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## John Lawrence

Birth: Nov. 15, 1835  
Saint Louis  
St. Louis County  
Missouri, USA  
Death: Feb. 13, 1908  
Denver  
Denver County  
Colorado, USA

John Lawrence's obituary, which follows, was published in the Saguache "Crescent," Thursday, February 20, 1908, p. 1, cols. 3-4. A death notice and obituary also appeared on the front page of the "Rocky Mountain News."

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"The Father of Saguache County Dead.

On Thursday morning at 4:15 o'clock Feb. 13th, the Hon. John Lawrence of this city died of pneumonia at Mercy hospital in Denver where he had been under treatment for several weeks. He was a man of strong constitution and had enjoyed good health all his life until about the first of last December when he began to fail. He gradually grew worse and at Christmas time his friends persuaded him to go to the hospital at Denver.

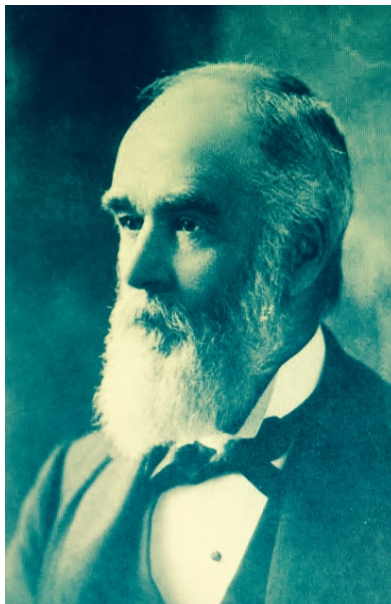
John Lawrence was born in St. Louis, November 15, 1835. His parents died when he was quite young and he was placed in an orphanage in that city. At the age of 15 he left the orphanage and began to make his way in the world. He went to Iowa where he spent nine years working among the farmers in the vicinity of Dubuque. He then decided to go west, crossing the plains with an ox team. On landing in Colorado he began freighting in the northern part of the state; and put in two years at this, mining and whatever other work that he could get to do around Denver, Georgetown and Central City.

In 1861 he came to San Luis valley and located at Conejos where he met J. B. Woodson with whom he formed a partnership which lasted until Mr. Woodson's death. They came north in 1867 and took up land on the Saguache creek and began ranching. This country, at that time was a part of Conejos county and the only white settlers above the Rio Grande were Nathan Russell, George Neidhardt and a few others. [Prudencio Garcia, for one]

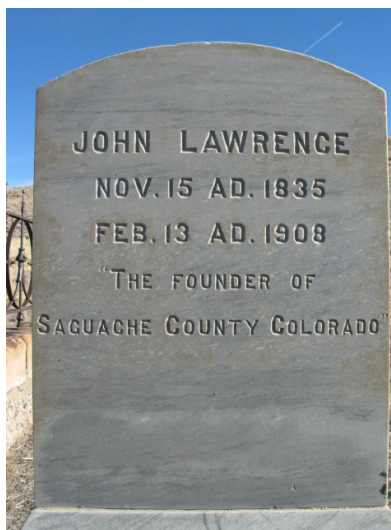
As a boy, John Lawrence's educational advantages were very limited; but he was the possessor of a wonderful memory and accumulated a rich store of valuable information by reading, observing and actual experience which made him intellectually the superior of many who had had far greater opportunities in youth.

He was a natural linguist, and after locating in the valley it was but a short time until he had learned the language of the Utes and mastered the Mexican language. He soon became an expert. He was the official interpreter for the Mexican people in the first territorial legislature; and played an important part in making treaties between the United States government and the Ute Indians.

Mr. Lawrence's name is prominently associated with important events of the San Luis valley history. It was he who framed the bill that organized and established the county of Saguache. It was he who established the first public school in the county. It was his influence



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Cemetery Photo  
Added by: [Bill Hazard](#)

upon the Ute chief Ouray who was a warm personal friend of his, that made the removal of the Indians from the San Luis valley a comparatively easy task.

In politics Mr. Lawrence was a democrat. He was the first county supt. of schools, was at different times county judge, assessor and commissioner. He served two terms in the state's legislature, being a member of the 12th and the 16th general assembly.

Some years ago Mr. Lawrence disposed of his interest in ranch land and went into the sheep business, at which he was very successful and acquired quite a fortune. After disposing of his ranch he moved to the town of Saguache. His wife died in the year 1901 and since that time he has lived with his nephew, Daniel Vigil. He was several times elected mayor of Saguache and held that office at the time of his death.

He was engaged in the mercantile business, being the senior partner firm of Lawrence and Williams of Saguache.

He was a kindhearted man and had many good traits of character which made friends of all who knew him. He was a great friend of the poor and will be greatly missed.

The body arrived from Denver on Saturday and the funeral was conducted from the residence on Sunday by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of which he was a member.

The following was read at the house:

'Friends, Neighbors and Brother Elks. As we are assembled here to pay our last respects to the memory of our friend and brother, John Lawrence, it is fitting that he should not pass from among us without a tribute to the traits of character which made us love him.

'For forty years John Lawrence has lived among us, and in all that time no man has left him hungry, or with wants unfilled, whether he sought food, shelter or words of brotherly comfort and advice.

'The county of Saguache, both as a political division of the state, and as an economic entity, is his most fitting monument. He was largely instrumental in the organization of the county, and he has ably and honorably represented the county in the legislative halls of the state.

'His influence was felt here, but his innate kindness and his ever ready generosity betoken a largeness of heart which make him a citizen not of the county and state alone, but a citizen of the entire world.

'Many to whom he has been as a father or brother who have turned to him with every sorrow, and looked to him for help in every want, will long revere the memory of John Lawrence.'

After this the procession proceeded to Hillside cemetery where the honors of the order were paid to the remains; and the Father of Saguache county was quietly laid to rest."

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Family links:

Spouse:

[Juliana Vigil Lawrence \(1843 - 1901\)\\*](#)

[\\*Calculated relationship](#)

Inscription:

The Founder of Saguache County Colorado

Burial:

[Hillside Cemetery](#)

8/23/2017

John Lawrence (1835 - 1908) - Find A Grave Memorial

Saguache  
Saguache County  
Colorado, USA  
Plot: Block J, Lot 93, Map No. 5

Created by: [Bill Hazard](#)  
Record added: Jun 06, 2009  
Find A Grave Memorial# 37993548