mem-ber-a-bil-ia.

noun. (1) A concise summary/compendium of treasured information and downright important stuff published exclusively for the edification and pleasure of the membership of Historic Georgetown, Inc., one of the best preservation organizations in the world; (2) less than our quarterly historical journal and more than our glitzy little newsletter.

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In Search of Major Anderson

By Mort Stern

THE QUEST....

The nugget of local history (and its national context) featured in this publication was unearthed by members of Historic Georgetown, Inc. as a result of questions that naturally arose when a friend and neighbor of ours, Marv Geisness, bought a tract of land in the Meadows area on which to build some handsome townhouses.

All that Geisness knew about the history of the parcel was its designation as the "Major Anderson Mill Site." As one after another of us visited the site, looked at the drawings, or watched the progress of construction, we kept asking, "Who was this Major Anderson? What do we, or should we, know about him?"

Naturally, around here the first thing anyone with a historical question does is ask Christine Bradley, HGI Board member, Clear Creek County archivist, historian and all-around pursuer of fact, fallacy and legend about this part of Colorado. But Bradley didn't know either, especially since we didn't seem to have much to go on--not even the major's first name.

Another member, Mort Stern, retired journalist and professor whose wife Pat had been working as a design consultant on the Major Anderson construction project, suggested that Anderson must have been a member of a federal military unit stationed in Colorado or of a local volunteer group involved in some noteworthy event, or that perhaps he was a Civil War veteran who took up mining. But we couldn't find a mention of such a person in the state or local historical reference books. However, Bradley had an inspiration: Find the record of the original claim and see what that would reveal. But what the available document told us only seemed to add to the mystery. It was an 1872 record of an application to the General Land Office of the United States outlining the Major Anderson claim and giving survey data compiled by the claimant, a man named Egbert Johnson. [A copy of Johnson's plat for the 5 1/2 acre Major Anderson Lode and Mill Site, taken from that document, is part of this publication, page 10]

Now, we had a new question: Who was Egbert Johnson, and what was his connection to the mysterious Major Anderson? Bradley recalled that she had read somewhere of the presence in Georgetown in the 1860s of an Egbert Johnson and/or an Albert Johnson. But county who's whos offered no listing for either name.

Then we got a break. As a birthday present, Stern received a copy of a book entitled Hell's Belles written by Clark Secrest, a former Denver Post colleague of his who was now editor of Colorado Heritage magazine at the State Historical Society. As he was reading this account of early day crime and prostitution in Denver, Stern was startled

to find on page 26 a reference to "President Egbert Johnson of the Fire and Police Board in Denver" taking some action against an officer. A footnote to the item traced the account of the incident to an 1892 newspaper article. Could that be the same Egbert Johnson whose claim to the Major Anderson site in Georgetown was officially confirmed in the document dated 20 years earlier?

Checking with Secrest led us to a brief biographical reference to the Egbert Johnson of Secrest's book in Frank Hall's 1895 History of Colorado, which reported that before coming to Colorado, that particular Egbert Johnson not only had been a surveyor but had volunteered for Civil War duty with the 17th Illinois Cavalry Regiment in 1863--and although he served less than a year because of health problems, he had risen to lst lieutenant and acting captain of his company. While we still didn't have confirmation that the Denver Egbert Johnson was Georgetown's Egbert Johnson, we began to have some basis for further detective work. And we had what we thought might be a workable theory: That Major Anderson might have been a fellow officer of Johnson's in the 17th Illinois.

The theory wouldn't pan out, though we held on to it until, with Secrest's assistance, we received from the Illinois State Archives in Springfield a roster of the officers in the 17th Cavalry. We found no one named Anderson among the officers, although we were able to confirm the presence on the roster of Egbert Johnson and his status.

He had enlisted as a private in December 1863 at Evanston, Illinois--ironically, the town named for President Lincoln's friend and early political supporter Dr. John Evans who, by this time, had been appointed by Lincoln to be Governor of the territory of Colorado. Johnson was assigned to the quartermaster staff, but apparently he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Union cause, for he moved up quickly in the regiment, being promoted to Quartermaster Sergeant in early February, commisisoned a 2nd lieutenant on April 1, and advanced to 1st lieutenant and acting captain on June 25. But an infection he seemed to have acquired during a relatively minor assignment cut short his military service. He had to resign his commission and was honorably discharged from the Army at Benton Barracks, Missouri on July 8, 1864.

We happended upon the latter information, about the illness that led him to quit the Army and head for Colorado in the mid-1860s--and much more about the resulting disability that apparently plagued him the rest of his life and contributed to his early death--through a fortuitous turn in our research efforts. Secrest had suggested that in addition to checking about Johnson and Anderson with Illinois authorities, we request help from the military reference section of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. When we got a copy of the form for ordering copies of veterans' records from the National Archives, it listed three choices for files to be searched and we were instructed to check "one box only" from among pension, bounty land warrant applications and military records. Since we didn't know what we were looking for in Johnson's case, we checked the first box--pensions--and it turned out to be a treasure trove of information.

We were still lacking the connection to Anderson. But John Daly, director of the Illinois State Archives, was considerate enough to send us a copy of some pages from the Historical Register of the U.S. Army that listed all commissioned officers from 1789 to 1903. At least we were able to tell from the alphabetical roll of names that none of the Andersons listed appeared to have any link by military unit, time period or location to Egbert Johnson.

Still, learning more about the Denver Johnson led us to find the date of his death, which Bradley discovered was in July, 1897. Now, if Secrest's Johnson was our Johnson, then he would have been prominent enough for the *Georgetown Courier* newspaper to give notice of his death to its local readers.

And sure enough in the *Courier* of July 17, 1897 we found an item headlined "ANOTHER PIONEER GONE," which definitely linked the man in Hall's Colorado History with the man who came to Georgetown "in 1864 or 1865 and was engaged in mining." The *Courier* article added that "He was the discoverer of the Herkimer, Major Anderson and other lodes, which he sold for a considerable amount."

Hoping for a more detailed history on Johnson (and a still-missing connection to the major), we enlisted the help of John Ewers of the Georgetown library to seek from the Denver Public Library any obituary of Johnson that might have appeared in the Denver newspapers. Ewers was told by the DPL contact that the staff had found such an item in the old *Denver Times* and that they would be sending a copy by courier. But when it arrived, it was not an obituary but a 1902 article about fur trapping!

Good news/ bad news, as it turned out. The good news was that the article revealed a bit more about Johnson--namely that before he "became prominent here [in Denver], and was the first president of the Fire and Police Board," he had come to Colorado between 1856 and 1858 to hunt and trap beaver as a partner of O. P. Wiggins, a former sidekick of Kit Carson. And the article included a photo, our first look at Egbert Johnson (in the outfit of a trapper, see page 8). The bad news was there was no mention of a Major Anderson.

But soon we would experience another fortunate twist of fate. Bradley happened to be reading the *Georgetown Courier* of October 18, 1919 and came across a reference to the fact that Covode Mountain near Empire had been named by "a red hot Union man from Kentucky" after John Covode, a Pennsylvania congressman who had introduced a bill to impeach President Buchanan for failing to send supplies and reinforcements to the officer defending Fort Sumter--identified in the short newspaper item simply as "Major Anderson."

Now Bradley went back to the dusty record books to see if the Anderson name was on any other claims. And it was--on at least three others and perhaps more. Each time the filing was by a different person, but each claim was entitled "Major Anderson," with no first name listed.

It then occurred to Bradley that perhaps the claims weren't filed by or for Anderson, but in his honor. That he was perhaps someone so well known at the time that no first name was necessary to identify him further. Like "Colonel Roosevelt" in the Spanish-American War. Or "Sergeant York" in World War I. Or "General Patton" in WWII.

Further checking, especially in the 1964 book, Empire and the Berthoud Pass, by Louise Harrison, showed clearly that the Anderson of Fort Sumter--Major Robert Anderson--was indeed a figure to stir people's souls and lead them to memorialize his name during the period when the Union Mining District of Clear Creek County was formed in 1860, and for years thereafter.

And as every volume of history we examined dealing with the prelude to and early days of the Civil War documented, the mere mention of "Major Anderson" was enough to bring supporters of the Union and Old Glory to their feet cheering, from New York City to the smallest hamlet in the West. As you will see in the accompanying text.

This photo of Major Robert Anderson is taken from volume 1 of Carl Sandburg's Pulitzer Prize winning 1940 history Abraham Lincoln: The War Years. The photo was a part of the poet-historian's pedrsonal collection.

THE OUTCOME...

On a hillside overlooking the Meadows and the Lake in Georgetown, a cluster of colorful townhomes is going up on a tract of land with a name that suggests strong ties to the early mining history of Clear Creek County and to the most traumatic period in the history of the United States. The land on which these homes are built is part of what is known locally as the Major Anderson Lode--the history of which had been pretty much forgotten, until recently.

The lode was discovered June 15, 1866 during the great silver rush to the Territory of Colorado after the Civil War, and its name appears to be a byproduct of the intense emotionalism brought on by that terrible conflict. The claim, filed by supporters of the Union side, was named for the first hero of the Northern forces, Major Robert Anderson, commander of the tiny U.S. Army garrison at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina--where the first shots of the war were fired.

The heavy artillery attack on Sumter in April 1861 by the Confederate forces in South Carolina under General Beauregard unified a divided North, where many had been sympathetic toward the principle of States Rights and where the abolition of slavery was far from a majority cause. It also severely undermined the position of Northern Democrats like outgoing President James Buchanan and senatorial leader Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, who had tried to resolve politically and by compromise the issue of whether the new states of the West would be allowed to permit the institution of slavery within their borders.

Major Anderson himself was sympathetic to their conciliatory approach. He was a native of Kentucky, with family ties to Virginia (his father had been an officer of that state's troops in the Revolutionary War and had been captured by the British at--of all places--Charleston, South Carolina), and he was married to a Georgian whose father was also a military hero in the South. The West Point-educated artillery officer (he had been Beauregard's instructor in artillery there) was regarded as pro-slavery, though loyal to the Union. Apparently he believed that the secessionist states should be allowed to go peacefully so they could return in due course.

Ironically, he was sent to South Carolina in December 1860 because the Buchanan administration felt he would deal tactfully with the Secessionist authorities there. And, in fact, that is what he intended when on December 26, he moved his small garrison from Fort Moultrie at the edge of Charleston harbor, where it was vulnerable to a possible land attack, to Fort Sumter, which was located on a shoal in the water. "Nothing will be better calculated to prevent bloodshed than our being found in such an attitude that it would be madness and folly to attack us," Anderson wrote at the time.

He became an unlikely hero when he staunchly refused demands from South Carolina officials to lower his flag and withdraw from Sumter without orders to do so from his superiors in Washington, even when warned he would be fired upon. As Carl Sandburg reported in his monumental book, Abraham Lincoln: The War Years. "Week by week the country had watched the emergence of Major Robert Anderson into a national figure. `Bob Anderson, my beau, Bob,' ran a song line. He had kept a cool head and held on amid a thousand invitations to blunder. Nebraska legislators two thousand miles away had sent him a telegram of affection. Northern newspapers paid tribute to his patience and loyalty. Even the *Charleston Mercury* complimented him as a gentleman whose word was good."

And he stuck to his word that he would resist as best he could, despite shortages of manpower, food and ammunition. For the better part of two days, he returned fire with his inadequate artillery until his few supplies were exhausted and the fort was a shambles. He had, in fact, no more than 128 men, including himself, to face the 6,000 Confederate troops stationed at Charleston harbor. His forces consisted of nine officers, sixty-eight enlisted men, eight musicians, and forty-three non-combatant workmen. Thus he came to symbolize a brave and stirring nationalism: a man who placed devotion to the nation, the flag, the uniform and his oath as an officer of the United States Army above fear for his own safety and above loyalty to the region of his birth and his own political sentiments.

So large a figure did he become, symbolically, that a leading Republican in Congress, Rep. John Covode of Pennsylvania, introduced legislation in early 1861 that would have impeached President Buchanan for not

sending reinforcements to Major Anderson in time for him to carry out an effective defense once it became likely that Sumter would be a target of the Secessionists. Of course nothing came of the bill because within a short time, by March 4, Abraham Lincoln officially and physically assumed the presidency from Buchanan, an ineffective effort to reinforce Anderson was made and beaten off by Confederate guns. Anderson's garrison took a pounding for many hours, and on Sunday, April 14 the major had no choice but to turn over the shattered fort.

Despite his obvious frustration, Anderson managed to maintain the morale of his troops by giving them (and the lowering flag of the nation) a 50-gun salute and marching them out to a waiting ship while his small band of musicians played *Yankee Doodle*. "In his trunk Major Anderson had the flag he had defended; he wished to keep this burnt and shot flag and have it wrapped round him when laid in the grave," wrote Carl Sandburg, who added:

> Anderson and his garrison had arrived in New York [April 23] and the town had gone wild over them! A Union Square mass meeting with 50,000 people shouting for the Union! Processions, speeches, enlistments of more men than the President called for! . . . So the news ran.

Typical of the sentiment that spread across the North was that experienced in the town of Galena, Illinois. People met in rallies to express their outrage. At one of them, John A. Rawlins, a young pro-Douglas Democrat and self-educated lawyer, one of the best orators in the district and a very popular man, was warned not to mix in, that it was "an abolition fight," but he replied: "I don't know anything about party now. All I know is, traitors have fired on our flag." And in a stirring 45 minute speech he said, "I have favored every honorable compromise, but the day for compromise is passed. Only one course is left to us. We will stand by the flag of our country and appeal to the God of Battles!"

"The effect was electric," in the words of a contemporary, as reported in the book Prologue to Sumter by Philip Van Doren Stern. "The audience sprang to their feet and gave cheer after cheer for the old flag, for Major Anderson, and for the maintenance of the Union at whatever cost." By the way, Rawlins went on to become a major-general in the Union Army. And one of the men who heard him that day was a Galena merchant who had earlier retired from the Army, but now resolved to go back into the service. That man was Ulysses S. Grant.

An example of how far people in the West would go to express their sentiments about these matters could be found among the organizers of the Valley City Company of gold miners in 1860 at what is now Empire in Clear Creek County, Colorado. In August of that year the men organized the mining area as the Union District. On one side of the valley some of the organizers named the nearest mountain for Abraham Lincoln, and on the other side another group named the mountain near them for Senator Douglas, who had been opposed by Lincoln in the famous debates of 1858. Others countered by naming a Republican Mountain, a Democrat Mountain, and a Union Pass near Lincoln and Douglas Mountains. And the hill behind what became Empire was given the name Covode Mountain, for the congressman's part in seeking support for Major Anderson at Fort Sumter.

The expression of Civil War sentiment through the naming of Western landmarks was no isolated phenomenon. For example, on the western side of the Continental Divide there was a gold mining town that had been named in honor of John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, who had been vice president of the United States under President Buchanan, and who in the 1860 election had gotten the 72 electoral votes of the South in opposition to Abe Lincoln's 180 and Stephen Douglas's 12. But in 1861 Breckinridge joined the Secession (in fact he became a Confederate brigadier general), and, as Colorado historian Muriel Sibell Wolle wrote in Stampede to Timberline, "In indignation the 'Union' population substituted an 'e' for the 'i' in the name, and as Breckenridge the town has been known ever since."

Obviously, Anderson was a hero to many. As late as 1906, in his Causes of the Civil War, F. E. Chadwick wrote that "the country owes a debt to this upright and excellent commander." However, Anderson was to become something of a tragic hero. As historian W. A. Swanberg commented in First Blood, his account of Fort Sumter, "Major Robert Anderson, the Galahad of the North, was exhausted physically and mentally....

The man the Union hailed as its savior saw only disaster in what he had been forced to do.... To him, every gun fired from Sumter, every return salvo from the enemy, sounded the defeat of reason and humanity."

Bruce Catton reported in his book Terrible Swift Sword that Anderson suffered what amounted to a nervous breakdown from his months of stress at the center of events in South Carolina, and that his doctor prescribed a period of rest and recuperation. But because strong pro-Unionists in the hotly contested areas of Tennessee and Kentucky urged that the hero who had been born in Louisville was the best man to hold off Confederate forces in that so-called "border" area, the Army put Anderson in charge there.

Once again, he found himself in the position of opposing people he knew, cared for and understood, and again given inadequate forces to deal with the kind of warfare that became increasingly uncivil because it was often a matter of neighbor against neighbor and brother against brother. Again, the stress proved too much, and after conferring with Gen. Winfield Scott, he turned his command over to the more intense and single-minded Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. And as Catton summarized about Anderson, "Then he went off stage, seeking the recovery that never came." With his health gone, Anderson was obliged to retire from active duty on October 27, 1863. "A combat casualty just as surely as if he had been hit by bullets," Swanberg wrote, "he spent the war years in New York, a gray, quiet man occasionally seen walking with his young son."

But Mr. Lincoln, who hadn't trusted Anderson at first, had a sense of irony. When the war ended the President directed that on April 14, 1865, four years to the day after Major Anderson's surrender, there would be an observance marking the federal repossession of the fort where the shooting started. Anderson, though a retired brevet (which is to say nominal) major-general, was to be the key figure. As he replaced the American flag at Fort Sumter with his own hands, he was once again in the nation's consciousness, sensing, as Swanberg wrote, that "the whole nation was looking at him." At dinner that night, Anderson offered a toast to "the man who, when elected President of the United States, was compelled to reach the seat of government without an escort, but a man who now could travel all over our country with millions of hands and hearts to sustain him. . .the good, the great, the honest man, Abraham Lincoln." Later that evening Mr. Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theater in Washington. It would be a day to remember, for Anderson as well as the nation.

Catton wrote of Anderson that "He had seen the war begin, on the ramparts of Fort Sumter, and in a sentimental finale, four years later, a wreck of a man in a ruined fort, he would hoist his flag there once again; but except for that his part in the war was finished." But not forgotten. Certainly not among the Republicans on the frontier in Colorado.

In 1866 and 1867 there were at least four mining claims filed in Clear Creek County honoring the name of Major Anderson. One of them was in the Morris Mining District near Dumont, another was in the Lower Fall River District, and two were in the Griffith District near Georgetown. Both were filed by men whose pro-Union sentiments were well known.

One was John Cree, a 56 year old businessman, prospector and sometime Methodist preacher originally from Ohio who had come to Colorado in 1860 during the Central City gold rush and whose son Alex served with the 1st Colorado Cavalry, which had been sent by then Territorial Governor Gilpin to resist a threatened Confederate thrust into the Southwest in March 1862. The Georgetown *Courier,* writing about Cree a quarter century later, said that Alex and the 1st Colorado "skirmished with Texans in southern Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona," a tongue-in-cheek reference to the famous victory for Northern forces in the battle of Glorieta Pass that ended the Southern threat. John Cree moved to Georgetown in 1865 when, as the *Courier* put it in his 1893 obituary, "silver mining began to be agitated." He listed his Major Anderson claim's discovery date as June 15, 1866, and said the site was about one-half mile below Georgetown on the east side of the south branch of South Clear Creek.

A subsequent claim was filed by Egbert Johnson, a 30 year old native of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a surveyor, onetime fur trapper in the White River Forest area of western Colorado and prospector who had served as a 1st lieutenant in the 17th Illinois Cavalry in 1863-1864. Like Cree, Johnson had come to Georgetown during the postwar silver boom, but whether it was silver alone or a combination of factors that drew him is not entirely clear. Illness might have been a factor. Although Johnson got off to a fast start in the 17th Illinois Cavalry-

is no present day indication at the site of the construction of a mill, although the plat shows the location of two structures identified as magazines for blasting powder, one of which remains nearly intact today on Main Street in the Meadows area of Georgetown.

Oddly, the *Courier's* obituary on Johnson said that he remained in the mining business until 1869--although the document mentioned above, which officially conveyed possession of the mine and mill site to him, gave the date of September 28, 1872. The obituary added that he sold those lodes he discovered "for a considerable amount." Of course it is possible that he could have sold the properties any time after 1869, perhaps after he was no longer actively engaged in mining. And the suggestion of a profitable sale appears to be reinforced by the detail from the *Courier*'s obituary to the effect that Egbert's brother Albert (himself a former surveyor) "who was also a resident of Georgetown for many years and interested with him in some of his mining operations, is engaged in the banking business at Murray, Idaho." The obituary in the *Courier* said that Egbert Johnson moved his place of residence from Georgetown in 1869 and that he married in Chicago in 1870, "since which time he has lived near and in Denver." It did not say what he went on to do in Denver, but other accounts have. The pension application records show that Johnson married Marion A. Peck on November 29, 1870 at the Waukegan (Illinois) Methodist Episcopal Church. He was 34 and she about eight years younger. Afterwards they made their home at 1067 South 15th Street in Denver, says the pension record, but this apparently was not their only residence. For in another affidavit (filed January 11, 1896, in support of Johnson's pension application) Dr. James Kelly, MD of Golden stated that he had treated Johnson for pneumonia and chronic diarrhea at his ranch at Mount Vernon during the spring of 1871.

Johnson must have gained some political prominence to go with his affluence. In Frank Hall's 1895 History of Colorado, it was reported that Johnson "until the past five years, engaged in the cattle and mining business." Hall's history said that Gov. John L. Routt (another former easterner who took up mining in Colorado and made his fortune) appointed Johnson to be chairman of the Fire and Police Board of Denver in 1889 and that he served two years. Another account, in the Denver *Times* newspaper, said Johnson himself framed and secured the passage of the first metropolitan police law for the city of Denver--a clear indication of political influence. In 1895, he was appointed by newly elected Gov. Albert McIntire to be appraiser of public lands for the State Board of Land Commissioners. Both governors who appointed Johnson were Republicans, which virtually assures that Johnson's political influence was in that party. Governor Routt had been the last territorial governor of Colorado, having been appointed by President U. S.Grant in 1875, and he was the first governor elected once Colorado attained statehood in 1876.

Egbert Johnson died at his home in Denver on July 12, 1897. The *Courier* obituary mentioned his being afflicted with paralysis, but the death certificate listed the cause as a cerebral hemorrage. Burial was at Riverside Cemetery. He was 61. The obituary stated that Johnson would be remembered as one of Georgetown's "early pioneers." Like Anderson, Johnson apparently had suffered much physical and undoubtedly some emotional pain since his brief experience in the war that had been a critical point in the lives of both men and their only known material link to each other.

Robert Anderson died much earlier, on October 26, 1871 in Nice, France, while on a European trip supposedly to improve his health. Coincidentally, the death came only a couple of months (according to the timing in the 1872 General Land Office conveyance) after Egbert Johnson had submitted his detailed application for possession of the mine and mill property which had been named to honor Anderson the man as well as the defining moment of his life. Anderson's death, however, was hardly noticed by his countrymen. He was buried at West Point, New York, the breeding ground for the military leaders of the United States of America and the Confederate States of America and sometimes of their civilian leaders as well.

Survey No. 100.

PLAT of the claim of Egbert Johnson upon the Maj. Anderson Lode and Mill Si

Griffith Mining District, Clear Creek County, Colorado

Containing 5 [illegible]/100 Acres.

Scale of 400 ft. to an inch.

Variation 15°45'E.

Boundaries

No. of Course	Course	Distance in feet.
	Lode.	
1	N.49°50'E.	3000
2	S.40°10'E.	50
3	S.49°50'W.	3000
4	N.40°10'W.	50
	Mill Site	
1	S.21°W.	300
2	N.69°W.	300
3	N.21°E.	300
4	S.69°E.	300

Those of you who are familiar with the Meadows area in Georgetown may be able to note a few landmarks on the mineral survey plat of the Major Anderson millsite shown above, from an 1872 General Land Office document on file at the Clear Creek County Courthouse. Of particular interest is the Dupont DeNemore [sic] & Co.'s Powder House in the lower left hand side of the sketch. The building is still standing on Main Street across the street to the west of the town tennis courts.

Marv and Dee Geisness made this publication possible. Once author Mort Stern had all of the information in hand and written up for those interested in the Major Anderson townhouse property, it seemed a shame not to share it with the membership of Historic Georgetown, Inc. Marv and Dee generously enabled us to print a few hundred extra copies for your enjoyment. Our thanks to them for their continued support!