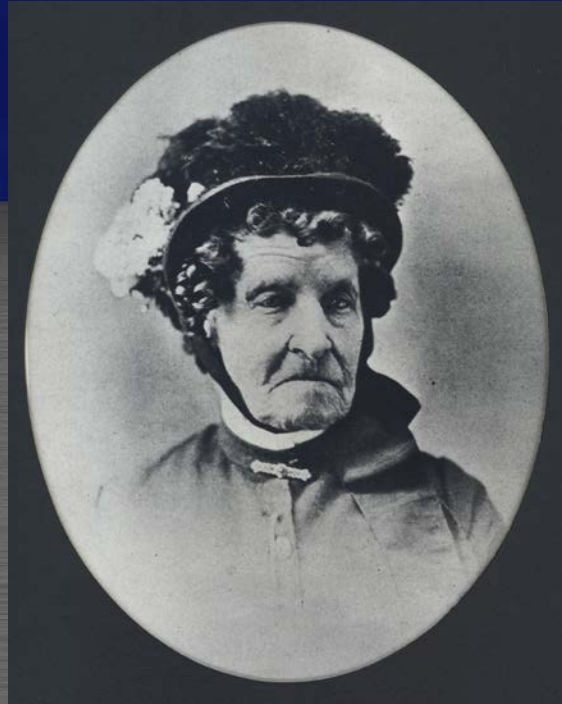
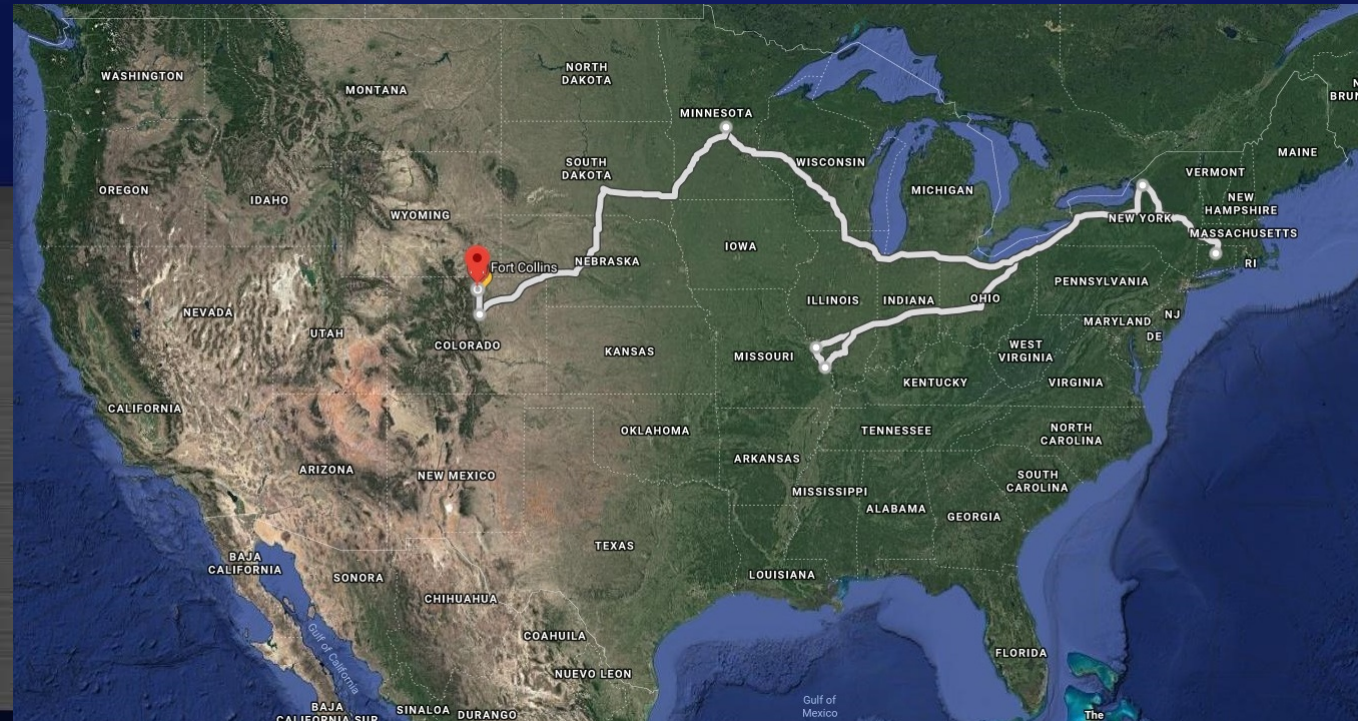


Born in Hartford, Connecticut on September 21, 1801, Elizabeth Hickok saw the country as it was when Thomas Jefferson was president. She would travel a long way in her life, eventually making her last home here in Fort Collins to become a local legend as our own Founding Mother.

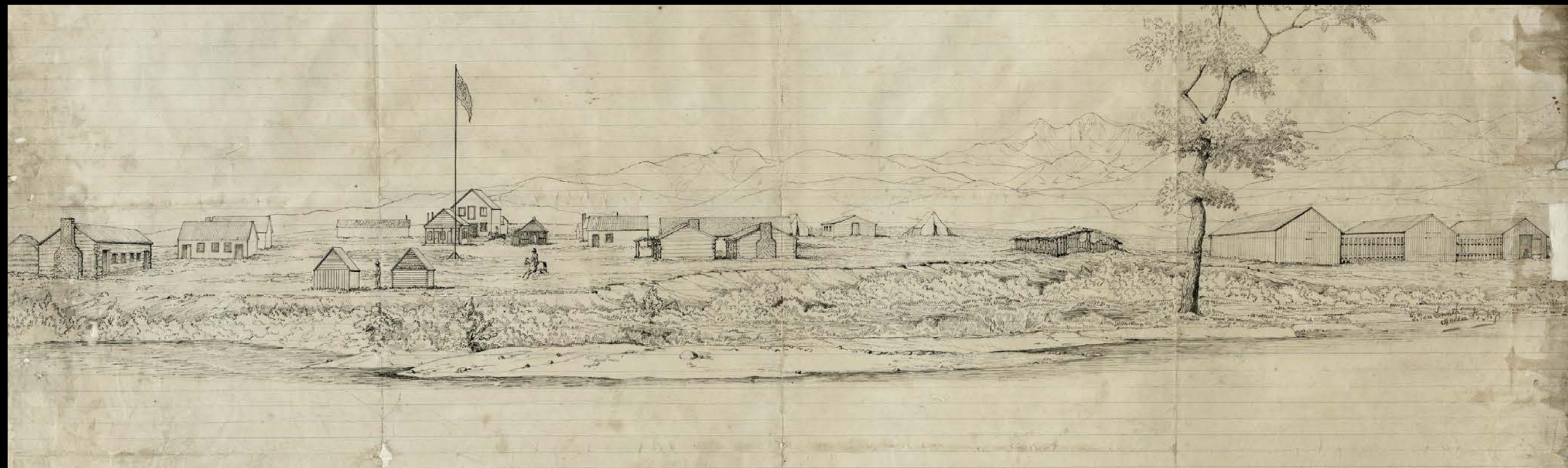


Elizabeth Hickok Robbins Stone  
1801-1895

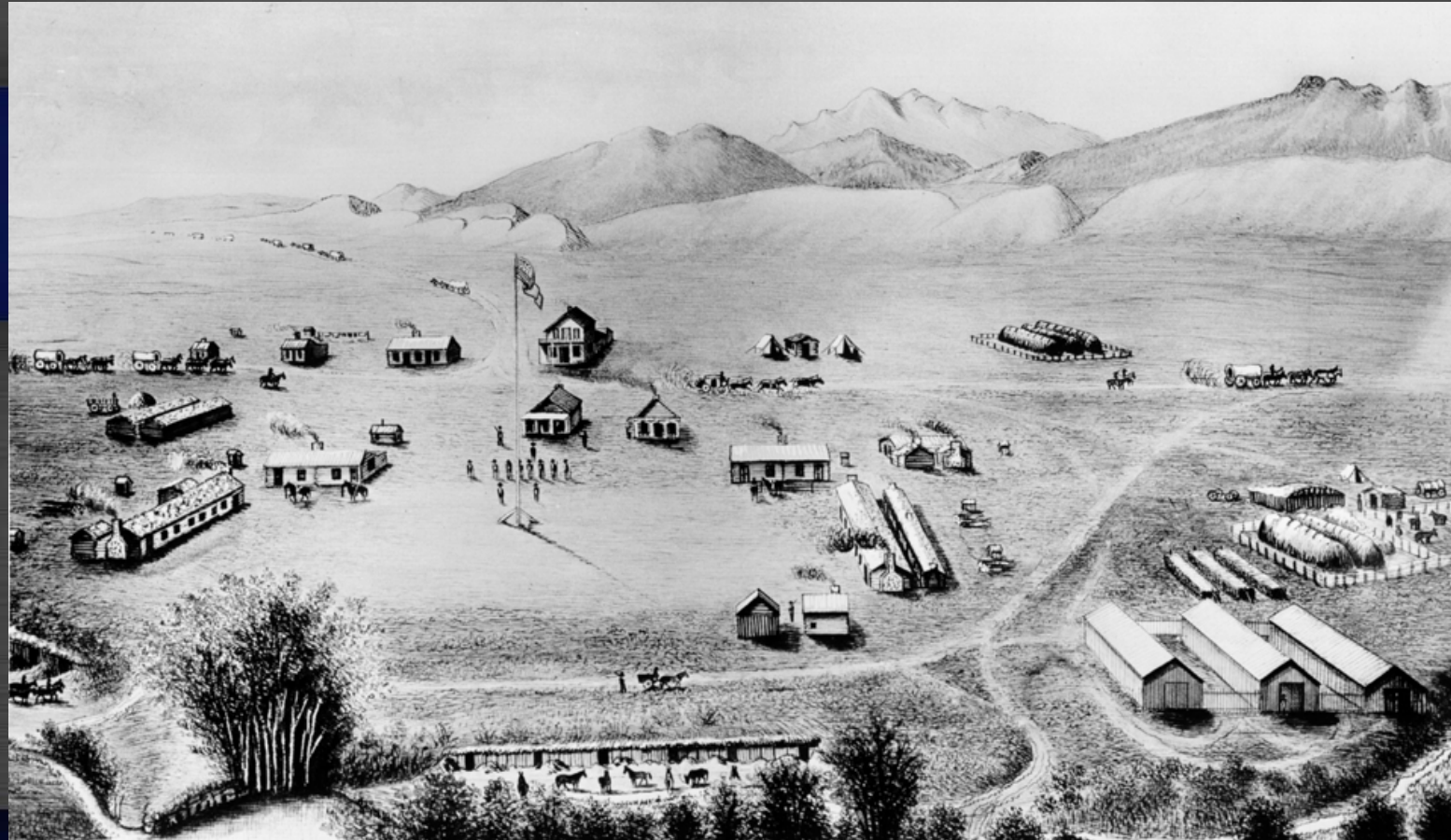
At age 23, she married Dr. Ezekiel Robbins in Watertown, New York. They moved to St. Louis where they raised their family of 8 children. They later traveled to Chester, Illinois, where Ezekiel died of cholera in 1852. The couple had been married for 28 years. Elizabeth eventually made her way to Minnesota and married a widower named Lewis Stone. They ran the Stone Hotel there, then traveled to Denver in 1862 by covered wagon. The Stones built a restaurant and hotel on land that is now part of Denver's Union Station.



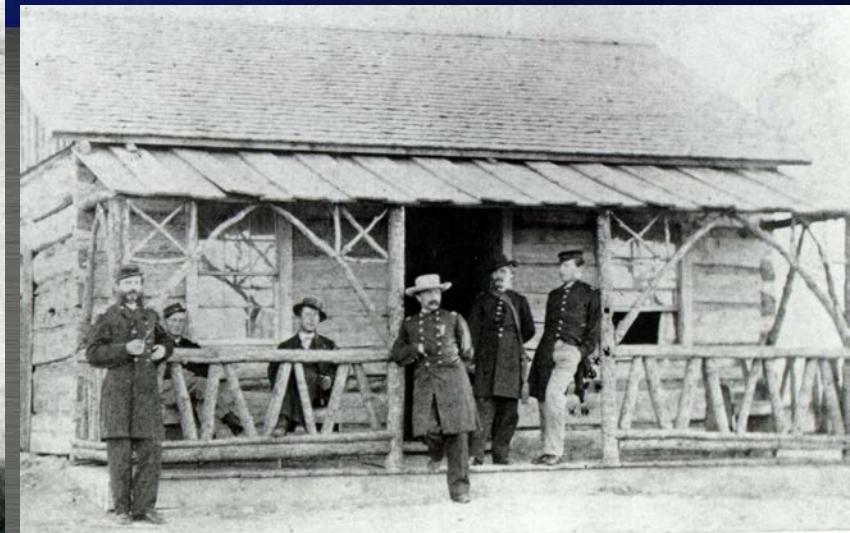
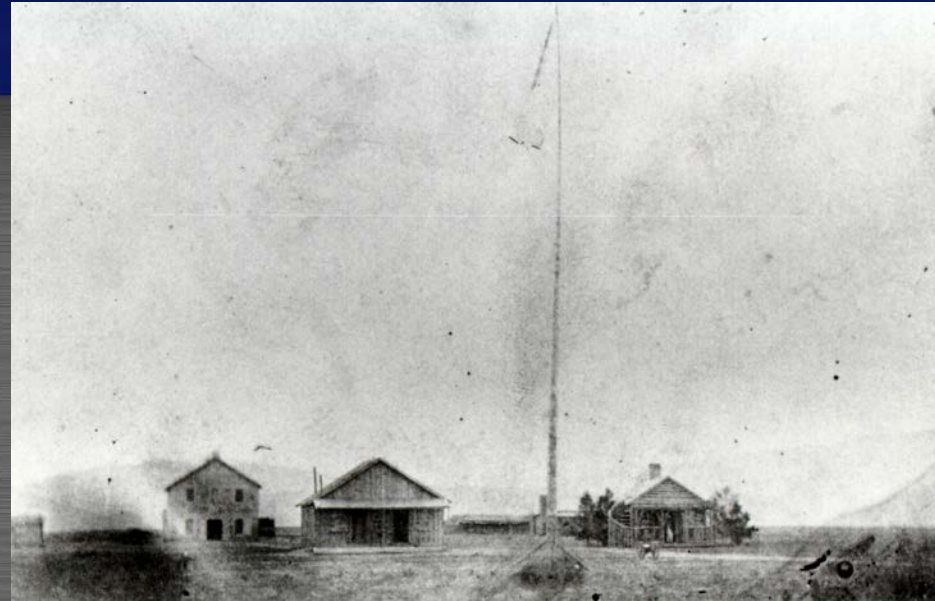
In 1864, the Stones were invited by their friend, Dr. Timothy Smith, to a fledgling outpost in Colorado Territory called Camp Collins. They were contracted as civilians to run an officers' mess and boarding house. Elizabeth was 63 at this point, and had already traveled at least 4,000 miles before finally arriving here, where she would live the remainder of long her life. This is how Fort Collins looked when she arrived. The fort was a cavalry post charged with patrolling a portion of the Overland Trail.



Here's another view, facing southwest. Today, Linden Street runs approximately through the center of the Fort's parade ground (where the flag is located), with Jefferson Street forming the southern boundary of the Fort.



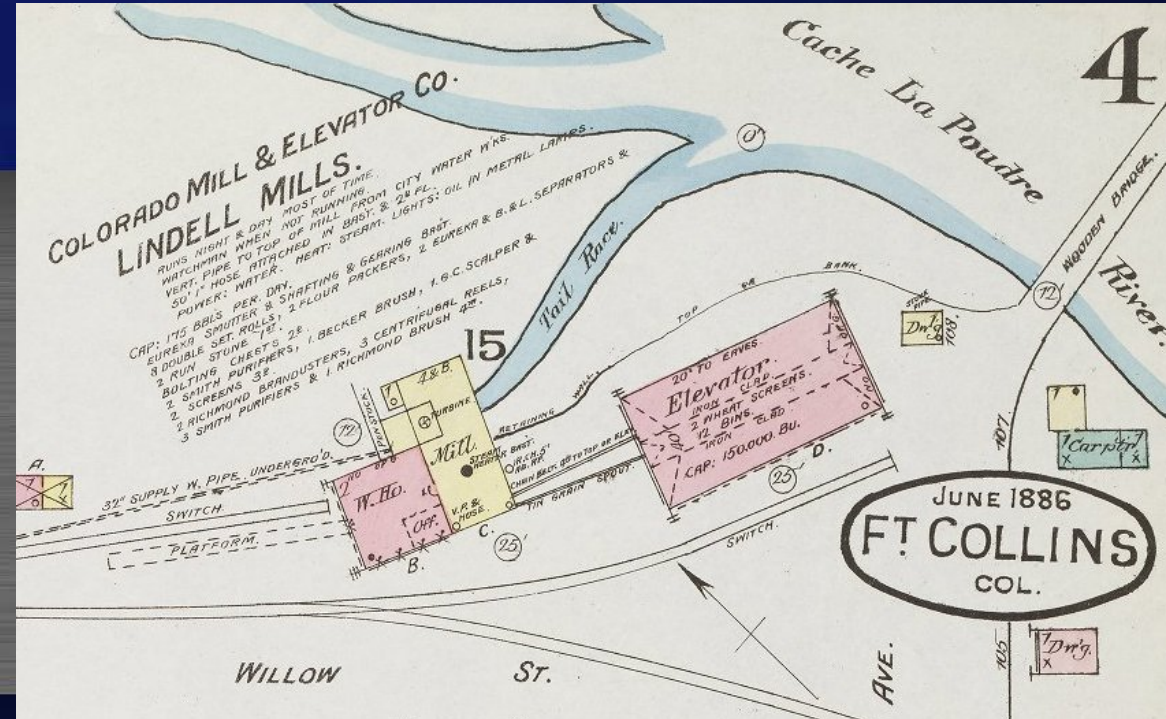
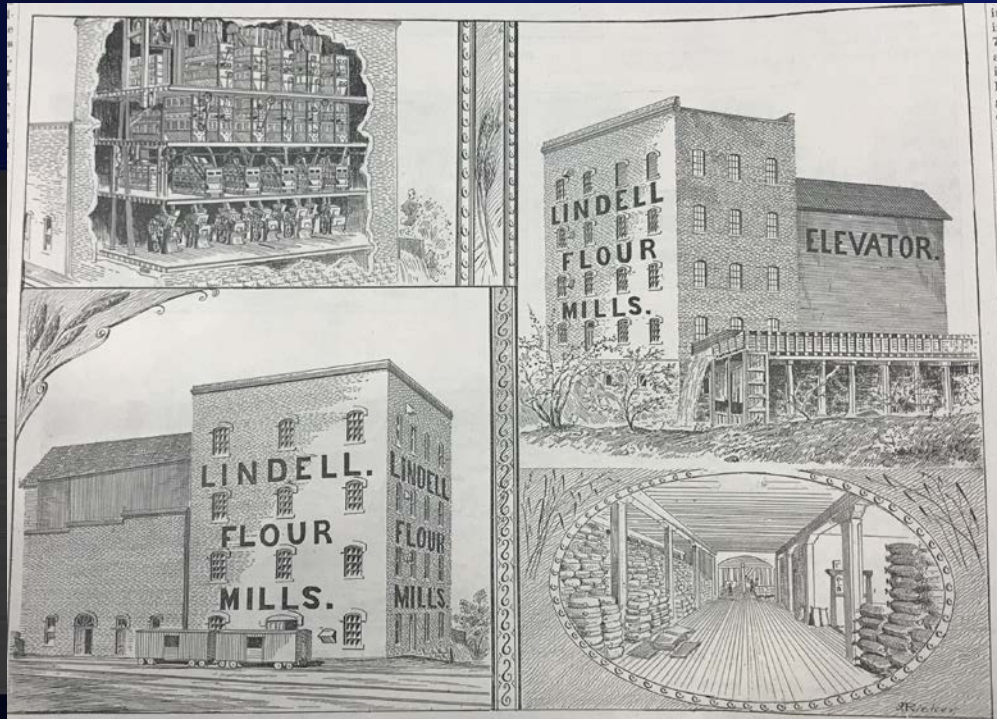
Here are a few more images of early Fort Collins. It was by the Fort soldiers like these that Elizabeth Stone acquired the nickname "Auntie." She was like family to them, known for her kindness and hospitality.



After Lewis Stone died in 1866, Auntie Stone invited her niece, Elizabeth Keays, to come to Colorado. Keays kept a diary of her journey west, and described Auntie's cabin as a "very comfortable home for this country with three large rooms below and chambers for sleeping rooms..." with "...ingrain carpet, nice bed, and window with a nice sunset view." This photo is said to be of the cabin. Elizabeth Stone is probably the woman circled below, and Elizabeth Keays and her son Wilbur are at the far right.



Fort Collins was decommissioned in 1867, but that's when Elizabeth hit her stride as a businesswoman. With her business partner Henry Clay Peterson, she started Lindell Mills, the town's first flour mill. She and Peterson also started and the first brick factory in Fort Collins.



She was again in the hotel business. Auntie first ran the Pioneer Hotel out of her cabin, and then bought the Blake House hotel in 1873. She also ran the Cottage House, a small hotel made from bricks from her factory, until age 80, when her daughter Theodosia Van Brunt arrived to take over.

This new and capacious Hotel is now thoroughly furnished, and is open for the reception of guests. 1yl

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**BLAKE HOUSE.**

**MRS. E. STONE, Proprietress,**

**Fort Collins, - - Colorado-**

A large addition has been made to this well known hotel, and it has been thoroughly refitted.  
Good stables and corral attached. 1yl

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**THE COTTAGE HOUSE,**

*Mrs. T. M. Van Brunt, Proprietress.*

Rates, \$1 Per Day. \$5 Per Week.

FIRST-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS. NICE CLEAN BEDS.

◆◆◆

**ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME.**

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(Next door west of Teds on House)

JEFFERSON STREET, FORT COLLINS.

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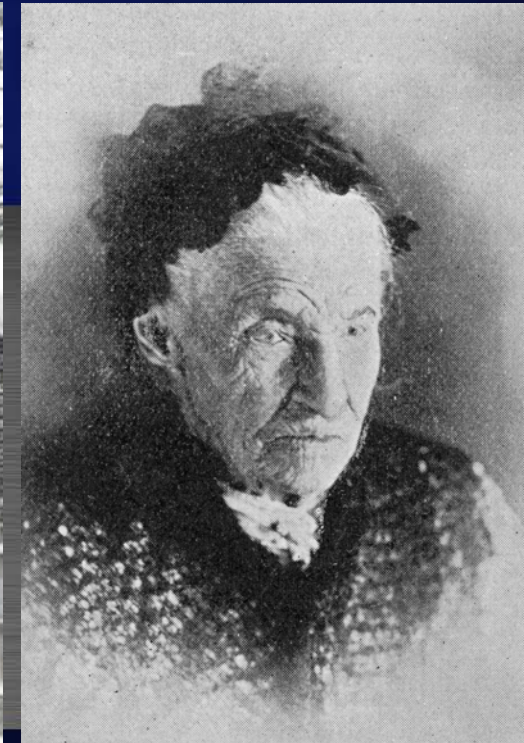
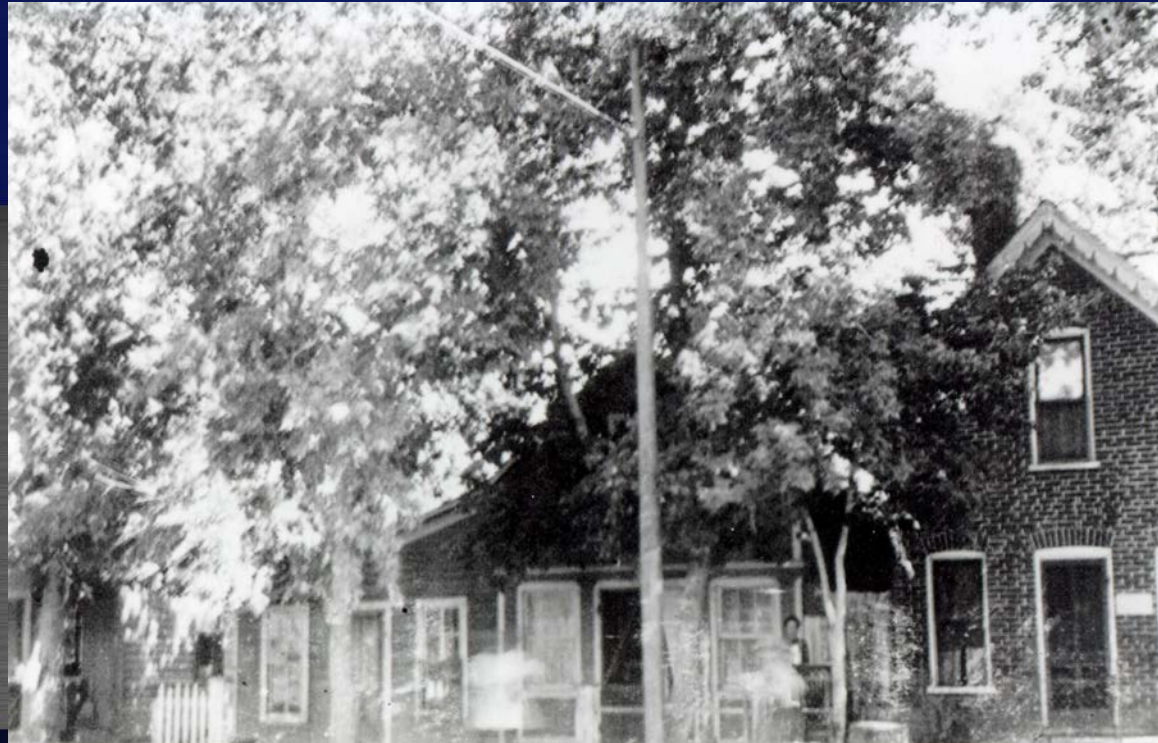
See the Cottage House hotel? It's over the left of the huge Tedmon House hotel. This is the northwest corner of Linden and Jefferson Streets.



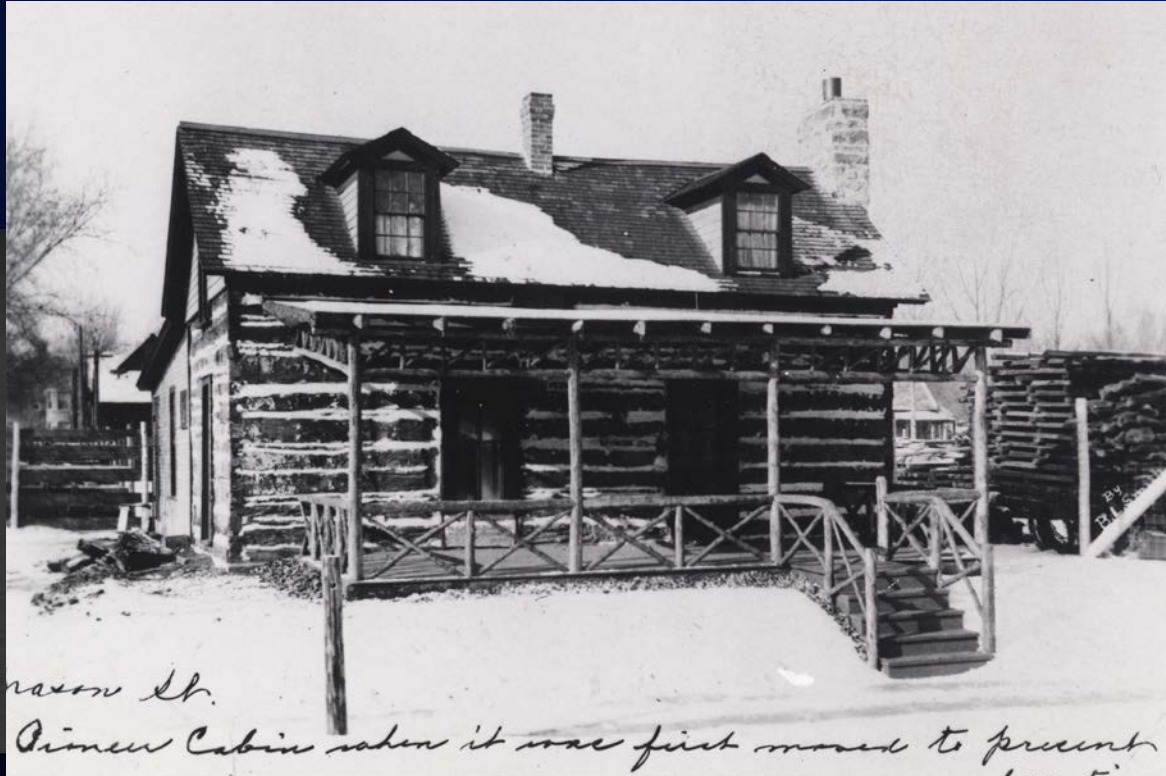
Here are two more shots of the Cottage House on Jefferson Street.



Auntie Stone was famous for her energy. In 1882, at her 81st birthday party, the younger men in attendance failed to "dance her down," and Elizabeth further astonished everyone by leaving the dance at 5:00 a.m. to go home and cook breakfast for all her guests. In 1894, Elizabeth voted for the first time in a municipal election, stating "I have waited a lifetime for this privilege." She was 93. Her picture is at the right, probably from about 1893. Her daughter Theodosia is at left, and the house they shared is pictured at center.



Her old cabin is the last structure still in existence from the Fort. After Auntie Stone sold it, it was moved several times around town, finally settling into its current home at the Heritage Courtyard on Mathews Street.



This painting of Fort Collins in the 1880s was created by local artist Frank Miller in 1945. We're looking down Linden Street towards Jefferson, and here's our own Elizabeth Stone, strolling along. She died on December 4, 1895 at age 94. In her honor, all the local businesses closed that afternoon, and the bell in the firehouse rang out 94 times for each year of her life.



Auntie Stone was beloved in her own time, and still is today. Her great-granddaughter Cora Brown recalled Elizabeth's "brilliant mind", and that she used to say, "a smile is worth more than anything else." She's inspired living history interpreters, educational programs in her cabin, and even a little Auntie Stone doll.



Here's Fort Collins as it was in the late 1890s. We're looking north up Linden Street towards the site of the original fort. This is the Fort Collins Auntie Stone knew before she died, a bustling town that she helped build.



Learn more about local history by visiting the Archive at Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, visiting the Poudre River Public Library District, and by checking us out online at the Fort Collins History Connection.