and healing. See page 158.

"It would stagger you if I should recount the amount we owe: the year's office rent, and Mrs. Burkey [their housekeeper] about \$300, and back taxes and smaller bills around. Father's insurance is such a lot every month."

She is thinking they will have to drop the insurance.

In those days, and even when I was young, when people went to the doctor, they usually did not pay up front. At the end of the month, the doctor would mail you a bill: "Two office visits \$2 each and one house call \$5," or something like that. Then you would write a check and mail it in an envelope with a two-cent stamp. You would pay your doctor bill along with the water bill, the light bill, etc. But how could people pay their doctor bill if they didn't have enough money for groceries? And if you had to choose, which would you pay first, the doctor or the electric company that could cut off your lights?

In addition to the worry and stress over finances, they carried a heavy burden for fourteen-year-old Pitt Allison who was seriously ill with osteomyelitis, a painful bone disease. He had spent months at home in bed, and now was at the Colorado State Children's Hospital in Denver. Recovery was uncertain. On May 22, Julia Margaret had given birth to a daughter, Rayona. Due to the depression, Julia's husband LeRoy Lane had lost his job, so they were living with Pitt and Alice, and their marriage was in trouble.

The letter from Alice continues:

Father is up and goes to the office twice a day, but he is far from well. I wonder just what is the matter with him. ... He is not able to do anything that requires physical exertion. I think he *oughtn't* ever build a fire or carry out ashes or work around the place anymore. He can't sleep at night. He never did sleep very well, but he seems to feel it more now. I guess he needs to sleep so much more now. He is awfully thin, and his skin hangs so loose on him like an old person's." [He was 65.]

Maybe he was ill, but it also seems that Pitt was overwhelmed and depressed. The ebullient entrepreneur was no more. Crushed in spirit, he was facing family troubles and financial ruin. Alice wonders in the letter if they should mortgage the house to pay their many debts. But then, there would be the interest, she says, and how would they make the monthly payments?

There is a note on one side of this letter in my father's handwriting: "This is the letter that brought me home in 1932." He was still a surgical resident at the time, so his visit was brief. He helped Pitt crate his X-ray equipment and put it in storage. That freed two office rooms and lowered the rent considerably. In other simple and practical ways, he helped, and his visit gave them courage, but there was little he or anyone else could do to solve their underlying problems. Pitt had created debts to finance his many projects, and the creditors were closing in.

## Downsizing

By 1943, the depression had ended, and things were looking better for the country, but for Pitt and Alice, it was too late. In March of that year, they left the beautiful home they loved so much,<sup>43</sup> and moved to a cabin that my parents had built in the mountains near Wetmore.

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<sup>43</sup> I have studied Fremont County court records and have seen no evidence of a foreclosure or sheriff's sale of the property. Maybe they sold it as a way to pay their debts. Alice appears as the owner of their car. That would seem to indicate that Pitt had filed for bankruptcy. There is room for more research here, but I have concluded that it is beside the point. For whatever reason, the fact is that they lost their home. I have also seen a letter from Alice to her

Suddenly, they were living in a small wooden house with no telephone, no electricity and no running water or indoor plumbing.

But, amazingly, there, among the fragrant pines, Pitt seemed to find his courage again. Worse had already come to worst and the stress of their loss was in the past. This man, who had not been able to build a fire or carry out the ashes, dug up the ground and put in a large garden, and each time we went up to visit, he would joyfully show us the improvements he was making around the place. Mother got them a goat who became a great pet. The goat entertained them with her antics, and they enjoyed her rich milk. He even developed a limited medical practice as people heard there was a doctor in the area, and he would drive around making house calls.

But it was an Indian summer.

One night in February of 1945, Alice was overwhelmed by intestinal bleeding. Pitt got her into the car and drove through the darkness to the emergency room at Corwin Hospital in Pueblo. It turned out to be colon cancer. In those days, the treatment for cancer was to cut out the tumor, hoping to get it all. Surgery was followed by slow recovery in the hospital and later at our home on Withers Avenue. Finally, she and Grandfather returned with great joy to their home in the mountains. But the reprieve was not to last.

Father was in Europe as an army surgeon when this happened. A few months after V-E Day<sup>44</sup> (May 8, 1945), he returned, and in December, our family moved to California where Father became chief of surgery at the Paradise Valley Adventist Hospital. Uncle Pitt with Aunt Phyllis and their daughter Reta moved into our house in Pueblo, and there Phyllis lovingly cared for Grandmother who lived on with great suffering until the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1946.

After the funeral, Pitt and Phyllis encouraged Grandfather to stay on with them, but he was determined to return to their home in the mountains, and he went. Before he left, Uncle Pitt handed him a note written in what was, to him, the most familiar and beautiful handwriting in the world:

I have this thing to tell you. I want you to get this after I am gone. There are things I very earnestly want you to do, and it means everything to me that you do so. I want you to learn the art of forgiving and forgetting. No matter what injustices have been done to you, I ask that you put them entirely out of your mind and your thoughts for all time. The Second Coming of Christ and the Day of Reckoning are immediately before all of us. I want you to leave all judging to God and to feel content that He knows what is wrong and what is right. I want you to bear in mind that your only need is to be certain that your personal case is right with Him, and that you yourself are ready. Let the other things go from your thoughts. I want you to devote your every thought and your every effort to the things of God. Ask Him to make clear faults that you yourself may have that you may correct them if necessary while you have time. I want your heart to be filled solely with the love and charity of God so that you may be a living example of such things to our children. ...

I ask you, Pitt, to see and pray with all of your endeavor that you no longer harbor any bitterness or any anger in your heart toward anyone no matter what provocation you have had. Learn to fully forgive. I want you to devote your remaining days to your own status with God. I am sure that, when the time comes, He in His wisdom will see to it and will let you rest with me. Until then, spend your remaining days in patience and he will guide you if you ask him. He has a plan for everyone. I want to see you again. Love Alice.

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sisters saying that she was applying for the Colorado State Old Age Pension. That was a program reserved for indigent people.

<sup>44</sup> V-E Day: "Victory in Europe Day." This was the day the German government signed papers of unconditional surrender to the Allies.

Gentle and loving as always, Alice could speak to his needs and appeal to his heart better than anyone alive. "There are things I very earnestly want you to do, and it means everything to me that you do so. ... I want to see you again."

Forty years had passed since the message from Ellen White:

Should you in any way become suspicious of one who does not harmonize with you, you would make trouble. When your will and way is crossed, bitter feelings arise in your heart. You cherish a feeling of hatred toward the one who you think has made a mistake.

When that letter came, Pitt showed it to Alice. "It is true," she told him. "Every word of it is true." She encouraged him, at that time, as he initially prayed and asked God to change his heart. Now, facing the end of life, she was speaking to him again, appealing to the most sensitive fibers of his soul.

Not long after that, Uncle Pitt had a phone call from Mrs. Bigelow, a Wetmore neighbor, who said she had gone to visit his father and found him disheveled and surrounded by dirt and disorder. He went up to the cabin quickly and was shocked. Depressed and paralyzed by grief, the old man was totally unable to cope. Pitt helped him get his things together and put him on the train for California.

Theodore and I were delighted when we heard Grandfather was coming, and as soon as he arrived, we began begging him for stories. But Mother intervened: "No, Grandfather can't tell you any stories now," she said. "We have to wait until he is feeling better." But that day never came.

On the evening of March 19, 1947, Theodore and I were reading in the living room while our parents were in the bedroom caring for Grandfather. Suddenly, Mother came in and said, "If you boys want to see your grandfather while he's still alive, you need to come quickly." We followed her into the bedroom, but it was already too late. Mother told us that he said, "I want to go to sleep, and I don't ever want to wake up again." Then he closed his eyes and was gone.

Not long before that, he said to Father, "There is something I need to tell you, Ted. I want you to know that I have forgiven the people who hurt me. I have let go of all that. I am leaving it with the Lord." Did he also reflect on words that could never be unspoken, deeds that could never be undone?

Many years later, I asked my father, "What did your father die from?"

"I think," he replied, "that he died of a broken heart."

## **Reflection**

There is no doubt that Pitt was highly successful in his chosen profession. He worked hard and efficiently. As Uncle Pitt observed, he made a lot of money over a good many years. As a father, he knocked the ball out of the park: His children greatly loved and admired him. They were good citizens and successful people, and they all died in the Faith. Beyond that, we can leave judgment over such a colorful and interesting life where it belongs.

**This photo was taken at the Wetmore cabin. Little Theodore is with Aunt Dortha, Alice is next to Pitt, and Rayona is close to her mother Julia Margaret**



Another insight about Grandfather Pitt: Not long after our family moved to Paradise Valley, a letter came from Grandfather who was living at the Wetmore cabin. It was addressed to Theodore and Loron, and it said: “Yesterday morning I looked out the French doors at the back of the house and what do you think I saw out there beside the bee hives? The first boy who can guess what it was will get a bag of jellybeans.”

In the same envelope he enclosed a little piece of paper that was about 3 inches square. The paper was folded in the middle and at about every half inch along the edge he had torn the paper slightly. Between the tears, the paper was folded first one way and the next the other. The purpose of these little folds was to keep the paper from opening spontaneously.

After thinking it over for a while, I remembered reading that bears love honey, so I guessed: “I think he saw a bear!” Theodore said he agreed with that answer. Mother then opened the little square of paper. Inside, he had written, “A bear.” I wondered how he was going to send the jellybeans. Not long after that a letter came addressed to Mother that included 10 three-cent postage stamps. He asked if Mother could use the stamps and provide the 30 cents for the candy.

I don’t remember much about the jellybeans but a lot about a loving grandfather.



A handwritten note at the edge of this photo says, “Felter Building, 1902.” The Felter Building is still standing in downtown Canon City. His office was on the second floor in the corner above a drug store.

In 1902 he turned 35. At that time, men were starting to be clean shaven, but he felt that if people saw him with a beard, they would think of him as older and more experienced.

The scene has been carefully composed for the photograph: The glass instrument case is open, with the instruments standing up on full display. The safe is open and crowded with numerous items. It is labeled “DR. PITT A. WADE.”

Is that tank next to the examining table for anesthesia? Maybe. He was not a surgeon, but there is a newspaper account of at least one procedure. So, evidently, in the early days he did do some surgery. It seems likely these were the instruments and examining table that he got for 5 cents on the dollar are related on page 13.

The doctor is seated at a “secretary”-style of writing desk, In the waiting room we see a telephone, a rocking chair and a bookcase filled, we assume, with weighty medical tomes. There are several diplomas on the walls.

The photographer is standing in the hallway aiming his camera through an open window that is visible at the extreme left.

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**This account is included in a book of stories about my forebears, *Trouble on the Applegate Trail*, that is available on Amazon.com**