

Alexander Cameron Hunt

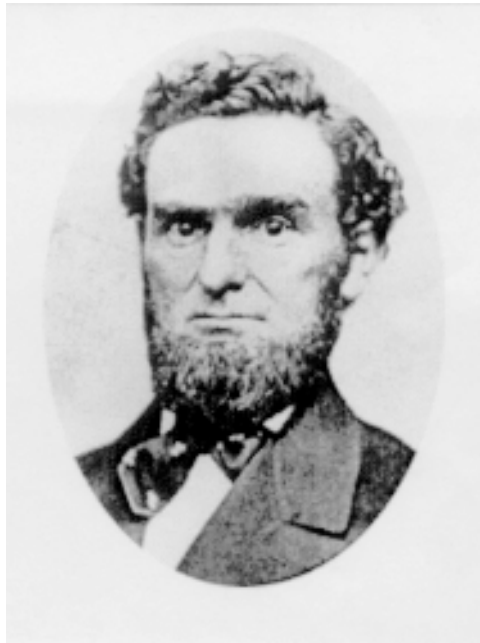
(12 Jan 1825 – 14 May 1894)

Hunt. At his residence, Tenleytown, near Washington, D.C. on May 14, 1894, Alexander Cameron Hunt, formerly governor of Colorado. Funeral private.

The Evening Star, May 15, 1894

Ex-Gov. Hunt Dead

A Forty-Niner and Active in the Development of the West



The death of Alexander C. Hunt at his residence in Tenleytown yesterday closes a career which was actively identified with many of the interesting and important features in the development of the west. For the past six years Gov. Hunt, as he was known, has been a resident of this city. His home was at 1446 Rhode Island avenue. In 1891, while at Chicago, he had an attack of paralysis, and his recovery, while partial, was never complete. His health became impaired, and he built a residence at Tenleytown which he had only recently occupied. The funeral services, which will be private, will be held tomorrow, the interment being at Congressional cemetery.

Gov. Hunt was born at Hammondsport, N.Y., in the year 1829. When a child he was taken by his parents to Freeport, Ill., which became their home. Here his early life was spent and he was honored by his fellow citizens by being elected mayor, and given other places of trust. He crossed the plains in 1849, and returning in the latter part of the 50's, he went to Colorado, making his residence at Denver. He was elected a delegate to Congress from that territory, and later he was appointed governor. He subsequently had charge of the Indians in that territory. He was president of the Rio Grande railroad, and also projected the National railroad from Laredo to the City of Mexico. He had large property interests in Texas and in Mexico. He was twice married and leaves a wife and three children.

The Evening Star, February 23, 1908, pt. 4, p. 5

Granite Boulder Placed in Congressional Cemetery to Gov. A.C. Hunt

Special Dispatch to The Star

A granite boulder has been shipped from Colorado to Washington to mark the last resting place of Alexander Cameron Hunt, who was territorial governor of Colorado, 1867-1869.

The stone is the gift of Gen. William J. Palmer, founder and resident of Colorado Springs, and represents a friendship which has outlasted death.

Ever since the death of the ex-governor it has been the wish of his widow to mark his grave with a piece of natural granite from the Rockies, but to quarry and ship the stone from one end of the country to the other is a formidable undertaking, which, so far, she has been unable to achieve. Gen. Palmer, learning of Mrs. Hunt's efforts and her distress at the enforced delay, at once wrote and asked

permission to pay this last tribute to his friend and co-worker of pioneer days, and she gratefully accepted his entirely unexpected offer, in the name of herself and of her young daughter -- knowing that had their fates been reversed the governor would have insisted upon so honoring Gen. Palmer.

The boulder is of red granite taken from the Ute Pass, weighs several tons, and when placed in the Congressional cemetery will probably be the only monument of its kind in this section of the country. In this cemetery, endowed by Congress and in which sleep many statesmen who have helped to make the history of the nation, Gov. Hunt lies in the lot of John C. Underwood, United States district judge of Virginia, and Mrs. Underwood, parents of Mrs. Hunt. An inscription on the family monument states that:

Alexander Camron Hunt
of Colorado
Crossed the Divide
May 14, 1894.

In selecting the stone from Ute Pass General Palmer was inspired by a sentiment that must appeal to all who are familiar with the governor's connection with that Indian stronghold in the Rockies. The Utes were a menace to the entire territory, and their attacks upon the settlers make a bloody chapter in the early history of Colorado.

Hunt won the confidence of the red warriors because of his fearlessness and fair treatment of them. He insisted that the Indian had some rights in his own land, and they in turn trusted him fully and called him their "white friend."

When the authorities found it necessary to treat with the Utes Gov. Hunt was asked personally to confer with them. He consented on condition that he be allowed to make whatever promises he considered advisable and that these promises be kept absolutely. He often went to the camp alone and unarmed, and later he was given charge of all the Indians in the territory.

History and reminiscence credit Gov. Hunt with some of the most powerful achievements of the early west. Though born in Hammondsport, N.Y., and reared in Freeport, Ill., where he was honored with the mayoralty and other offices of public trust, he, followed the California gold trail in 1849, and some years later went to Colorado. He built the first brick house in Denver, was appointed United States marshal, then delegate to Congress, and at the close of his term was made governor. He was the incarnation of energy, and, endowed with nature at once daring and chivalrous, he made a record which will live forever in the state of his adoption.

He was the pathfinder and builder of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad system, of which Gen. Palmer was the financial motor. It was Hunt who conceived the project of taking narrow-gauge tracks across seemingly unbridgeable chasms and snow-covered passes of the Rockies. According to Bancroft, he would ride 100 miles a day on horseback while superintending the work. In addition to building this system he opened six of the leading mines of Colorado; then, with Gen. Palmer, went to Mexico to obtain concessions for the Mexican National railroad from Laredo to the City of Mexico. While building that line, with an army of 12,000 employes, he took time to attend to personal interests, which included the opening up of the San Tomas mine and the construction of a private railroad to convey his coal to market. This was the Pecos railroad, running twenty-six miles along the Rio Grande, and which impressed Gen. Sherman as being "the best picket line possible."

It was at this time, also, that the governor established his electric light plant at Laredo, Tex., and by throwing wires across the Rio Grande to illuminate New Laredo, Mex., made his project international in character.

The governor was a human whirlwind, and nothing better illustrated his indomitable activity than the fights he made in later years with other original Rio Grande men to recover their road after its lease to the Santa Fe on the ground that it had been mismanaged.

Once, at Pueblo, his rivals locked a roundhouse against him and his trains. he ex-governor boarded a locomotive and told his engineer to smash through the door and the brick wall on the other side. And there was no locked roundhouse after that.

The old governor owned coal mines above Laredo and the rival railroad wanted them. On one occasion, taking advantage of his absence, the invaders took possession, loaded his carts and implements onto a train and started down to Laredo with them. A faithful employe rode at breakneck speed down to the town and told the governor what had happened. Then the governor took a hand in the game. Though sick in bed, he dressed hurriedly, rushed out in his slippers, hired a dozen hacks, mustered a crowd of armed men, rode out with his caravan to a switch a mile above Laredo and waited for the incoming train.

When it arrived the governor signaled the engineer to stop. Like every other man who had ever worked under Hunt, the engineer was his devoted follower. He stopped. As the governor was boarding the train his way was barred by he company's manager, who demanded by what authority he was interfering. The governor promptly explained:

"By the authority of what I hold in my hand."

As his authority took the shape of a shotgun, the manager concluded to retire from the argument, and the train. he governor, with his men, took possession and inviting the passengers to make the trip in the hacks provided for them, turned the cars back to the mines and there was no more trouble after that.

The governor was an uncompromising republican, and his friends claim that his treatment of President Gran serves as a notable instance in which he sacrificed personal feeling to love of party.

As the executive of Colorado, it became necessary for him to confer with the President. He made the long journey to Washington, had what he supposed to be a mutually satisfactory interview, and was hurrying back to the west, when, at Cincinnati, he read in a newspaper that Grant had removed him from office and appointed E.M. McCook.

Being a man of action rather than words, Hunt handed over his office to his successor and proceeded to attend to his own affairs.

Later on, when the President made his tour through the west in the interest of his renomination, it so happened that neither the governor nor the lieutenant governor of Colorado was at home to receive him. In this emergency, the party managers called on the ex-governor to do the honors. Hunt considered that the President had treated him unfairly, and he had neither forgotten nor forgiven the transaction. When, however, it was urged that his refusal would injure the republican party in Colorado, he agreed to see that the President was met properly at the state line. He arranged a program and carried it out so greatly to Grant's satisfaction that the President said to one of his party.

"This has been a remarkable demonstration. he reception was perfect, but there seemed to be no head to it. Who has the matter in charge?"

He was told that the whole arrangement was in the hands of A.C. Hunt.

"Then why isn't he here to welcome me?"

"Well, Mr. President," was the answer, "the ex-governor wishes you to understand that he arranged this reception for the sake of the republican party. He will do nothing for you personally."

Learning that Hunt was in his private car on the train, President Grant called on him, and upon his return to Washington he forwarded to the ex-governor's horse ranch, a stallion valued at \$5,000.

The governor was a man of humor, and used especially to enjoy telling one story at his own expense.

He was riding over the mountains when, at Amargo, the stage was stopped by highwaymen and the passengers ordered to hand over their money. One of the robbers must have recognized Hunt, for the order was countermanded. The passengers could keep their cash, but the Governor of Colorado must

get out in the road and dance. The executive of the territory got out. And he danced. And in telling his story he always admitted that his steps were unduly lively because of the popping of pistols at his feet.

Hunt crossed the plains nine times in the old wagon and stage coach days, when the journey meant a matter of three months, in every hour of which there was peril from hostile Indians. He was frequently attacked, and on one occasion the Indians killed or wounded every male member of the party except himself, and he, the only well man left, was compelled to bury nine of his companions.

Shortly after his election to the governorship he and his wife, the first Mrs. Hunt, made a six weeks' trip through Colorado entertaining a party of whom Vice President Colfax was the guest of honor. The cook had early proved a failure, and rather than see his wife taxed, Hunt took upon himself the arduous duties of chef. His wife protested. She didn't think it quite the proper thing for a governor to know about pots and pans. But her husband was proud of his accomplishment, acquired in his pioneer days, and settled the matter by saying that it was still a question as to whether he would make a good governor, but he was pretty sure of his ability as a cook, and he thought it wise to impress that fact upon his constituents.

Cooking was, however, not his only gift. Not long before his last illness, he was making a trip on the Mexican National line, when, suddenly, at night the train came to a stop because of a concerted strike of the engineers all along the line. The governor, with no time to waste, went forward to the locomotive, ran the train all night and brought it in on time. The governor had cause to be proud of this road, for from the time he and his 12,000 men built it until twenty years later, no passenger had ever been killed, though the road climbs more mountains and turns more curves than any road in the United States.

Though tenderly devoted to his family, Hunt rarely did his share of talking. Once, when his wife, the present Mrs. Hunt, feeling socially inclined, asked him to "say something," he answered that he had nothing to say.

"Then make up something," she persisted.

The governor must have taken this proposition seriously, for he said:

"Don't know how. Never had time to make up things. Always had to act. Do you want anything done?"

Another time, when they were riding near Ouay, on a curving shelf cut around the mountain side, with a sheer fall of 9,000 feet, Mrs. Hunt, quivering with fear, but eager for information, asked how on earth men ever managed to make such a road. The governor could probably have furnished her with minutest details, but his reply was in two words:

"Powder and perseverance."

<http://www.state.co.us/...archives/govs/hunt.html>

Colorado State Archives

Alexander Cameron Hunt

Alexander Cameron Hunt, the fourth territorial governor of the Colorado Territory from 1867-1869, was born in New York City on January 12, 1825. Soon after his birth his family moved to Freeport, Illinois where he was educated and later served as mayor.

Hunt traveled to California in 1850 to find his fortune, and did fairly well until he lost his wealth in the Wall Street Panic of 1857. After this episode, Hunt traveled to Colorado and the Cherry Creek area where gold was found in 1858. Desperadoes and vigilante mobs terrorized Cherry Creek prospectors which Hunt believed to be an unacceptable situation. He was soon chosen to be Judge of the Vigilante Committee of the Territory, a committee which effectively cleared this undesirable element from the community by conducting a series of hangings.

When the Territory of Colorado was formed, Hunt's actions were rewarded with a presidential appointment as United States Marshal for the Territory, a position he held for five years. He was also

appointed Ex-Officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, an office that he continued to hold throughout his Governorship. In 1867 Hunt ran for a congressional seat against George Chilcot. During this controversial election there was evidence of voting fraud, and as such the matter was reviewed by the House Committee of Elections in Washington. While Chilcot was the congressional races' victor, Hunt was appointed as Territorial Governor on April 24, 1867.

Hunt's administration was dominated by conflicts between Indian tribes, primarily the Ute's and other Plains Indians, and white settlers. Indian uprisings had become so common and violent that Hal Sayre, the Adjutant General, created volunteer forces to protect property and life. The Indian problem became so severe that Central City offered money for Indian scalps, a measure that probably did not help the situation. Tension grew with word that the native Ute Tribe was seriously considering joining efforts with other Plains Tribes, a prospect that made people living in settled areas fear for their existence. Hunt's previous relationship with the Ute's as Ex-Officio of Indian Affairs, however, helped to relieve this tension. In February of 1868 the Ute Chiefs, Indian agents, and President Andrew Johnson were brought together by Hunt to discuss a possible peace treaty. An agreement was reached which forced the Ute's to vacate all lands east of the 107th meridian. The federal government chose not to honor their end of the bargain by reneging on the promised food and products. Understandably the Ute's were upset, and began to strengthen their ties with the Arapaho and other Plains Indians tribes. Hunt personally defused the situation by traveling from camp to camp and discussing the problem with the Ute leadership.

An agreement with the Ute's, however, did not dissuade the Arapaho's. The following August, Schuyler Colfax, Samuel Bowles, Governor Bross of Illinois, Governor Hunt, and several prominent Denver families went camping near Buena Vista. Meanwhile a party of Arapaho warriors was seen traveling toward the campground. Territorial Secretary Frank Hall quickly created a volunteer army which was sent out to protect the camping notables. Luckily a messenger reached the Colorado Governor first so that Hunt was able to utilize his friendship with the Ute Tribe and obtain an armed escort back to Denver. When Colfax returned to Washington he pushed officials to create a larger military presence in the Colorado Territory, and praised the heroism of both the Colorado pioneers as well as the Ute braves who had escorted the camping group back to Denver.

Legislatively, little was accomplished during Hunt's term, but the decision to move the territorial capitol from Golden to Denver was finalized on December 9, 1867. The Seventh Session legislature also created a penitentiary in Canon City during his term.

Despite Hunt's conscientious efforts as Territorial Governor of Colorado, President Ulysses S. Grant relieved him from duty in order to offer a friend, Edward McCook, the Governorship. Hunt, however, continued to contribute his various skills to the Territory after his unexpected fall from grace. He was instrumental in the development of the Denver Pacific Railroad and Kansas Pacific Railroad. Furthermore, he is credited with introducing the first bee colony to Denver, and pioneering the use of alfalfa in Weld County. Alexander Cameron Hunt died in May 1894, and is buried at the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Thomas A. McMullin and David Walker, *Biographical Directory of American Territorial Governors*, Westport, CT: Meckler Publishing

HUNT, Alexander Cameron, 1867-1869

Born on December 25, 1825 in Hammondsport, New York, one of ten children of a physician. Hunt disapproved of all religious observances. He married Ellen Elizabeth Kellogg on May 11, 1854 in White Pigeon, Michigan, by whom he was the father of Isa E., Albert C., Robert B., and two children who died in infancy. Following the death of his first wife in August 1880, he married Alice Underwood on June 3, 1889, by whom he was the father of Gloria J.

Hunt moved with his family to Freeport, Illinois, where he attended the common schools. In 1845 he travelled to California, making a considerable amount of money there. He returned to Freeport in 1850, and served as Mayor of that community in 1856. Hunt lost most of his money in the Panic of 1857; the next year he left Illinois for the Pike's Peak gold fields. After a trip east, he returned to what would later become Colorado Territory with his family in May 1859. He settled into a log cabin, opened a restaurant, and soon was serving as judge on a vigilante committee. By the end of 1859 he was Vice President of Auraria Town Company, and in March 1860 he presided over a meeting which united that town with Denver. In 1861 President Abraham Lincoln appointed him United States Marshal, a position he held until 1866. During the administration of Governor Alexander Cummings, Hunt served for a time as Treasurer of Colorado Territory. He was a candidate for Congressional Delegate in the close and disputed election of 1866, although the seat eventually went to his opponent, George M. Chilcott.

Leaders of the dominant "Denver Crowd" of Republican politicians decided to support the gubernatorial candidacy of Hunt, a member of the opposition "Golden Crowd," in hopes of furthering the cause of statehood. Accordingly, with both major factions in the Colorado Republican Party behind Hunt, President Andrew Johnson named him Governor early in 1867. The first Colorado chief executive to be a resident of the territory at the time of his appointment, Hunt devoted most of his attention to the Indian problem. Indian attacks became so serious in 1867 that the governor wired General William T. Sherman for help and troops were immediately sent to the territory. Hunt made a serious attempt to reach an accord with the Indians, and he achieved a significant success in 1868 when he negotiated a treaty with the Ute, one of the major warring tribes. This treaty granted to the United States all of the Ute lands in Colorado east of the 107th meridian.

Ironically, Hunt's success with the Ute helped bring an end to his administration. The Ute treaty provided for the payment of large amounts of goods and money to the Indians, which created considerable patronage opportunities for the Colorado governor. With the office having a new attractiveness, President Ulysses Grant soon after his inauguration appointed his own candidate to the gubernatorial post. Yet Grant and Hunt remained friends; Grant later would give Hunt a stallion as a gift and apologize for removing him.

Following his years as governor, Hunt was associated from 1870 to 1883 with General William J. Palmer in the development of the Colorado Springs and the building of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. He purchased land in many of the townships laid out along the railroad, and acquired considerable wealth. Brokenhearted at the death of his wife and son, he left Colorado in 1883 and travelled to Mexico. Unfortunate investments in coal mining and railroads in Texas later cost him most of his fortune and, after suffering a paralysis in Chicago in 1891, he died in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 1894. Hunt was buried in the Congressional Cemetery.

Bibliography: Washington Post, May 15, 1894; "Diary of Mrs. A.C. Hunt, 1859," with Introduction and Notes by Leroy R. Hafen, Colorado Magazine, 21 (September 1944), 161-70; Isa Stearns Gregg, "Reminiscences of Isa Hunt Stearns," Colorado Magazine, 26 (July 1949), 183-93; Jesse Augustine Castro, "Alexander Cameron Hunt: Colorado Territorial Governor, 1867-1869," unpub. master's thesis, University of Denver, 1957; Julia F. Lipsey, Governor Hunt of Colorado: His Life and His Family (Colorado Springs, 1960); Helen Cannon, "First Ladies of Colorado--Ellen Kellogg Hunt," Colorado Magazine, 39 (April 1962), 125-32; Helen Cannon, ed., "The Religious Philosophy of Governor Alexander Cameron Hunt," Colorado Magazine, 39 (April 1962), 133-36; Howard R. Lamar, The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History (New York, 1970); Carl Abbott, Colorado: A History of the Centennial State (Boulder, 1976).