

*The Glover Mining Company  
of the Black Hills  
and the House that  
Mary Baker Eddy Built*

By  
Eleanor Swent

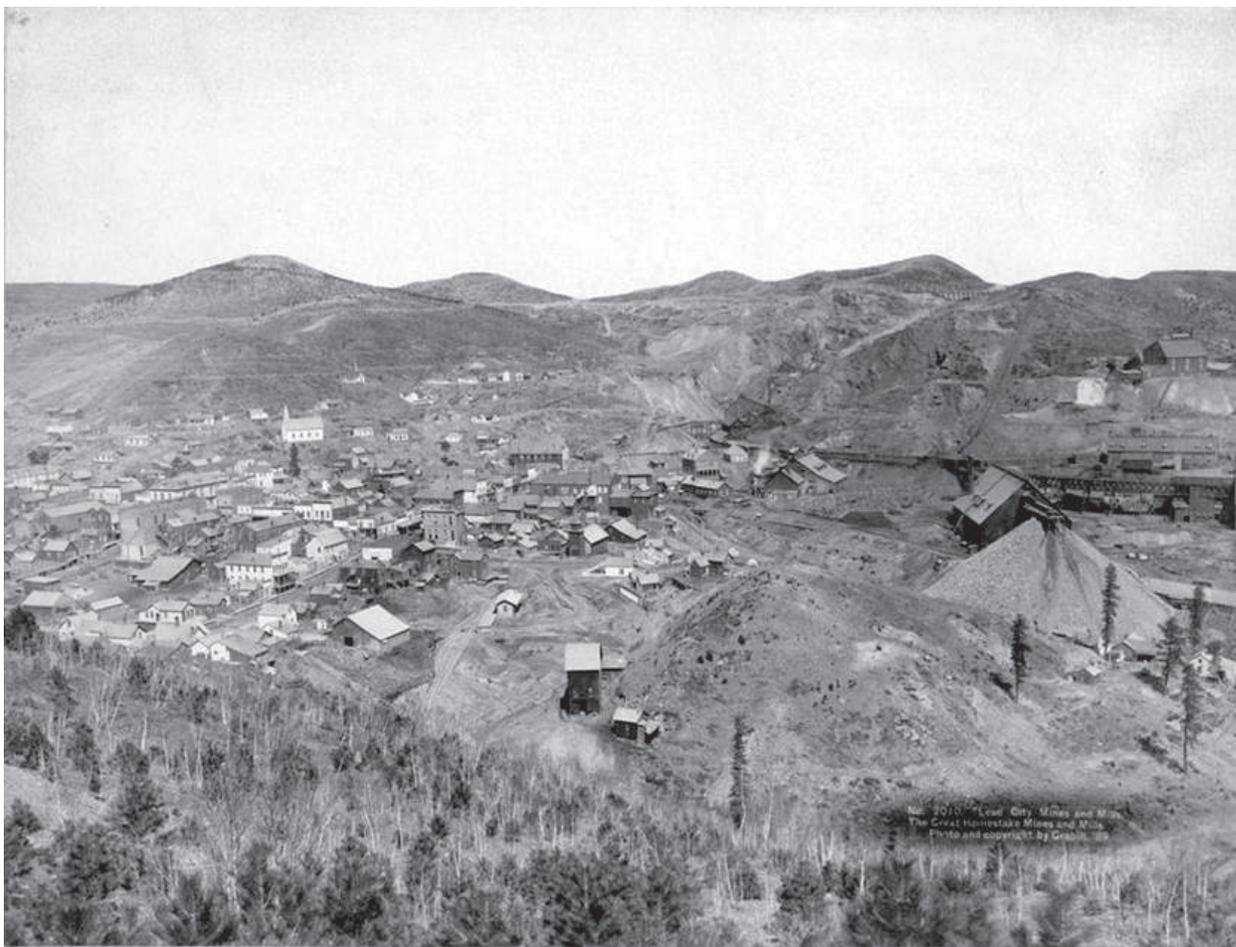
The presence of gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota was known to white Americans as early as 1833, well before Custer's expedition of 1874. However, Horatio Nelson Ross' discovery of grains of gold in French Creek on July 30, 1874, sparked the gold rush, and the region was soon teeming with prospectors.<sup>1</sup>

By 1899, Lead City, in Gold Run Gulch, was a thriving industrial and commercial town clustered around the mining property that George Hearst and his partners had consolidated as the Homestake Mining Company.<sup>2</sup> And as was typical in such communities, the mine superintendent's house, near the intersection of Main and Mill streets, was the grandest residence in town.

A mile farther up Main Street, however, where it dwindled off toward Poorman Gulch, a far more imposing home was built that year, using plans and workmen sent from Boston. Why would a famous and wealthy woman in New England order a house to be built in faraway Lead, South Dakota, for a man named George Washington Glover?

**Mary Baker Glover and Her Son George**

The story begins near Concord, New Hampshire, in December, 1843, with the marriage of twenty-two-year-old Mary Baker to George Washington Glover, twenty-six years old and already a successful building contractor, whose projects included Masonic temples in the Carolinas. Glover took his bride to Wilmington, North Carolina, a decision which proved catastrophic. In a disastrous financial setback, his building supplies were destroyed by fire or theft, then George contracted what



*Lead City in 1899. (Photograph by John C. H. Grabill, courtesy of the Denver Post.)*

was probably yellow fever and died nine days later, in June 1844. Mary, pregnant and destitute, returned to her family home, and George Washington Glover, Junior, was born on September 12, 1844.

Mary continued to suffer, as she had since childhood, from what was termed “nervous disease,” and was unable to care for her infant son, described as rambunctious, boisterous, and noisy. Various local relatives and neighbors cared for the boy, until, at the age of six, he was sent forty miles away to live with a former servant married to a farmer named Cheney. In 1856, the Cheney family took the eleven-year-old boy with them to Minnesota, and he lost contact with his mother. In 1861, at the age of sixteen, he joined the Union Army and was wounded during the Civil War. Following

the war he went to Bismarck, North Dakota, and after 1875 worked for one of the many freighting outfits serving the Black Hills.

By 1878, Glover had begun to stake claims in the Black Hills in Ruby Basin, in Nevada Gulch, and in the Bald Mountain area. He sold one claim for seventeen thousand dollars, another for twelve thousand, and kept still others. Among those he retained was the Saratoga claim, worked by what was known as the Glover Group. In 1900, Glover incorporated the Glover Gold Mining Company. Company letterhead, dated 1904, lists George W. Glover as president, J. P. Wilson as secretary and treasurer, and “Capital stock, \$1,000,000 fully paid up.” The company had a brief association with the Manila Mining Company that ended badly.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, in Boston, Mary Glover had married Asa G. Eddy, had recovered from her chronic invalidism, and had developed a remarkable insight into the power of the mind over the body. In 1875 she gained wealth and worldwide fame as the author of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, and in 1879 Mary Baker Eddy founded the Church of Christ, Scientist.<sup>4</sup>

### Boston and the Black Hills

By then Mary Baker Eddy and her son had somehow made contact, and in 1879 he came to Boston to visit her. According to her biographer, however, “he did not seem open to the reception of Christian Science teaching.” George soon returned to the Black Hills. There he married Ellen “Nelly” Besant, the daughter of English immigrant homesteaders in the Black Hills. George took two of his young children with him when he paid a second visit to his mother in 1887.<sup>5</sup>

She had, by then, moved to a five-story brownstone home purchased for forty thousand dollars, a price equivalent to about a million dollars today. George Glover was “affectionately received by Mrs. Eddy,” but, once again, he quickly returned to the West. Glover never learned to write more than his name, and one biographer observes that “as a westerner his manners may have appeared to some as not being in keeping with eastern refinement.”<sup>6</sup> These factors undoubtedly made Glover a misfit in Eddy’s Boston circles, but he had a good reputation in the Black Hills. The *Black Hills Daily Times*, of Deadwood, observed at the beginning of 1893:

Mr. Glover was among the first to locate at Bald Mountain. . . . For ten years he suffered privations and endured hardships . . . yet he never gave up hope. He kept at work continuously opening up his mines and developing their mineral wealth. As



*Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist.*

a reward for his perseverance and hopes, he of all the prospectors in the district has been the most prosperous. . . . The Times wishes Mr. Glover success in his every undertaking, as he is deserving of it.<sup>7</sup>

The article also gave this description of Glover’s Saratoga claim and its potential:

“Five years ago Mr. Glover purchased it for \$4,000. Everybody thought him a fool, but they have since changed their minds. . . . In this mineral deposit he has a bonanza, as the deposit is a flat one, almost inexhaustible, and averaging \$12 to the ton in gold. The ore is free milling and easily and cheaply mined. . . . The small investment of \$1,000 has enabled this lucky prospector to become possessed of



*George Washington Glover, Jr., circa 1865.  
(Courtesy of the Longyear Foundation.)*

a property which will some day enrich him in the neighborhood of seven figures.”

A year later, the same newspaper reported, under the heading “The Glover Group,” that a

property . . . is being opened up in a practical manner by the owner, George Glover, of Lead. . . . A tunnel is now at 235 feet, and will be driven 300 feet more, when it is expected the vein will be struck at a depth of 150 feet. . . . So far between four and five thousand dollars have been expended on the property, and . . . Mr. Glover is confident that it will prove a big bonanza.<sup>8</sup>

Glover’s efforts continued to produce some discoveries. Two years later, in November 1896, the *Black Hills Mining Review* reported that “a discovery of high-grade free milling ore was made

by George Glover on a group of mines owned by him in Grizzly Gulch. A force of men is at work developing the property.” Later the paper noted: “The Glover Mining Company which was organized by George Glover, son of Mrs. Mary Eddy . . . of Boston, is doing a large amount of development work west of Lead. At a depth of 250 feet a fine grade of telluride ore had been encountered. The company,” the newspaper observed, “has ample financial backing.”<sup>9</sup>

### The Glover House

Some of that backing came from Mary Baker Eddy, who reputedly invested five thousand dollars in her son’s mining ventures. By this time, Glover had acquired what came to be known as “Glover Hill.” Perhaps in exchange for her investment, she asked him for a piece of his Glover Hill property. According to George’s grandson, when workmen, plans, and materials arrived from Boston, he thought she was building a church; he was surprised when the building developed into a home, his Christmas gift in 1899.

Built at a cost of twenty thousand dollars, the house was of red brick in the fashionable Queen Anne style, with a pillared porch, and, in deference to South Dakota’s climate, an entry foyer with a fireplace, and front and back parlors and a dining room, each with a fireplace. Two stairways, one from the foyer and another from the kitchen area, led to the five upstairs bedrooms, one also with a fireplace.<sup>10</sup>

One can only speculate about Mrs. Eddy’s motivation for having this fine house built in Lead. Perhaps she was trying to compensate for losing touch with her only child, trying to give him a life comparable to her own in Boston. Or it could be that she was caught up in the excitement of the mining boom and dreamed of occupying the home herself.

### The Glover Gold Mining Company

Whatever Eddy's intentions, George, Nelly, and their five children moved into the house, while George continued to develop his mining properties. South Dakota's state mine inspector reported "a shaft is down 370 feet" on the Glover Gold Mining Company's property in Nevada Gulch, west of Lead, in 1902.<sup>11</sup> That same year, the *Black Hills Mining Review* reported the particulars, noting that

the shaft on the property has been put down for permanent working purposes. It is . . . one compartment with an air shaft, timbered with square sets all the way down, and is one of the best pieces of work

in the country. The air shaft works perfectly, producing so strong a circulation of air that water froze in the shaft at the depth of over 200 feet during the cold weather of the present winter, making it necessary to put in a trap door at the entrance of the air shaft so as to cut off the draught.

While detailing the shaft's construction, the newspaper also provided evidence of the modest scale of at least this portion of Glover's enterprise.

The sinking has been done with a horse whim. Two shifts of three men each—two miners and a top man—have been employed on the ground all winter. The shaft



*The Glover House with the Glovers in residence, c. 1900.  
(Courtesy of the Longyear Foundation.)*

and whim are enclosed by a large comfortable building, in one corner of which is a dressing room for the men, fitted up with a stove. Near the entrance to the shaft is the blacksmith shop, and the top man puts in his spare time sharpening tools.

The newspaper next examined the Glover Gold Mining Company's general layout and prospects:

The Glover group is situated on an arm of Bald Mountain . . . virtually in the midst of the most active mining section of the Black Hills. . . . The Nevada gulch branch of the Deadwood-Central narrow gauge crosses the southern end of the Glover group . . . so it would be an easy matter to get ore from the shaft to the road. The Glover Gold Mining company's group contains 66 acres of ground, a large part of it covered with a good growth of pine timber, sufficient . . . to supply the company with all the timber it will ever require. A large amount of development work has been done. . . . There is one tunnel over 500 feet long . . . . The tunnel exposes a number of quartz bodies, in which free gold is frequently found, and from which excellent assays have been obtained. . . . It would be difficult to conceive of a locality more favorable for the existence of strong bodies of rich ore.

Having inspected the property, the *Mining Review* laid out the mining company's financial status.

The Glover Gold Mining Company is incorporated under the laws of South Dakota, being capitalized at \$1,000,000, divided into 1,000,000 shares of the par value of \$1.00 each. . . . The company has been working quietly but steadily for

more than a year. It pursues a conservative policy, and has . . . maintained a monthly payroll of about \$900, and is free of all incumbrances [*sic*]. The company has an encouraging outlook, and there is every assurance that the careful system of development adopted will be productive of satisfactory results."<sup>12</sup>

Despite such encouraging evaluations and all of his hard work, George Washington Glover's personal bonanza never materialized. Reports of high values do not guarantee great production. Half a century later, a writer for the U.S. Bureau of Mines recorded that "a group of seven claims lying north of Nevada Gulch were held by the Glover Gold Mining Company in the early 1900's [*sic*]. . . . An exploratory shaft on the Saratoga claim . . . reached a depth of at least 370 feet by the end of 1902. Apparently no commercial orebody was encountered, although high values were reported as mining of the shaft progressed. No production has been reported from the property."<sup>13</sup>

### **The Glover House since the Glovers**

Mary Baker Eddy died at her home outside Boston in 1910, leaving her entire estate of \$1.5 million to the Church of Christ, Scientist, "for the propagation of the faith," and nothing to her son, George.<sup>14</sup> He died in 1915, though his widow, Nelly Glover, lived on in the beautiful Glover house until her death in 1947. Homestake Mining Company bought the property in 1948 and remodeled it for use as a residence for senior personnel.

The company converted the barn behind the house to a garage, and upgraded the house by modernizing the kitchen, adding bedroom closets and a second bathroom upstairs, increasing furnace capacity, lowering the ceilings to reduce heating costs, and painting the woodwork a battleship grey. The name of the street upon which the house stands was also changed, from Poorman



*Glover House, c. 1960, shortly after the Swent family resided there.  
(Courtesy of the Longyear Foundation.)*

Road to the more genteel Glendale Drive. During the company's years of ownership, the Glover house was occupied by a succession of four families of Homestake personnel. In 1972 Homestake sold the Glover house to private owners who have lovingly restored and maintained it.

My husband, Langan Swent, and I lived in the Glover house with our three young children from 1955 to 1957, when he was assistant manager of the Homestake Mine. We used the basement as a children's playroom, and installed a large sand table filled with tailings from a defunct mine in Nevada Gulch, perhaps one that George Glover had first staked. That sand would probably now be labeled toxic. Our three-year-old son called one of the upstairs rooms "the Lincoln Log room" and

rejoiced because toys did not have to be picked up and put away there each day. Behind the house, a level area made a fine play yard. Beside the house, a large empty sloping lot was ideal for beginner skiing during the winter. We planted a Colorado blue spruce and a raspberry patch.

In 1957, two months before our fourth child was born, we were off to a new adventure, as we transferred to Grants, New Mexico, site of the Ambrosia Lake uranium-mining boom. We were fortunate and did not have to live in a trailer, but had an 1,100-square-foot house with two bedrooms and a bathroom. One table served for dining, folding laundry, playing board games, assembling model airplanes, and setting up a sewing machine or typewriter. There was no hospital

for non-Indians in an area of five thousand square miles. Life in the Glover house became a distant but beautiful memory. ■

*Eleanor Herz Swent was born in Lead, South Dakota, where her father was chief metallurgist for the Homestake Mine. Her mother was a geology teacher. The author received her B.A. from Wellesley College and M.A. from the University of Denver. She married Langan Swent, mining engineer and son of a mining engineer, and they lived at the San Luis Mine in Tayoltita, Durango, Mexico; the Homestake Mine at Lead, South Dakota; and the Ambrosia Lake mines at Grants, New Mexico. When he became vice president of operations for the Homestake Mining Company, they moved to Piedmont, California.*

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#### Notes:

1. Ernest Grafe and Paul Horsted, *Exploring with Custer: The 1874 Black Hills Expedition* (Custer, SD: Golden Valley Press, 2002), passim; Joel Waterland, *Gold and Silver, Sweat and Tears* (Rapid City, SD: Grellind PhotoGraphics and Typesetters, 1988), passim.
2. Steven T. Mitchell, *Nuggets to Neutrinos: The Homestake Story* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2009), passim.
3. *Black Hills Mining Review* 7, no. 38 (June 1904): 6; and 10, no. 39 (Oct. 1908): 14. In 1909, Glover sued C. M. Woodbridge, F. H. Woodbridge, and I. A. Webb, described as "former associates in the Glover Gold Mining Company and the Manila Mining Company," for malfeasance and misappropriation of funds.
4. Caroline Fraser, *God's Perfect Child: Living and Dying in the Christian Science Church* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1999), passim; Sybil Wilbur, *The Life of Mary Baker Eddy* (Boston: Christian Science Publishing Society, 1913), passim.
5. George Washington Glover Jr.'s namesake, George W. Glover III, was born in 1889, the third of five children. A skilled carpenter, he worked for the Homestake Mining Company and raised five children of his own. He died in 1980, survived by a son named George Washington Glover.
6. Jewel Spangler Smaus, "Family: from New England to the Black Hills," *Longyear Historical Society Quarterly News*, 19, no. 3 (Aut. 1982): 299.
7. "An Old Pioneer's Success, a Short History of George Glover, an Old Black Hills Pioneer, and the Valuable Mining Properties Owned by Him," *Black Hills Daily Times* (Deadwood), 1 Jan. 1893.
8. *Daily Times*, 7 Jan. 1894.
9. *Black Hills Mining Review* 2, no. 45 (Nov. 1896): 7.
10. Some workmen employed in constructing the home came from Boston, a few of whom remained in Lead as residents.
11. State of South Dakota, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the State Mine Inspector for the Period Ending November 1st, 1902* (Pierre: State of South Dakota, 1902), 20.
12. *Black Hills Mining Review* 5, no.3 (Feb. 1902): 6.
13. United States Bureau of Mines, Region V, *Black Hills Mineral Atlas, South Dakota*, Part 1, in: U.S. Bureau of Mines *Information Circular 7688* (Pittsburgh: The Bureau, 1954), 83, 120.
14. *New York Times*, 9 Dec. 1910, 1.