

58. THREE MUSKETEERS

As young adventurers, Nathaniel Alford, William Calloway, and Jacob Cornelison arrived here to spend the winter of 1861-62, then left to go exploring elsewhere.¹

William Calloway (1838-1891), for whom the water rights were named that occasioned such a fuss in the previous chapter, left a surprisingly indistinct image. Widely varying local histories,² puzzling land records and sketchy genealogical information don't reconcile well. However, here goes...

Bill was born in Indiana and lived an apparently placid life on his father's farm until he was 21. He left in 1859 for Missouri (likely St. Joe or thereabouts), where he teamed up with Jacob Cornelison (1836-1920) to haul freight from the Missouri River to Colorado by ox team.

1860 found them in a mining camp on the Blue River near Breckenridge, Colorado. Bill fell seriously ill with 'mountain fever'³ in the fall of 1861 and Jacob, certain that Bill was dying, rushed him to Denver in the back of a wagon hitched to two wild steers. Miraculously, neither the fever nor the trip did Bill in – four days lying delirious in the back of the careening buckboard. His fever broke before they got to Denver where he apparently neither sought nor received medical attention.

At some point, probably back in Breckenridge, Bill and Jacob fell in with Nathaniel C. (N. C.) Alford (1835-1916), also a freighter, and together the three (and perhaps others) spent the winter of 1861-62 on Meadow Creek hunting game to sell in Denver.⁴

Bill wandered west in 1863 and on the way back ended up working for N. C. Alford, raising vegetables to sell in mining camps near Boise, Idaho. The two came back to the East Slope, lighting in Cheyenne in 1867. Shortly afterwards, Bill homesteaded in the Livermore area.

This is where things start to go fuzzy. Bill is credited with settling both on Boxelder Creek **11**

and North Rabbit Creek **3** in 1867, and he likely did both. Either one would make him one of the first settlers in the Livermore area.

Musical homesteads. It seems Bill sold his claim⁵ on Boxelder Creek in 1869 to his younger brother, Martin (1846-1879), and wife, Mary (née Hackerd – 1851-1935). They lived there until Martin died of pneumonia in 1879.⁶

Meanwhile, over on North Rabbit Creek, the original survey (~1873) laying out townships and ranges shows two house locations, one with the notation *Wm Calloway* about where the Lower Cherokee Unit headquarters is now **3**, another for *N. C. Alford* near the old Brackenbury headquarters **2** and a third, possibly for Jacob Cornelison **10**.

Local histories have Bill trading this place on North Rabbit Creek to his brother, John M. Calloway (1836-1917), in 1870 or 1875⁷, for the place on the river where Clarence and Priscilla Koch lived and the location of the William Calloway #1 and #2 Ditches (Chapter 57). **9** One account has Bill living on North Rabbit Creek in 1872.

At some point it became clear that Bill's new place on the river was on UP land. Bill was stubbornly disinclined to pay for something that he had improved and considered his, so he just dug in. In 1894, three years after his death, his widow, apparently somewhat more pragmatic, bought and paid for the place. Likewise, his homestead patent on the land where the Rabbit Creek Pivot is located came through in 1893, two years after he died – it was only from beyond the grave that Bill managed to acquire durable title to land in Livermore.

He claimed 160-acres of bottom land along Rabbit Creek under the Pre-emption Act (Chapter 6) in 1884. The published notice lists four neighbors that attest to his "*continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land...*"⁸ Bill is credited with attempting a *timber claim* (Chapter 24) on this property, but the trees died. Two homestead Patents for this piece and an ad-

joining 160-acres were issued to Joseph W. Calloway (perhaps a younger cousin) in 1887. Bill's brother-in-law, Henry Hackerd, obtained a Patent to another adjoining 160-acres in 1890.⁹

Bill's fondness and capacity for nipping at a passing demijohn prominently noted in reminiscences of his contemporaries, may sadly provide a clue to his early death from kidney failure (Bright's Disease) at the age of 53.

Thanks to Ray Sumner for his help with this chapter.

¹ Eventually the three would homestead in the Livermore area. Alford **2**, Calloway **3**, **6**, **8**, **9** & **11**, Cornelison **6**, **10**.

² *Ranch Histories of Livermore and Vicinity 1884 – 1956*, Larimer County Stockgrowers Association. Also, *History of Larimer County, Colorado – 1911*, Ansel Watrous. 1911.

³ A catch-all malady that was probably what is now known as Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (tick fever).

⁴ The photograph (opposite) shows a stone structure near a spring in Jackson Park, south of Meadow Creek. **1** The large granite rocks are stacked roughly without mortar. There seems to be no record of this structure and by the time I got around to asking Bill Tibbits about it, his memory had failed him. I take the liberty of declaring that it is a 'game safe', originally covered with trees and branches to keep predators out long enough to assemble a wagon load of game carcasses for the trip to Denver. The spot, about 12 miles northwest of Livermore, is in keeping with one report of their 1861-62 winter hunting camp location.

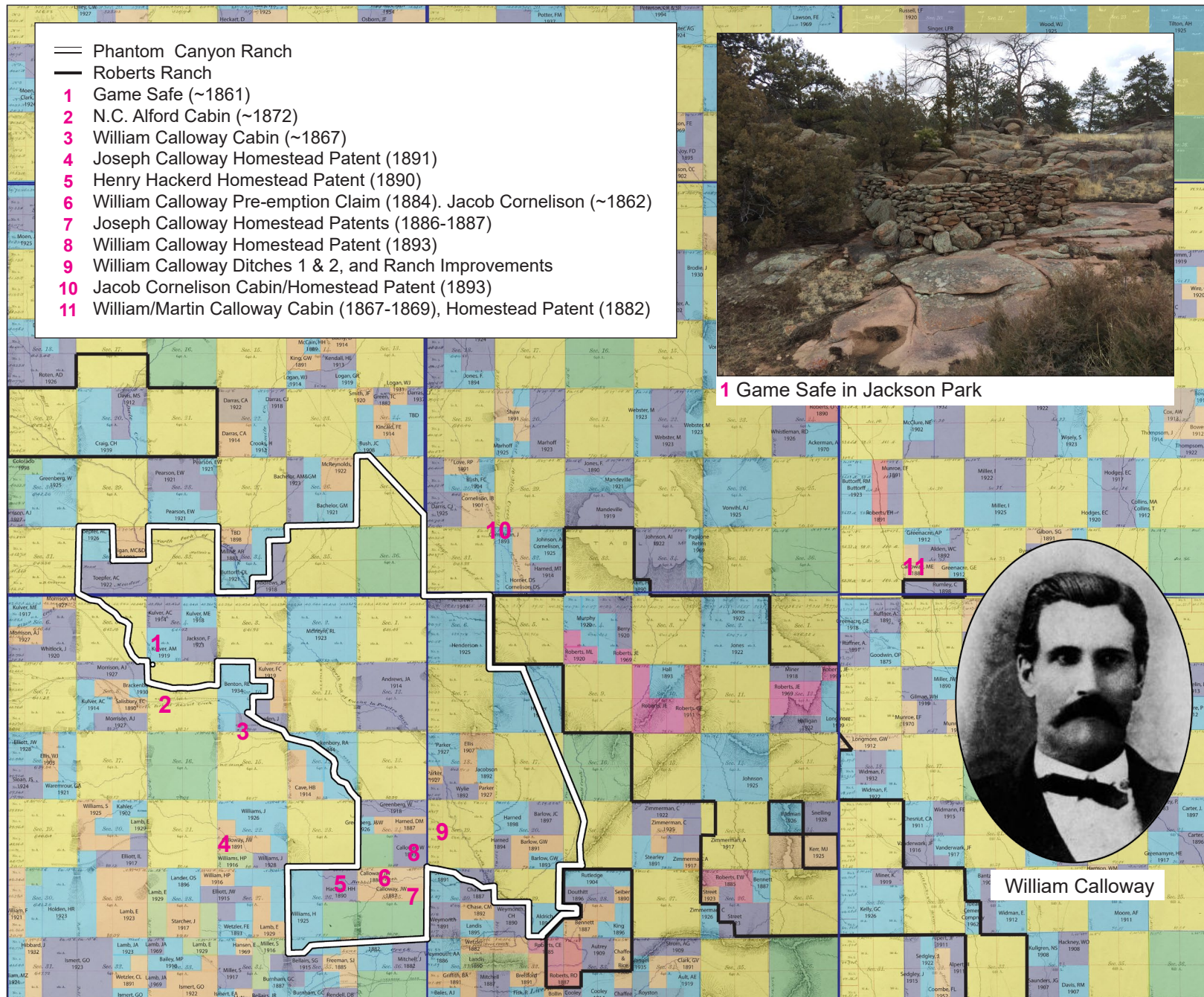
⁵ May not have been much to sell. There seems to be no official record of Bill's claim on Boxelder Creek.

⁶ Bill's first wife, Fannie (née Keach – 1848-1879) died the same year as her brother-in-law, Martin. In 1881 Bill and Mary married (a not uncommon practice in those days for widowed in-laws to remarry).

⁷ 1875 is most likely.

⁸ Bill's peculiar ability to dwell continuously in more than one place at a time is of interest.

⁹ This was a popular corner of the Livermore Valley. Jacob Cornelison settled in here for a while after 1862, panning for gold and hunting.



Original Survey Map to Establish Ranges and Townships in Colorado Showing Original Disposition of Land by the Federal Government (courtesy of Ray Sumner)