



LUCIAN M. RALSTON
Pioneer Settler

Mount Vernon Canyon pioneer settler Lucian McKee Ralston was an extraordinary, hard-working, enterprising, and stabilizing influence for the community from 1879 until he died in 1957. His example of integrity, strength, and generosity continues to inspire all public school children who attend Ralston Elementary School, the school named after him.

Lucian's father, Captain Lucian Hunter Ralston, moved his family from Kentucky in 1879 and settled in a log cabin near Cody Park near Genesee and Lookout Mountains. Eight year old Lucian watched his father teach children at the Rockland School and help build the Rockland Church while raising potatoes and grain. In 1887 they established a ranch and general store where Interstate 70 now lies between Exits 256 and 254. After the death of his father, Lucian continued to manage the family ranch and store, freighted lumber to Idaho Springs and harvested hay. In 1900 he married Bessie Lindsay. They established a variety of enterprises to support raising their seven children. The children helped grow and harvest grain, hay and vegetables. They milked cows and tended the chickens to sell milk and eggs at the store where they each developed business and retailing skills.

Lucian served on the Rockland School Board of Education for 35 years. His family helped repair and maintain the school building, and teachers boarded at the Ralston ranch during the seven month school year. He was the first Chaplain for the Genesee Grange #219 in 1913. He built a large room behind the store to provide space for community celebrations and meetings. He also served as a Jefferson County Deputy Sheriff.

When Denver officials began to explore for a mountain park system, Lucian encouraged them to purchase Genesee Mountain to preserve the wildlife habitat, plant diversity, and extraordinary views. It would also provide a pasture for a buffalo herd; and open land for hiking and camping. He helped dig the grave for Buffalo Bill and guided the Colorado Mountain Club in building the historic Beaver Brook Trail for hikers in 1919. Lucian worked for Denver Mountain Parks for 14 years, helping to build and maintain roads and establish picnic areas.

After Lucian's death in 1957, the Ralstons traded their Genesee Mountain land for a site south of Cold Springs to allow for the Genesee development and construction of I-70.

"Ralston was a quiet man, he lived unpretentiously, and was a true man of the mountains. He gave many a helping hand and never had an unkind word to say of his fellow man." (Georgina Brown, THE SHINING MOUNTAINS).