

Preston Adkins Smith

Preston A. Smith was born May 24, 1884 at Hot Sulphur Springs along with his twin brother Henry Adkins Smith. His mother died when he was five years of age, and very early in life these two boys went out in the world for themselves. . *Preston and Henry (age 16) are listed in the 1900 census as living with PH Smith and his wife Mary Eva Quinn in Grand Lake.*

Memories by Georgia Smith compiled by Lynda Lindsey

P. H. Smith's three sons, Preston, Henry and Ed were huge like their father. They had the same stamina of pioneer courage of their father and their sisters. They were reckless and lived violently. These hardy fellows were hired as stage and mail drivers for ex-senator Tovey between Grand Lake and Granby for several years. To drive a stage was the highest ambition a young boy could have. The fad was to be the fastest, most powerful driver of the swift overland stage. Middle Park had her share of hero drivers, among them were Preston, Henry and Ed Smith. They were a tough boisterous bunch, full of pranks, yet always thoughtful and polite to their passengers.



From an article in Middle Park Times May 29, 1908.

This community was greatly shocked last Saturday morning May 28th about 11 o'clock when a telephone message from the Troublesome brought the sad news of the untimely death of Preston A. Smith which occurred near that place one hour before, as the result of his being crushed beneath the horse on which he had been riding. The accident occurred in the vicinity of the Deitrich place, in the presence of Ed Deitrich and John Johnston who were with Smith assisting in the rounding up a bunch of horses. From what we can learn young Johnston and Smith had been rounding up their horses for a day or two and had them all in, when they started out to assist Mr. Deitrich, at whose house they were stopping, to round up some horses for him. The horse on which Preston Smith had been riding during the roundup was pretty well worn out and Mr. Deitrich told him to take one of his horses, an old saddle horse and one that was perfectly gentle. This Smith did, and the party started out on their trip. After riding three or four miles the men dismounted to tighten the cinches on their saddles. It seems that Smith much have cinched his saddle too tightly, for as soon as he got astride the horse again, the animal reared up on his hind legs and fell backwards, pinning the young man to the ground in an instant. When this happened Johnston and Deitrich were only a few feet away. Smith jumped up and stepped back a little distance and said "open my clothes" and fell over unconscious. He lived for about forty five minutes after the accident occurred. It is thought that his neck was broken in the fall. His comrades did all in their power to revive him, but before they could get any help he was dead.

Preston Smith was an ideal young man, 24 years of age, or would have been the day after the fatal accident occurred. Everybody in Middle Park knows Preston and Henry Smith, twin brothers, and nothing but good can be said concerning them. Both young men were of good habits and friends to all who ever knew them. The temptations so easily yielded to by so many young men in these parts, had no charms for Preston Smith. His life, though short, was filled with noble deeds, and after all the possession of such a name is worth more than gold or silver. What Preston Smith was will live and act after him. His high ideas of life, his actions, will pass into the thoughts and actions of others and make an influence for good, the value of which cannot be measured by the twenty four short years of his life – short years indeed. But the good men do is not always to be reckoned by the number of years they live.

Preston Smith and John Johnston passed through Sulphur Springs enroute to Troublesome where they expected to get their horses and bring them back to the ranch on Stillwater. The boys stopped here and were greeting friends with no thought of what the next day would bring forth. On Saturday Preston Smith was brought back through this place – a corpse. Funeral services were conducted by Rev W. R. Hodges at the Congregational church here Monday at 1:30 in the afternoon. The funeral was one of the largest ever attended in Middle Park which shows the esteem in which the deceased was held by all who knew him.