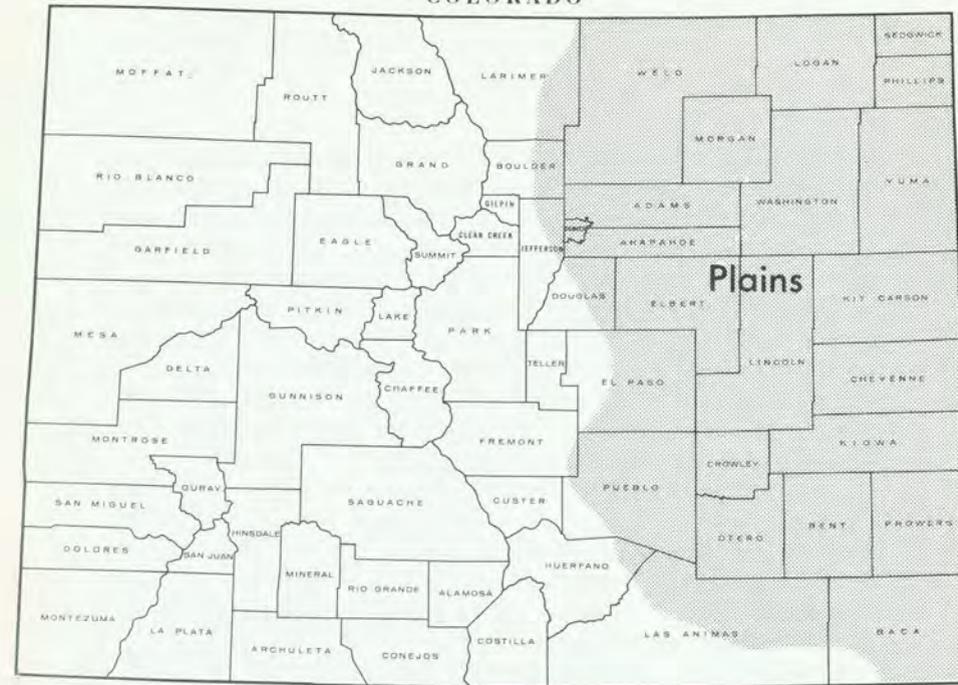


COLORADO



The Town Boom in Las Animas and Baca Counties

Morris F. Taylor was professor of history at Trinidad State Junior College until his death in 1979. Well known for his contribution to the historical scholarship of Colorado and New Mexico, he won two certificates of commendation for his writings from the American Association for State and Local History and the 1974 LeRoy R. Hafen Award for the best article in The Colorado Magazine. His two major books are First Mail West: Stage Lines on the Santa Fe Trail (1971) and O. P. McMains and the Maxwell Land Grant Conflict (1979). He held a master's degree from Cornell University and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Colorado in 1969.

In the late 1880s southeastern Colorado experienced boom conditions that were short-lived. Several years of unusually good rainfall over much of the Great Plains had aroused unquestioning hopes and speculative greeds, bringing on land rushes and urban developments that were the first steps toward the dust bowls of the twentieth century.¹ Similar to the many land development schemes in the West today that are unplanned, quick-profit enterprises, land rushes and town promotions sometimes failed because they were out of tune with environmental realities. The ephemeral life spans of hundreds of homesteads and a score of towns in southeastern Colorado, and the uncertainties of the few that survived, provide data for the case in point.

Historically, the region has long been known, but only in the transient sense that its tip was crossed by the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. There may have been some occupancy in the last days of Mexican sovereignty, but the evidence is skimpy. The area was range land for the cattle outfits, large and small, that showed up by the late 1870s, but it was the advent of the small farmer just prior to 1890 that gave hope for agriculture prospering and towns flourishing.² The influx of people was the farthest wave of intensive settlement that culminated in southwestern Kansas in the mid-1880s. Expectations varied. The editor of the Republican *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, for example, hoped that emigration from Kansas would be great enough to wipe out the Democratic majority in Las Animas County.³

A few years of good rainfall had obscured some of the conditions that caused Major Stephen H. Long to dismiss the central plains as the Great American Desert over sixty years before. Long, of course, had been proven wrong, but many of the plains promoters of the 1880s went to the other extreme in their propaganda, absurdly and untruthfully extolling the climate, rainfall, soil, and other conditions for intensive, diversified agriculture. And on occasion the mineral resources of an area were rather overstated. From the start, the migration into southeastern Colorado was inflated by speculators organized into town companies. However, those who believed in the potentialities of the area were soon to be disillusioned.⁴

On 24 July 1886 two men from Wichita, Kansas, and two from Las Animas County, Colorado, incorporated the Butte City Land and

Town Company. Probably named for Two Buttes, a prominent landmark in that flat country, the place was abandoned the next year, most of the people moving to a new town, Minneapolis, which had a more attractive site not far away.⁵ In November of that year the incorporation papers of the Clyde Land and Town Company, signed by men from Kansas and Rhode Island and Las Animas County in Colorado, were filed with the Las Animas County clerk. The business office of the company was to be at a town called Clyde, southwest of the present-day town of Springfield, but the place seems never to have been of any significance.⁶

The incorporation papers of the Atlantis Town Company, directed by five men from Richland, Kansas, in Morton County, and Ashland in Clark County, Kansas, were filed with the secretary of the state of Colorado on 22 November 1886. On that same date a survey of the new town of Boston, where company business was to be transacted, was completed. F.F. Jennings and several other men traveled from Richland onto the Colorado plains in September. Greatly impressed by the country, they drove some stakes at the town site, eighteen miles from the Kansas line and seventeen and one-half miles from No Man's Land (the Neutral Strip).⁷

The next spring Walter G. Hines, Las Animas County judge acting as trustee under federal law, entered the town site of Boston at the United States land office in Lamar, Colorado.⁸ In July, forty qualified voters submitted a petition to Judge Hines asking for incorporation of the town, and the judge appointed three commissioners to call an election for 11 August 1887. All fifty citizens voted for incorporation. The sale of lots hit a peak in the fall of 1887 and the spring of 1888, which was the boom period for most of the hope-laden town developments that sprang up in southeastern Colorado.⁹

In March 1888 a promotional advertisement in the *Boston Western World* said that there were about six hundred people in the town and

¹ Carl Abbott, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1976), pp. 157-58.

² J. R. Austin, *A History of Early Baca County* (n.p.: By the author, 1936), pp. 1-21; Albert W. Thompson, *They Were Open Range Days: Annals of a Western Frontier* (Denver: World Press, 1946), pp. 3-10. A member of the Felipe Baca family of Trinidad probably was the first settler along Butte Creek (Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado . . . from 1858 to 1890*, 4 vols. [Chicago: Blakely Printing Co., 1895], 4:71).

³ William Frank Zornow, *Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 65-67; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 9, 14 November; 25 December 1888.

⁴ Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, pp. 22-23; *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888.

⁵ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 24, p. 611; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 39. Incorporators of the Butte City Company were R.E. Lauck and C.A. Casimir of Wichita, Kansas, and Gabriel Crill and William H. Bowdle of Las Animas County.

⁶ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 34, p. 114. Incorporators were John H. and Charles H. Carey of Las Animas County and the following Kansas men: Montague S. Hasie and George E. Hasie (Arkansas City) and Lewis F. Kelley (Coolidge). Also listed were William R. Greene and Robert Reoch of Rhode Island.

⁷ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 34, p. 183. Directors were: Albert Hughes, E.D. Taylor, F.F. Jennings, J.D.F. Jennings, Quincy A. Robertson (all from Richfield, Kansas), and Isaac H. Berry and Francis Hall from Ashland, Kansas.

⁸ See Henry N. Copp, *Public Land Laws Passed by Congress from April 1, 1882, to January 1, 1890*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1890), 2:1008; Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 37, p. 1. Named for Secretary of the Interior L. Q. C. Lamar, the town was organized in 1886, and that same year Congress gave it the land office for the new Bent Land District (LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State*, 4 vols. [New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948], 1:423-24).

⁹ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 39, p. 185, and Book 37.

This Indenture, Made this 11th day of November A.D. 1887

between Benjamin F. Gunn

of Las Animas County, in the State of Colorado of the first part

and George Bryning

of Las Animas County, in the State of Colorado of the second part

Witnesseth, That said part y of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Seventy Five and 00 DOLLARS, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do and by these presents grant, bargain, sell, and convey unto said part y of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all the following described Real Estate, situated in the County of Las Animas and State of Colorado, to wit:

Lot One and Two
in Block Thirty-Nine
39 in the Town of
Boston according to
the original recorded
plat thereon

To Have and to Hold the Same, Together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining, forever:

And said Benjamin F. Gunn for himself, his heirs, executors or administrators, do and hereby covenant, promise and agree, to and with said part y of the second part, that at the delivery of these presents he is lawfully seized in his own right, of an absolute and indefeasible estate of inheritance, in fee simple, of and in all and singular the above granted and described premises; with the appurtenances; that the same are free clear, discharged and unincumbered of and from all former and other grants, titles, charges, estates, judgments, taxes, assessments and incumbrances, of what nature or kind soever:

and that he will warrant and forever defend, the same unto said part y of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against said part y of the first part, his heirs, and all and every person or persons whomsoever, lawfully claiming or to claim the same.

In Witness Whereof, The said part y of the first part has hereunto set his hand the day and year first above written.

Benjamin F. Gunn

During the fall of 1887 and the spring of 1888, lot sales in Boston hit a peak. Lots one and two in block thirty-nine sold for seventy-five dollars.

ballyhooed it as "the Utopian city of the plains." The advertisement had a curious headline: "Railroads a Moral Certainty" and it claimed that coal, natural gas, and unspecified minerals underlay the area. By autumn fifteen hundred people were reported as residents of Boston. The *Colorado State Business Directory*, 1888, however, gave the figure as four hundred. Professing confidence that "inside of five years every claim within twenty miles of Boston will be worth \$1,500," the *Boston Banner*, spoke of "monumental faith in the future success of the Great American Desert." That unsuspected irony was given direct treatment by a Trinidad paper, which cautioned that "only ten miles north of Springfield, however, the drouth belt begins,

and thence on northward to the [Santa Fe] railroad the dry summer left a desert."¹⁰

Five saloons, the three-story Boston House (advertised as the finest west of Wichita), a bank, a drugstore, a hardware store, three livery barns, and a post office were evidence of prosperity. For a while the law in Boston was Cornelius Smith, alias William Cornelius, alias Billy the Kid, a reformed horse thief, who later reverted to his old ways. In October 1888 he was indicted for stealing two horses from David F. Barrett on 18 September, an action that ended his career as a lawman. Bill Thompson (said to be an alias for Charley Hall), a notorious "regulator" employed by several big cattle outfits to keep rustling and other depredations under control, often came to Boston. Relations of townspeople and farmers with cattlemen were not always cordial. On one occasion the *Minneapolis Chico* reported that eight hundred to one thousand range cattle drifted into town from the north, and the *Brookfield Maverick* declared that "the range cattle are the curse of this country."¹¹ Apparently, Boston was a tough town, and it is difficult to accept the story that it was abandoned after a wild shoot-out with Thompson and his men, although its demise may have been hastened by the incident.¹²

The town of Vilas was the namesake of William F. Vilas, postmaster general and then secretary of the interior in Grover Cleveland's first administration. Men from Comanche County, Kansas, organized the Southern Colorado Town Company on 15 January 1887, incorporated under Colorado law with its headquarters at Vilas; a survey was completed on 5 February. Soon after the inception of the town, the *Vilas Democrat* reported about two hundred buildings under construction and by November more than five hundred families living in the town and surrounding vicinity. The 1888 directory gave Vilas a population of two hundred fifty and another source estimated a peak population of seven hundred fifty, which might help to explain the optimism of a forty-acre addition.¹³

¹⁰ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 1, 16 November 1888, 6 June 1889; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 27. The town may have been named for the Massachusetts capital ("Place Names in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 17 [May 1940], p. 87); *Colorado State Business Directory*, with *Colorado Mining Directory Department*, 1888 (Denver: James R. Ives, 1888), p. 131.

¹¹ *Trinidad Daily News*, 24 January 1889.

¹² Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, pp. 27-31; Records of the District Court, Third Judicial District, Las Animas County Court House; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 16, 17, 18 February 1889; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 13, 14, 16, 18, 23 February 1889; Thompson, *They Were Open Range Days*, pp. 12-22; Ike Osteen, "Shoot-Out at Old Boston," *Frontier Times* (April-May 1967), pp. 39-40; Hugh B. Burnett, "Lost Towns of the Homesteaders," *The Denver Westerners Brand Book*, 1974, ed. Alan J. Stewart (Denver: Denver Westerners, 1977), p. 275.

¹³ Vilas became postmaster general after the town was named ("Place Names in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 20 [March 1943], p. 75, refers to Senator Vilas, but he did not become senator from Wisconsin until 1891). Evidently, there was a second paper called the *Republican* (Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 39). Organizers of the Southern Colorado Town Company were: Timothy Shields, C.W. Hungerford, T.S. Moffett, Sam W. McClure, D.C. Kelly, R.A. Crossman, M.D. Ryan, and C.T. Avery

Railroad and prominent in the founding of Lamar and the Bent County Land District. Although he lived in Garden City, Kansas, he was a director and the general manager of the Holmes Town Company. Although described as being in the "great valley of the Cimarron River," Holmes City was actually near a minor northern tributary of that stream. The town was unaccountably referred to as "the *only* [author's italics] gateway to the great coal fields of Southeastern Colorado and No Man's Land." Its promoters foresaw the establishment of sorghum sugar factories that used something called the Fort Scott process.¹⁷

In the summer of 1887 businessmen from Morton County, Kansas, organized the Brookfield Town Company to develop a new settlement on Two Butte Creek, about fifteen miles north of the present-day Pritchett, Colorado. The location chosen was on a wagon road that was a late segment of the Santa Fe Trail, which headed southwestward from Granada, a town on the Santa Fe Railroad, dating from 1873. For some reason the town company did not play a major part in land sales in Brookfield, but the ubiquitous Judge Hines was active in the disposal of lots. A major investor was Colonel G.A. Henry from Trinidad. The town had a weekly newspaper *Brookfield Maverick*, edited by J.L. Young, and a population by 1889 of fifty.¹⁸

Another venture that summer was known both as Adams and Stonington, promoted by southwestern Kansas men through the Adams Town Company. Stonington was the surname of a man who lived in the neighborhood and operated a post office in his home. In August a surveyor from Richfield, Kansas, completed a town plat. About five and one-half miles to the east was a contemporary promotion called Plymouth, which had two newspapers during its existence—the *Plymouth Progress* succeeded by the *Plymouth Rock*. Although no plat, articles of incorporation, or other documentary evidence has been found, some contemporary maps show a place called Progress in the vicinity of the Plymouth location. Because one of the local newspapers

was known as *Plymouth Progress*, it appears that there may have been some connection.¹⁹

With no relationship to the Atlantis Town Company, the settlement of Atlanta, apparently named because its organizers were from Georgia, came to life in the angle between Two Butte and Freezeout creeks, about ten miles southwest of Brookfield. Mainly stone structures lined the main street, which was part of the same wagon road from Granada that passed through Brookfield. A doctor's office, a church, a cafe, a general store, a post office, two saloons, and a newspaper called the *Atlanta Democrat* served an estimated one hundred fifty people, not counting the area farmers and ranchers. An 1889 map shows Maxey, south of Brookfield, and Decatur, north of Springfield, but other data is lacking.²⁰

The Kansas towns of Wellington and Winfield, south of Wichita, in 1887 were the homes of the incorporators of the Windsor Town Company; its principal project in Colorado was named Springfield, because a number of the first purchasers of lots were from the Missouri town of that name. Population estimates were three hundred in 1888 and five hundred in 1889. At one time Springfield had three newspapers—the *Herald* (Democratic), the *Republican*, and the *Advertiser*.²¹

The site of Carriso, located one and one-quarter miles south of the later Oklarado, may have been picked as early as the spring of 1887, and early the next year the Carriso Town Company was advertising with superlatives, such as "in the heart of the finest and richest agricultural country on the globe."²² However, there was another feature that spoke of the times; the reader was informed that Carriso was thirty-five miles from any other town, so it would be without a competitor for the county seat of the new Carriso County. No new county had been created, but the desire and need for such subdivisions would become increasingly recognized and set off strong rivalries. In the late summer of 1888 the *Carriso Current* published notices of an

¹⁷ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 29, p. 539; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 6 May 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 18 January 1889; Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People*, 1:423-24; *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888. Persons incorporating were: A.M. York, George Tromlitz, John B. Morris, and James K. Doughty, all of Bent County.

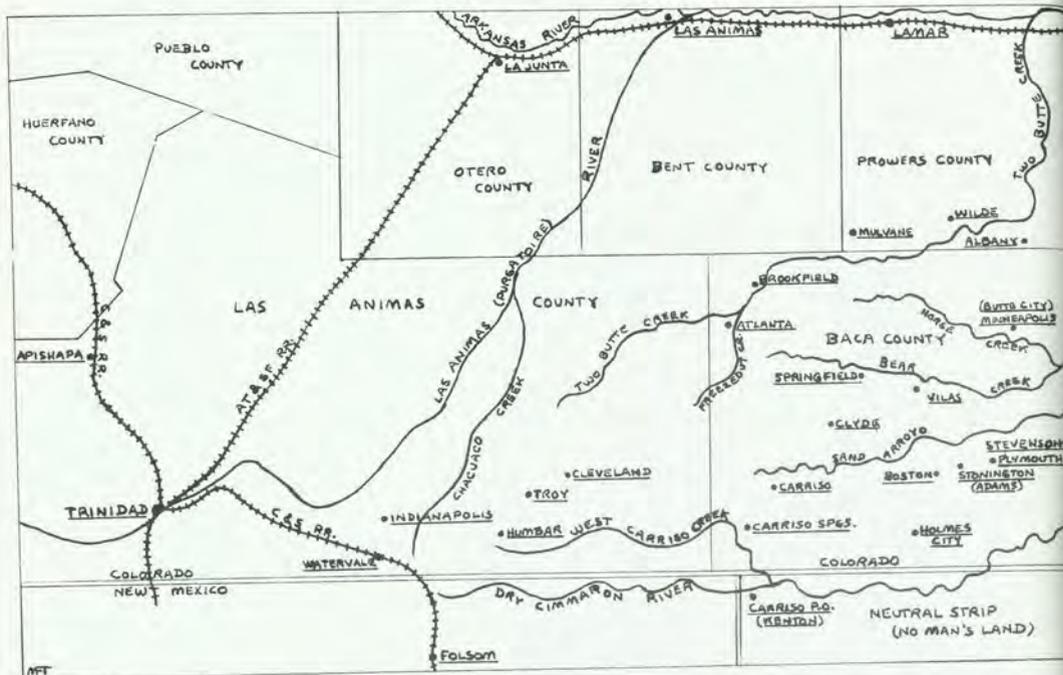
¹⁸ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 34, p. 195; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 22 January 1888; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 39; U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Colorado—Two Butte Sheet), 1893, and (Colorado, Baca Co.—McEndree Ranch Quadrangle), 1971; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 12, 15 December 1888; Nell's Topographical & Township Map of the State of Colorado (1885); U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Historic Trail Map of the La Junta 2 Quadrangle Colorado, compiled by Glenn R. Scott), 1972; *Early Far West Notebook 8*, Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs; *Colorado State Business Directory, 1889* (Denver: James R. Ives, 1889), p. 147; G.H. Allen, S. Hughes, E.C. Miller, Jess G. Northcutt, C.F. Reed, A. Dymond, and A.E. Rogers were directors of the town company. *Maverick Creek*, north of town, may have inspired the name of the local newspaper.

¹⁹ Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 40; Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4:71; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 24 November, 1 December 1888; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 6 April 1889; Las Animas County Plat Book No. 1, p. 27 (no articles of incorporation were found); U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Colo.—Kan.—Vilas Sheet), 1892, reprint 1949; Nell's Topographical Map of Colorado (1889).

²⁰ U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Colo.—Two Butte Sheet), 1893, reprint 1948; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, pp. 14-15, 37-38; Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4:71; Nell's Topographical Map (1889). Austin's history and Hix's map show Atlanta as located on the Penrose cattle trail. That is questionable, but space prevents discussion here.

²¹ Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, pp. 31-32; "Place Names in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine*, 19 (November 1942), p. 232; Patrick Byrnes, "A Brief Sketch of Springfield, Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 20 (March 1943), p. 76; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 31 August 1888; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 10 October 1889; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 27 February 1889; A.W. McHendrie, "Boyhood Recollections of Springfield, Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 21 (May 1944), pp. 93-100; Las Animas County Plat Book No. 1, p. 17 (no articles of incorporation were found); Burnett, "Lost Towns of the Homesteaders," pp. 280-81; *Colorado State Business Directory, 1888*, p. 483, and 1889, p. 494.

²² *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888.



Although this map is not drawn to scale, it is generally correct as to town locations. In its preparation the author was assisted by a map prepared by Bill Hix, former assistant county agricultural agent in Baca County.

incorporation election, which was successfully held on 15 September, although the place was credited with a population of only twenty-five by the state business directory of 1888. It was known also as Carriso City and Carriso Flats. Lack of water caused the demise of the town after about a year.²³

In November 1887 the town site of Carriso Springs was officially recorded by J.H. Concannon, calling for a location on Carriso Creek in more broken country near the Mesa de Maya. Early growth was slow, followed in late 1888 by a boom stimulated by copper, lead, and silver discoveries in the vicinity. Topeka, Kansas, capitalists showed an interest, and the Carriso Springs Mining and Location Company brought in about one hundred fifty miners. The Carriso Springs Town Company was active, and the *Carriso Springs Optic* noted that in the summer of 1889 crops were good and the La Mesa Hotel was being handsomely decorated.²⁴

²³ Ibid.; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 40; Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 37, p. 151, and Book 54, pp. 485, 494-96; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 10 December 1888; *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; *Trinidad Daily News*, 14, 21 August 1888, 18 January 1889; *Colorado State Business Directory*, 1888, p. 512.

²⁴ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 37; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 15, 21, 25, 28 November 1888; *Trinidad Daily News*, 15 November 1888; 15 July 1889.

The author is indebted to Willard C. Loudon for evidence in the Carriso Springs area of early mining

North of the Mesa de Maya near the head of Poitrey Canyon, someone with a classical bent bestowed the name of Troy on a new settlement. Perhaps the same person put the name of Athens on another aspiring spot—a town that did not succeed. Troy was backed by a town company, and for a while it had a newspaper called the *Troy Settler*.²⁵

Not far northeast of Troy was a point known as Cleveland (doubtless named after President Grover Cleveland), which was on the same wagon road as Atlanta and Brookfield. In 1888 it was listed as a voting precinct in Las Animas County. With the incorporation of the Humbar Townsite Company on 2 March 1888, the town of Humbar was planned a few miles southwest of Troy.²⁶

Beyond the Mesa de Maya, southwest of Troy, was Indianapolis, the closest of the new towns to Trinidad, the Las Animas County seat, which was about thirty-five miles to the west. Established in October 1887 on a site seven miles northeast of Trinchera between Trinchera and Alkali creeks, promoters of Indianapolis told the prospective buyers of the beauty and the other attractions of the Raton Mountains (mesas) nine miles to the south and the Spanish Peaks to the northwest. The beneficial effect of those geographic features on local rainfall was greatly exaggerated, in keeping with a hyperbolic assertion of "greater rainfall in this valley than any other part of the United States at this latitude." Indianapolis was seen as another budding county seat, and the Rock Island Railroad had been surveyed through it. With about seventy-five business and residential structures (mostly frame) and some two hundred fifty people by 1888, Indianapolis was dominated by C.F. Aultman's two-story, thirty-two-room hotel. A new livery barn was under construction that "would be a credit to a much older town."²⁷

This land and town boom on the southern Colorado plains was by

activity of undetermined age. Carriso is the spelling used in this paper, because it is the form commonly employed in the public record. Carrizo also is correct and frequently found in various sources.

²⁵ U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Colorado—Mesa de Maya Sheet), 1893, reprint 1948; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 40. There is an interesting notation in William H. Bauer, James L. Ozment, and John H. Willard, *Colorado Postal History: The Post Offices* (Crete, Neb.: J-B Publishing Co., 1971), p. 92, stating that Minneapolis formerly was known as Corinth, probably after another classical Greek city. This author has seen no other mention of that.

Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 34, p. 349; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 4 November 1888, 18 February 1889; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 6 December 1890. The men who incorporated the Troy Town Site Company were: J.W. Heskett, John J. Ideson, J. DeWitt Wolf, John W. Morgan, and C.D. Dunn.

²⁶ Historic Trail Map, La Junta Quadrangle; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 6 May 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 2, 15 November 1888; Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 29, p. 428. S.F. Miller, M.J. Shepard, J. Blanchard, and Elmer E. Page were incorporators of the Humbar Townsite Company. The location was identified by Willard C. Loudon, and it appears that Humbar had a post office for a couple of months in 1887, which was then transferred to Troy (Bauer et al., *Colorado Postal History*, p. 72).

²⁷ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Colorado—Mesa de Maya Sheet), 1893, reprint 1948; *Trinidad Chronicle-News*, 26 October 1930; *Colorado State Business Directory*, 1889, p. 376.

no means limited to the central and eastern portions of Las Animas County. In the same period from 1886 through 1889, Bent County, just north of the east end of Las Animas County, was a scene of similar activities. West of the Two Buttes landmark, some local people joined with others from Illinois and Iowa to organize the Wilde Town Company on 1 February 1887. Doing business in Bent and Las Animas counties, the town of Wilde soon had the usual basic enterprises, including the *Mulvane News*, and it was the halfway point on a stage line from Lamar to Springfield. On the same line, west of Wilde, was Mulvane, probably named for the Mulvane brothers (John and Joab), Topeka bankers, who also had an interest in the Topeka Cattle Company (TPK brand) near Clayton, New Mexico. Joab Mulvane was also vice-president of the Chicago, Kansas, and Western Railroad. The town had about one hundred people in 1889, as did Albany, east of Wilde, which supported a newspaper, dubbed the *Advance*, and a post office.²⁸

Also in the extended picture were new settlements in the Neutral Strip or No Man's Land. The Carrizo post office became the town of Florence about 1887, a name that later gave way to Kenton. Mineral City, established in 1885 by the Western Land and Mining Company of Kingman, Kansas, had many homesteaders by 1887-88. Due west on the Dry Cimarron in New Mexico, Folsom (named after Frances Folsom, President Cleveland's bride) took root in 1888, and the next year it had a federal land office.²⁹

A new town without a post office was unusual, even though a "town" might not have amounted to more than a plat in the office of a county clerk. Some offices were referred to as "rural," a term that seems to indicate post offices that existed in no apparent conjunction with a settlement. A post office called Maxey, near Brookfield, operated from 1889 to 1894, but no evidence was found of an actual community at that time. Another post office named Stevenson, east of Springfield and almost on the Kansas line, existed briefly in 1888, but the name can be found on later maps.³⁰

Sprouting towns could be supported, of course, only by an adequate population and economic enterprises in the hinterland. Agriculture was the expected mainstay. The *Pueblo Daily Chieftain* predicted that the area would be the "garden spot of the state," supplying the mountain towns with farm produce. This was an excessively optimistic view, but it reflected the hopes of town boomers and farmers alike. Local newspapers went to contrived lengths to reassure people that the rains would continue, and area items sometimes were published under the headline—"From the Rain Belt." This inducement to encourage immigration was so successful that Boston boosters pressed for a federal land office to be located there.³¹ Dry farming, land not irrigated, was the technique, as the *Mulvane News* made quite clear.

A great number of eastern people being misinformed, labor under the impression that the productiveness of the entire country is based on irrigation. This is not so. While we do not say that irrigation is not a good mode of farming, we hold that in this section it is unnecessary. The rainfall in southeast Colorado during the past three years has been sufficient to produce excellent crops upon the highest ridge land. Irrigation is not the necessity so many suppose it is, yet a number of advantages are derived, in this manner of farming.³²

Diversification of the economy naturally was welcomed. Minneapolis and Holmes City sought sugar factories in cooperation with eastern sorghum sugar manufacturers, and Boston was excited about a coal vein—eighteen to twenty inches thick—just south of town, which at least might lessen the dependence on such sources as Mineral City in the Neutral Strip or the Trinidad coal fields to the west. The future also seemed bright for Carrizo Springs because of the copper, lead, and silver finds already noted there. The anticipated mining boom in the Carrizo area, however, did not materialize. Three of the factors probably contributing to the lack of development in the area were the poor quality and the small quantity of the ore and the inadequate transportation system.³³

None of the sugar or mining enterprises could prosper on local consumption alone, and wagon transportation simply was inadequate for getting commodities to larger and distant markets. Inducements to railroads seemed to be the only answer, a necessity that was realized from the outset. Leadership was assumed by the towns of Boston, Carriso, and Troy, and in October 1887 a preliminary survey to obtain

²⁸ Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 34, p. 114; U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Two Butte Sheet), 1893, reprint 1948; clipping from the *Two Buttes Sentinel*, 28 December 1922, in the Dawson Scrapbook, vol. 34, p. 271. Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver. Alex. York, Demaris Tracy, and Ella Brown (all of Bent County), Cassius B. Tracy (Christian County, Illinois), and Henry F. Graver (Polk County, Iowa). The company office was in Lamar, Colorado; U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey Map (Two Butte Sheet), 1893, reprint 1948, and (Albany Sheet) 1893, reprint 1946; *Boston Western World*, 6 March 1888; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 20, 27 January, 5 April, 13 June 1889; Bauer et al., *Colorado Postal History*, p. 12.

²⁹ Articles by Jenny Rose Benton, *The Boise City News Historical and Anniversary Edition*, 1968, pp. 14, 20, see C; T.M. Pearce, ed., *New Mexico Place Names. A Geographical Dictionary* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), p. 57; *Trinidad Daily News*, 21 May 1889.

³⁰ Bauer et al., *Colorado Postal History. Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 2 November 1888; Nell's Topographical Map, 1889; Ray Shaffer, *A Guide to Places on the Colorado Prairie, 1540-1975* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 49, 50-51.

³¹ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 31 August 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 10 October, 1 November 1888.

³² *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 20 January 1889, quoting the *Mulvane News*.

³³ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 31 August 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 11 December 1888.

another line was surveyed from Richfield, Kansas, to Boston, Colorado.³⁴

Rail connections could determine the success or the failure of a town, a fact that was reflected in the promotional advertising. Holmes City, for example, assured prospective settlers that there would be two railroads there within a year. "Holmes City is on the Mulvane Extension of the Chicago, Kansas and Western," and "the Wichita Railroad is also building on an AIR LINE from Wichita through Holmes City to the Coal Fields of Colorado."³⁵ The tracks were never laid. A map of the Boston area in the *Boston Western World* showed Boston served by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, and the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad, which was part of a linkage between Colorado and Texas built some miles to the south.³⁶ These advertisements were not only expressions of wishful thinking, but they were also misleading to the people at whom they were aimed.

A major railroad—the Rock Island—was in the background of some of the schemes that gained new strength in the latter part of 1888. In September incorporation papers were filed in Colorado for the Dodge City, Montezuma and Trinidad Railroad Company, proposing a standard-gauge line from a point on the Kansas-Colorado line (either in Morton or Stanton County, Kansas) to Trinidad. A similar filing was made in Kansas for the same road to build from Dodge City to either of those points. The Dodge City, Montezuma and Trinidad was a subsidiary of the Rock Island, and earlier, the voters in Haskell County, Kansas, approved bonds to assist it in reaching the Trinidad coal fields.³⁷

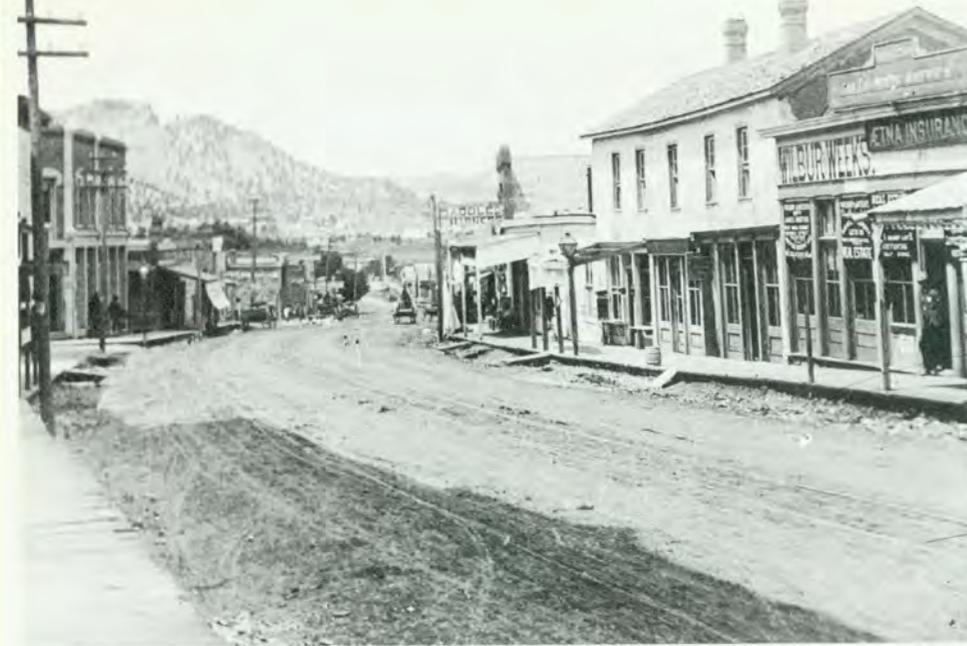
A new Rock Island subsidiary, the Omaha, Dodge City and Trinidad Railroad, took over the Dodge City, Montezuma and Trinidad in February 1889. A sale in Europe of bonds for the new railroad apparently had been successful. When the Rock Island also acquired the Boston, Trinidad and Western, a railroad through the eastern end of Las Animas County to Trinidad seemed inevitable. There was some speculation that the Rock Island would be extended from Trinidad to the Pacific Coast, but that was supplanted by a report

³⁴ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 24 February 1889; Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 38, p. 458.

³⁵ *Boston Western World*, 8 March 1888.

³⁶ *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 12 October 1888; Richard C. Overton, "The Colorado and Southern Railway: Its Heritage and Its History," *The Colorado Magazine* 26 (April 1949), pp. 93-94.

³⁷ *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 16 September 1888, 11 April 1889; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 29 October 1888, 27 April 1889. Montezuma is in Gray County, Kansas, which is between Ford County (Dodge City) on the east and Haskell County on the west. The new town of Folsom, New Mexico, hoped that the Rock Island line would build through Emory Gap to it (*Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 2 October 1888, quoting the *Folsom Idea*). The little town of Apishapa, north of Trinidad, expected the Rock Island to come there to tap coal mines (*Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 18 June 1889).



A view of Commercial Street in Trinidad about 1885.

a right-of-way into Trinidad was made. As finally laid out, the route was from Boston to Trinidad via Carriso, Carriso Springs, Troy, and Indianapolis. The project was delayed by the engineering problem of getting around the great Red Rocks Canyon of the Purgatoire River. Plans were actively supported by Trinidad interests; the Boston, Trinidad and Western Railroad was incorporated in January 1888, and

A lone passenger waits at the adobe Trinidad depot.



that tracks would be laid to those of the Denver, Texas and Fort Worth at Watervale, south of Indianapolis, and then over those tracks to Trinidad. The latter town was becoming an important transportation center, already served by the Denver and Rio Grande and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroads.³⁸

One of the benefits of a direct rail connection would have been shorter travel time from the eastern towns to Trinidad, the county seat, but it is doubtful that alone it would have allayed the growing demand for a political subdivision of Las Animas County. The inconvenience still would have been great. In a letter to the *Trinidad Daily Citizen* a resident pointed out the expense as well as the time consumed in traveling 150 miles, and "add to these the physical strain upon the health and energies of one who pulls out of a cold morning to make a stagecoach travel of 80 miles that day to reach the railway station, or travel 150 miles overland, sleeping out of nights, and eating stale food, and the reader can form some faint idea of our situation."³⁹ Emphasizing his point, he continued by noting that Las Animas County then had more square miles than Connecticut or Rhode Island or New Jersey and was almost as large as Massachusetts. He also warned that subdividing counties could initiate a disastrous county-seat war. Having experienced such bitter contests in western Kansas, many people were not predisposed toward subdividing the county.⁴⁰

On the other hand, an "East End Settler" advocated making three or four counties out of the eastern extremity of Las Animas, thereby, he claimed, satisfying a majority of the settlers and giving several places a chance to become county towns. That, he said, would stave off county-seat wars, Kansas style. At a meeting in Springfield, that advice was accepted and four new counties were proposed.⁴¹

However, simple solutions were not to be, and the new subdivisions became an issue in the political campaigns during the late summer and the fall of 1888. Judging from newspaper reports, the four-county plan favored Springfield, Boston, Minneapolis, and Carriso Springs.⁴² Naturally, residents of Vilas, Holmes City, Brookfield, Indianapolis, and other places did not complacently accept that trend. To lose an official designation could mean the death of a town, and to

be named a county-seat town could help offset the lack of a railroad or help secure a railroad connection.

The editor of the *Vilas Democrat* wrote that the farmers of the east end wanted only one new county, which would be less of a tax load, and attributed the four-county plan to the town schemers in the four places that expected to benefit from that arrangement. One prominent voice opposed any subdivision; Colonel Henry, the Brookfield investor, advised waiting a couple of years so that present settlers would be better able to pay taxes and new settlers would be able to share.⁴³

Dividing Las Animas County had little opposition at Trinidad, and its senator and representatives in the Colorado General Assembly promoted it. The number and names of new counties, and the selection of county seats, were the chief items of contention. The same kinds of choices were awaiting decisions in Bent and Elbert counties to the north.⁴⁴

Final decisions in such matters lay with the Seventh General Assembly, which convened on 2 January 1889. Early in the session, bills were introduced to create the counties of Cooper, Rice, Lincoln, and Lee out of Las Animas County, and Wolcott, Morton, and Felker were to be taken from Bent and Elbert counties. Another proposal would have taken Morton and Harrison counties out of Bent, while Sheridan County would have been carved from Las Animas. Some of the new county names were sponsored by towns that were confident, or at least very hopeful, of becoming county seats. Boston preferred Cooper; Minneapolis wanted Rice; Lamar favored Wolcott; and Cheyenne Wells, farther north, supported Morton. From other sources came suggestions for Tioga County, with Boston as the county town, and Carriso County centered at Springfield. Also the name of Chilcott was submitted for a new subdivision. From that confusion emerged a recommendation by the House committee on counties and county lines on 17 January 1889, calling for the printing of bills for the creation of thirteen new counties.⁴⁵

Harrison, Lee, Lincoln, and Sheridan are names of obvious origin. Edward O. Wolcott was senator-elect from Colorado, and Levi P. Morton was vice-president-elect. Job A. Cooper was governor and James Rice the secretary of state of Colorado. A distinguished Pueblo citizen, George M. Chilcott was a former senator. Republican names predominated because the state government was controlled by that party, although Las Animas County was a Democratic stronghold.

Las Animas County Congressman R.L. Wootton, Jr., introduced a

³⁸ *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 24 February 1889; *Trinidad Daily News*, 21 January, 8 February 1889; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 11, 25 April, 5, 7 May 1889; Overton, "The Colorado and Southern Railway," pp. 93-94. The Denver-Fort Worth connection was opened on 1 April 1888.

Rail facilities were necessary. Early shipments of ore from the Carriso Springs mines were taken by wagon to Clayton, a new railroad town on the Denver, Texas and Fort Worth (later the Colorado and Southern) in New Mexico for transfer to Denver (*Trinidad Daily News*, 8 February 1889; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 20 April 1889; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 9 April 1889).

³⁹ *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 25 December 1888.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30 October, 6 November, 11 December 1888.

⁴² *Trinidad Daily News*, 6 December 1888.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 18 December 1888; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 12 December 1888.

⁴⁴ *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 9, 10, 18, 19, 23, 24 January 1889.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* The origin of the name Felker for a county is unknown.

bill for the creation of Plymouth County, which James Swift of Bent County wanted to name Henry, probably after Colonel G.A. Henry, the Brookfield booster and general promoter of the southeast corner. The other member of the house from Las Animas County, Albert Hughes of Boston, a member of the committee on counties and county lines, was also active with new county bills, and someone proposed that one of the new counties be named after him. On the home scenes, with nearly every town having its own paper, editorial conflict and political exploitation were vociferous and complex. However, there was much mutual admiration and political back-scratching, especially among Republicans. Confounded by it all, the state legislature considered doing nothing about subdivision, particularly in Las Animas County.⁴⁶ These pressures for new counties were being exerted over much more of Colorado, not just in the eastern and southeastern parts.

The leaders of the subdivision movement then took the obvious step of abandoning plans for three or more counties in the east end of Las Animas. Two similar bills calling for two counties were passed by the state assembly, but the governor refused to sign them because the population and the economy could not support two counties. Farmers and their wives were the chief protesters, he said, while town developers favored two or more counties. He declined to go counter to "the prayers of the sturdy and industrious poor" and his stand left a single new county the most likely solution, because the Republican legislature probably would not override his veto.⁴⁷

Into these circumstances stepped Senator Casimiro Barela, a Democrat from Las Animas County, proposing a single subdivision. He pushed aside the controversy over names, perhaps to the relief of the Republicans, by giving his unit the name of Baca—after a pioneer Trinidad family, one of whose members, it was said, first settled along Butte Creek. Barela's bill named Springfield as the county seat until changed by law, and when he telegraphed word of the passage of the bill, the jubilant citizens of that town celebrated with a gala dinner, speeches, and music by the Silver Cornet Band.⁴⁸

Actually, Baca was the last of a group of new counties created by the Colorado General Assembly in March and April 1889 that radically



Members of the Baca family posed in front of the Baca House in Trinidad about 1912-1915. Built by merchant John S. Hough in 1869, the two-story, adobe house was sold in 1870 to Don Felipe Baca, a successful sheep rancher. Don Felipe lived there until his death in 1874, and the house was occupied by some member of the family into the 1920s. Now a regional restoration of the Colorado Historical Society, the house was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970.

⁴⁶ Colorado, *Laws Passed at the Seventh Session of the General Assembly, 1889*, pp. 14-15; *House Journal of the General Assembly, Seventh Session*, pp. 105, 107, 108, 109, 172, 248, 870-71; *Senate Journal of the General Assembly, Seventh Session*, pp. 713, 728, 1248, 1249, 1683, 1785-86; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 6 February 1889.

⁴⁷ *Trinidad Daily News*, 1 April 1889.

⁴⁸ *Session Laws, 1889*, p. 26; *House Journal, Seventh Session*, p. 1683; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 2 May 1889; *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 2 April 1889; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 43; Hall, *A History of the State of Colorado*, 4:71; McHendrie, "Boyhood Recollections," p. 98.

revised the organization of southeastern Colorado.⁴⁹ Cheyenne and Otero counties were first (25 March), the former taken from Bent and Elbert, with Cheyenne Wells as the county seat. Then on 11 April three more were approved: Lincoln County, taken from Bent and Elbert, with Hugo as the county seat; Kiowa County, taken from Bent, with Sheridan Lake as the county seat; and Prowers County, taken from Bent, with Lamar as the county seat. The date of the creation of Baca County was 16 April.⁵⁰

The *Trinidad Daily Advertiser* reported that truncated Las Animas County still was a big one—114 miles long (east to west) and 45 to 56 miles wide—while the new Baca County was four times the size of the largest Kansas county. Optimism held sway in Baca with its “eleven thriving towns” and the apparent imminence of a railroad. Cleveland, Troy, Humbar, and Indianapolis were still in Las Animas.⁵¹

However, the realities did not meet the expectations. Legal technicalities in the transfer of authority to officials of the new county were worked out, but vestiges of the county seat disputes remained. For example, a company planned to build a new town six miles northeast of Boston to challenge the official position of Springfield. That did not happen; the real significance of the news story lay in the prediction that some Boston buildings would be moved to that site. One leading citizen had already moved his structures to Springfield and the *Boston Western World* had suspended publication. Boston was dying, but failure to become a county seat was only partly to blame.⁵²

All of Baca County was gravely weakened by the lack of a railroad. The major blow was the failure of the Rock Island to build into Trinidad, instead going into Colorado Springs from a point much farther north on the Kansas-Colorado line. Neither did the Denver, Texas and Fort Worth build across the southeast corner of Colorado; it passed a few miles south of Indianapolis on its way to Emory Gap into New Mexico. This bypass hastened the decline of Indianapolis, and gave a temporary fillip to a new town on the line, Watervale, which for a brief time was replete with a town company and a newspaper called the *Echo*. In January 1889 Indianapolis buildings were being moved south, and in July the Aultman Hotel was dismantled to be reassembled in Trinidad.⁵³ Baca County would not have a railroad

until the twentieth century. Across the state line in New Mexico the railroad tracks strengthened places like Folsom and Clayton.

Bona fide settlers and town speculators alike were victims of a return to the normal semiaridity of southeastern Colorado. In November 1888 Frank Bloom, a leading cattleman, commented on the driest season in twenty-three years. Because of more moisture, the crops looked good the next spring, but searing winds in June destroyed many of them. The weather pattern was spotty—a common occurrence. Rains were good around Carriso Springs, but at Indianapolis a severe water shortage helped to depopulate the place.⁵⁴

The exodus from Baca County was fast and severe. The census of 1890 showed only 90 people living in Springfield, the county seat recently credited with about five hundred, and at Vilas only 43 remained. The total population of the county was 1,479, in notable contrast with an estimated six thousand a couple of years earlier.⁵⁵

There were other factors that contributed to the decline. When a mortgage company sold sixty-six farms in one day in 1890, one observer discounted the influence of the drought, asserting that it was the inexperience and the ignorance of many so-called farmers that made them unable to pay the \$400 to \$500 interest charges. A variation on that theme said that many settlers proved up on their claims, borrowed money on them, and then left. Some of the people who departed, money in hand or not, headed for the great land rush in Oklahoma in the summer of 1889, but the evidence indicates that most of them made more prosaic shifts to places like the new Beaver County in the Neutral Strip and to other locations that have not been traced.⁵⁶

Hardy and optimistic people hung on for a while. In the Springfield area excellent yields of wheat and rye and predictions of corn running twenty to forty bushels per acre raised hopes in September 1890. Also, encouragement was derived from an exhibit in Trinidad of products raised without irrigation in the vicinity of Min-

were: L.B. Wilcox, J.Q. Chase, J.J. Powell, J.J. Seppi, R.L. Winebrenner, S. Curtis, L.S. Long, Robert Curran(?), M.D. Lewis, Peter Torino, H.H. Williams, A.C. Bishop, Albert M. Walty, and W.H. Kinkelman.

⁴⁹ Abbott, *Colorado*, p. 158; Melvin B. Stults, “Baca County,” *The Historical Encyclopedia of Colorado*, ed. Thomas S. Chamblin, 2 vols. (Denver: Colorado Historical Association, 1960), 1:331; *Trinidad Daily News*, 15 July 1889; Glenn Aultman of Trinidad, whose grandparents built the Aultman Hotel at Indianapolis, told the author about the poor water supply.

⁵⁰ Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 47; *Trinidad Daily News*, 9 August 1890; “Census Bulletin, Population of Colorado by Minor Civil Divisions,” pp. 1, 3, in U.S., Department of the Interior, Office of the Census, *Population of the United States by Minor Civil Divisions as Returned at the Eleventh Census, June 1, 1890* (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Printing Office, 1891); *Colorado State Business Directory, 1890* (Denver: James R. Ives, 1890), p. 474.

⁵¹ *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 20 February 1890; articles by Ira E. Myers and Dunn T. Burnett, *Boise City News Historical and Anniversary Edition*, p. 1, sec. B, and p. 4, sec. D.

⁴⁸ Two names, Tioga and Baca, had received House and Senate approval by mid-March. In a conference committee on a bill to establish judicial districts, a recommendation was adopted striking out “and Tioga” and “in the county of Tioga.”—an action that left Baca as the choice (*Senate Journal, Seventh Session*, pp. 1248-49, 1785-86).

⁴⁹ *Session Laws, 1889*, pp. 26, 56, 222, 234, 281, and 294.

⁵⁰ *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 11, 14 April 1889; *Trinidad Daily News*, 11 July, 19 September 1889.

⁵¹ *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 6 June 1889; *Trinidad Daily News*, 17 April, 23 May 1889.

⁵² Las Animas County Deed Record, Book 38, p. 203; *Trinidad Daily Citizen*, 24 January 1889; *Trinidad Daily News*, 18 July 1889. Watervale Townsite Company incorporators, some of whom were from Kansas,

neapolis. In the background, reports persisted into 1891 that the Rock Island Railroad would build from Liberal, Kansas, to Trinidad, Colorado.⁵⁷

Extreme dryness gripped many other locales in the summer of 1890, and heavy snows the following winter delayed spring planting and brought a loss of livestock in some places, although the cattle industry, as a whole, was not seriously affected. In the summer of 1892 many acres of wheat in the Springfield area grown without irrigation were harvested. That island of agricultural success may help to explain the survival of Springfield and Vilas, which appear to have experienced some regrowth in the early 1890s. Yet, in 1893 only three families lived along the twenty-two miles between Boston and Holmes City, where not long before nearly every quarter section had been occupied. By 1894 a general, crippling drought had set in, which collapsed all vestiges of the boom.⁵⁸

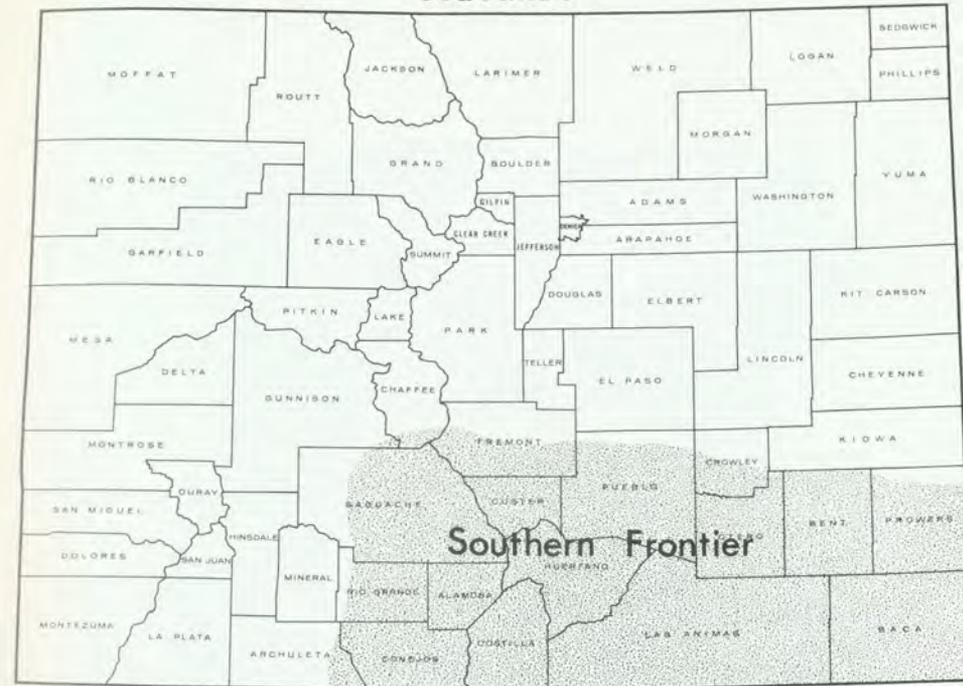
A resurgence did not occur in Baca County until 1909.⁵⁹ Then, improved weather conditions and the construction of a railroad were the foundations of the new cycle, aided by reckless optimism, short memories, and irresponsible speculation. In more than the natural sense, the cycle commenced again.

⁵⁷ *Trinidad Daily Advertiser*, 12 September 1890; *Trinidad Daily News*, 12 September 1890, 3 March 1891.

⁵⁸ *Trinidad Daily News*, 24 February, 3 March, 30 March 1891; *Trinidad Evening Chronicle*, 12 July 1892; Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 49; Stulis, "Baca County," p. 331; Abbott, *Colorado*, p. 158; *Colorado State Business Directory, 1893* (Denver: Ives Publishing Co., 1893), pp. 655, 674.

⁵⁹ Austin, *A History of Early Baca County*, p. 52; Stulis, "Baca County," p. 331.

COLORADO



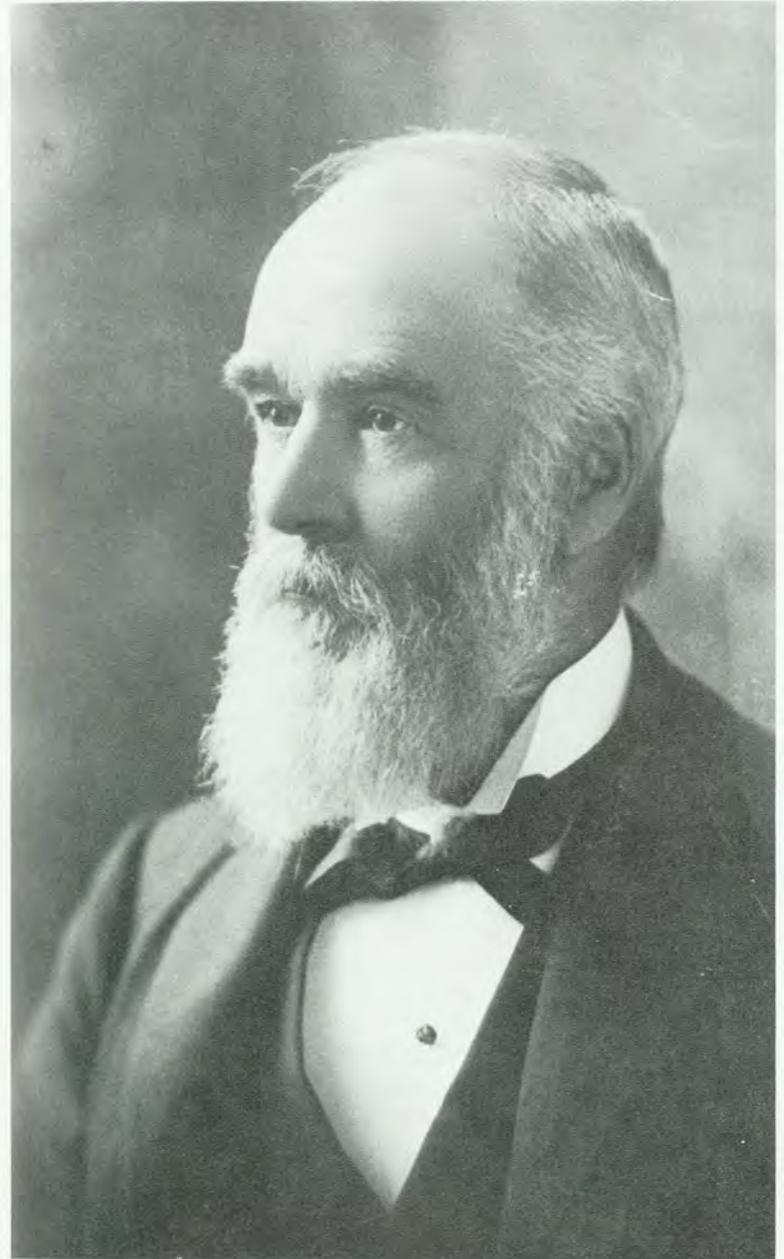
John Lawrence of Saguache

Janet Lecompte of Colorado Springs is the author of Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn: The Upper Arkansas, 1832-1856, published in 1978 by the University of Oklahoma Press. She also contributed some thirty biographies to The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West series, edited by LeRoy R. Hafen, and has had articles published in The Colorado Magazine, the New Mexico Historical Review, and the Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society and other historical journals.

The most important single source for the early social history of the San Luis Valley in Colorado is probably John Lawrence's "Memorandum," a seven-volume diary that he kept from 1867 until his death in 1908. The diary records his life in and near Saguache at the northern end of the San Luis Valley, but it touches on much more than the story of that town. John Lawrence was an exceedingly active politician and farmer who visited all parts of the valley in his buggy and hauled his produce in every direction from Saguache. He was also an inquisitive and often droll chronicler who provided a detailed account of how people lived in the San Luis Valley, what they ate and drank, how men treated women, how people felt about school, sports, racial differences, God, and horses. In this paper a few of the topics covered in the first decade or so of his diary will be discussed—in the hope that it will stimulate interest in making this valuable document more accessible to researchers and even to general readers.

John Lawrence was born on 15 November 1835 in Saint Louis, Missouri, where he was raised in a Catholic orphanage. He ran away to Iowa and from there he came to the gold regions of later Colorado in April 1859. By 1863 he was living in Conejos in the southern part of the San Luis Valley near the New Mexico boundary. Living among Spanish-speaking natives of New Mexico who had first settled at Conejos, Lawrence learned their irrigating methods and their language. Because of his fluency in Spanish he was sent to Denver in the winter of 1866-67 as the interpreter for the Spanish delegates to the Territorial Legislature of Colorado. There he drew up a bill for the establishment of Saguache County, which was approved on 29 December 1866. Lawrence felt this was the height of his accomplishments, and he directed in his will that his gravestone read, "The Founder of Saguache County," which it does.¹

When Lawrence returned from Denver, he and James B. Woodson, a merchant and a stock raiser at Conejos, decided to go into partnership in a ranch on the Saguache River. Lawrence set out from Conejos on 28 February 1867 accompanied by Longino Verte, Juan Manchego, Sylvestre Leroux, José Antonio Morán, and Prudencio García. They brought with them three wagons loaded with wheat, oats, provisions, and tools, and a herd of cattle, tended by the Navajo boys Andrés and Gabriel Woodson. Lawrence also had three appointments to deliver to



John Lawrence

¹ John Lawrence, "Memorandum," diary, Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, under dates of 15 October 1878, 9 January 1901. Hereinafter, dates refer to the Lawrence "Memorandum," unless otherwise specified. When direct quotations were taken from the "Memorandum," the editorial practice was to reproduce Lawrence's words and writing style exactly, preserving the spelling and preventing the excessive use of *sic*.

Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado . . . from 1858 to 1890*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Blakely Printing Co., 1889-95), 4:303-4; "Will of John Lawrence, made January 22nd A.D. 1906," Saguache County (Colo.), Will Records, Book 1, pp. 1-2; gravestone of John Lawrence, Saguache Cemetery.

the new Saguache County commissioners. One was for Prudencio García who accompanied him; another for Nathan Russell, an Irishman who was farming with his hired hands for Fred Walsen and Christian F. Stollsteimer on the present-day site of the town of Saguache; and another for Captain Charles Kerber, a former commandant of Fort Garland who with other ex-soldiers had settled in 1865 on Kerber Creek near present-day Villa Grove, north of Saguache.²

Lawrence and his party arrived on the Saguache River three miles above Russell's ranch on 6 March 1867, and immediately they began measuring off quarter sections of land and sending wagons to the mountains for pine logs to make into cabins. The valley they chose to settle is flat and narrow, a mile wide at its head, five miles wide at its mouth, and twenty-four miles long. Through this valley the Saguache River flows deep and strong until it reaches the site of the town of Saguache. There it separates into streamlets that flow eastward in intermittent strands that finally disappear into the marshes and sands of the central San Luis Valley. Most of the valley of the Saguache River is magnificent farmland—level, fertile, and easily irrigated because the river is only a few feet lower than the fields. As soon as Lawrence and his hands had built their rude log cabins, they broke the sod with three breaking plows heavily shod with iron feet, each drawn by two yoke of oxen. Then they sowed wheat and oats with one ox team, drawing a harrow to cover the seed and another dragging a log to smooth the furrows. They also planted potatoes, peas, beans, corn, pumpkins, and beets this first year, and other vegetables in subsequent years, but wheat and oats were the principal crops for another decade.³ When the earth thawed in April, they began digging the irrigation ditch, which had the largest appropriation of water in the district. Over the years the ditch was improved until it was about four miles long, five feet wide, and two feet deep. By the end of May they had finished planting. They spent the rest of the summer irrigating and weeding, fishing for trout in the teeming Saguache River, and visiting their neighbors on Sunday to make invidious comparisons of the size and the quality of their respective crops.⁴

In September James B. Woodson, his wife, and two children came up from Conejos to live with Lawrence, who was a bachelor. In 1870 they built a fine, large adobe home with wood-framed windows and doors and stone fireplaces. This house is still occupied as the headquar-

ters for the Dameron Cattle Ranch. Like other Saguache valley adobe houses, it probably had adobe floors until 1873 or 1874 when sawmills began to appear in the region. From then on many buildings were of lumber with plank floors.⁵

Woodson arrived on the Saguache in time to help Lawrence with harvest—cutting and binding oats, stacking oats and wheat, and digging potatoes. As yet Lawrence had no reaper; he and his workers used cradle scythes with four, long, curved blades or “fingers.” In November the threshing team visited all of the ranches in the valley and spent twelve days on the Lawrence ranch. The team consisted of three or four men, six horses, and the thresher—a wheeled contraption ten feet high and thirty or forty feet long. It was attached by belts to a horsepower, a circular contrivance on the side of the machine powered by walking horses. About one-half of the time the thresher was “broke down” and under repair, but on its good days the machine threshed out hundreds of bushels of wheat and oats and was a prime factor in the commercial success of Saguache valley farms.⁶

In his first farming season, Lawrence grew more wheat than he needed. In November he loaded up his wagons with the surplus to sell to



Lafayette Head's house and flour mill beside the One Price Store in Conejos.

Lafayette Head of Conejos, who ground it into flour at his mill. In 1868 the commercial possibilities of farming on the Saguache River were greatly enhanced by the construction of roads to other parts of Colorado. Local ranchers were assessed several days of work to assure completion of these roads. In November 1868 Lawrence subscribed seven workdays with nine hired hands to help build the road over Poncha Pass, which divided the San Luis Valley from the Arkansas River valley. In June 1870 Lawrence and his hands helped build an extension of the Poncha Pass road to Cache Creek (Granite). As soon as the road was passable,

² 28 February 1867 to 7 March 1867; Hall, *History of Colorado*, 4:303-4.

³ 7 March 1867 to 27 May 1867; their claims were all in Twp. 44, R. 7 E. Nathan Russell's ranch was the E² NE⁴ and E² SE⁴ Sec. 12; Lawrence's, SW⁴ Sec. 3; Woodson's, NE⁴ and SE⁴ Sec. 4; Juan Manchego's, NW⁴ Sec. 10; Prudencio García's, NW⁴ Sec. 12 (Saguache County Records, Book A).

⁴ 15 April 1867 to 8 September 1867; Hall, *History of Colorado*, 4:305-6; District Court Record Book 2 (Water Book), Saguache County, p. 338.

⁵ (houses) 8 September 1867, 17-30 August 1867, 3-10 September 1867, 2-24 March 1870, 24 May 1870; (sawmills) 27 December 1873, 11 March 1874, 31 October 1874.

⁶ (harvesting) 6 September 1867 to 28 October 1867; (threshing) 7-18 November 1867; (description of thresher) verbal communication of Glenn Coleman to author, Saguache, Colo., 21 August 1978.



The Saguache Flour Mill ground flour for over fifty years.

Lawrence sent 150 dozen eggs and 900 pounds of oats to Cache Creek and 3 wagonloads of wheat to the Chalk Creek Flour Mill near present-day Nathrop. His wagons returned to Saguache with 500 feet of lumber and 2,700 pounds of cornmeal. The Poncha Pass road became the first of many of Otto Mears's toll roads, but John Lawrence's diary shows that Mears did not build the road alone.⁷

The prosperity of the Saguache valley was hampered during those first years by the lack of a good flour mill to grind the surplus of wheat. William Godfroy and Prudencio García each had little Mexican mills that ground grain at a leisurely pace, dependent upon the revolutions of a water wheel that turned the mill stones, which produced a coarse flour. So John Lawrence hauled his wheat to Conejos or Culebra (San Luis) to be ground on American mills, which used fine silk bolting cloths for separating the wheat from the chaff. In August 1873 Preston and Enos Hotchkiss began building an American flour mill on the Saguache River about a mile west of the later town of Saguache, and Lawrence was one of fifteen men who raised the building. The Saguache Mill began grinding flour on the evening of 16 December 1873 and did not stop for fifty years or more.⁸

The farmers of the San Luis Valley were often too poor to buy seed and tools, cattle and sheep. Because their labor and the land they

homesteaded were their only assets, they used them to gain capital. Farming and ranching on shares was nothing new to native New Mexicans. For years before the Americans came they had negotiated *partido* contracts, agreeing to care for their *patrones'* flocks of sheep in return for a percentage of the newborn lambs. Some of them accumulated their own flocks of sheep. In the San Luis Valley, men without capital farmed on shares. John Lawrence helped his "renters" pay their fees and file their claims to 160 acres under the Homestead Act of 1862. He helped them build houses, clear fields, dig ditches, and pay taxes; he gave them seed and sets, which they planted, cultivated, watered, and harvested. In return, Lawrence took a share of their crop. On occasion the landlords themselves would share a crop; in April 1870 Otto Mears provided fifty pounds of American peas for John Lawrence to plant on halves.⁹

Where money was scarce, agreements were not limited to share-cropping. Mrs. Houghland made jelly from Lawrence's berries on halves. George Kinkade set up a blacksmith shop with Lawrence providing the necessary tools, paying one-half of his outstanding debts, furnishing his board and one-half of his stock and coal, and receiving in return one-half of the proceeds of the business. In a particularly complex agreement, Lawrence acquired Gabriel Woodson's land and crop of wheat and oats, except for two fanegas, as well as two cows and a horse worth \$100, in return for paying Gabriel's debts at local stores and his court costs in a suit for assault, and for asking a girl to marry him and contributing \$40 for the wedding if the girl should accept him. Renting equipment was also done on shares: Prudencio García borrowed Lawrence's two big wagons and five yoke of oxen in return for one-half of the proceeds of the posts and poles he obtained with them.¹⁰

Lawrence appears to have given more than he got in some of his agreements with his renters, but if so, his generosity was well repaid in the long run. Preemption and homestead laws were written for farmers in the East where 160 acres were sufficient to support a family. A rancher in the West needed ten times that many acres to keep a herd of cattle. The only way landlords could get land was to help renters file their claims and then buy them out. In June 1869 surveyors mapped Section 4, Township 44, Range 7 east where the Lawrence-Woodson ranch was located. During the next year both landlords and renters filed their claims and received their certificates of preemption. Two years later Lawrence began buying up the claims. In February 1872 he bought Trinidad García's and Juan Manchego's claims on the day their patents

⁷ 21 November 1867, 7 November 1868, 19 December 1868, 2 May 1870, 1 June 1870, 14 June 1870, 5 August 1870.

⁸ Early mills at Saguache) 30 October 1867, 22 June 1869; (mills at Culebra and Conejos) 21 November 1870, 21 November 1867; (Hotchkiss Mill) 8-9 August 1873, 18-19 December 1873. (The Saguache Flour Mill is on the National Register of Historic Places, 18 September 1978.)

⁹ 28 February 1867, 1 March 1867, 7-9 April 1870, 23 March 1871.

¹⁰ 10 September 1886, 27 November 1872, 9 December 1874, 12 December 1876. A fanega is a unit of dry measure equal to 1.58 bushels.

were issued, paying Manchego a mare, two cows, a yearling steer, and sixteen dollars. During the next year Lawrence bought Kinkade's and Gabriel Woodson's lands. By 1876, through buying up his renters' claims, Lawrence had acquired a thousand-acre ranch.¹¹

Some of Lawrence's men were not renters but merely hired hands, paid from twelve to thirty dollars a month with or without board and room. Lawrence seemed to enjoy telling his hands to "go to the Devil" and not without reason, for they habitually showed up for work late or drunk or not at all, and they came and went like stray dogs. A few became landlords in time. Andrés Woodson, the Navajo boy redeemed by Woodson from the Ute tribe at Conejos, was about fifteen when he accompanied Lawrence to Saguache in 1867. He worked on Lawrence's ranch for the next forty years, first as herder, then farmer, then sharecropper, and finally as an independent sheep rancher with a stable family and position, having made a steady rise in a world that was foreign and sometimes hostile toward him.¹² Gabriel Woodson, the other Navajo boy, did not succeed in the white man's world, which Lawrence blamed on his "d—m mean Indian blood." Hot-tempered and easily offended, Gabriel was constantly involved in drunken brawls. Rejected by the girl he wanted to marry, he was finally shot and killed in a bar fight with Robert Morrison in 1873.¹³ Morrison was alternately a day laborer, a sharecropper, and an independent rancher. He had a strange hold on Lawrence who stuck by him through a penitentiary term for killing Gabriel, through continual drunkenness and temper tantrums, and through civic disturbance charges. He was Lawrence's best friend to the end of Lawrence's life and was rewarded in Lawrence's will with five hundred sheep, various Saguache town lots, one-half of Lawrence's horses and vehicles, and his spacious frame house in town.¹⁴

During the first years of establishing a settlement in the valley of the Saguache River, the Ute tribe played a prominent role. They wanted no part of the white man's world; all they asked of the white invaders was enough land to continue their hunting and gathering way of life. Twelve days after Lawrence arrived at the site of his ranch in March 1867, he was visited by a group of hungry Ute. He gave them dinner and an order on Nathan Russell for a fanega of wheat. On their way to get the wheat, the Ute found a cow drowned in the river, and one of them returned to tell Lawrence about it. The owner of the cow, Prudencio García,

stripped the hide and tallow from the carcass and gave the meat to them, and they camped there and feasted on it.¹⁵

John Lawrence had known the Ute people at Conejos, where a Ute Indian Agency had been located since 1861. In 1863 the Tabeguache Ute and Chief Ouray signed a treaty giving up much of their land to the United States in return for goods and livestock, which the government failed to furnish them. By the time they showed up at John Lawrence's ranch in 1867, they were hungry enough to eat dead cow. During the summer of 1867 they camped near Lawrence's house, trading buckskins for food and hanging around until they were invited to dinner. On one occasion they broke a window to steal a loaf of bread. In August Lawrence went to Ouray's camp to complain and shortly afterwards they left the region until the following May.¹⁶

In March 1868 the chiefs of seven bands of Ute made a treaty in Washington, D.C., giving up their claim to all lands except for a reservation comprising roughly the western one-third of Colorado. On this reservation two agencies were to be established providing the Ute with carpenters, farmers, blacksmiths, millers, and teachers; seeds and implements, cows and sheep; and land for them to farm. The United States government would also give them \$60,000 a year for clothing, blankets, and provisions. The Tabeguache Ute chose as the site for their agency land along a branch of Cochetopa Creek called Los Pinos Creek, a broad grassy valley forty-five miles west of Saguache over Cochetopa Pass. The Los Pinos Agency was not ready for the Ute until the summer of 1869. In the meantime they camped on the Saguache River, which made the local ranchers nervous.¹⁷

In the summer of 1868 the Plains Indians stole horses and murdered white people near Colorado Springs and along the Arkansas River, and the men of Saguache feared that the Ute would join their old enemies in a general war. Some of John Lawrence's neighbors fortified up with their families at Godfroy's ranch and appealed to Fort Garland for soldiers, but the Ute had no thought of war and remained docile. Governor A.C. Hunt came to the San Luis Valley in September 1868 and asked the ranchers to let the Ute have wheat and beef now and then, but the Ute were full of suspicion and despair. Chief Ouray told John Lawrence that they were tired of making treaties that the whites did not honor, and that

¹¹ 19 June 1869, 20 February 1872, 1 March 1873; *Saguache* (Colo.) *Chronicle*, 22 July 1876, p. 2.

¹² 9 May 1875, 27 July 1875, 25 March 1889; (Andrés) 28 February 1867, 14 August 1868, 26 July 1807.

¹³ 2 May 1867, 8 November 1869, 30 July 1869, 1 July 1873, 30 November 1873.

¹⁴ 21 November 1870, 8 September 1879, 40 January 1880, 27 November 1886, 9 November 1801, 21 November 1801, 9 November 1807; "Will of John Lawrence."

¹⁵ 19 March 1867.

¹⁶ James Jefferson, Robert W. Delaney, and Gregory C. Thompson, *The Southern Utes: A Tribal History*, ed. Floyd A. O'Neil (Ignacio, Colo.: Southern Ute Tribe, 1972), pp. 21-23; 15 May 1867, 5-7 June 1867, 13 August 1867.

¹⁷ Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 2:990-96; Jefferson et al., *The Southern Utes*, pp. 22-23; 29 November 1868, 12 July 1869, 27 July 1869.



Ranchers would often meet at Andrew Settle's house. Built in 1863, the house was the first in Saguache.

they wanted only goods and money every year, not farms and mills or cattle and sheep.¹⁸

During the winter of 1868-69 the Ute left Saguache to hunt in the Uncompahgre Valley, returning in April with tanned buckskins to trade for flour. Lawrence had the buckskins smoked and made into garments and sacks. The Ute camped near Godfroy's until the end of September when they went to the Los Pinos Agency for their annuity goods. In the spring of 1870 they again camped near Lawrence's ranch and committed petty nuisances, such as shooting down the headgate on Lawrence's ditch. The ranchers were afraid of them and met at Andy Settle's to discuss petitioning the governor for a military post. By July all of the Ute had left for the agency except Ouray, who stayed two weeks longer and came every day to talk and eat dinner with Lawrence.¹⁹

By late summer 1870 all of the Ute were finally settled at the Los Pinos Agency, to the great relief of the white settlers and to the great benefit of the local economy, for the Los Pinos Agency with its 2,500 Ute provided a good market for the surplus foodstuffs of the region. In the spring of 1870 John Lawrence built a road from Saguache to Los Pinos over Cochetopa Pass to accommodate the stream of ox-drawn wagons delivering grain and vegetables and returning with lumber from the agency sawmill. The biggest contractor in the fall of 1870 was Otto Mears who supplied 13,000 pounds of turnips, 18,000 pounds of

¹⁸ Hall, *History of Colorado*, 3:345; Luke Cahill, "Recollections of a Plainsman" (1921), Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, 27 September 1868, 4 October 1868.

¹⁹ 29 April 1869, 28 March 1869, 25 September 1869, 25-26 May 1870, 21 June 1870, 21 July 1870; R.B. Townshend, *A Tenderfoot in Colorado* 1923, new ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 87-104.



W.H. Jackson photographed this scene on the Los Pinos Agency.

potatoes, 20,000 pounds of wheat (at 4-1/2 cents per pound), and 200 sacks of flour (at 7 dollars per sack).²⁰

In the spring of 1871 Lieutenant C.J. Speer relinquished his position as Ute agent at Los Pinos to Jabeze Neversink Trask. The Ute people disliked Trask so much that they left the agency and again camped near Lawrence's ranch, where they traded buckskins and annoyed the local ranchers. In May there was a report that the Tierra Amarilla Ute had gone to war. The Saguache Rifle Company quickly mobilized—sending a man to Fort Garland for more ammunition and two other men to Los Pinos to see how the Ute there were behaving. The Ute were behaving well so the excitement died down. Trask was removed in June 1872, and Charles Adams was named as the new agent. He persuaded Lawrence to interpret for him at a council at the agency between 28 August and 31 August. At this meeting the Ute gave the commissioners a grand reception dressed in peace and war toggery, but no treaty resulted.²¹

In September 1873 the commissioners again met with the Ute at Los Pinos. This time the so-called Brunot Treaty was signed, with the Ute relinquishing their claim to the San Juan region where great numbers of miners had already trespassed on their lands. From the fall of 1873 until the fall of 1874 John Lawrence continued to send flour and vegetables to the agency at Los Pinos. In November 1874 the Ute were moved to a

²⁰ 22 May 1870, 28 August 1870, 18 August 1870, 10-20 October 1870, 10 March 1871, 26 April 1871.

²¹ 2-16 May 1872, 25 August 1872, 2 September 1872; Sidney Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado* (Denver: Carson-Harper Co., 1913), pp. 33-39.

new "Los Pinos" Agency on the Uncompahgre, where Lawrence and Otto Mears continued to deliver oats, potatoes, vegetables, and horses through 1875 and 1876. In 1878 the agency was moved to a narrow rectangular reserve running 110 miles long and 15 miles wide along the southwestern boundary of Colorado, where Lawrence delivered two consignments of flour, the last contracts he had with the Ute agency.²²

The town of Saguache was organized after the Brunot Treaty of 1873 opened the Ute lands in the San Juan country to white miners, creating infinite commercial possibilities for the Saguache valley. Several previous attempts at town building had failed. As early as June 1867, John Lawrence and others were talking about a town site at Nathan Russell's ranch where the post office was located in July 1867. In 1869 Lawrence and William Godfroy staked out its boundaries, but a prospective meeting of the town company was never held. In the summer of 1872 Woodson and Lawrence laid off a plaza and some streets at their ranch, giving away lots to some of their hired hands and to Bishop Machebeuf and his three priests for a church. The town never materialized.²³

In August 1873 Absalom Pumphrey located a town he called Milton about a mile south of present-day Saguache. Pumphrey proposed that Milton be named the county seat, and it was so approved at a meeting at Otto Mears's house in August. John Lawrence fought this decision, for he had already persuaded Enos and Preston Hotchkiss and Prudencio García to give land for a town site at the new Hotchkiss Mill, one mile west of Russell's. All through November 1873, Lawrence visited friends and neighbors and settlers as far away as La Loma (present-day Del Norte), promoting his "Saguache City" as county seat. At an election on 1 December "Saguache City" won over Milton by six votes.²⁴

The December election was neither countywide nor decisive. Nevertheless, John Lawrence went to Denver and filed Articles of Incorporation for Saguache City on 20 February 1874, which described the town not at the Hotchkiss Mill but at its present-day site. In March Lawrence went to La Loma to request that a surveyor run lines for the town on land donated by Otto Mears, Nathan Russell, A.W. Settle, Robert H. Jones, Enos and Preston Hotchkiss, and Prudencio García. Then Lawrence sent the survey papers to the Pueblo Land Office—and the town of Saguache was officially born. By the summer of 1874 it had twenty buildings, one-half adobe, one-half frame and log.²⁵



In 1874 one-half of the buildings in Saguache were frame, one-half were adobe—as the church in the center.

On 8 September 1874 Saguache City won the election for the county seat. Immediately the county commissioners and justices of the peace established their offices and courts. By the following summer Saguache City had a post office and a courthouse, Otto Mears's general merchandise store, Sam Houghland's Livery Stable, Royster's Wagon Repair Shop, Jones's Blacksmith Shop, Andy Slane's Butcher Shop, and R.G. Gibbs's Bon Ton Saloon. In 1876 Saguache had four hundred residents; Barlow and Sanderson's four-horse Concord coaches made tri-weekly runs to Lake City, Canon City, and Del Norte; and the weekly *Saguache Chronicle* proclaimed the superiority of Saguache to Del Norte as a departure point for the mines.²⁶

As soon as Saguache City was incorporated in February 1874, Enos Hotchkiss was given a contract to build a new toll road to the San Juan mines—to be known as the Saguache and San Juan Toll Road. While building the road, Hotchkiss discovered the Hotchkiss Lode and other deposits at the present-day site of Lake City, which resulted in the founding of the town. In the meantime John Lawrence continued to improve the 1870 road over the Continental Divide at Cochetopa Pass on a route south of the Saguache and San Juan Toll Road. In June 1875 Lawrence incorporated his road as the "Lawrence Toll Road" and began collecting a toll, which was officially set in 1877 as: each wagon drawn by one yoke or span of animals, \$1.00; each extra span or yoke, \$.25; one wagon drawn by one animal, \$.75; trail wagon, \$.50; saddle

²² 3 September 1873, 1 October 1873, 24 December 1873, 3 October 1874, 9 November 1874, 7 November 1875, 23 May 1876, 25 June 1876, 27 June 1876, 5-8 April 1878, 16 June 1878; Jefferson et al., *The Southern Utes*, p. 31.

²³ 20 June 1867, 2-3 January 1869, 16 February 1869, 10 June 1872, 21 July 1872.

²⁴ 6-7 August 1873, 16 August 1873, 29 November 1873, 1 December 1873.

²⁵ 2 January 1874 to 6 March 1874, 19-28 March 1874, 21 April 1874; *Saguache Chronicle*, 8 July 1876, p. 2; LeRoy R. Hafén and Ann W. Hafén, eds., *The Diaries of William Henry Jackson: Frontier Photographer*

... 1874, *Far West and the Rockies Historical Series*, 1820-1875, 15 vols. (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1959), 10:284.

²⁶ 30 January 1875, 2 April 1875, 10 July 1875, 15 October 1875, 25 October 1875; *Saguache Chronicle*, 15 April 1876, p. 3, 4 November 1876, p. 2.

animal, \$.35; pack animal, \$.10; loose horses, mules or cattle, \$.05; sheep or goats, \$.02.²⁷

In the summer of 1875 Lawrence started a cattle ranch at his toll house thirty-two miles west of Saguache, where he built a frame house for his agent Dick Mooney. Mooney collected toll, sold whiskey and tobacco to travelers, and herded cattle. In January 1877 Lawrence sold the ranch to Franklin A. Burnham and Isaac K. Cleaver and started another ranch at the head of the Saguache River valley, twenty-four miles from Saguache. He hired George Munshower to collect toll there and Manuel Martin to herd about one hundred fifty head of cattle and one hundred sixty-six head of sheep, the cattle on fifths, the sheep on halves.²⁸

Lawrence's toll road opened up the valley of the Saguache River to settlement and by 1876 most of the valley had been claimed. James Fullerton had the ranch just west of Lawrence's where he grew wheat. Above Fullerton was Sam Houghland who kept horses and cattle and ran a fine stage stop in a two-story building of huge timbers, which still stands, although in ruins. Above Houghland was Rock Cliff, a settlement of retired British merchant mariners—Captain G.V. Gideon, Major Monk, Lieutenant Heming, and Messrs. Henderson and Hodging. These gentlemen combined to buy two thousand acres of bottom land fifteen miles west of Saguache. There they built fine log houses and engaged in farming and stock raising with about twelve hundred head of cattle and a hundred head of horses. Jointly they ran a large dairy with a stone floor and a trough of fresh spring water running through it to cool their milk and butter. The next ranch was Lawrence's cattle ranch run by Munshower. At the very head of the valley was a two-hundred-acre stock ranch of Slane and Hawkins, whose cattle ranged twenty miles west to the head of Cochetopa Pass and as many miles north and south.²⁹

An increase in stock raising near Saguache required an increase in the supply of hay, which became a commercial crop of great importance to John Lawrence from 1876 on. In the summer of 1876 he hired a team of five men to bale fourteen and one-half tons of hay, some of which went to Lake City, afterwards a steady market for Lawrence's hay. A heavy snowfall in the winter of 1876-77 started winter feeding of animals in the Saguache area and established hay as the principal crop, as it

still is today. In 1878 Leadville was booming; four of Lawrence's ox-drawn wagons hauled hay to Leadville that year and from that time on.³⁰

Ox-drawn wagons had powerful competition in the late 1870s and 1880s from the railroad, which began to invade the San Luis Valley like an exuberant weed, sending rails over rivers and up mountainsides to reach every little hamlet. Lawrence's diary says very little about railroads to Saguache, and indeed there was very little to say. In 1867 Major Lafayette Head and Major Calhoun went over Poncha Pass to Canon City looking for a route for "the Southern Railroad," but this effort was premature. In 1876 the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad sent out its president and chief surveyor to consider a route through Saguache to Lake City, but nothing more was heard of this project. In 1877 an independent railroad was organized to run up the Arkansas River through the Grand Canyon (Royal Gorge) and Pleasant Valley to Saguache—but this also fell through. The next year the Denver and Rio Grande railroad was supposed to run a line from Garland City near Fort Garland through Saguache to the Gunnison with a branch to Ouray. Again, this was mere rumor. Saguache and San Luis de Culebra were the only towns ignored by the railroads. They remained rooted in the nineteenth century and in the predominant culture of their beginnings, Saguache as "American" as rural Kansas; San Luis as "Spanish" as rural New Mexico.³¹

If Saguache failed to gain the political clout necessary for "progress," it was not through lack of trying, especially on the part of its most politically minded citizen, John Lawrence. At the first county election on 13 August 1867, he was elected representative to the territorial council, forerunner of the state legislature, and he spent from November 1867 to March 1868 in Denver. During the 1870s he went to Denver on other political errands, as a delegate to the Democratic convention in July 1870 and as interpreter to the territorial council in January 1874, which was, he wrote in his diary, as pleasant a time as he ever spent in his life.³²

As much as he loved the political scene in Denver, Saguache County was where he operated most successfully. At the first meeting of the county commissioners on 18 June 1867, he was appointed county assessor, a position he held until the fall of 1870. He made his assessments as he went on business or pleasure trips to Hot Springs and San Luis Creek in the eastern part of the county or as he went down to Russell's for his

²⁷ *Saguache Chronicle*, 29 July 1876, p. 2, 14 July 1877, p. 2; 22 May 1870, 23 May 1874; Saguache County Records, Book 45, p. 135.

²⁸ 12-13 July 1875, 24 August 1875, 31 August 1875, 3 September 1875, 27 July 1876, 12, 13 January 1877; *Saguache Chronicle*, 3 February 1877, p. 4.

²⁹ *Saguache Chronicle*, 16 September 1876, 6 January 1877, 22 July 1876.

³⁰ 21 March 1876, 24 May 1876, 22 July 1877; *Saguache Chronicle*, 3 February 1877, 29 July 1878, 17 August 1878, 9, 26 October 1878, 23-24 October 1879, 23-24 May 1879.

³¹ 1 September 1867; *Saguache Chronicle*, 9 September 1876, 20 January 1877, 23 March 1878.

³² 13 August 1867, 21 November 1867 to 18 March 1868, 18 June 1870, 6 July 1870, 24 January 1874.

mail. In 1870 his diary notes that the county had 118 taxpayers owning \$134,144 in taxable property on which they were assessed a total of \$1,901.94, including poll and militia taxes.³³

Political battles were the cause of the utmost local excitement, and John Lawrence was active in them, registering voters, preparing notices, canvassing votes, serving as a delegate to conventions, and electioneering for himself or for other Democratic candidates. When William Godfroy called for a Republican convention, he let it be understood that he "wanted no lukewarm Republicans." And no lukewarm politicians could have endured the rigors of campaigning in the far-flung settlements of Saguache County. A candidate got on his horse or in his buggy and visited every ranch in his county and beyond it. Charles L. Hall, candidate for territorial representative, came all the way from his salt works in South Park to persuade the voters of Saguache that he was no stranger to their interests. Lawrence and Otto Mears spent two days on Carnero Creek and La Garita Creek electioneering for Jerome Chaffee, at the same time that four of their friends were visiting the same sources of votes on behalf of Chaffee's rival, A.C. Hunt.³⁴ Despite the regular and predictable defeat of his Democratic party, Lawrence held many political offices and appointments, including county school superintendent (1872-74), road overseer (1875), county judge (1881-82), county assessor (1880-84), state representative (1899-1901, 1907-8), and mayor of Saguache (1900-1902).³⁵

A most difficult institution to start at Saguache was the public school. In December 1869 James B. Woodson decided it was time to send his nine-year-old daughter Lala to school. John Lawrence, then county assessor, drew up the necessary papers and laid off school districts for Patterson, superintendent of schools. A few days later there was a school meeting at Andy Settle's, but it was decided that there were too few students to warrant hiring a teacher and a hall.³⁶

Two years later they tried again. Lawrence, Woodson, and Jim Fullerton met with others at Lawrence's ranch and elected themselves to a school board for District Number One, which included the upper Saguache valley and the later site of Saguache. They listed all of the names of persons in the district between the ages of five and twenty-one and hired James A. Hadley as teacher to board with Lawrence and Woodson. Hadley and Woodson made a blackboard and fixed up a schoolhouse, and on 2 January 1872 school opened in District Number

One with six pupils. Although attendance was poor, James Hadley finished the term on 29 March and was paid his salary of \$150.³⁷

John Lawrence became county superintendent of schools in October 1872 with \$744 to fund all of the districts in the county. He hired Charles W. Darst to teach in District Number One, but school appears not to have opened that year, for Woodson sent Lala to board from December to March at John Proffitt's ranch, south of present-day Saguache, while she attended school in the lower district. In December 1873 school opened in District Number One and was conducted until March when the teacher and the children gave a well-attended exhibition in the Temperance Lodge. The next year Lawrence hired Roger Glass to teach, but parents were dissatisfied with him and on 3 February 1875, Glass dismissed school for lack of students. In the lower district Woodson and his wife succeeded in extending school for a month after dismissal in March by getting subscriptions from parents, but on 22 March when Woodson and Lala arrived at John Proffitt's, they found that the teacher had dismissed school because the children were sick and not attending.³⁸

In March 1876 Woodson went up the Saguache River to see people about starting a school near his ranch, but nobody was interested. Nevertheless, Lawrence held a school meeting, compiled lists of children, and hired a teacher who conducted classes in Jim Fullerton's house for eighteen days in November and then quit. The next year Lawrence brought down the benches from Fullerton's and installed them in Santana's house, but when school opened in November, no one attended. That next summer very few parents came to the school meeting, but Lawrence persevered and moved benches into a building at his ranch to be used as a schoolhouse. If school opened there, no mention of it appears in Lawrence's diary.³⁹

For the winter term of 1876-77, 339 students were enrolled in Saguache County, about one-half of the children in the county. That term 19 boys and 12 girls attended school in the Saguache Courthouse, using homemade desks and seats and an old set of outline maps. Under Mrs. W.W. Nye they studied spelling and reading from the *McGuffey Readers*, and from a variety of other textbooks they learned geography, history, mental and written arithmetic, penmanship, and physiology. Mrs. Nye complained of the multiplicity of textbooks, the paucity of students, the lack of interest of parents, and particularly the discomfort of the courthouse. The school board suggested buying the Methodist

³³ 18 June 1867, 28 June 1868, 2 June 1869, 9 September 1870.

³⁴ 13 September 1871, 4 October 1876, 3 October 1877, 4-5 October 1878, 21 August 1870, 8 September 1871, 3-6 September 1874.

³⁵ "Memorandum"; *San Luis Valley Historian*, III, no. 1, 1978, pp. 10-11.

³⁶ 6 December 1869, 14 December 1869. Lala's name was really Bernarda and her tombstone in the Saguache Cemetery gives her date of birth.

³⁷ 14 November 1871, 28 December 1871, 2 January 1872, 10-11, 16 February 1872, 29 March 1872.

³⁸ 8 October 1872, 9 April 1873, 17 November 1872, 19 March 1875, 19 March 1874, 22 November 1874, 29 November 1874, 14 January 1875, 3 February 1875, 19, 22 March 1875.

³⁹ 20 March 1876, 8 June 1876, 17 August 1876, 9 October 1876, 30 November 1876, 2, 5 November 1877, 6 May 1878, 6 December 1878.

church at Milton, moving it to Saguache and renovating it as a schoolhouse, but the voters rejected the proposal in 1878. In spite of all the difficulties, schools were finally established. In the winter of 1877-78, 50 children attended school in Saguache and 30 at lower Saguache.⁴⁰

In addition to politics, railroads, and education, the Lawrence diary recorded the growth of law and order in the county. Early justice at Saguache was a mixture of the Spanish and the American traditions. The first semblance of justice at Saguache was an alcalde court, which functioned without a courtroom, clerk, jurors, or jails. The alcalde was a justice of the peace, untrained in law but a man of recognized wisdom before whom adversaries could appear with their advocates (*hombres buenos*) and receive a decision that was without right of appeal. The first alcalde of Saguache was José Antonio Morán whose duties as justice were very light. He found time to farm on shares for John Lawrence, who described him as "one of the best hands I ever had to work for me."⁴¹

Alcalde justice was not speedy enough nor severe enough for the Americans, who took matters into their own hands. When E.R. Harris and Serafino Pino killed Pete Evertt in 1870, the killers were taken to Justice Morán's house. The justice postponed the examination and the prisoners spent the night at E.R. Harris's house, from which Serafino Pino escaped. To make sure that the other murderer would not escape, John Lawrence procured from Harris a chattel mortgage on all that he owned, to be foreclosed if Harris left the San Luis Valley, which proved to be an effective deterrent. In another case Donaciano Sánchez was accused of stealing two horses. The horses were recovered and Sánchez was kept in chains and guarded at Lawrence's house. In January 1871 he was tried at Otto Mears's store and committed to appear at the next term of district court six months hence. After the trial Sheriff James Fullerton took Sánchez to his ranch, and that night he was removed "by persons unknown" as the inquest stated, and hung from a tree by the river.⁴²

John Lawrence was often involved in the early legal cases of Saguache, making out papers and helping Justice Morán run his primitive little court. In February 1871 Isaac Gotthelf sued William J. Godfroy, and Lawrence served as Gotthelf's advocate, "the first time in my life I ever took an active part in a lawsuit." Gotthelf was granted a judgment of \$923.90 and Godfroy's property was attached. Godfroy left his wife and home at Saguache and never returned to the region.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Saguache Chronicle*, 2 December, 5 August 1876, 16 February 1878, 1 December 1877.

⁴¹ 2 April 1867, 13 August 1867, 21 August 1867, 6-7 September 1868.

⁴² 28 February 1870 to 5 March 1870, 25 January 1870, 9-24 January 1871.

⁴³ 11-13 February 1871, 6 March 1871, 13-17 July 1872.



George W. Hazard delivers freight to Isaac Gotthelf's general store in Saguache about 1880.

In 1872 Judges Hallett and Bradford came to Saguache to hold a two-day session of district court. In an interview Judge Hallett later described his visit. "Statutes requested him to hold a term of court at the county seat of Saguache Co. . . ., but when he arrived here he found no town, no county buildings and even the people could not tell him where the county seat was. He finally found that there was a plat of a town called Saguache filed in the county clerk's office but not recorded. . . . Finding upon an examination of the plat that Mr. Nathan Russell's house was within its limits he concluded that he would be justified in holding his court there."⁴⁴

The next year district court was again held at Russell's with a large number of curious people attending and with Lawrence serving on the jury. Between sessions of the district court, the alcalde court was likely to be used, especially in actions brought by Hispanos. Three arbitrators were chosen to decide the case, one each by the plaintiff and the defendant, and a third was chosen by the other two arbitrators. Lawrence served often as court interpreter, arbitrator, and attorney, for there were no trained lawyers in Saguache.⁴⁵

Like most frontiersmen, John Lawrence could adapt his talents to whatever was needed, whether as an amateur attorney or as an amateur physician. When thirteen-year-old Lala Woodson fell ill, Dr. Heimberger came two or three times a day and often spent the night, but he was never able to diagnose her illness nor ease her suffering. Lawrence

⁴⁴ *Saguache Chronicle*, 14 October 1876.

⁴⁵ 3 August 1873, 31 January 1873, 15 August 1873, 20 October 1873, 23 September 1874, 7 July 1879, 11 August 1879.

decided she had a severe infection in her ear. He cleaned out the ear and gave the child a stimulant, resulting in her prompt if temporary improvement, and the doctor told Lawrence to continue the treatment. Sam Houghland who kept the stage station some twelve miles above Lawrence's brought his whole family to sit up with the sick girl and help the Woodsons care for her. Every day people thronged her bedchamber—Spanish neighbors, Anglo townspeople. Mrs. Laughlin was a faithful attendant, a woman with gentle hands who was often called to the bedside of the sick and the dying. When the child died after a two-week illness, Mrs. Laughlin and Mrs. Church laid out the body while Mr. Church made the coffin. A large number of folk came to sit up all night with the corpse. Fortunately, the weather was cool and the body did not decompose rapidly, as did the body of poor old Mrs. Mayol whose burial had to precede her funeral. Lala's burial waited on the arrival of her grandparents from San Luis. Then the coffin, gaily trimmed, was carried on a wagon to the new cemetery on Andy Settle's ranch at the southeast edge of town. At the grave the Reverend Mr. McMains said a prayer, the coffin was lowered into the hole, and the mourners dispersed. John Lawrence then took Mrs. Laughlin home, comforted in the knowledge that his and the Woodsons' grief was widely and deeply shared.⁴⁶

In July 1879 James B. Woodson became ill with erysipelas. Again Dr. Heimberger paid daily and overnight visits, Mrs. Laughlin was sent for, and the neighbors rallied around. Woodson was in great pain and his face was swollen and hideous, but still people came in droves to sit by his bedside. The doctor lanced his face near the eye that was swollen shut, and his family kept warm linseed poultices on his face. After a month, he began to get out of bed and dress himself. One day he walked out, had a pleasant word with all the hands gathered for dinner, then went to Lawrence's room and shot himself through the left eyebrow with a double-barreled shotgun. For several days afterward Dr. Heimberger spent hours taking gunpowder out of Woodson's face, as great numbers of people sat around visiting with the patient. Two weeks later he was well.⁴⁷

In February 1878 smallpox appeared among the Spanish families near Lawrence's ranch. Three of Salvador García's children contracted it and two of them died. A houseguest of the Woodsons' named Ines came down with it. They moved her into Woodson's room and cared for her until she was out of danger, eight days later. Smallpox continued to rage in the Saguache valley as Dr. Heimberger and John Lawrence vis-



The first Catholic church in Saguache was made of adobe and ministered to the needs of the Catholic and the non-Catholic residents.

ited each house and vaccinated children, instructing families stricken by the disease to disinfect their houses.⁴⁸

The sick and the dying were afforded no spiritual comfort until the appearance of Bishop Joseph P. Machebeuf on 1 October 1868, a year and one-half after Lawrence's arrival on the Saguache River. From that time on priests came at long intervals: Padre Lucy José Merles in 1869, Machebeuf and Father Roli in 1870, Father Roli on three occasions in 1871 and Father Reverdy from Denver that same year, and Father Salvador twice in 1872. The priests held Mass usually at José Antonio Morán's house until an adobe church was built on Francisco Chávez's ranch in December 1876, near a little Spanish graveyard still in use. Protestants were invited to attend, but they were sometimes offended by the sermons. In August 1870 they protested Bishop Machebeuf's sermon on the infallibility of the Pope, and two years later Father Salvador came to apologize to Woodson for "the way he preached in the spring about the Americans." Lawrence also complained about the priest who went about confessing non-Catholics, like the Navajo Gabriel Woodson, and the priest who would not marry Manuel Sisneros during Lent unless he paid thirty dollars.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ 9-26 April 1875, 29 March 1874.

⁴⁷ 12 July 1879 to 12 September 1879.

⁴⁸ 6 February 1878 to 10 March 1878.

⁴⁹ 1 October 1868, 9 July 1869, 13-18 August 1870, 25 January 1871, 20 March 1871, 3-4 September 1871, 10 October 1871, 15-16 February 1872, 20-21 July 1872, 11 November 1872, 13 March 1876, 6 December 1876, 13-18 August 1870, 11 November 1872, 2 April 1873.

John Lawrence described himself as an "infidel" in his will, but he was very curious about the religious activity in his community. In July 1868 he was told that there was "preaching" at Mr. Ashley's house that night, and he went down to hear it. In 1869 Lawrence's diary notes that the Reverend Mr. Dyer and the Reverend Mr. Murry were preaching at Andy Settle's, and in 1870 Lawrence and Jim Fullerton went to hear Mr. Smith of Fairplay preach at Mr. Ashley's. In February 1877 Saguache had a Baptist revival and Lawrence went to see the baptisms in a hole cut out of the ice on W.D. Spencer's ranch.⁵⁰

Lawrence also watched the ceremonies of Los Hermanos Penitentes at Easter. His diary notes that the *velorio* ("wake") was held at Francisco Chaves's on two successive nights and that Moreno went to Carnero ("think he is a penitente and went to whip himself"). The Penitentes at Saguache did not hide their Good Friday activities. Lawrence wrote in 1877 that there were a lot of them up at Antonio Pacheco's whipping themselves; in 1878 he wrote that no work was done because all the Mexican hands were up at Prudencio Garcia's either as Penitentes or as observers. "We all went up in the afternoon to see them, they dragged their crosses around som, and whiped themselves."⁵¹

Saints' days were celebrated in the early days of Saguache by both the Spanish and the Anglos. Where there were no priests or churches, these holy days lost their religious significance and became as light-hearted as Halloween. The favorite saints' day was San Juan's, on 24 June, when all work ceased and everyone joined in a day-and-night-long festival of "running the rooster" (cock-pull), horse races, foot races, and, at night, fandangos. Other saints' days celebrated were Día del Santísima Cruz (3 May), Día Santiago (25 July), Día San Antonio (13 June), Día de Guadalupe (13 December), and Día San Lorenzo (10 August). Many of these were name days, honoring those bearing a saint's name. On San Juan's (Saint John's) Day, Lawrence was frequently awakened at daybreak by serenaders under his window, whereupon he would get up and give them some whiskey and send them reeling off into the morning.⁵²

One by one the saints' days went unobserved, probably because of pressure from the American ranchers whose hands celebrated not only the day itself but failed to show up for work the next day as well. By the late 1870s Días de San Antonio, San Lorenzo, Santísima Cruz, and Guadalupe had died, but the midsummer revel on San Juan's Day con-

tinued until John Lawrence recorded in his diary in 1897 that the Spanish had finally abandoned it.⁵³

For the first years, the ranchers of Saguache were so busy building houses, planting fields, and making roads that the only recreation was visiting neighbors on Sunday. Later the men played ball or cards (poker, casino, or pitch) or went fishing or duck hunting. Occasionally there were jumping and running contests or games of shinny. After the town of Saguache was established, recreation changed. Now John Lawrence's favorite pastime was billiards played at George Gibbs's Bon Ton Saloon once or twice a week, accompanied by whiskey and lasting sometimes until dawn. Or there was gambling. Lawrence would throw dice for peaches or socks; he would bet ten dollars and a steer calf on a foot race; he would play freeze-out for a watch and a pistol; or he would bet on horse races. At first horse racing was only one event in a program of athletic contests on San Juan's Day or the Fourth of July. Then Joe Coberly built a track at Saguache and Absalom Pumphrey built another at Milton, both straight-away race tracks for only two horses at a time. From then on, horse racing was a frequent event.⁵⁴

In October 1878 Lawrence first made the acquaintance of Red Buck, Pumphrey's horse which ran a race at Milton and won by thirty feet. Lawrence bought a third interest in the horse for \$275 and went south with jockey Johnny O'Neil to find races for him. They went to New Mexico where at La Joya they won an 800-yard race, but at Santa Fe, Red Buck flew the track. Two weeks later on the same track, Red Buck won. Lawrence found other races for Red Buck at Fort Garland, Gunnison, and Buena Vista, but the most famous race was Red Buck's last, against Little Casino in August 1880 on Pumphrey's track at Milton. Lawrence wrote in his diary the day of the race: "Last night the betting was high on both horses, and several thousand dollars were bet, at 1 o'clock we went to the track and the first race was Pumphrey's colt against the Casino men's pony, the pony won, then the main race come off, and Casino won, everything went off nice, and the day was cloudy but warm, but I nor no one else believes but what Buck was thrown."⁵⁵ In 1951 Mrs. Maude Lockett, a Saguache lady of eighty years, gave a better account of the Red Buck story.

(John) Oneil [sic] was the jockey of Red Buck, a famous Colorado horse, which at one time was believed to be the fastest animal in the country. When Red Buck's fame was at its height, he was matched

⁵⁰ 7 July 1868, 4 October 1868, 8 August 1869, 28 August 1870, 11 February 1877; see John L. Dyer, *The Snow Shoe Itinerant: An Autobiography* . . . Methodist Episcopal Church (Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe, 1890), pp. 205-6, for a description of this "preaching," which Dyer erroneously dates 1866.

⁵¹ 30 March 1877, 19 April 1878.

⁵² 24 June 1867, 24 June 1869, 3 May 1870, 25 July 1870, 13 June 1871, 24 June 1871, 24 June 1874, 10 August 1874, 25 July 1875, 24 June 1876, 25 July 1876, 24 June 1877, 24 June 1879.

⁵³ 24 June 1897.

⁵⁴ (visiting) 20 September 1868; (ball) 10 January 1869; (cards) 14, 16 February 1869; (hunting) 4 April 1869; (races) 22 December 1872; (shinny) 28 April 1872; (billiards) 16, 24 November 1873; (gambling) 11-12 March 1871, 26 July 1872, 28 September 1873, 5 November 1873; (horseracing) 22 December 1872, 4 July 1874, 24 December 1874, 19 February 1875.

⁵⁵ 15-17 October 1878, 8 December 1878, 21 August 1880.

against Little Casino, a mare owned by Dave Day, and his associates of Butler, Mo. The race was run here on a straight way track and attracted thousands of persons. Little Casino won by a neck and, as a result of heavy backing given Red Buck by its citizens, this district experienced financial difficulties for many months. Red Buck was doped and two or three men made their stakes right there. A dirty trick. Red Buck was no good after that.⁵⁶

Horse races were attended by women, even Catholic sisters. At a well-promoted race at Milton in October 1878, a group of sisters of the order of Saint Joseph had come to beg money from the crowd for a school and charity in Central City, and they managed to collect about two hundred dollars. In general, the women in Lawrence's diary were of small importance to him. Their essential activities were limited to housekeeping, visiting, berry-picking, and dancing at fandangos. A fandango was a dance party to which everyone was invited to dance to the music of fiddles, guitars, drums, or whatever other music the community afforded. Sometimes fandangos honored special occasions, such as weddings or saints' days or special guests, as when Godfroy gave one for the Fort Garland officers and the Ute treaty commissioners.⁵⁷

John Lawrence makes a distinction between a fandango and a dance, the former attended primarily by Spanish folk, the latter by Anglos. At dances there was often a charge for admittance and supper furnished. There was no charge at a fandango, for the host, or "getter-upper" as Lawrence called him, made a little profit selling refreshments. In New Mexico the refreshments were likely to be candy and wine; in Saguache the refreshment was whiskey.⁵⁸

By the mid-1870s, Lawrence's diary shows that whiskey was playing an expanding and debilitating part in the lives of the Saguache people. An early hint that all was not well with either fandangos or dances was the 1873 Temperance Society Christmas party, a well-attended dinner and dance at Al Church's house where everything went off pleasantly without a drop of liquor, to Lawrence's apparent surprise. Then the women of the community began boycotting the drinking parties. A few months after the Temperance Society party, Bob Morrison gave a dance to which few women came. After Woodson and Lawrence allowed their hands to fix up a room on the ranch for a dance hall, the two proprietors attended the dance with their hands, but Mrs. Woodson refused to go and was furious at the men for attending. Women were scarce at later fandangos at the dance hall, and John Evertt's Spanish wife came to Lawrence in great distress about her husband's drinking.

⁵⁶ Maude Lockett, "Early Days of Saguache," 1951, pp. 12-13, Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

⁵⁷ 15 October 1878, 25 July 1870, 14 April 1869, 24 July 1869, 15 February 1873, 16 July 1874.

⁵⁸ 27 November 1868, 23 April 1870, 24 July 1875, 7 July 1874, 1 October 1873, 21 February 1873.



Left to right in the back row are John Lawrence and Bob Morrison; front row are Myrtle Phillips, James Woodson, and Juliana Vigil Woodson, who later married Lawrence after Woodson's death.

During the summer of 1877, Lawrence's diary began to single out dances and fandangos that did not become drunken brawls. The story is told of three Saguache women who appeared at Otto Mears's store with hatchets and hacked holes in barrels of whiskey standing on the porch. Mears billed their husbands for the whiskey and the affair was overlooked, if not forgotten. Through the 1880s and 1890s members of the Woodson-Lawrence household had increasingly severe drinking problems, which Lawrence unabashedly describes in his diary.⁵⁹

In its early years the town of Saguache had very little interest for John Lawrence except for its merchandise stores, courts, and billiard tables. More can be learned about the town from the weekly newspaper, the *Saguache Chronicle*, than from Lawrence's diary. The *Chronicle*

⁵⁹ 25 December 1873, 4 April 1874, 26 July 1876, 30 December 1876, 7 January 1877, 9 January 1877, 20 May 1877, 4 July 1878; "Saguache—The Blue Land," undated typescript, no author, Adams State College Library, Alamosa, Colo.

describes dinner parties with piano music in the parlor afterwards, a dramatic troupe, a Masonic Ball with women dressed in "exquisite taste," a baseball club called "the Alkali Treaders," ladies and gentlemen playing croquet in January, Odd Fellows in full regalia marching to the courthouse, Fourth of July picnics with toasts, dancing, and fireworks, and the Saguache Lyceum, a literary club where it was "resolved, that the right of suffrage should be extended to women" (but, of course, there were no women present).⁶⁰

Saguache in the 1870s was a prosperous, snobbish, middle-class country town savoring its "progress." William Byers of the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* visited Saguache in 1877 and described it as a lively village of three hundred people "with considerable Mexican style and plenty of American enterprise." Byers was in error, as the *Chronicle* was quick to point out—there was no "Mexican style" in the town. To another journalist from the *Saint Louis Republican* who wrote that most of Saguache's population was Mexican, the *Saguache Chronicle* responded that "it is well known that not a single Mexican family reside within the corporation of Saguache, and out of the 597 tax payers in Saguache County, only 101 of the number are Mexicans, mostly industrious citizens, and the dirtiest Greaser of them all, is a far worthier and more truthful man, than the correspondent of the *St. Louis Republican*."⁶¹

Three miles west of town on John Lawrence's ranch, there was no "progress" and no dinner parties but plenty of "Mexican style" in the 1870s. Even here, though, the frontier was dying. The accommodation to foreign cultures that had added so much flavor and tolerance to the lives of the Ute, the Hispanos, and the Americans, had all but vanished. The Ute were gone at last, and for good; the Hispanos were giving up and going south, or withdrawing unto themselves, and no wonder. Near the end of his life John Lawrence wrote bitterly about the verdict of "not guilty" in the trial of Tom Tucker for the killing of Perfecto Chaves. "The jury after being out about 6 hours brought in a verdict of not guilty. This was expected by me, as it was race prejudice, for in the nearly 36 years that the country has been organized, there never has been a case where a Mexican has accused an American of a crime, or where the American committed the crime against a Mexican but what the American has gone clear, and for the same time there has only been one case where an American has accused a Mexican of a crime, or the crime has been against an American, but what the Mexican has been found guilty and sent to the penitentiary."⁶²



The apple of Lawrence's eye when she was little, Myrle Phillips, his foster child, married Humphrey Fullerton, the son of Lawrence's neighbor and enemy.

John Lawrence noted other inequities that hurt and infuriated him. He blamed the death of Dario Archuleta's little girl on the lack of care given children of Hispanos by Anglo doctors, and he deplored the thoughtless cruelty of the Americans at the public Christmas celebration where candy and apples were given to every Anglo child in the county but none to the Hispanic children.⁶³

In 1890 John Lawrence moved into a fine, white, frame house with a widow's walk on top at Third and Gunnison streets in Saguache. He kept a hardware store for six years, and then became a state representative and the mayor of the town. Lawrence was a bachelor for all except six years of his life, and there is no indication that he regarded any woman as a person except Juliana Vigil Woodson, his partner's wife. Mrs. Woodson's industrious habits, violent temper, and excessive drinking interested him, and almost all of his references to her fell into those three categories. He disregarded her feelings entirely: "Mrs. Woodson gave me the devil because I had told her she was not as good as an American woman," he wrote in 1872, with a certain evil glee. Mrs. Woodson gave him the devil for other things, too—for going to a fandango or to Culebra, for staying all night in town, or for no reason at all. "Mrs. Woodson on the rampage, but not drunk." A year later after James B. Woodson died in 1894, Lawrence married Mrs. Woodson (as he continued to call her after their marriage), probably because they had lived in the same house for nearly forty years and propriety would otherwise demand that one of them move out. There is no tender word

⁶⁰ *Saguache Chronicle*, various articles from 15 April 1876 to 20 April 1878.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1877, 17 February 1877.

⁶² 27-31 October 1902.

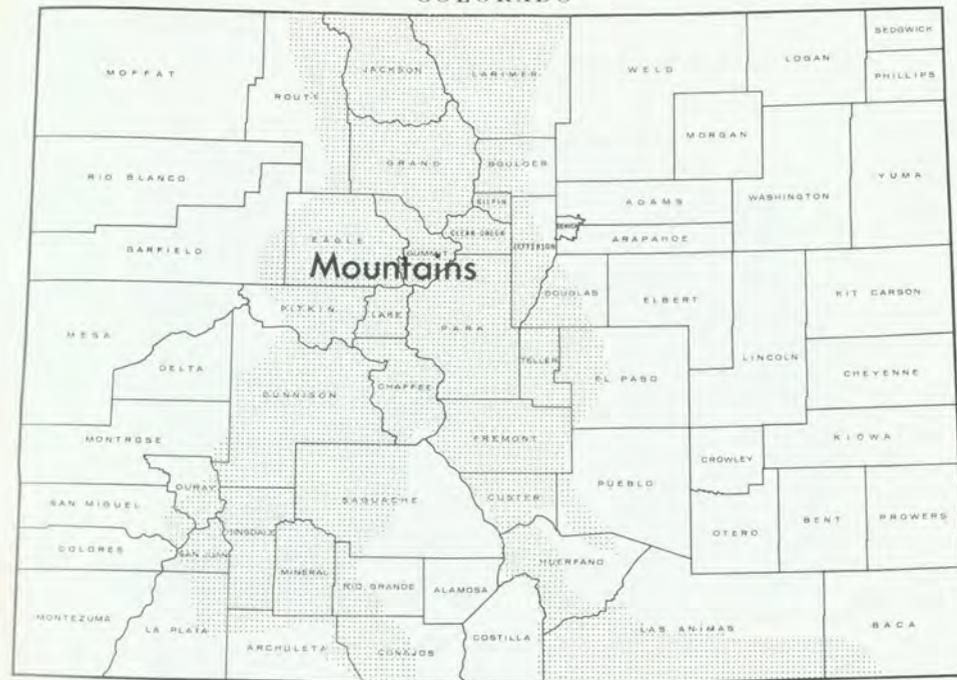
⁶³ 13-14 January 1904, 23 December 1892, 25 December 1894.

for his bride in the diary nor any sign of mourning when she died six years later. Compared with Lawrence's grief at the drowning of his foster son Orville Phillips in the Saguache reservoir, Mrs. Woodson's death went unmourned. The only other female to command any space in Lawrence's diary was his foster child Myrtle Phillips. When Myrtle was little and eagerly obedient, she was the apple of Lawrence's eye; when she grew up and got sassy and independent, he had no more use for her. Myrtle married the son of Jim Fullerton, Lawrence's neighbor and enemy, which so angered Lawrence that he cut her out of his will. But it was typical of this good and responsible man that when Fullerton's two sons ended up in jail, Lawrence did all in his power to effect their release and to provide for Myrtle in the meantime.⁶⁴

John Lawrence died on 13 February 1908, as his tombstone shows. He was buried in the Saguache Cemetery, which he had founded forty years earlier. Behind him he left a thriving little town that would long remember him and a diary that chronicled not only the birth and the growth of the town, but in a larger sense, the development of the frontier.

⁶⁴ 9 September 1872, 24 July 1884, 1 November 1901, 20 April 1893, 22 July 1900, 13 December 1894, 25 December 1895, 3 May 1893, 22 July 1900, 11 June 1906.

COLORADO



The Lebanon Mill and Mine Complex

Liston Leyendecker, professor of history at Colorado State University, earned his doctorate at the University of Denver, where his dissertation dealt with Central City entrepreneur Bela S. Buell. His extensive research on Gilpin and Clear Creek counties is reflected in such publications as Washington Hall: Gilpin County's Oldest Courthouse (1975) and Georgetown: Colorado's Silver Queen, 1859-1876 (1977). During 1965-66 he served as deputy state historian, and he has continued to assist the Society with research for the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining Area, particularly the Lebanon Mine and Mill Complex.

The Lebanon Mill and Mine Complex forms the major portion of the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining Area (GLHMA), which lies south of Interstate Highway 70 between the communities of Georgetown and Silver Plume, Colorado. The Lebanon tunnel runs in a northerly direction, cutting through portions of several groups of claims including the Ben J. Adams, James Guthrie, Ben J. Harding, Elijah Hise, George D. Prentice, Sally Ward, and Nat Wickliffe claims. Because they were named for prominent residents of the Blue Grass State, originally they were known collectively as the Kentucky Group and were located and preempted in the summer of 1865 by Kentuckian John T. Harris. The mill stands close to the tunnel portal on a mill site also taken up by Harris in 1865.

Harris was about thirty-four years old when he arrived in Colorado during 1859. Although he ventured into the vicinity of Georgetown a year later, Harris settled in Central City until sometime in 1861 when he moved to Empire. There, he remained until 1863, when, together with John M. Dumont, he helped Stephen F. Nuckolls overhaul and run the old Griffith mill in Georgetown. He also preempted and purchased gold lode claims in the Griffith Mining District, and when Nuckolls ceased operations that season, Harris remained in Georgetown. Later, he claimed that he was the sole resident in the community during the winter of 1863-64; a statement his contemporaries toned down to several weeks.¹

Even though Clear Creek County became known as a silver area in 1865, Harris did not join the hunt for the "white metal" immediately. Nevertheless, his days as a gold operator drew to a close when, in July 1865, he preempted the Kentucky Group of claims on Republican Mountain. Several friends helped Harris by staking properties around his discovery claims and then turning them over to him for a "valuable consideration," which, more often than not, remained unstated.²

As winter approached, Harris's associates furnished him with powers of attorney to dispose of their mining properties, a procedure that permitted them to return to their eastern homes for the winter. Harris had a wife, two daughters, and a son in Kentucky but would not or could not go home, choosing instead to remain in Georgetown where he managed all of the properties during the slack season.³

¹ *Georgetown Courier*, 6 December 1863, 27 March 1864, 1 December 1896; *Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal*, 30 June 1865; Frank Fossett, *Colorado: A Historical, Descriptive and Statistical Work on the Rocky Mountain Gold and Silver Mining Region* (Denver: Daily Tribune Steam Printing House, 1876), p. 92; Aaron Frost, "History of Clear Creek County," *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin and Co., Historical Publishers, 1880), p. 281; Colorado, Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "C," p. 563, Book "S," p. 33.

² Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "O," pp. 48-49, Book "L," pp. 43 and 434 are good examples of such practices.

³ *Ibid.*, Book "N," p. 381; various instruments filed in the county clerk's office demonstrate that Harris remained in the district during the winter of 1865-66.



Prior to using heavy equipment for underground mining, prospectors separated ore from rocks and pebbles by running water over the gravel in a sluice.

Although much of the ground staked during the early silver period was taken up solely for speculation, some development work was begun on a few claims, such as the James Guthrie, which, by September 1865, started to attract the attention of leading mining men in Central City and Black Hawk. On the surface the Guthrie vein was one inch wide and very rich in silver. At a depth of fourteen feet the seam widened to fifteen inches and assays were so encouraging that one-half a ton of its ore was smelted. Even more heartening was the knowledge that several rich veins in the immediate vicinity paralleled the Guthrie and seemed to merge at a common center. In March 1866 Nathaniel P. Hill analyzed a collection of selected ores from several mines, including rock from the Guthrie, which he valued at \$810 per ton. A 1,000-pound sample extracted from eight feet below the surface, where the crevice was nine and one-half inches wide, was smelted at Lyon's works in Black Hawk and yielded \$11,520 in silver.⁴

In spite of the early promise shown by the Guthrie, the Elijah Hise received most of the attention. Although Harris did not file the discovery notice of the lode until 2 December 1865, he had located the group earlier in the year, and by November miners were busy developing it. They were managed by John T. Herrick, superintendent of the Pioneer Company, who extracted about "ten tons of pure mineral from the Adams and Hise . . . hauled it down the mountain on bull-hides,

⁴ Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "O," p. 49; *Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal*, 2 August 1865, 3 March 1866.

packed it then on jacks to the Park'' and then had it hauled in wagons to Lyon's smelting works at Black Hawk. Herrick was fortunate in his selection of a smelter close-by for some rock was shipped as far away as New Jersey.⁵

Hise ores were among those tested by Hill in March 1866, and his report of their wealth would have rallied the spirits of any mining man in an area where the industry remained depressed. The selected Hise rock was worth \$1,750.30 per ton, while its ordinary ores, dug out of a crevice four feet wide, averaged \$810 per ton. The ore itself was argenteriferous galena, mixed with chlorides of silver and some antimony.⁶

Later in the year the Hise tunnel operators deepened its shaft to thirty-five feet, exposing a well-defined wall with a vein, gangue and ore, five and one-half feet wide. For twenty feet prior to that point, the ore streak varied in width from five to fourteen inches and its average value, ascertained from daily tests, was \$835 per ton. The vein appeared to be quite similar ''to the great Comstock vein of Mt. Davidson.'' ⁷

After two years the Hise shaft reached a depth of sixty feet, where Herrick lost the lead and, believing the mine to be exhausted, he abandoned it. In November 1867 Harris blasted out the north wall of the shaft and exposed a fine body of silver-bearing ore. By March 1868 miners were digging drifts from the shaft at a depth of about twenty feet. The vein at the surface of the shaft was about eight inches wide and increased gradually until, in the floor of the east drift, it measured between fifteen and eighteen inches. The same was true for the west drift. Assays averaged \$1,123.08 in silver, while the furnace yield was about \$1,007.50 per ton. Small wonder that the discoveries and the wealth of the Elijah Hise were credited with having promoted much of the growth of the district. During July 1868 Harris took out some very valuable argenteriferous galena from the Hise and, a year later, Herrick was preparing to resume work on the lode.⁸

John T. Harris played an active, if minor, part in the political affairs of Clear Creek County and the town of Georgetown. As early as 4 September 1865, he was nominated Democratic candidate for county assessor. On 1 December 1866 he attended a meeting called to incorporate Georgetown. In 1870 he was a Democratic delegate from Clear Creek County to the territorial convention held by that party. He also became interested in a railroad that residents of the community contemplated as early as 1871. In May 1867 Harris relinquished the north end of a building he owned in Georgetown to the founders of the

Georgetown Colorado Miner, the first issue of which appeared on 30 May.⁹

Typical of the early entrepreneurs in Georgetown, Harris shared his bounty with the community in which he lived and operated. Yet, he, and others like him, fell from prominence in Clear Creek County mining circles as eastern companies, which employed scientifically educated management, began acquiring the properties. Almost from the beginning, Harris attempted to dispose of his interests in the Kentucky Group. In March 1866 Benjamin Strong (who shared an interest) and Harris furnished Edward Salisbury of Central City with their powers of attorney to sell claims on the Adams, Guthrie, Harding, Hise, and McGoffin lodes. Salisbury was unable to sell the claims even in New York. Harris and Stevens then turned to Ebenezer Smith, also of Central City, in November 1866. But, Smith fared no better than Salisbury.¹⁰

Harris and Stevens continued their efforts for the next several years engaging prominent figures such as Joseph W. Watson and George T. Clark as their agents. Yet, even these men failed to dump the claims as a group, although Harris managed to unload several others separately. By April 1870 matters had reached desperate straits for Harris who, using all of his properties as security, signed a three-month note with the Jerome B. Chaffee and Company bank in Georgetown for \$1,658. Then, in July, his interests in the west half of the Hise, along with a house and the lot he occupied in Georgetown, were auctioned at a sheriff's sale. Later, he was able to redeem them.¹¹

Harris's faith in his Republican Mountain claims was to be rewarded shortly. On 2 June 1870 the *Georgetown Colorado Miner* noted that J. Warren Brown, president of the Lebanon Silver-Lead Mining Company of New York, had spent several weeks in Clear Creek County examining claims in the Cascade District, adjacent to the Griffith, and testing ores from the Silver Bluff mine. As he boarded a stage to return to his home in New York City, Brown declared that his visit had been worthwhile, and that he hoped to return in July to assume an active role in the mining industry of the region.¹²

Soon after Harris discovered a large outcropping of rich galena on the Guthrie, some thirty feet west of his former shaft, which he opened. His find was one of the largest ever located on Republican Mountain. Additional development uncovered a three-foot pay vein, one foot of

⁵ Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "M," p. 31; *Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal*, 21 November 1865; *Georgetown Courier*, 6 December 1865.

⁶ *Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal*, 3 March 1866.

⁷ Ovando J. Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles and Co., 1867), pp. 259-60.

⁸ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 5 March 1868, 9 July 1868, 28 July 1869.

⁹ *Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal*, 4 September 1865, 1 December 1866; *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 21 July 1870, 16 April 1871, 20 June 1867; *Georgetown Courier*, 22 May 1884.

¹⁰ Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "Q," pp. 461 and 463, Book "T," pp. 686 and 696; *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 27 June 1867.

¹¹ Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book "X," p. 390, Book "Z," pp. 468 and 717, Book "Y," p. 223, Book 6, p. 364, Book 8, pp. 37, 53, 383, Book 14, pp. 10-11.

¹² *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 2 June 1870.

which was a very solid, compact galena that returned high assays. Furthermore, its value was enhanced because a good wagon road could be constructed to it for about \$500.¹³

Harris took advantage of his latest strike and began disposing of his properties to J. Warren Brown who was in Georgetown. Stevens and Harris, on 15 August, gave Brown a warranty deed for claims one to eight west on the James Guthrie lode for \$6,000. On 23 September they furnished the New Yorker with another warranty deed for the west one-half of the General Marshall, the Ben Harding, George D. Prentice, Sally Ward, and L. W. Powell lodes for \$2,000. They also quitclaimed the east one-half of the Ben J. Adams, General Marshall, Ben Harding, Prentice, Sally Ward, J. T. Harney, L. W. Powell, Jim Boyd, and Guthrie lodes, along with the west one-half of the Ben J. Adams lode and sixteen hundred feet on the Nat Wickliffe lode. Brown agreed to pay \$2,000 for those parcels.¹⁴

Harris made a separate deal with Brown on the west one-half of the Elijah Hise lode along with a tunnel claim on the south fork of South Clear Creek, about eighty-five feet above the second bridge on the Bakerville road. He also quitclaimed the east one-half of the Elijah Hise lode to Brown along with other eastern portions of the Kentucky Group. As far as can be divined, Harris and Stevens sold the majority of the claims comprising the Kentucky Group for \$10,000 while they disposed of the west one-half of the James Guthrie lode for an additional \$6,000. Brown paid them \$2,000 and then signed a title bond guaranteeing them the remaining \$8,000, which he paid them in July 1871. In January 1871 Brown deeded these properties and numerous others in the Cascade Mining District to the Lebanon Mining Company of New York for \$55,000.¹⁵

The new owners were small businessmen from New York, who included J. Warren Brown, a wholesale merchant in hangings who resided in Brooklyn; Theodore C. Pohle, a baker specializing in crackers who lived in New York City; Julius G. Pohle, an analytical chemist and brother of Theodore who lived in New York City; Charles H. Maynard, a painter who resided in Flatbrook; and Bruno Wallenhaupt, who lived in New York City. Originally, the group had organized their firm as the Lebanon Silver-Lead Mining Company of New York in 1869.¹⁶ However, they reorganized it on 24 October 1870 as the Lebanon Mining Company of New York. This time the incorporators were Brown, the

Pohles, Thomas S. Ollive (Theodore Pohle's partner), Louis Franke (who dealt in trimmings), and Bruno Wallenhaupt. John P. Arey (a Clear Creek County mining man) replaced Charles H. Maynard on the board of trustees. The firm was capitalized at one million dollars and its capital stock was divided into ten thousand shares valued at one hundred dollars each. The chief offices of the company were at 489 Broadway in New York City, but its mining affairs were to be carried on "in the states of New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Colorado Territory and other States and Territories as occasion may require."¹⁷ Brown became president, while Ollive served as treasurer, and Theodore Pohle assumed the duties of secretary. Brown supervised operations, but soon turned that phase of the business over to Julius G. Pohle.¹⁸

Although he was born in Berlin, Julius Pohle spent his boyhood in New York and eventually studied medicine under Dr. James R. Chilton of New York City. He married Chilton's daughter, Rebecca, and, in 1864 he succeeded his mentor who had established an analytical chemistry office in New York City. For several years during the mid-1860s, Pohle apparently worked for the state geologist of New York collecting specimens in the Brown District of the Adirondack Mountains. He reestablished his office in New York City at 489 Broadway in 1869. During 1870 he analyzed a sample of Idaho Springs water and reported the results in the *Rocky Mountain Directory and Gazeteer for 1871*. At the time of his Colorado trip, he visited Georgetown and presumably examined the recently purchased company properties.¹⁹

Shortly afterward, in January 1871, Brown deeded the properties he had purchased from Harris and Stevens along with those in the Cascade District to the corporation. About that same time, Pohle began proposing that his fellow directors support him in Colorado while he managed the Georgetown operations.²⁰

On 20 April 1871 the *Miner* announced that the Lebanon Mining Company was "to commence work on its valuable property on Republican mountain." The claims discussed were the Adams, Guthrie, Harding, Hise, Prentice, Ward, and Wickliffe, which were all potential moneymakers and situated favorably for a single plan of development. Brown returned in May and on 25 May the company advertised for bids to drive a tunnel five hundred to one thousand feet into the mountain in order to open the above lodes and to prospect for new ones. The con-

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16 June, 14 July 1870.

¹⁴ Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book 10, pp. 141, 211.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Book 10, pp. 212-13, Book 14, p. 49.

¹⁶ H. Wilson, comp., *Trow's New York City Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1869* (New York: John F. Trow, 1868), pp. 140, 375, 738, 868; Colorado, Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Articles of Incorporation, the Lebanon Silver-Lead Mining Company of New York.

¹⁷ Articles of Incorporation, the Lebanon Mining Company of New York.

¹⁸ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 9 November 1871, 15 December 1870.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, 8 October 1895, p. 8; *Engineering Record*, 12 October 1895, p. 345; *The Rocky Mountain Directory and Colorado Gazeteer for 1871* (Denver: S. S. Wallihan and Co., 1870), pp. 368-69; *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 22 September 1870.

²⁰ John P. Arey to J. Warren Brown, 20, 23 March 1871, J. Warren Brown Collection, Correspondence, Box 5, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, Denver.



The Lebanon Mine is now part of the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining Area and is open for tours.

tractor was to furnish the track, car, and ventilation, and seventy-five percent of his work would be paid for on the fifth of each month. Bidders who desired further particulars were asked to inquire at the company offices in Georgetown.²¹

As was customary, the local journalist visited the Lebanon as soon as the firm was comfortably settled on its new properties. Pohle, who had returned also, escorted the newsman through the Guthrie and Hise lodes, showed him the new mill he was constructing, and permitted him to observe the progress being made on the new tunnel. The Guthrie lode was in good pay—some of its first-class ore assaying \$1,800 per ton. The Hise, a short distance above the Guthrie, not only had ore on its



dump, but had other rock sacked and ready for transportation to the mill. In addition, Pohle was saving all of the very low grade ores (that paid about \$30 to \$40 per ton), which usually were “dumped down the mountain.” He planned to run them through the mill to see if they would pay. There was no mining in the tunnel although workers had driven in about one hundred feet. Its mouth was near the mill, so that when the veins were cut, the ore could be carried to the crusher in cars without any rehandling. It was a well-organized operation and the impressed reporter wrote a highly complimentary story about its progress.²²

During August and September work continued at a rapid pace as the company pushed the digging of the tunnel, obtained good results from the mill, and took high paying mineral from the Guthrie and the Hise lodes. The very fine ores extracted from the Hise induced the company to continue their stoping, sinking, and drifting operations into October. The Guthrie lode was worked in several places and, early in October, there was a pile of good ore on its dump. Therefore, Pohle was able to render substantial reports to his fellow directors and stockholders when they gathered on 13 November 1871 in New York for the annual meeting.²³

In April 1872 Pohle closed his New York City office and moved to Colorado as a representative of the Lebanon Mining Company in Georgetown. Shortly afterward, when J. Warren Brown resigned the presidency of the firm, Pohle became its sole Georgetown agent. He brought his family with him, purchased several pieces of property, and became active in the vestry of Grace Episcopal Church.²⁴ While the Pohles were never the social lions of Georgetown, they moved in what passed for the society of the town.

At the very outset, the Lebanon Mining Company was noted for its concentrating and sampling mill, which it began to build in 1871. The wooden, two-story structure, designed to dress and concentrate low grade ores from the Kentucky Group, stood on the north fork of South Clear Creek, close to the mouth of the Lebanon tunnel.²⁵

Mills were important institutions during the early silver mining period since one of their major functions was to separate low grade ores from the base rock in order to make them marketable at the smelters. Until 1874, the metals in ores were never purchased unless they con-

²¹ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 20 April, 25 May 1871.

²² *Ibid.*, 27 July 1871.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14 September, 12 October, 19 October, 9 November 1871.

²⁴ *Weekly Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 18 April 1872; Pohle is not listed in the New York City directory for 1872, see H. Wilson, comp., *Trow's New York City Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1872* (New York: John F. Trow, 1871); *Weekly Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 2 May 1872, 19 October 1871, 18 April 1872, 3 January 1874, 19 January 1874, 10 August 1878, 17 April 1884; *Georgetown Courier*, 9 April 1885.

²⁵ *Weekly Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 25 May 1871, 2 February 1874.

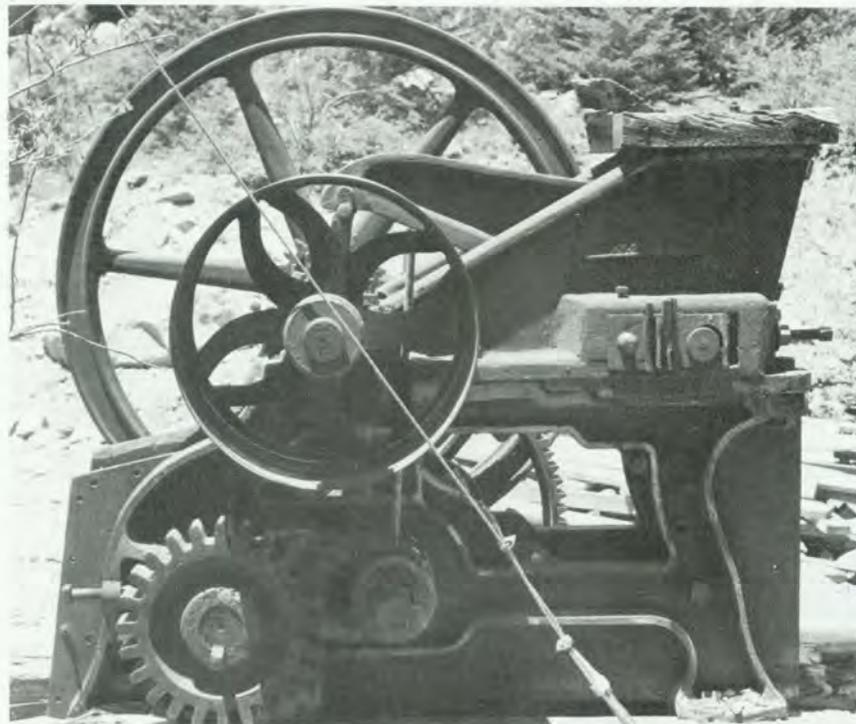


The Lebanon Mill not only processed ore from the Lebanon Mine but also from other mines in the area. The ore wing of the mill is presently being reconstructed by the Seabees.

tained a certain minimum. For silver the minimum was forty ounces and for gold, one-and-one-half ounces per ton or 2,000 pounds. Much low grade ore was cast on dumps either because it was in the way or because it was refuse from sorting better ores; yet a good deal of it could be concentrated, by proper dressing, and then sold. Therefore, when the gangue had been removed by dressing, the concentrated or purified ore obtained would sell for a better price due to its higher mineral content and due to its reducibility to bullion by cheaper methods. There was a savings in transportation costs as well since ore, not rock, was shipped to the smelters. This was a crucial item in areas, such as Georgetown, which lacked railroad service.²⁶

The New Yorkers started their crushing and concentrating works on 24 August 1871 and continued to run it into September. Pohle installed ore dressing machinery, although a majority of his customers did not need this service and desired only sampling and crushing of their ores for shipment. Ores were sampled to determine whether they warranted more sophisticated milling or even smelting. By June 1872 the plant was doing a lively business crushing, sampling, and sacking ores, and that fall Pohle returned East to secure backing for his custom crushing

²⁶ Frank Fossett, *Colorado: Its Gold and Silver Mines, Farms and Stock Ranges, and Health and Pleasure Resorts, Tourist's Guide to the Rocky Mountains*, 2d ed. (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1880), pp. 233-34; Wilbur Fiske Stone, ed., *History of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918), 1:314; Henry Engelman, "The Utsch Automatic Jig," *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers*, vol. 2 (Eaton, Pa.: The Institute, 1875), pp. 31-33.



Crushers performed an integral function in hard-rock mining. The ore was first sorted, then passed through crusher jaws, and then dropped between adjustable steel sizing rollers, which crushed the ore to uniformly sized fragments. The resulting mixture was then concentrated and sacked for shipment to a smelter.

enterprise. He was back in Georgetown by November ready to pay cash for all grades of profitable shipping ores.²⁷ Custom crushing meant that Pohle bought ores to treat for himself or for others.

Pohle also managed to process ores belonging to the company, even though by the summer of 1873, all the millmen in Georgetown had more work than they could handle. That year Pohle shipped eighty-five tons of gold and silver ore valued at \$47,000 outside of Colorado. Probably this was the peak year for the mill's operations and explains his installation of two jigs along with the addition of a boiler and engine, which would permit work to continue throughout the winter.²⁸

²⁷ *Weekly Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 24 August 1871, 27 June, 18 July 1872; *Daily Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 8 November 1872, 7 January 1873.

²⁸ *Daily Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 9 July, 24 October 1873; Fossett, *Colorado*, 1876 ed., p. 319; U.S., Congress, House, Rossiter W. Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains: Being the Sixth Annual Report of Rossiter W. Raymond, United States Commissioner of Mining Statistics*, 43d Cong., 1st sess., 1873-1874, H. Exec. Doc. 141, p. 291.

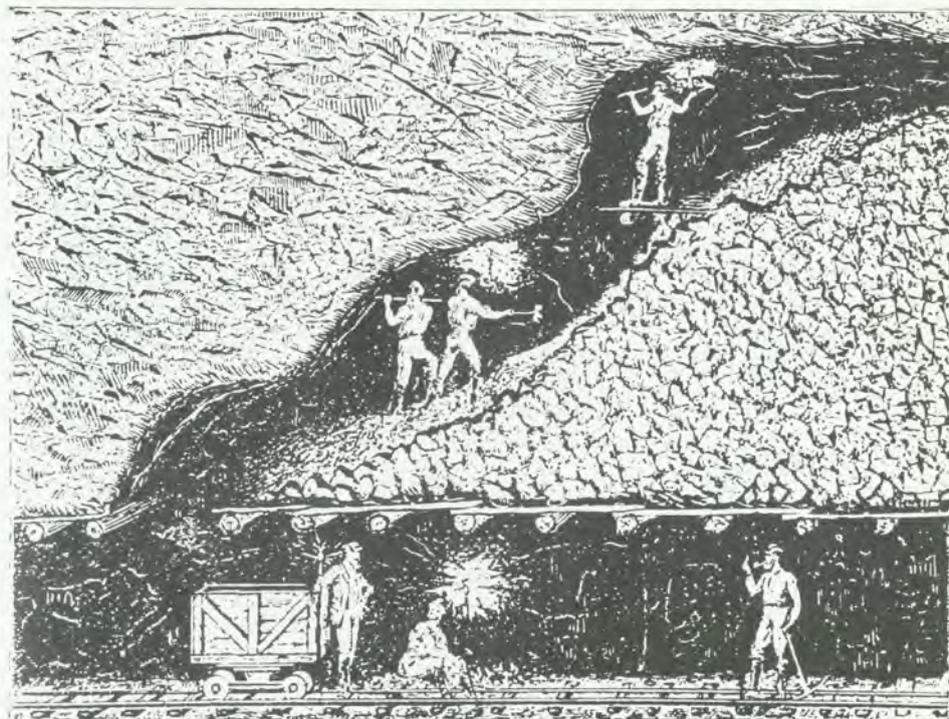
Pohle rearranged his plant in January 1874 and by the end of the month had the operation running steadily and successfully. The hard-working superintendent continued to purchase large amounts of ore, which he pushed through his plant as fast as his meager facilities would permit. Although Pohle was hampered by his small mill, all such operators in Georgetown were harassed by an ore blockade brought on by a lack of transportation facilities necessary to carry the processed rock to railheads.²⁹

In spite of such handicaps, Pohle managed to work over the entire Lebanon dump and to perform custom work on similar ores in the district. The trouble was that the ores were all surface rock and something was needed to concentrate the harder and still more refractory minerals that were dug out of the lower depths. Like others before him, Pohle failed when it came to treating products of the deeper veins. Thus, after 1874, the mill stood idle, although a lessee, D.E. Melliss, who operated an ore buying business, used the crusher for about six weeks during 1877. Then, in June 1878, Edward Stoiber a lessee on the number five lode of the Lebanon tunnel made minor repairs and ran it throughout the summer and into September 1878, when he stopped it because of a lack of water. After that time it was not listed as an operating plant although it remained intact, for as late as 1888 it contained the turbine wheel, ore crusher, and rollers along with the belting and pulleys.³⁰

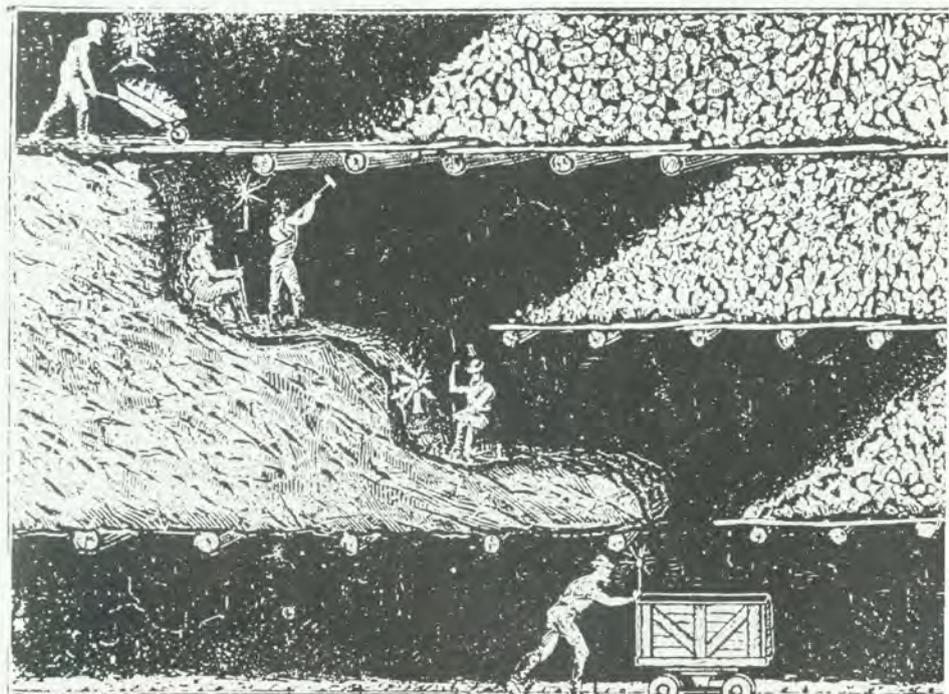
Comments throughout the 1870s emphasized the quiet efficiency of the firm in handling its properties. Workers laboring day and night, succeeded in driving the Lebanon tunnel 580 feet by June 1873. Although the project intersected several lodes, the company paid them little mind as it headed for the Hise and other known rich veins in the mineral belt. There were other tunnels being pushed by operators in the district and, like the Lebanon, they were driven steadily. Yet, by the close of 1873, the results of such mining were unsatisfactory, and while some (including the Lebanon) were continued, the general opinion was that new tunnels should not be started until those in operation proved more remunerative. Therefore, digging in the Lebanon slowed appreciably for the next two years and while it was considered to be one of two principal tunnels on Republican Mountain, by 1875 it hardly paid expenses. The ordinary rock found in its path was a tough, compact granite, which increased driving costs to \$35.00 to \$40.00 per foot. Although the tunnel had cut several veins at right angles, little mineral was found at the points of intersection and the company did nothing to

²⁹ Daily Georgetown Colorado Miner, 3 January, 27 January, 2 February 1874; Weekly Georgetown Colorado Miner, 5 September 1874.

³⁰ Daily Denver Rocky Mountain News, 10 September 1874, 18 September 1875; Daily Georgetown Colorado Miner, 2 June 1877; Georgetown Courier, 10 January 1878; Georgetown Colorado Miner, 1 June, 14 September 1878; Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book 106, p. 57.



Overhand stopeing (above) and underhand stopeing (below), sinking, and drifting are all methods of following the lode from the main tunnel.





The reconstructed mine support buildings include a blacksmith shop, change room, supply shed, and manager's office.

develop them. Then, at Pohle's suggestion, in the spring of 1876 the firm began issuing leases to develop the mines through the tunnel. After a great deal of "dead work," the results were very satisfactory as nearly all the veins were in the hands of lessees and were returning a good royalty to the company along with good wages to the miners.³¹

Dr. Pohle maintained general supervision over the driving of the 800-foot tunnel. By early June 1877, several of the eight lodes had begun to pay handsomely. Others were considered good, but had been encountered at poor places in the tunnel. Furthermore, the firm anticipated that the project would soon cut a number of other valuable deposits at a great depth. Physically, the operation reflected Pohle's carefully planned and systematic approach to his work. A blacksmith's shop stood conveniently on the east side of the tunnel mouth, while on the west side Pohle had thoughtfully erected a small cottage to accommodate the miners. The timbering in the tunnel was first rate, while a shaft in lode number three created a strong draft, which circulated throughout the enterprise and insured good ventilation. The drainage was good and the depth at which the mines were cut (between 100 and 500 feet) gave the lessees all the ground even the most exacting could desire. A good

T-rail tramway and car, with side tracks running to veins that had been explored any distance from the main tunnel moved the ore to the surface.³²

Miners with families appreciated the accessibility of the mines to Georgetown and Silver Plume, and the busy scenes in the tunnel indicated the enterprise and the faith of these workers who could return home in the evenings. In extent and richness the ore in some instances surpassed the deposits near the surface, while mining costs were lessened by one-half. Such production gave the Lebanon tunnel a reputation for being quite successful.³³

By 18 September 1877 the tunnel had reached a length of 830 feet and a depth of 500 feet, when the project was halted temporarily. On the line of the tunnel, the following surface lodes had been discovered: the Sally Ward, George D. Prentice, James D. Guthrie, and Ben Harding. The Elijah Hise, still the main object of the tunnel, was due to be cut within 100 feet, while the Ben Adams, General Marshall, No Name, and Nat Wickliffe all lay beyond. By December twelve men were working for the company, three more were under contract, and an additional twenty-two were lessees. On 12 January 1878 the aggregate amount of drifting on the lodes totaled 2,000 feet along with 800 feet of shafting. The ore was principally argentiferous galena.³⁴

By March 1878 Alfred Tissot, working under an indefinite contract had driven the tunnel an additional thirty feet as he pursued the Hise lode, still estimated to be less than one hundred feet ahead. Since it was an old producer that still did well, the miners anticipated intersecting it. There were reasons for such expectations since one pocket on the James Guthrie, another old claim, had produced \$30,000 and the miners were encouraged further by the general high grade of the ore they dug out on that slope of Republican Mountain. In spite of such high hopes, after May 1878, the *Miner* reported that the Lebanon Company had performed no work on its tunnels except that required by law. That year the tunnel passageway was 914 feet long.³⁵

While the company concentrated on digging the tunnel, lessees continued to work the surface claims of the Kentucky Group, which were located farther up the slope of Republican Mountain. By 1877 the firm had patented a few of the more famous, such as the Adams, Guthrie, Harding, Hise, Prentice, and Ward, some of which had been intersected or were due to be cut by the tunnel very shortly. Even the Ben Adams,

³¹ *Daily Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 7 June 1873; U. S., Congress, House, Rossiter W. Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains: Being the Eighth Annual Report of Rossiter W. Raymond*, 43d Cong., 2d sess., 1874-75, H. Exec. Doc. 177, p. 368; Raymond, *Sixth Annual Report*, p. 289; Samuel Cushman, *The Mines of Clear Creek County, Colorado* (Denver: Times Steam Printing House, 1876), p. 23; *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 13 January 1877.

³² *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 9 June 1877.

³³ *Ibid.*, 13 January, 9 June 1877.

³⁴ *Georgetown Courier*, 18 September 1877; *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 12 January 1878.

³⁵ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 22, 28 March 1878, 10 January 1880; *Georgetown Courier*, 18 September 1877; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1 January 1880; Frost, "Clear Creek County," p. 317.

General Marshall, No Name, and Nat Wickliffe, which still remained beyond the tunnel were developed to some extent. Lessees operating the old lodes found good production on the Prentice, Hise, and Harding, although operators working the latter group had one-half ton of their rich ore stolen during a period when ore thieves plagued the neighborhood. However, miners in the area were on their guard to capture the scoundrels when "the services of the grave digger instead of the jailor [would] be called into requisition."³⁶

Until connections were made with the upper workings, the lodes bisected by the tunnel were numbered as they were cut and designated by their numbers. Thus, lode number three eventually was recognized as the Sally Ward and produced ore until the middle of 1877, after which its output declined although it did continue to provide fresh air for the entire tunnel. Lode number five was identified in June 1877 as the George D. Prentice on the west and the James D. Guthrie on the east. It continued to pay well into 1880. The lessees were motivated, in all probability, by the results they obtained from the ground that lay between the main tunnel and the earth's surface, where a good deal of fine ore was extracted, although there was considerable unexplored dirt remaining above the tunnel. While some of the lodes paid well for their development, the company did no work on its tunnels except that required by law in 1879.³⁷

The slackened activity following the latter part of 1878 was caused partially by a reorganization of the company. The exact circumstances are unknown, but indications such as the company mill site, the mill, car track, ore houses, and cabin appearing on the delinquent tax list during April 1878 suggest that all was not well. The real estate and improvements were valued at \$7,000, and the taxes amounted to \$263.60. In August, Theodore C. Pohle and his family visited his brother in Georgetown and, while it might have been purely a social occasion, it would seem that much time would have been consumed talking business. That fall the firm was reorganized with Felix Stoiber as president and Thomas S. Ollive as secretary. On 28 October 1878 the company filed a copy of its new charter, which stated that the purpose of the company was to conduct a mining business in Clear Creek County with Georgetown as the site of its main offices. Julius G. Pohle was its agent and superintendent. While his personal real estate appeared on the delinquent tax list for 1879, the mill and its improvements were absent.³⁸

³⁶ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 29 April 1876.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 January, 9 June 1877; *Georgetown Courier*, 18 September 1877; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1 January 1880.

³⁸ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 20 April, 10 August 1878; 19 April 1879; Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Lebanon Mining Company of New York, Certificate of Appointment of Agent, filed 1 November 1878; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 30 October 1878.



The Griffith Mining District, headquartered in Griffith Mountain in the background, spurred the growth of Georgetown in the valley.

It was unfortunate that Pohle encountered difficulties at the end of a decade of hard work, because the properties whose development had been his responsibility were in excellent shape. The Republican Mountain holdings of the company consisted of thirteen lode claims, which were worked from the surface and were opened by 3,000 feet of tunnels, shafts, and drifts. The majority of the lodes carried excellent grades of ores, and their product totaled about \$150,000. All of these mines would be operated through the tunnel in the course of time and development, and seven or eight lodes had been cut already by that project. Lode number five, which had been worked from the tunnel level up to the surface, was well ventilated, and it had been improved the most. It contained an unusually high grade of ore, which averaged 800 ounces of silver per ton for first-class ore, 300 ounces per ton for second-class ore, and 70 to 80 ounces per ton for third-class ore. The lode had produced \$75,000. Several of the lodes had been patented and applications were pending on the remainder. Seven mill sites lay on the property, which was considered immensely valuable and one of the finest in the district. Finally, the concentrating mill, blacksmith's shop, and other surface improvements finished out the company assets.³⁹

Pohle could look back on the 1870s with pride, for he not only had gained a good name for his firm and for himself, he had also managed the company holdings successfully during one of the worst depressions in the nineteenth century. He had also sustained them during the demonitization of silver, and he had maintained production in spite of

³⁹ Frost, "Clear Creek County," p. 317.

tremendous competition brought on by the bonanza discoveries at Leadville.

Although the outlook for the company early in 1880 was far from optimistic, at the end of January several parties of lessees were exploiting its ground profitably. Production continued throughout the year and in November twenty-four men (nineteen of whom were lessees) were laboring in the tunnel, which was by then between 950 and 960 feet long and being extended by two shifts of workers. At the end of January 1881 it was thirty feet farther into the mountain. Lode number five continued to produce high quality ore as several parties worked on its various levels. Other sections of the tunnel had good records, so that by April the company maintained a work force of thirty men.⁴⁰

The individual properties, especially number five, and the tunnel continued to be profitable throughout 1881. The tunnel was driven ahead until, just at the end of the year, it entered the Elijah Hise at right angles to its course and exposed a large vein of smelting ore along with a very large body of valuable concentrating rock. The *Denver Rocky Mountain News* stated that the strike was the first good sign of the New Year. They penetrated the Hise somewhere between 1,000 and 1,100 feet from the mouth of the tunnel at a depth of the vein of about 600 feet. It was considered one of the best strikes made in Clear Creek County for many months.⁴¹ The recovery of rich ore in the Hise lode continued through March 1881 because the pay streak improved as the lode was opened.

The Hise lode remained newsworthy during the first part of 1882 due to its rich output of wire silver. However, after the middle of August, it ceased to receive special notice. While the publicity accorded the Hise was extensive, it was shared by other Lebanon Company lodes. Number five, although idle for some time due to litigation, carried on valiantly for several years following 1880. In March 1882 one blast, set off by lessees, threw out fourteen sacks of first-class mineral, which the jubilant owners immediately took to their mill. Continued operations by lessees did well during 1884 and 1885. Number five doubtless was the best single lode in the tunnel, for, in 1886, one report stated that over \$200,000 had been taken from it alone. After 1882 lode number ten figured in the reports of the Lebanon tunnel activities. As late as March 1886 lessees on the east drift of number ten encountered nearly six inches of ore, which yielded between \$118 and \$360 per ton.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Georgetown Colorado Miner*, 31 January 1881; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 13 November 1880, 22 January, 22 April 1881.

⁴¹ Horatio Burchard, *Production of Gold and Silver in the United States, 1881: Report of the Director of the Mint upon the Statistics of the Production of the Precious Metals in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882), p. 371; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 8, 9, 15, 22 January 1882.

⁴² *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 9 March, 23 April, (8 June, 15 August 1882; *Georgetown Courier*, 19 April 1883, 4 March 1886.



Flags wave in the breeze above the 1882 National Mining and Industrial Exposition building.

While individual properties received newspaper space during the 1880s, reports appeared to stress the activity and the production of the tunnel, which was referred to as the Lebanon Tunnel mine, rather than separate workings. Chunks of ore from lodes number five and ten were selected for display at the 1882 Mining Exposition in Denver, at which Julius G. Pohle served as the county ore commissioner. In July 1883 a compressor was set up near the mouth of the tunnel so that workers would soon have air drills to assist them in their work. The tunnel continued to produce good ore for the remainder of 1883 and capped its activities on 27 December with reports of several good strikes.⁴³

In January 1883 the grade for a company-owned, side-track was completed from the Georgetown, Breckenridge, and Leadville Railway to the dump near the mouth of the tunnel. Such a connection with the "High Line" would furnish the firm with excellent facilities for shipping their ores. By the end of 1883, the company tunnel was known as one of the old reliable properties that had been deepened and mined more extensively that year. Early in 1884 the ground was said to hold its own as a producer of good ores and as a constant employer of goodly forces of men. Since the installation of the new compressor, work had forged ahead with great vigor, and the ore removed from the workings averaged as high as almost any mine in the vicinity. In 1885 the Lebanon, whose listed assets amounted to \$3,500, was one of the fifty producing mines around Georgetown.⁴⁴

Work on the tunnel paused for a while, but by July 1886 it was being

⁴³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 18, 27 June, 19 July 1882, 22 July 1883; *Georgetown Courier*, 27 December 1883.

⁴⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 10 January 1883, 1, 9 January 1884; *Georgetown Courier*, 6 December 1883, 30 July 1885.

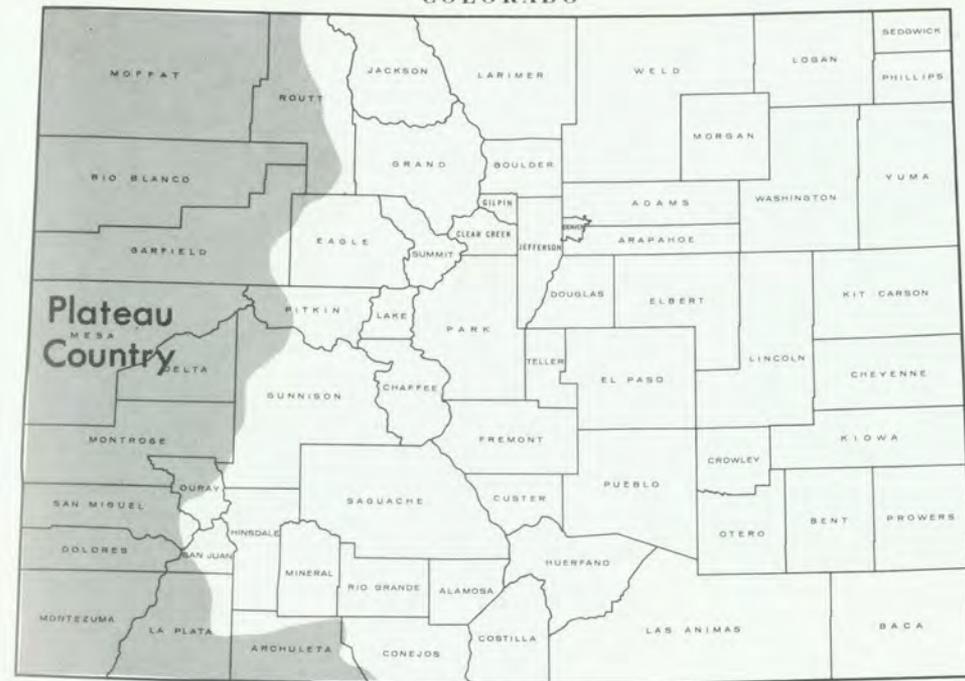
driven ahead, although it did not proceed much farther due to lawsuits and a continued decline in silver prices. Its final length from mouth to breast was calculated in 1908 to be 1,082 feet. This figure probably was wrong as it reached a length of over 1,200 feet in the 1880s. A miners' estimate of its total production, also given in 1908, was \$500,000.⁴⁵ This sum was fairly accurate since it agreed with those given out in the nineteenth century.

At least two things contributed to the decline of Lebanon Company operations during and after 1886. First, there were lawsuits between the firm and the Consolidated Republican Mountain Mining Company, which owned properties adjacent to the Lebanon, including the Everett tunnel, which had been organized and was managed by J. Warren Brown. Second, money began to play out as mortgages were issued in 1887 and 1888 first on properties on Republican Mountain and then on all the Colorado properties. During the latter year, Pohle's power of attorney, which he had held since 1874 was revoked, which meant that he probably had resigned. It was time for his resignation, for he was promoting a water pump that he had designed and used in the Lebanon tunnel, which was receiving a large amount of publicity. He went to California and eventually to work for the Ingersol Sergeant Drill Company of New York, in whose employ he died in 1895. After Pohle left, the company remained in Clear Creek operating its properties under lease until it quitclaimed them to the Clear Creek Holding and Mining Company in June 1911.⁴⁶ Thus, after forty years, the New York firm left the mining scene in Colorado.

⁴⁵ *Georgetown Courier*, 5 July 1886; Josiah E. Spurr and George H. Garrey, *Economic Geology of the Georgetown Quadrangle (Together with the Empire District) Colorado*, United States Geological Survey, *Professional Paper 63* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 214.

⁴⁶ *Weekly Georgetown Courier*, 25 October 1888; Clear Creek County, Office of the County Clerk, Book 86, p. 591, Book 85, p. 614, Book 92, p. 329, Book 34, pp. 90-91, Book 179, pp. 559-60; *Georgetown Courier*, 28 October 1886, 17 May, 22 November 1888; *New York Times*, 8 October 1895, p. 8; *Engineering Record*, 12 October 1895, p. 345.

COLORADO



A Land unto Itself: The Western Slope

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The fall of the land toward the Pacific is so distinctive that it has received its own name. When speaking of the Mississippi side of the mountains, one uses the term "eastern slope" as a matter of geographic convenience. Western Slope by contrast is spelled with capital letters. It is a human as well as a physiographic entity. It is also a mystique. The people of the Western Slope feel superior to lesser mortals.¹

Thus wrote David Lavender, a native son, to describe to those "lesser mortals" what the Western Slope symbolizes. This represented no easy task for even so talented a writer as Lavender. In many ways the sweep of the land and its individualistic people defy mere words to capture them, and they laugh at attempts to paint their "soul," as they would those who try to capture the wind.

Lavender's argument rests on two basic premises: that there is and always has been a Western Slope, and that Western Slopers have different characteristics. There may be geographic sections, such as the San Juan Basin and the plateau country, within the whole of the slope, but they are only components of a more complex entity, mere man-made definitions, which do not capture the feeling, the mystique, and the significance that surround the Western Slope.

A majestic, sometimes foreboding land of 14,000-foot mountains, desolate plateaus, and fertile river valleys, the Western Slope covers nearly two-fifths of Colorado. Once divided into three huge counties, it evolved into the twenty counties of today, several of which would give some eastern states a run for total size.² From the time of the first Anasazi village to the farmers and city dwellers of today, water has

¹ David Lavender, *David Lavender's Colorado* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1976), p. 86.

² Frederic Paxson, *The County Boundaries of Colorado*. University of Colorado Studies, vol. 3, no. 4 (Boulder, Colo., August 1906), pp. 197-215, traces the county development for the whole state.



Pleasant memories were held of Breckenridge in the 1860s.

directed (perhaps dictated would be more nearly accurate) Western Slope settlement. Where people found water they settled; where they did not, they tried to bring it to them, using canals and diversion. James Grafton Rogers expressed it extremely well when he wrote that "water is the limit of life in the far West. Its quantity fixes the number of men who can live in the plains, plateaus and mountains. It limits the crops they grow, the cities they build. Everything else is plentiful—coal, oil, forests, minerals, space, opportunity. Water alone is scarce."³ As yet no one has tamed the land. Some have gazed with wonder at the scenery; others have tried to reshape it; but the most successful have learned to adapt to the environment, not transform it. Once this lesson was learned and relearned, settlement proceeded more swiftly and smoothly.

The land is there and always will be there; the same cannot be said for Western Slopers. Setting aside the Mesa Verde people and the Ute, settlement covers only a little over one century, hardly a yawn in the total history of the region. In that time span man has scarred, dug, and tampered with the Western Slope more than his predecessors ever did. How permanent this intrusion will turn out to be cannot be judged. On the other side of the coin—is the impact of the Western Slope on people evident in unique ways? Did the environment produce a Western Sloper? Lavender says it did, and history supports his contention.

The isolation, the vastness of the land, and the simple fact that the area and its people were left so long to their own devices produced an independent nature, which Lavender and others sagely discerned. There was a self-reliance, too, as a correspondent from Breckenridge noted in

³ James Grafton Rogers, *My Rocky Mountain Valley* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1968), p. 164.



As an example of overanticipation, Gunnison in 1902 attempted to encompass an "area two miles square."⁴

the 8 August 1860 issue of the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*. He observed that the people generally know their own business, attend to it promptly, and "let others alone." Yet, there was an openness, provided the visitor did not infringe upon the right of privacy of others. Well-known Victorian traveler Bayard Taylor, on a Breckenridge visit in the summer of 1866, commented on just that point and said, "I shall always retain a very pleasant recollection of Breckenridge."⁴

Further insight into Western Slopers was furnished by two ministers who knew them in the 1870s and 1880s—George Darley and James Gibbons. Darley, who saw it all, from red-light district crib to church pew, wrote, "nor could a more intelligent, plucky, warm-hearted set of men be found." Gibbons concurred, going on to say that the region attracted "only the energetic and the robust, who have the hardihood to endure the severe cold that prevails in those altitudes [San Juans]."⁵

Western Slopers tend to be optimistic. "Everybody looks forward," wrote Ernest Ingersoll in the early 1880s, referring to mining and the prospects of selling a claim. "Perhaps this delicious uncertainty is a part of the fun." It must have been, because so many prospectors never struck a profitable deal. That characteristic prevailed, whether in miner, farmer, or merchant. Routt County residents agreed with the *Steamboat Springs Pilot* in 1899, when it prophesied that "the dawn of prosperity"

was breaking for them.⁶ No matter that the editor had said the same thing before and would again. They treasured this faith, this optimism.

That eternal optimism has propelled Western Slopers into trouble more than once. For instance, mining engineer Thomas Rickard, arriving in Gunnison in 1902, was dismayed by what he found. "Gunnison was a boom town, and when the wind goes out of a boom the wreckage is not enlivening." The town attempted to "cover an area two miles square," and Rickard was never sure whether he was inside or outside of the city, riding on a main street or out on the prairie.⁷ Few Western Slope communities did not pass through similar manias of overbuilding and overanticipation.

It is fair to ask if these traits are unusual or different from other similar western experiences. The answer must be a qualified "no"; the chemistry of these various ingredients produced a Western Sloper, who, by the early twentieth century was different from his, even then, more urbanized eastern slope counterpart. And it is still true, as David Laverder wrote, not that physical differences are apparent when Western Slopers mingle with Denverites on Sixteenth Street in the capital city. They do not stand out, except perhaps when gaping at the traffic, buildings, and crowds and shaking their heads over the noise and the smog. The traits that make the Western Sloper what he is are the frontier heritage and the struggle of life, yesterday and today. These things are not observable in casual conversation.

Historically, the concept of the Western Slope dates almost from the beginning of Colorado, although the term came into general use several decades later. The words used to describe the area explain much about the early perception of this region. Miners referred to it as "the land beyond the snowy range." By the early 1870s Denverites had taken to lumping the whole area as "beyond the Divide," a place that, except perhaps for mining, held little interest for most of them. The mountain barrier, then, set it apart initially. When adventurers penetrated this barrier, they found a land of promise. As early as October 1859 a correspondent to the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* praised the Blue River diggings as beating "California out and out." Twelve years later the Western Slope appeared to Sidney Jocknick to be a Garden of Eden. An old frontiersman told him that "the whole 'Western Slope' was a hunter's paradise, a region fit for the gods." Entranced, Jocknick moved there and stayed.⁸ So, slowly, did others.

⁴ Bayard Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Son, 1867), pp. 112-15.

⁵ George M. Darley, *Pioneering in the San Juan: Personal Reminiscences of Work Done in Southwestern Colorado during the "Great San Juan Excitement"* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1899), p. 18; James J. Gibbons, *In the San Juan: Colorado Sketches* (Chicago, Ill.: Calumet Book and Engraving Co., 1898), p. 187.

⁶ *Steamboat Springs Pilot*, 17 May 1899; Ernest Ingersoll, *The Crest of the Continent: A Record of a Summer's Ramble in the Rocky Mountains and Beyond* (Chicago, Ill.: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1885), p. 154.

⁷ T.A. Rickard, *Across the San Juan Mountains* (New York: Engineering & Mining Journal, 1903), p. 92.

⁸ Sidney Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado and Campfire Chats with Otto Mears, the Pathfinder, from 1870 to 1883, Inclusive*, (1913; reprint ed., Glorieta, N.Mex.: Rio Grande Press, 1968), p. 32. See also [Charles Harrington], *Summering in Colorado* (Denver: Richards & Co., 1874), p. 130. *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 20 October 1859.



A picturesque view of the stream between Upper and Lower Emerald Lake in the San Juan National Forest.



William Byers built his ranch on the banks of Hot Sulphur Springs. The springs, directly on the river bank, have a temperature of 100 degrees and possess some therapeutic qualities.

A land beyond the mountains, a land of potential, the Western Slope was both. Nevertheless, it received more than its share of bad press. Colorado newspaperman and author Ovando Hollister referred to it as a vast mountain wilderness (1867), and the *Denver Rocky Mountain Directory* (1871) described it as very nearly uninhabited land; one, however, known to be replete with valuable minerals. Traveler Samuel Bowles would not even say that, as he tersely dismissed western Colorado as “many a fable of rich mines, of beautiful valleys . . . it has few settlers and no especial history.” To Bowles the rest of the state was “in every way” more interesting. As the 1870s closed Frank Fossett could still call it an “unknown land,” especially to the world at large and even to Colorado.⁹

The Western Slope lagged in development in the 1870s, primarily wilderness territory of questionable potential. The land beyond the snowy mountains came to mean west of the Continental Divide.¹⁰ There was no need for further geographical discussion. As far as its potential, that meant one word—mining. Or did it?

Bowles, for all his negativism, nearly lapsed into ecstasy over Hot Sulphur Springs when he visited there in August 1868. With springs for bathing and rivers for fishing, the “old grew young and the young joyous.” Could the fountain of youth offer more? Promoter and Colorado booster William Byers of the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* owned the

⁹ Ovando James Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Co., 1867), pp. 336-37; *Rocky Mountain Directory and Colorado Gazetteer for 1871* (Denver: S.S. Wallihan & Co., 1870), p. 50; Frank Fossett, *Colorado, Its Gold and Silver Mines, Farms and Stock Ranges; and Health and Pleasure Resorts: Tourist's Guide to the Rocky Mountains*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1880), p. 564; Samuel Bowles, *Our New West* (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Publishing Co., 1869), p. 85.

¹⁰ Paxton, *The County Boundaries of Colorado*, p. 199. The Colorado Supreme Court in 1886 settled the definition once and for all in favor of the Continental Divide.

springs and had big plans for his park. He was one of the earliest eastern slopers to boost the Western Slope. The Reverend Isaac Beardsley and his party rode to the springs from Georgetown in August 1871, no easy feat in itself over the trails of those days. Beardsley returned home "invigorated and strengthened" and "healthier, wiser, and better."¹¹ The scenery had already lured the tourist, and the "vigorous" climate and "health" springs beckoned the weary and the invalid, of whom nineteenth-century Colorado claimed many. The Western Slope enticed the health-seeker and the tourist, as well as the prospector and the miner. Hard upon their heels came the rancher, the lumberman, the railroad, the merchant, the city promoter, and the farmer.

By the time of statehood, the Western Slope had become a recognized entity in Colorado. Yet, its development trailed as much as a generation behind the eastern slope. The placer deposits of the Blue and Snake rivers in the Breckenridge area opened barely a step behind those of Central City and Georgetown. In the early 1860s they caught up and were, in truth, widely acclaimed as one of the great mining regions of the territory. Prospectors even penetrated the far distant San Juans in 1860-61.

Then realities began to take their toll. Isolation, Ute resistance, rugged mountains, and shallow gold deposits ended the San Juan flirtation; and isolation, lack of capital, and exhaustion of placer gold deposits slowed Breckenridge to such a degree that it rapidly lost its early prominence. By 1872 United States Mining Commissioner Rossiter Raymond could write that the Western Slope, aside from "partial development" of a few mineral resources, was "today, nearly as wild and unimproved as it was when first entered by white men."¹²

The Western Slope enticed large numbers of miners such as this group at the North Star Mine on Sultan Mountain in 1885.



When Raymond was writing, Denver already had connected with the transcontinental railroad, and a web of rails slowly inched out of the capital city. Urbanization, nineteenth-century variety, was taking hold of several eastern slope communities besides Denver, while all that could be found west of the divide were a few forlorn mining camps, not even one that could honestly claim the title of mining "town." A population of five thousand in Denver probably tripled that of the entire Western Slope, although incomplete reports make it impossible to know for sure. Agriculture, ranching, and even limited industrialization on the eastern slope promised that the mining/smelting-based economy would become more balanced. Eastern and foreign investors, when they thought of Colorado, thought of Central City, then Leadville, not Saints John or Silverton.

The Leadville silver millions made the difference for both eastern and western slopes. Silver pouring out of the Little Pittsburg, Chrysolite, and a score of other mines helped build Denver into a state and regional mining, social, business, and political center and encouraged prospecting everywhere in the mountains of Colorado. If there was one Leadville, then surely there were more buried in some unprospected glen. Off went the prospectors, followed by money to buy those claims that would assuredly gush silver.

In the 1880s the Western Slope finally began to mature. The Ute people were removed after the Meeker troubles and the outbreak of 1879, and the railroad came in 1881. Prospectors and miners were searching everywhere, and their persistence finally paid off when Aspen emerged to challenge the predominance of Leadville in the late 1880s. A decade later the San Juans became one of the great mining districts in Colorado. With mining came lumbering, agriculture, urbanization, and tourism. The Western Slope was a wilderness no more. Sparsely populated areas could still be found, in northwestern Colorado and in the southwestern corner, about which a promoter wrote in 1890 that it "has been until recently a *terra incognita* to all save the cowboy and Indian and a few adventurous explorers."¹³ The Western Slope never developed evenly.

After their slow start, Western Slopers endeavored to catch up, a familiar refrain that still rings true. An understanding of the slope is dependent upon a thorough grasp of this fact: Western Slopers have long

¹¹ Bowles, *Our New West*, pp. 116-19; Isaac H. Beardsley, *Echoes from Peak and Plain; or, Tales of Life, War, Travel, and Colorado Methodism* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Curtis & Jennings, 1898), pp. 338-40. For Byers's role, see Robert L. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years: An Informal History of Denver and the Rocky Mountain News* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1959).

¹² Rossiter W. Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains, Being the Fifth Annual Report of Rossiter W. Raymond, United States Commissioner of Mining Statistics*, 42d Cong., 3d sess., 1872, H. Exec. Doc. 210, p. 82.

¹³ *The Montezuma Valley in Colorado* (Cortez: Colorado Consolidated Land & Water Co., 1890), p. 2.



Durango in 1889 aspired to become the trade center of the West.

been subjected to a semicolonial, exploited status, dependent upon the eastern slope and beyond for financial support. This subservience has colored their outlook and molded their philosophy and is best expressed in their attitude toward Denver, the symbol of their frustrations.

To strike at something so nebulous as the term "eastern slope" was tantamount to boxing the wind. This was not so with Denver, a physical entity, where resided the financial, political, and social powers that seemed to dictate Western Slope development. Denver became the convenient scapegoat. The city earned a good portion of the rhetorical brickbats thrown its way. Rhetoric proved to be about all that the politically and economically impotent nineteenth-century Western Slope could fire. A few illustrations of attitudes and reactions will suffice. These are, however, only the tip of a mountain of complaints. Editor Caroline Romney accused the "Queen City of the Plains" of trying to "freeze out" and blight Durango in 1881. Why?—because Denver feared new cities that would contend with her for the honor, trade, and rewards of the "metropolitan mart" of the West.¹⁴ Durango, all of nine months old at the time, had high aspirations.

The *Lake City Times* complained that quite a few local people were traveling to Denver to buy goods.¹⁵ This was a real concern, especially when, as the editor pointed out, these same people owed hometown merchants for goods already purchased on credit. Not even the largest town on the Western Slope could compete with the variety, size, or prices of the business community in Denver. Dave Day, the most outspoken Western Slope newspaper editor of his day, carried on a decades-long feud with Denver from Ouray and later Durango. He repeatedly called upon his fellow Western Slopers to rally to the unity banner. Amazed over Denver prices for fruit, he thumped, "we must quit Denver commission pirates" and market elsewhere. When Denver

¹⁴ *Durango Weekly Record*, 25 June 1881

¹⁵ *Lake City Times*, 1 October 1896.

lost a fight to get better roads, he shed no tears.¹⁶ Day took on anyone and everyone, but Denver held its place as a prime villain.

Part of the problem obviously lay with envy and resentment of Denver on the part of the Western Slope communities, as well as a lingering assumption that Denverites cared little about the land to the west. Except for those large mining communities and districts where profit could be made, Denver ignored the area. The persistence of Denver newspapers in 1904 to locate Rifle in Routt County amused a few, seemed trivial to most, and thoroughly infuriated Rifle residents. Back in 1890 the newspaper editor in Meeker wondered, after reading that Denver had hired seven, new post office clerks, when his town was going to be noticed. Meeker residents wanted daily mail service, not new clerks.¹⁷

Part of the image problem of Denver came from the companies headquartered there. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, which did so much to open and develop the Western Slope, was not always seen as a generous benefactor by the people and communities dependent upon its service. From its own company-created town of Durango, through Grand Junction and beyond, came complaints that rose and fell with the issues and the times. Nor was the D&RG alone. The *Meeker Herald* in March 1913 attacked the Denver-based Mountain States Telegraph and Telephone Company as an "octopus" that spent a lot of money in Denver papers to thwart the independent lines.¹⁸

There was always, of necessity, an ambivalence in the relationship between Denver and the Western Slope, something like a love/hate courtship. The *Steamboat Springs Pilot* on 24 November 1897 touched the heart of the matter when it printed that "when Denver prospers the whole state will prosper." Although this truth was not always readily accepted, few arguments could refute it. The Western Slope, chronically underfinanced, needed the money that had to come from Denver. Grand Junction, like all slope communities of any pretension, aspired to become the major urban center. Such aspirations, of course, generated regional jealousy and newspaper feuds. The idealists insisted it could be accomplished alone; the realists knew it would take outside help, meaning Denver. Grand Junction and Mesa counties were active in trying to attract Denver capital in 1890 for that very reason. To them it would mean more rapid development.¹⁹ Such courtships generally proved rocky and often sired only animosity; even a consummated marriage promised little peace. No money or assistance came without

¹⁶ *Durango Weekly Democrat*, 12, 19 January 1912.

¹⁷ *Rio Blanco News*, 13 December 1890; *Routt County Courier*, 20 March 1904.

¹⁸ *Meeker Herald*, 15 March 1913. See also *Grand Junction Weekly Sentinel*, 7 April 1914. For the Denver & Rio Grande, see Robert G. Altheart, *Rebel of the Rockies: A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

¹⁹ *Grand Junction News*, 22 March 1890.

strings and interest rates attached. Thus, when the relationship soured, Denver, as the creditor, received the heartiest share of the scorn.

What was the solution to dominance by Denver and the eastern slope? The hotheads talked of secession. In the 1870s, when the San Juans represented the major region of interest west of the divide, several movements flared in that direction because of real or imagined problems. An 1875 failure to achieve fair legislative representation prompted cries that echoed those of the colonies a hundred years before. Tired of being at the mercy of "cow punchers and Mexican peons," as opposed to King George and the Tories, Hinsdale and La Plata counties organized to select their own candidates to represent their "vast and growing interests." The impasse was not resolved, and two years later a movement was afoot to organize a new territory, to be called San Juan. The reasoning for this radical step was interesting and was reiterated throughout the next century. Colorado had become too large as a state, and the "great mountains" were almost an insurmountable barrier to intercommunication for a large part of the year. The "great majority of the inhabitants," as well as the greatest wealth, resided in the "north" (Denver and its neighbors), which thereby secured senators and representatives unacquainted with the San Juan region and its needs. No common interests bound the two sections, and it seemed impossible to secure "fair and equal representation" in the administration of state government. Not to mention that the capital was located over there, a vexing travel problem at the very least.²⁰ The 1870s movement fizzled, opposed even in the San Juans as impractical. The idea did not die, though; as late as the 1960s it came to light in conversation and newspaper print.²¹ While the separatists contemplated creating San Juan out of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, more practical people strove for Western Slope unity.

The first indication of a slope-wide organization came just before and with the hard times of the 1890s. A Western Slope Congress was organized in 1891 to include the counties on the Pacific slope of the state. Meetings were held in Grand Junction, Durango, Ouray, and Aspen before the panic of 1893 and the depression ended the support. The congress published several promotional pamphlets, which included minutes and speeches from the meetings. It organized to further the interests of that section of the state and to call attention to the "great resources" that awaited development.²² A second pamphlet praised the area in all those well-worn phrases, such as "garden spot," "center of

²⁰ *Lake City Silver World*, 14, 21 August 1875; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 21 July 1877, p. 42; *Ouray Times*, 6 October 1877.

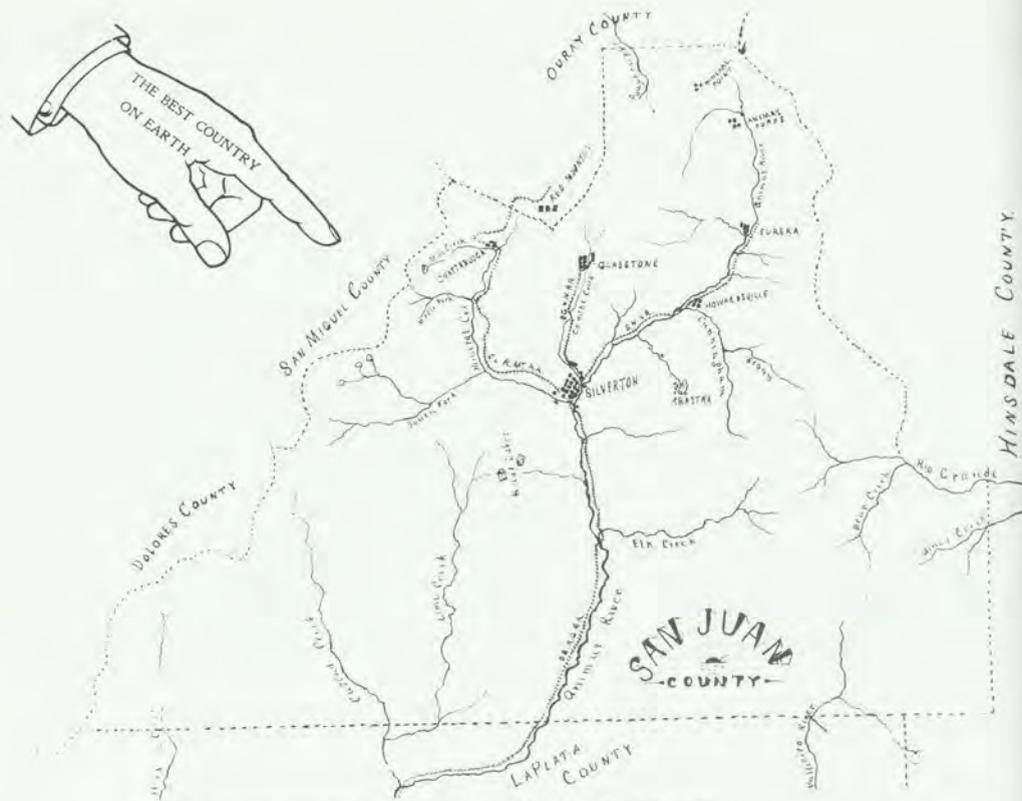
²¹ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 2 March 1969, describes a movement to create the state of Western Colorado. Back in the late 1940s a similar idea was generally ignored. Both suffered a common fate.

²² *Western Colorado and Her Resources: Reports Made to the Western Colorado Congress in Aspen, 15, 16, and 17 December 1891* (Aspen: Aspen Times, 1892), p. 2.



The beauty of the slope was extolled in promotional pamphlets.





A promotional map from the pamphlet *San Juan County*.

mining," and so forth.²³ Such familiar prose was expected, but the speakers and writers did not stop there.

"The Western Slope is a world of itself," wrote Richard McCloud of Durango. Aspen mayor E.P. Rose generally concurred; "the Western Slope is an empire in itself so far as its resources go." This "empire" was at variance with the rest of Colorado. The "great" Continental Divide naturally split the state; geography, natural resources, and rainfall all differed. "Never has nature supplied with such a lavish hand those things that make a country prosperous and rich as in this section called the Western Slope of Colorado."²⁴

Having delimited it and explained why the Western Slope was distinguished from the rest of Colorado, the group turned its discussion to the reasons that required unification. Judge John C. Bell, later to serve in Congress, explained very simply that "united we are powerful, divided we are weak." "Our interests are mutual," he went on and "we intend" to allow no discrimination against any section "that is west of the range." An editorial, reprinted from the *Grand Junction News* of 21 August 1891, expounded that "it is only through united action that our

resources, our natural wealth, and our many opportunities for the profitable investment in capital can be made generally known." It was absolutely necessary, the author concluded, for western Colorado to take "earnest, energetic and united action" to protect and advance her interests. Mayor Rose, soaring in a flight of oratory, called for working "shoulder to shoulder" for the "common weal."²⁵

Implicit in all this activity was the feeling that the Western Slope was being short-changed, treated as a second-class citizen by Denver and the eastern slope. Alva Adams, ex-governor and leading Democratic spokesman from Pueblo, had been invited to attend the Western Colorado Congress in 1891 but was unable to do so. Sensing the attitudes, he sent a consoling message that the Western Slope "is the living heart of Colorado—the ebb and flow of your prosperity is reflected at once in our every industry. When you prosper we flourish. When you languish we are depressed."²⁶ It sounded almost like William J. Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold" speech several years later. Adams's appeal failed to evoke much of a response; the listeners agreed with the viewpoint but mistrusted the motives.

Western Slope sentiments were expressed as clearly as they ever would be at these meetings and they strike sympathetic chords today. In subsequent years other Western Slope organizations have been tried, chambers of commerce, historical societies, pioneers' associations, and various groups to protect water rights. Only briefly have any of them been able to rally the troops; some were intended only to promote the common heritage.

The bitterness and the parochialism toward Denver and the eastern slope have continued through the years. Lucille Loving wrote from the lumber town of McPhee that "if the state of Colorado has money to spend on roads, why don't they spend it on roads that are in daily use, such as the Rico road, instead of million dollar highways for folks to use mostly to enjoy the scenery."²⁷ In 1927 tourists spent their money largely along the eastern slope, a fact their more numerous legislators did not overlook when appropriating funds. Two years later, ninety-eight percent of the hard surfaced roads of the state were on the eastern slope, a percentage no less lopsided ten years later.²⁸

Other statistics compiled for 1937-40 found Western Slope counties ranked in the lower one-half of the sixty-three counties for bank deposits, number of automobiles, and value of manufactured products. Several counties had no bank and most no manufacturing. What these

²³ *Western Colorado and Her Resources*, pp. 4, 7, 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁵ *Dolores News*, 3 June 1927.

²⁶ Colorado, State Board of Immigration, *Year Book of the State of Colorado: 1928-1929* (Denver, 1929), p. 218; State Planning Commission, *Year Book of the State of Colorado: 1939-1940* (Denver, 1940), p. 284.

²³ Western Colorado Congress, *Western Colorado* (Grand Junction: Grand Junction News, 1893).

²⁴ *Western Colorado*, p. 86. *Western Colorado and Her Resources*, pp. 4, 5, 7.



Highways were important to the development of the Western Slope. Here survey work begins on the Ouray to Silverton highway.

dry facts portrayed was a rural land that lagged well behind the rival eastern slope, further fueling the jealousy. Since World War II the gap has narrowed in some areas and widened in a few. The feeling of second-class citizenship with regard to economic development and state appropriations endures, rightly or wrongly.

More recently the bitterness has focused on water problems; the rift between east and west on this issue runs long and deep. For years Western Slope spokesmen have pointed accusingly at Denver, demanding that it limit demands, conserve its own water, and stop coveting theirs.²⁹ The dispute strikes at the very heart of the future of Colorado.

It lies beyond the scope of this study to consider the total impact of the Western Slope on Colorado, whether this impact be large or small. Only one example will be analyzed, the political "clout" of the slope. Western Slopers have been going to the polls in various elections since the first settlement, but only after statehood did they start to represent a discernible minority. To provide a clear illustration and to limit the length of the discussion, only the votes of the presidential and gubernatorial elections will be examined.

In the nineteenth century the Western Slope presidential voting pattern mirrored that of the eastern slope, solidly Republican until 1892, when Populist James Weaver broke the string in a losing cause.³⁰ In 1896 and again in 1900 the silver champion, William J. Bryan, was the darling of Colorado. In each of these three elections, however, the Western Slope provided more support for Weaver and Bryan than did

²⁹ See, for example, *Durango Herald-News*, 7 January 1955.

³⁰ The candidate name and constituency totals data were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, which bears no responsibility for the analyses. The data were programed in PL/I language. For the purpose of this particular examination, Colorado was divided into west and east slope divisions.

the eastern slope. Obviously, the former's more minerally oriented economy dictated such loyalty. Obviously, too, the terrible economic plight of the state made voters more radical in supporting their interests.

If ever a candidate received a Colorado mandate, it was Bryan in 1896, as Western Slopers backed him nearly 14 to 1, as compared to the eastern slopers' 5½ to 1 support. The eastern slopers seemed to feel, and that becomes the important fact here, that the interests of the Western Slopers would be better served by Bryan and his Democratic/Populist platform. The depression of the 1890s had hit the more economically underdeveloped counties beyond the divide harder than the rest, because they relied so heavily on outside investment for capital, a source now severely crimped. By 1900, with times improving, investors coming back, and the San Juan region finally maturing as a mining district, the two slopes moved closer together in support of Bryan, slightly better than two-to-one.

The only statewide office to be considered, the governorship, was contested every two years. Twice, in 1876 and again in 1894, the Western Slope support of a candidate differed from the rest. The 1876 vote total was so small as to be hardly a factor when the area voted Democratic against the state Republican sweep. The votes came almost entirely from the San Juan districts, where at this early day, as noted, dissatisfaction with Denver and its Republican leadership was already apparent. The year 1894 told a different story.

Back in 1892 Davis Waite from Aspen had run for governor with Populist and Silver Democratic backing. It was the Western Slope votes that provided him his overall winning margin, as the eastern slope contributed only a razor-thin Waite edge. After a stormy term, the easterners had had enough of Davis; not so Western Slopers, who continued to back their man, albeit with a slightly lower winning percentage. Davis lost badly, which told Western Slopers who had not realized it before, where the real political power of the state was vested. The political turmoil of the 1890s shattered the two major parties and the old loyalties. In the remaining three, nineteenth-century, gubernatorial elections the two slopes agreed on whom to back, if not on percentages. The Western Slopers continually gave more support to the silverite fusion candidates than they did to the Democrats. Because of the unpopularity of its national stand on silver, the Republican party disappeared temporarily as a Colorado political factor.³¹

In the years from 1902 to 1940 the Western Slope gained in population but still trailed well behind the eastern slope in voting strength and political significance. Only one time in the ten elections did the west-

³¹ See James E. Wright, *The Politics of Populism: Dissent in Colorado* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), for a fascinating study of this political era. Wright, however, fails to distinguish Western Slope voting patterns.



Slopers wholeheartedly backed the unsuccessful presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, but they were instrumental in the gubernatorial election of William Sweet.

erners disagree in the presidential races. That was in 1908, when they continued their emotional support for Bryan. Interestingly, their votes gave him the electoral vote of the state by a narrow margin. So the Western Slope could, in this type of tight campaign, hold the balance of power. It was only a small victory and one that did not really count because Bryan lost again nationally. If the eastern slopers did not fracture too badly, they had nothing to fear from the western upstarts.

Several other Western Slope presidential votes were interesting, if not critical to the outcome of the state. In 1920 the voters of the Western Slope gave less of a winning percentage to Warren G. Harding than did the east, showing more perspicacity, as the future would prove. In 1928, however, their underlying conservatism could not tolerate the Catholic, urban, and "wet" Al Smith and his "East Side, West Side" theme song. He lost far worse on the Western Slope than anywhere else in Colorado. After supporting Democrat Franklin Roosevelt for two elections, Western Slopers washed their hands of the New Deal and the Democrats, giving Wendell Willkie a higher percentage of votes than did the eastern slope. This was not too surprising—the slope had shown

that it could be radical in defense of its basic conservatism and individualism as early as 1892. The 1929 crash and depression severely tested convictions and forced a harsh reconsideration. With a basic "I got mine, now you get yours, but leave mine alone" philosophy, the individualists sailed along until they hit an economic shoal. Once the ship righted itself, though, Western Slopers showed no reluctance to turn their backs on their temporary radicalism and return to the conservative fold.

In the race for the governor's chair, the Western Slope, five out of twenty times, disagreed with the eastern slope, each time backing a Democrat. Only once did it matter, in 1922, when Western Slope votes elected William Sweet in a hotly contested election. Overall during these years, Western Slopers voted more strongly Democratic (eighty percent) in a state that was turning decidedly Republican as the 1930s ended. By then both slopes reflected the Republican trend, the Western on a much smaller percentage basis, however.

In the three decades from 1941 to 1972 the Western Slope played a small political role. The eastern slope urban corridor grew so fast as to almost negate the rest of the state politically, a population explosion that affected the whole east/west relationship. In the presidential elections the state and the Western Slope voted solidly Republican, except for Harry Truman in 1948 and Lyndon Johnson in 1964. The same accord was reached in the vote for governor; only once, in 1956, did the west not agree and then it could not change the outcome. Democrats and Republicans shared more equally in the spoils, the former winning five times, the latter seven.³² The political futility, except as a swing vote in a close election, was shown by the fact that in the 1972 presidential election the slope cast 81,000 votes, its highest total ever. However, this represented only 8.5 percent of the total vote in Colorado and compares unfavorably to 1900 (13 percent), 1924 (13 percent), and 1952 (11 percent). In gaining, it was losing!

Western Slopers placed little stock in third party movements, except for the Populist and the silver agitation in the 1890s. Prohibition candidates received a smattering of votes in their foredoomed quest to legislate the drinking habits of the country. The turmoil of the 1890s gave them more than their usual support; perhaps some voters felt that less drinking might improve things. The Greenback (paper money) movement of the nineteenth century received no encouragement from the mining-based Western Slope.

After the turn of the century, the labor unrest that ripped the major mining districts in Colorado was reflected in a minor rejection of the

³² Beginning with the 1958 election, all state officers were elected to four-year terms. Stephen McNichols was the first governor elected under this procedure.

two older parties and a turning to the Socialist-Labor and the Socialist parties. The Western Slope, hit hard by labor disputes, gave the Western Federation of Miners officer William Haywood, the socialist candidate for governor in 1906, 12.5 percent of its vote, far more than he received statewide. The Socialist vote remained higher than usual through 1914. Theodore Roosevelt and his Bull Moosers in 1912 made the greatest third party inroads when they corralled 21 percent of the vote. Roosevelt, always popular on the slope where he had toured and hunted, ran well ahead of the rest of the ticket. The Democrats swept everything that year. For all of Roosevelt's popularity, however, the Bull Moose program and candidates had more appeal for the eastern slope, though not enough to come up with a victory. In 1924 Robert La Follette and his progressive farm-oriented candidacy were almost as attractive to Western Slopers as Roosevelt had been twelve years before. Western Slope farmers were in trouble, as were their counterparts in the rest of the state. Since then, third parties have found slim pickings.

Even in the depths of the depression, with politicians and panaceas plentiful, socialist Norman Thomas could gather only 3.5 percent of the votes. The Communist party never found this region very supportive, nor did anyone else. Most minor party candidates usually polled less than 1 percent of the vote; only rarely did they climb even as high as Thomas's percentage in 1932. Post-World War II Western Slopers looked steadily to the two established parties for candidates and programs. Third party courtship vanished, a relic of the past.

A look backward to the first 100 years of the political history of Colorado shows that the influence of the Western Slope has been minimal. Only on a very few occasions have Western Slopers successfully influenced the outcome of an election, and only slightly more frequently have they stood in opposition to eastern slopers. However, the fact that the Western Slope has not had, and still does not have, much political clout in the presidential and gubernatorial races has not been as damaging to slope interests as might be suspected.

In securing candidates for state office the slope has done reasonably well, primarily because Democrats and Republicans like to balance their tickets geographically. From the very first, with Frederick Pitkin from Ouray through Davis Waite, Dan Thornton, Ed Johnson, and John Vanderhoof, Western Slopers have sat in the governor's chair and held lesser offices. Except for Johnson, however, the two United States senatorships, considered to be the real Colorado political plums, have not gone to Western Slopers. The ticket balancing has left them with the lesser prizes, accurately reflecting their minority status. Until redistricting realigned congressional districts and split the Western Slope, it had its own bailiwick, the Fourth District. It carried more political



Whitehouse Mountain, a part of the San Juan range, looms over Ouray.

power at this level than any other. Congressmen Edward Taylor and Wayne Aspinall represented the district from 1912 until 1973, the only gap being the period between Taylor's death in 1941 and Aspinall's election in 1948. Their seniority and experience did much to counteract the political frailty of their district. Now the Western Slope has been divided and combined with eastern districts. On this level it wields little political leverage and has no home-grown spokesmen.

Not only has the Western Slope been weak politically, it has never been able to achieve permanent unity, underscoring one of the fundamental deficiencies in advancing its interests. Durango newspaperman Art Ballantine commented in a 1974 interview that "everyone says 'Why isn't the Western Slope more of a unit? Those mountains to the north of us are a great barrier between the San Juan Basin and the Grand Junction area . . . , and of course, we possibly think of ourselves as West Slopers but we think of ourselves as 'San Juan Basinites.'" A merchant in Durango, Fred Kroeger, showed a sensitivity to a form of local snobbishness that has undermined unity. "When you go away from here [Durango], you notice it. People speak of the Western Slope. Well, I think we're on the Western Slope, but they're not thinking about us. They're thinking about everything from Ouray north, and we're Southwest Colorado or the San Juan Basin."³³

³³ Arthur Atwood Ballantine interview, 10 June 1974, Colorado Historical Society, Denver; Fred Kroeger interview, 20 September 1977.

Antagonism toward Grand Junction and rivalry among mining, tourism, and agricultural interests have created rifts, as have the struggles of town dwellers versus ruralites, old-timers versus newcomers, and environmentalists versus land users. County suspicions of neighbors' intentions and even racial/cultural prejudices, shown most blatantly in Ku Klux Klan activities in the 1920s, further tugged against unity. The touted individualism sowed seeds of disunity, too. Nor have issues touched the entire slope evenly—what disturbed one or two counties might not affect others. In general, a usually unintentional, self-generated "divide and conquer" philosophy has undermined the Western Slope. Even when united the strength was lacking; when divided the cause was hopeless.

Western Slopers did better when faced with a common enemy or issue, such as Denver and ever recurrent water problems. Even here unity was sometimes lacking, as one section played its own interests against those of another or the rest of the slope. The Western Slope has a common heritage and culture; yet it has been unable to produce the continuity of interest and leadership that would protect its interests. Until it does, a reasonable guess is that its influence will remain weak and its cause, dispirited.

In the 1970s the Western Slope, always a Colorado stepchild, has reached a divide in its history. For years it has been looked upon as the tourist back land for the urban eastern slope (more than one Western Sloper did not discourage the concept so long as not too many tourists decided to stay!). As late as the 1970 census, only Durango and Grand Junction had more than ten thousand people, and the latter ranked fifteenth in population in the state, first on the Western Slope.³⁴ A little over 7.5 percent of the population of the state lived west of the divide, down from the 9.7 percent in 1880. The Western Slope was, in fact, more urbanized then, thanks to the mining camps; today all of its counties are above the state average for percentage of rural residents.

The 1970s have heard the heralds of possible change. With another mining excitement in the making, this time coal and possibly oil shale, forecasts are being made of rapid upheavals. A look at Craig provides insight into what has already been wrought. Perhaps the region will weather the threat, as it has others, but this time it appears much less likely. Major changes in population, land use, mineral exploitation, and water utilization seem about to descend. The Western Slope has enough oil shale to meet the oil demands of the nation for an estimated eighty years, and an estimated 29 billion tons of coal reserves, in addition to oil, natural gas, and uranium.³⁵ The much ballyhooed energy boom has

forced Western Slopers to take stock of their situation. As Colorado State Senator Martin Hatcher of Gunnison commented, "the old tradition was being against everything. . . . It was being distrustful of government and everything connected with it, being distrustful of everything that came out of Denver."³⁶ Now Hatcher and others see a change, more acceptance of and willingness to work with government which, on the state level, means Denver. Former mayor of Grand Junction, Larry Kozisek, believes that the problems facing the Western Slope are so vast and beyond local capacity to solve that help has to come from the outside. He remarked that "the people in our area tend to be self-reliant and do not easily ask those outside for help." Then he was moved to add this sentiment, which would have elicited cheers from generations of Western Slopers—"We live in western Colorado because we want to. We do not want to see our communities destroyed."³⁷

Occasionally, there is a glimmer to indicate that the eastern slope understands its neighbor. When Congresswoman Pat Schroeder announced, "I represent Denver. . . . If Savery-Pot Hook and Fruitland Mesa [proposed water project areas] are suburbs of Denver, it's news to me." The *Denver Post* responded indignantly that the well being of Denver depended on a statewide economy. The editorial continued with "we believe it behooves Ms. Schroeder to take an interest in problems that affect the entire state and region, . . . Her flip, callous remark disavowing concern for anything other than Denver is excessively parochial and unworthy of the Congressperson who represents a vast agricultural area's largest center."³⁸ Congresswoman Schroeder's remarks sounded familiar; the reply in the *Post* was refreshing. A few weeks later, during a debate in Grand Junction with his gubernatorial opponent, Governor Richard Lamm recognized the divisions and called for one state instead of a Western Slope and an eastern slope. Colorado stands to gain if this can be achieved.

It is too early to say whether such change is permanent or just a political whim. In 1978 Western Slope candidates based their campaigns for the Third Congressional seat largely on local appeal. Overall, they were pretty conservative. Nancy Dick, an Aspen resident, campaigned for the lieutenant governor nomination on the Democratic ticket, and quite frankly admitted that one reason she decided to run was that the Western Slope deserved a candidate on a state ticket that was overwhelmingly composed of eastern slope residents. She commented that she was encouraged by Denverites, who probably unintentionally,

³⁴ 1970 Census of Population: General Social and Economic Characteristics—Colorado (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1972) contains the tables from which these statistics were taken.

³⁵ *Rocky Mountain Journal*, 16 August 1978, p. 37.

³⁶ *Denver Post*, 22 March 1978.

³⁷ *Rocky Mountain Journal*, 16 August 1978.

³⁸ *Denver Post*, 24 September 1978; *Durango Herald*, 20 October 1978, quoted Lamm.

but nevertheless accurately, reflected the political tokenism that has backed similar Western Slope candidates for these many years. Times and people change quickly, attitudes much more slowly.

Call it a rural paranoia, a parochial attitude, stubborn regionalism—whatever term fits the description—the Western Slope still goes its own way. *Denver Post* writer Kenneth Walsh sensed it in his March 1978 editorial entitled “A Message from the Hinterlands.” “Colorado’s Western Slope, a vast region known for its fierce individualism and conservative traditions, is showing signs of a new consciousness.” He then went on to quote Hatcher and others about the “new consciousness.” It is not so new, merely updated. The politician, writer, historian, energy expert or whoever, who elects to ignore the history and the tradition of the Western Slope and the individualism of its people, does so at his own peril. Although weak economically and politically, it does have its own way of rewarding the faithful and shunning the apostates.

To return to David Lavender’s statement that opened this article “the people of the Western Slope feel superior to lesser mortals. They like to think that while shaping the land, they have been shaped by it: by its long vistas, its angularity, even its stubbornness. It has yielded its resources grudgingly. When a person has at last wrested from it his portion of good things, he hangs on hard and is proud—this despite his turning, after the fashion of other people, to the state and federal governments for subsidies whenever the problems of mastering the land grow too much for him.”³⁹

The Western Slope must never be ignored by those who aspire to comprehend Coloradoans and their history. Historically a poor country cousin and upstaged by Denver, the Western Sloper retains more of what is cherished as western than does his urban opposite. Decrying it for its insignificant historical impact, Western Slope critics miss the pivotal point. In his novel *Red Mountain* Lavender has one of his characters speak to what it took to work and live at Red Mountain, a mining district above Ouray. “What made them go was a sort of urge, a frame of mind. One man that had it would take it up the hill with him and work his guts out, while the fellow next door with the same feeling would use it sitting on his ass scheming out ways to cheat the first one. A third fellow would save a life and the next one would kill just as fast and easy. . . . Yes, that’s right. That’s what built Red Mountain—the frame of mind of the people.”⁴⁰ That feeling, the proud individualism, the heritage are what count—David Lavender’s “mystique.”

³⁹ Lavender, *David Lavender’s Colorado*, p. 86.

⁴⁰ David Lavender, *Red Mountain* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1963), p. 517.

COLORADO



In the Shadow of Cripple Creek: Florence from 1885 to 1910

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According to a report in 1901, no place in Colorado had experienced more promising economic growth than Florence. The town had enjoyed notable advances in population, improvements, and wealth. Served by three railroads, Florence was located in a rich valley in the midst of coal and oil fields. Refineries yielded petroleum products marketed throughout the Rocky Mountain region. A smelter and several mills processed the ores of Cripple Creek, the richest gold camp on earth. As an industrial community, Florence seemed destined to outstrip Pueblo, if not Denver.¹

The promise of industrial greatness was not fulfilled. Rather than growing larger through economic diversification, as was anticipated, the community, beginning in 1901, gradually lost population.² This reflected a decline in oil production and in metallurgical activities. Subsidiary enterprises inevitably reduced operations or disappeared. Before 1910, ore reduction had shifted entirely from Florence to other communities.

Florence was for a brief time a microcosm of the industrial process that had occurred and was occurring in Pueblo, Denver, and other population centers in Colorado. Economic growth in Florence, from 1885 to 1910, can be measured in terms of specific elements or facilities. Business successes or failures can be attributed with some measure of accuracy to personalities, forces, and events.

Located thirty-two miles west of Pueblo and nine miles east of Canon City, Florence had its origin as a trading center that served farms and ranches in a broad segment of the fertile, irrigated valley of the Arkansas River. The community was laid out in 1872 by James A. McCandless, a local landowner, shortly after the Denver and Rio Grande Railway built from Pueblo to the new town of Labran, three miles from the coal banks that the carrier hoped to tap for its own fuel needs as well as a source of traffic for its profit. The officers of the narrow-gauge line sought to benefit from town development through an auxiliary, the Central Colorado Improvement Company, which acquired a large amount of land, including coal deposits. The promoters built a spur to a mine on Coal Creek, south of Labran, erected warehouses, and offered for sale business sites and residential lots. Reacting to what appeared to be a greedy monopoly, McCandless platted a rival community, which he named in honor of his young daughter.³

Florence survived, while the railroad town of Labran withered and

¹ Ben A. Block, comp., *Colorado: Its Resources, Its Men* (Denver, 1901), n.p.

² U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census, 1910: Population*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1913), 2:199.

³ H. Lee Scamehorn, *Pioneer Steelmaker in the West: The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 1872-1903* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 1, 14-15. See also (Pueblo) *Colorado Daily Chieftain*, 26 November 1874; *Florence Citizen*, 31 August 1944. The *Colorado Daily Chieftain* became on 4 November 1881 the *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, and between 1 January and 29 September became the *Pueblo Chieftain*.



After the town of Florence was established, James A. McCandless not only opened a store but also served as the first postmaster in an adobe building on the south side of main street.

died. However, the community experienced little growth for several years. It was adjacent to but derived almost no benefit from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and the Denver and Rio Grande railroads, which served the coal mining camps in the area. Eventually, the discovery of crude oil beneath the land within and adjacent to the town marked its emergence as an industrial center.⁴

Oil had been produced on a small scale near Canon City as early as 1862, only three years after Colonel Edwin Drake drilled the first oil well near Titusville, Pennsylvania. On Four Mile Creek seepages of petroleum, long known to the Ute, were discovered by a hunter-trapper named Gabriel Bowen about 1860. He sold his claim to the so-called "oil spring" to Alexander Morrison Cassiday. Cassiday, a native of Ohio and a long-time resident of Iowa who came to Colorado as a participant in the Pikes Peak Gold Rush, skimmed oil from the surface of the water, refined it in a crude still, and shipped the product, a light oil suitable for use in lamps, to Denver and other communities. Cassiday and his successor, James Murphy, dug or drilled six wells near the seepage, one to a depth of 300 to 500 feet, without appreciably enhancing the flow of oil. As much as 3,000 to 10,000 gallons of petroleum products, including lubricating oil, were produced annually until 1870, when the construction of the Kansas Pacific and Denver Pacific railroads to the capital city of Colorado opened the local market to relatively inexpensive eastern oil.⁵

⁴ The Census Bureau reported the population of Florence for the first time in 1890. That year the community contained 732 residents, fewer than the mining camps of Rockvale and Coal Creek, which recorded 741 and 1,122 inhabitants, respectively. U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census, 1890: Population*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1892), 1:79. See also *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 10 July 1885, 1 May 1887.

⁵ Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Blakely Printing Co., 1889-95), 3:399-401. See also F.V. Hayden, *Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Ter-*

While drilling for water, Alexander Morrison Cassiday accidentally found oil before he lost his cable tools down the hole. Although litigation prevented the development of the well, it was the first real find in the Florence field.



Convinced that the seepage on Four Mile Creek was fed by a vast underground reservoir, Cassiday spent the remainder of his life searching for the oil pool. After abandoning the oil spring about 1870, he formed a company to drill for oil near Canon City. Unsuccessful in that venture, he turned to coal mining, an occupation in which he had gained experience in Iowa and Colorado.⁶

In 1881 Cassiday asked a friend and occasional business partner, Isaac Canfield, to sink a well for water at the Grand Canon Coal Company mine south of Florence, along Coal Creek. Canfield, an experienced driller, struck not water but oil, a small quantity of which was removed before the hole was permanently blocked by loose cable tools.⁷ This accidental discovery prompted Cassiday and others to renew the search for oil in Fremont County.

The Arkansas Valley Oil and Land Company, organized by Cassiday with the support of Cleveland capitalists, carried out an extensive drilling campaign. In seven years the firm drilled several wells, most of which were small producers of crude oil. This success prompted the so-called "Cassiday company" to erect at Florence in 1885 a refinery with a capacity of 100 barrels of oil daily. The output was doubled



The United Oil Company operated the main oil refinery in the region.

within two years. Kerosene and lubricating oil were marketed in Denver, Pueblo, Aspen, and Leadville.⁸

Also a participant in the search for oil was the Land Investment, Coal and Oil Mining Company, formed by David G. Peabody and other Canon City businessmen in 1882. Each of two wells on Edwin Lobach's farm at Florence yielded only a few barrels per day. Unable to find oil in sufficient quantity to meet the expenses of exploration, the enterprise was forced into a reorganization. With the financial support of New York capitalists, Peabody created, as a successor corporation, the Colorado Oil Company. More wells were drilled on the Lobach property and the nearby McCandless and Tanner farms. The largest producer was a 90-barrel well. All crude oil was sold to the Cassiday company refinery.⁹

In 1887 the Arkansas Valley Oil and Land Company and the Colorado Oil Company were merged to form the United Oil Company, which brought all crude oil production and refinery operations at Florence under one management. The major force behind the combination was former United States Senator Nathaniel Peter Hill, the builder of the first successful smelter of precious metal ores in Colorado. Hill, as the president of the firm, owned or leased approximately forty thousand acres in the oil field and operated the main oil refinery in the region. Petroleum products were distributed by the Continental Oil Company, a

ritories, *Embracing Colorado: Being a Report of the Progress of Exploration for the year 1873* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Co., 1874), p. 315; biographical and historical data in Alexander Morrison Cassiday File, Petroleum History Research Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming (hereinafter cited as Cassiday File).

⁶ Biographical sketch of Alexander Morrison Cassiday by Burl J. Haight, Cassiday File.

⁷ B. F. Rockafellow, "History of Fremont County," *History of the Arkansas Valley, Colorado* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1881), p. 594; *Pueblo Daily Chieftain*, 19 January 1881.

⁸ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 3:402; James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafen, eds., *History of Colorado*, 5 vols. (Denver: State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado, 1927), 2:750; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 41 (2 January 1866), p. 10; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 27 November 1883, 15 November 1885, 1 May 1887.

⁹ Baker and Hafen, *History of Colorado*, 2:750-51; Rosemae Wells Campbell, *From Trappers to Tourists: Fremont County, Colorado, 1830-1950* (Palmer Lake, Colo.: Filter Press, 1972), p. 75-76; *Canon City Record*, 13, 16 January 1883; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 6 September 1885, 20 January 1886, 1 May 1887.

unit of the Standard Oil Trust, in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana.¹⁰

The leadership role of the United Oil Company in the Florence field was twice challenged by rival enterprises, the Florence Oil and Refining Company and the Rocky Mountain Oil Company. The Florence Oil and Refining Company, formed in January 1887 by Appleton H. Danforth, general manager of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company at Pueblo, and two Florence men, Augustus R. Gumaer and William E. Johnson, drilled numerous wells and erected a refinery. Petroleum products were distributed initially by the Continental Oil Company. That arrangement was terminated in December 1889, inaugurating an "oil war," during which the Standard Oil affiliate reduced the price of kerosene from fifteen to five cents a gallon in Denver and at other points in Colorado. After two years, the independent firm of Florence Oil and Refining halted refinery operations, devoting its energies to the production of crude oil, all of which was sold to a newcomer, the Rocky Mountain Oil Company. The Florence Oil and Refining Company resumed refining in 1895, opening a new plant that had been designed specifically to enhance its ability to compete with the United Oil Company. However, in order to avoid another ruinous price war, the corporation distributed its products through the Continental Oil Company.¹¹

Some members of the United Oil Company rebelled against the monopoly of Continental, the Standard Oil affiliate, on the distribution of petroleum products in the Rocky Mountain region. A group of Cleveland stockholders wanted to expand drilling operations at Florence, a move opposed by management in order to stabilize the price of crude oil. The dissidents also wanted to engage in the marketing of processed oil. When both goals were blocked, Dan P. Eells, an Ohio banker, solicited support for the rival Rocky Mountain Oil Company. Created in 1890, the new firm drilled two successful wells before the close of the year. The oil was stored pending construction of a refinery at Overton, six miles north of Pueblo. A four-inch pipe line twenty-eight miles in length linked the field and the plant, which had a capacity of 1,000 barrels daily. The products were illuminating oil, lubricants, and paraffin.¹²

The inauguration of operations by Rocky Mountain Oil at Overton and the marketing of petroleum products in early 1892 brought a quick

¹⁰ Campbell, *From Trappers to Tourists*, p. 76; Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 3:403-4; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 8 July 1887, 23 May 1900.

¹¹ *Florence Oil Refiner*, 19 December 1889, 2 January 1890, 25 April 1895, 2 May 1895; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 1, 31 May 1887. The *Florence Oil Refiner* changed its name to the *Oil Refiner* on 1 July 1892 and to *Florence Refiner* on 3 July 1896.

¹² Campbell, *From Trappers to Tourists*, pp. 78-79; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 9, 25 March 1890, 7 June 1890, 10 May 1890, 5 July 1891, 4 September 1891, 3, 19 January 1892, 7 September 1892; *Florence Refiner*, 15 May 1891.

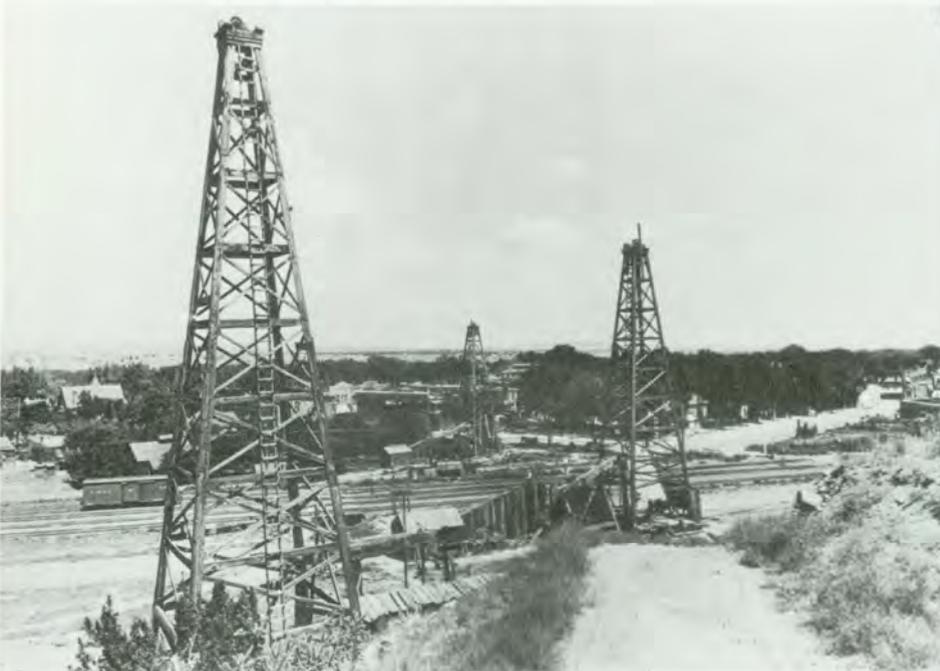


Oil well number forty-nine (above), owned by the Florence Oil and Refining Company, was one of the first wells in the field. Its yield was over one million barrels of oil in a forty-year period. The standard-gauge Denver and Rio Grande trains and the narrow-gauge Florence and Cripple Creek cars provided transportation for the oil refining as well as for the ore reduction industry.





Florence was prominent in the oil refining and the ore reduction industries before 1900. In 1910, with the closing of the last mill, Florence continued serving the surrounding area primarily as a trade center. Activity on Pikes Peak Avenue in 1910 was brisk.



response from the Continental Oil Company. Although even then in the final phase of an "oil war" with the Florence Oil and Refining Company, the Standard Oil affiliate slashed prices even further in order to undermine competition from the newcomer in the industry. At Manitou oil was offered to regular customers without charge. After eighteen months, the Rocky Mountain Oil Company, its finances in disarray, capitulated. The corporation closed its processing plant in Overton and agreed to sell its crude oil to the refineries at Florence.¹³

Bankruptcy eventually ended all hope of reviving operations at Overton. In 1898 Eells, acting for a majority of the stockholders, purchased at a tax auction the land, buildings, machinery, and oil leases of Rocky Mountain Oil. A reorganized company with the same name controlled nearly two dozen wells in the Florence field and continued to put down others in the next two years. Meanwhile, the pipe line was taken up and sold to a California corporation, and the refinery was dismantled, a portion of it going to the new oil field at Boulder. Some buildings were demolished in order to salvage timber and bricks. In 1903 the Rocky Mountain Oil Company completely ceased operation. The United Oil Company purchased the assets of the firm, including 1,600 acres of land, numerous wells, and supporting facilities.¹⁴

Under the influence of the United Oil Company, the Florence field experienced only limited growth over a period of several years. Production of crude oil was 76,295 barrels in 1887, the first year for which records were kept. Output jumped to 297,612 barrels in 1888. Modest increases were reported in the following two years before the yield reached 665,482 barrels in 1891 and peaked at 824,000 in 1892. Thereafter, the flow declined, leveling off at about 400,000 barrels for a few years at the turn of the century.¹⁵

Despite the lower levels of output, Florence remained for many years an important crude oil and refining center. Production failed to grow apace with demand, however, with the result that refined products consumed in the Rocky Mountain states and territories were drawn in ever-increasing volume from outside the region. The rapid growth of the California and the Mid-Century fields in the early years of the twentieth century overshadowed and gradually relegated to an insignificant role the Florence field and its small refineries.¹⁶

¹³ *Pueblo Chieftain*, 22 October 1892, 3 December 1892, 1 January 1893, 18 February 1893, 29 July 1893.

¹⁴ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* 66 (12 February 1898), p. 338; *Florence Daily Tribune*, 11 April 1899, 9 November 1899; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 6 June 1900, 16 February 1902, 11 May 1902, 17 June 1902, 26 September 1902, 14 February 1903, 22 July 1903, 9 August 1903, 5 September 1903.

¹⁵ U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, *Mineral Resources of the United States*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1928), 2:319.

¹⁶ The development of the California and Mid-Century fields is treated in Harold F. Williamson, Ralph L. Andraano, Arnold R. Drum, and Gilbert C. Klose, *The American Petroleum Industry: The Age of Energy, 1899-1959* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), pp. 17-28.



In 1893 a considerable amount of gold was recovered from the placers in the town of Cripple Creek, which were in the northwest part of the town on Mineral Hill.

At the high point of petroleum development in 1892, gold mining began on a large scale to the north of Florence in what became known as the Cripple Creek district on the western slope of Pikes Peak. Local capitalists, some of whom were amply supplied with earnings from the oil boom, recognized the benefits to be derived from linking the Arkansas River valley by means of a wagon road or rail line with the new mining region. Transportation was the key to reaping some of the wealth of the precious metal mines.¹⁷

Robert Womack's discovery of gold in the vicinity of Cripple Creek in January 1891 marked the opening of one of the most productive gold fields in Colorado. By the spring of 1892 the mining district had a population of more than four thousand people. The output of gold jumped from \$200,000 in 1891 to \$587,310 the following year. In 1893 it soared to \$8,750,000, and the Cripple Creek boom was under way. In the decade from 1891 to 1900, Stratton's Independence, Cresson, Golden Cycle, Granite, Ajax, Elkton, Findley, Vindicator, El Paso, Isabella, Mary McKinney, Portland, and numerous lesser-known properties yielded gold worth in aggregate \$77,274,872.¹⁸

The expansion of mining operations in the Cripple Creek district stimulated the growth of a reduction industry. Initially, mines produced

high-grade ores that were freighted by wagons to the Colorado Midland Railroad for shipment to smelters in Denver and Pueblo. Ores with gold contents that did not exceed the cost of transportation and reduction by sufficient margin to assure profits were relegated to dumps. An abundance of low-grade ores, the output of which increased as mines gained depth, demanded economical methods of treatment. The technique of stamp milling in combination with amalgamation with mercury, applied successfully elsewhere in Colorado and the West, proved inadequate because of the prevalence of gold tellurides. The problem of separating a small amount of gold from a large amount of rock at costs that afforded profits to mine owners as well as mill owners was eventually solved by the adoption of chemical reduction processes.¹⁹

In an effort to stimulate the processing of low-grade ores at costs that assured profits to mine operators, Denver capitalists David H. Moffat and Eben Smith, principal owners of the Anaconda Gold Mining Company, contracted with a Paris syndicate in 1892 to treat 15,000 tons each year. The Société Anonymé des Mines de Lexington erected the Rosebud Mill in Squaw Gulch and equipped the mill with stamps and amalgamation plates. When mercury failed to recover a reasonable percentage of metal, Moffat and Smith encouraged the Gold and Silver Extraction and Milling Company, holder of the American rights to the MacArthur-Forrest method of cyanide lixiviation, to put up the Brodie Mill. The Rosebud Mill, the first sizeable investment of foreign capital at Cripple Creek, subsequently burned to the ground, and the Brodie Mill, at least for a time, was a dismal failure.²⁰

When crushed ores were leached in cyanide solutions, too much gold was lost in the tailings. Experiments revealed that finer grinding resolved the problem. After two years of erratic operation, the Brodie Mill was remodeled and its capacity more than doubled. Reopened in 1895, the plant was a resounding success, handling ores at costs substantially below prevailing smelter treatment charges.²¹

The initial shortcomings of the Brodie Mill focused attention on lixiviation in chloride solutions as a method for processing low-grade ores. Captain J.R. De Lamar, Charles M. MacNeill, and Edward Holden erected a chlorination plant in the closing weeks of 1894. The Lawrence Gold Extraction Company lowered treatment charges and

¹⁷ Histories of Cripple Creek include Marshall Sprague, *Money Mountain: The Story of Cripple Creek Gold* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953); Robert Guilford Taylor, *Cripple Creek Mining District* (Palmer Lake, Colo.: Filter Press, 1973); and Catherine Rinker, "History of Cripple Creek, Colorado, 1891-1917" (Master's thesis, University of Colorado, Boulder, 1934). The growth of transportation linking Cripple Creek with Florence and Colorado Springs is discussed at length in Tivis E. Wilkins, *A History of the Florence & Cripple Creek and Golden Circle Railroads*, Colorado Railroad Annual No. 13 (Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1976).

¹⁸ Wilbur Fisk Stone, ed., *History of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918-19), 1:276-79, 281.

¹⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 62 (19 September 1896), pp. 267-68; *Mining and Scientific Press* 102 (18 February 1911), p. 263, 110 (23 January 1915), p. 136.

²⁰ *Mining and Scientific Press* 110 (23 January 1915), p. 135; 112 (22 January 1916), p. 126; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 53 (25 June 1892), p. 671; 54 (6 August 1892), p. 133, (26 November 1892), p. 517, (3 December 1892), p. 542; 55 (11 March 1893), p. 228; 56 (9 September 1893), p. 273, (16 September 1893), p. 299; 57 (24 March 1894), p. 267; 58 (1 December 1894), p. 516; 74 (16 August 1902), p. 226.

²¹ *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 126, and *Mineral Industry* 3 (1894), p. 648; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 90 (24 December 1910), p. 1251. See also *Engineering and Mining Journal* 57 (24 March 1894), p. 267; 59 (9 February 1895), p. 132; 62 (8 August 1896), p. 132, (12 September 1896), p. 253; 63 (16 January 1897), p. 73; 74 (16 August 1902), p. 226.

claimed recovery of a high percentage of assay values. The mill, designed by John E. Rothwell, an engineer who was destined to play a key role in the evolution of the barrel chlorination process, remained in operation little more than a year before it burned down in December 1895.²²

The early facilities for the chemical reduction of Cripple Creek ores were handicapped by conditions peculiar to the remoteness and the topography of the mining district. Mill and dump sites were often too small for efficient operation. Water and labor were generally in short supply. Fuel, particularly coal, had to be hauled into the district from El Paso or Fremont counties, and the cost was high because demand usually exceeded supply. By contrast, land, water, and fuel, in addition to labor, abounded in the valleys of the Fountain and Arkansas rivers. Obviously, ore reduction could be carried on more economically at lower elevations if only a reliable mode of transportation linked the gold mines with Colorado Springs or Florence.²³

Businessmen in Florence recognized the value of regular freight services between their town and the gold camp. James McCandless and Isaac Canfield assumed the lead in creating the Florence and Cripple Creek Free Road Company to build a highway to the mines. The enormous potential for lucrative traffic quickly caused an expansion of the scheme. In February 1892 the promoters organized concurrent with the wagon road project the Florence, Cripple Creek and State Line Railroad Company for the purpose of laying steel rails to Fremont, adjacent to the future community of Cripple Creek.²⁴

The Florence residents enlisted the support of D.H. Moffat, who, because of interests in the Anaconda and the Victor Mine on Bull Hill, recognized the importance of transportation to the mining district. In April 1893 Moffat's associates, including Eben Smith, George A. Ross-Lewin, and A.B. Roeder, joined McCandless and William E. Johnson as incorporators of the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad Company. To that enterprise the Florence, Cripple Creek and State Line Railroad surrendered its right-of-way and other assets. Construction of a three-foot gauge line began in December 1893, and the first train entered the town of Cripple Creek on 1 July of the following year. The new carrier also served the mining communities of Altman, Anaconda, Arequa, Barry, and Victor.²⁵

²² *Mining and Scientific Press* 114 (5 May 1917), p. 614; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 58 (18 August 1894), p. 157, (25 August 1894), p. 181, (15 December 1894), p. 565; 59 (9 February 1895), p. 132, (18 May 1895), p. 469; 60 (28 December 1895), p. 620.

²³ Wilkins, *A History of the Florence & Cripple Creek*, pp. 15-16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21; Campbell, *From Trappers to Tomcats*, pp. 79-80; *Oil Refiner*, 18 July 1894.



In 1893 the Cripple Creek mining boom was underway—from 1891 to 1900, the properties in the area yielded gold worth in aggregate \$77,274,872. Bull Hill (above) and Raven Hill (below) were two of the areas in the Cripple Creek-Victor mining district that produced a large volume of low-grade ore.





Three railroad lines served the Cripple Creek-Victor district in the early days, emphasizing the importance of transportation to development.

Moffat's participation in the railroad venture was motivated by the need for a means of shipping a large volume of ores to the Arkansas valley for treatment. The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad and Reduction Works Construction Company was incorporated by Moffat's friends on 17 April 1894. That firm, whose name was later changed to the Florence Construction Company, proposed to build and equip the railroad and to erect an ore reduction plant at Florence. The projected mill, in addition to generating traffic for the narrow-gauge line, was designed to process economically the increasing volume of low-grade ores produced by the Anaconda and Victor mines.²⁶

Construction of the mill commenced in November 1894 on a site north of the river, two miles from Florence and adjacent to the Florence and Cripple Creek right-of-way. The plant was designed by Philip Argall, a prominent Denver mining engineer who had been instrumental in solving the technical problem that prevented the successful operation of the Brodie Mill when it opened in the mining district. Impressed by Argall's knowledge of the cyanide process, mine owners asked him to study the feasibility of erecting a large plant at Cripple Creek. Argall insisted that requirements for land, water, fuel, and labor favored a valley location. Acting on that conclusion, Moffat and his partners hired Argall to build a mill utilizing advanced equipment and techniques in applying the MacArthur-Forrest system of cyanide lixiviation.²⁷

The new plant, owned and operated by the Metallic Extraction

²⁶ Wilkins, *A History of the Florence & Cripple Creek*, p. 28.

²⁷ *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 126; *Mineral Industry* 6 (1898), p. 369.



The Economic Mill at Eclipse used the controversial "Beam process."

Company, began operation in May 1895 with Argall as general manager. Every twenty-four hours approximately one hundred tons of ores from the Anaconda and Victor mines, much of which contained less than two ounces of gold per ton, was sampled (assayed), dried, crushed to forty mesh, and leached in large tanks with cyanide solution. Gold was precipitated with zinc shavings, refined, and shipped to the United States Mint in Denver. Treatment costs were as low as \$3.50 per ton and, according to one source, the proportion of gold recovered from the ore was as high as 97.5 percent. This was probably exaggerated. Refinements in the process and additions to the mill raised the capacity to 300 tons daily, providing direct employment for 150 men at the community of Cyanide and for another 250 miners and people in service industries in Cripple Creek and Florence.²⁸

The Metallic Mill was one of eight reduction plants located at Florence during the boom days of Cripple Creek. In fact, the first mill was constructed on the bluffs north of the Arkansas River by the United States Reduction Company, an association of Chicago investors, in 1894. A bromide process failed to extract a reasonable percentage of gold, and within less than eight months the enterprise passed into bankruptcy. The buildings were subsequently leased to the American Cyanide Gold and Silver Recovery Company, promoter of what was known as the dioxide-cyanide process. The plant was remodeled and reopened, but remained in operation only a brief time. It could not match the performance of the Metallic Mill with the MacArthur-Forrest process.²⁹

The Economic Mill remained idle until 1899, when the Cripple

²⁸ *Mineral Industry* 6 (1898), pp. 368-73; *Florence Refiner*, 19 September 1895, 16 March 1899. The evolution of the reduction process employed by Argall in the Metallic Mill is discussed in *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 126.

²⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 58 (17 November 1894), p. 472, (29 December 1894), p. 612; 59 (12 January 1895), p. 36, (18 May 1895), p. 469; 60 (14 September 1895), p. 257, (30 November 1895), p. 520; 62 (25 July 1896), p. 84. See also *Oil Refiner*, 12 June 1894, 25 July 1895, 12 September 1895, 8 November 1895.



The Elkaton Mill operated c. 1900.

Creek-Beam Company purchased the site and occupied a portion of the plant. The new owner installed the so-called "Beam process," the invention of A.M. Beam, an experienced metallurgist, and the property of the newly organized Beam Furnace Company of Denver. The firm claimed its unique method of treating ore extracted values in excess of gold identified by accepted methods of assaying. Critics, including some prominent mining engineers, denounced the process as a fraud designed to deceive ignorant and unwary investors. The plant, as predicted, was a failure. The promoters sold the mill to some of the original Chicago stockholders who tried without success to modify the machin-

The El Paso Mill treated up to 100 tons of ore a day.



ery in order to employ more traditional methods of chemical ore reduction.³⁰

West of the Beam Mill, and between it and the Metallic Mill, a group of Saint Louis investors erected the Union Mill. The chlorination plant employed a method of lixiviation that was widely hailed at the time as superior to cyanidation. The new mill, completed in 1900, was the largest of its kind in Colorado.³¹ An outgrowth of the Arequa Gulch Mill, the Union Mill was operated by the Colorado Ore Sampling and Reduction Company at Elkton in the mining district. Two small plants, one chloride and the other cyanide, were, by 1900, too small to handle the increasing volume of low-grade ores produced in the area. Convinced that conditions in the Arkansas valley were better suited to milling activities, John T. Milliken, president of the enterprise, organized with the same stockholders the Union Gold Extraction Company. John E. Rothwell, a Denver consulting engineer, was retained to design and oversee construction of the plant. Ore processing was initially restricted to 300 tons a day. This was advanced to 400 tons. Ores came principally from the Golden Cycle, Vindicator, and Anaconda properties, all of which were controlled in 1900 by Milliken and his Missouri associates.³²

Immediately to the east of the Union Mill, the Dorcas Mining and Development Company erected a 100-ton reduction plant. The principal owners were F.B. and J.M. Hower, residents of Buffalo, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio, respectively. The mill commenced operation in March 1901, using the Begeer adaptation of cyanide lixiviation. Over a period of three years, the capacity was increased in steps to 200 tons a day.³³

Other reduction plants were constructed south of the Arkansas River. The Page, El Paso, and Kilton mills were located on land purchased from the United Oil Company along the branch line of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad linking Florence and Coal Creek. The Rocky Mountain Smelter was adjacent to the Page Mill.

³⁰ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 62 (12 September 1896), p. 251; 63 (23 January 1897), p. 96, (13 March 1897), p. 263; 64 (2 October 1897), p. 391, (13 November 1897), p. 574, (20 November 1897), p. 603, (27 November 1897), p. 634, (4 December 1897), pp. 668-69, (25 December 1897), pp. 751, 754; 67 (6 May 1899), p. 523; 72 (13 July 1901), p. 47; *Mining and Scientific Press* 81 (4 August 1900), p. 127, (17 November 1900), p. 537; 84 (19 April 1902), p. 223, (14 June 1902), p. 327; 85 (4 October 1902), p. 195. See also *Florence Refiner*, 21 April 1899, 2 August 1899, 13 April 1900; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 21 June 1901, 1 July 1901.

³¹ *Cripple Creek Daily Press*, 18 May 1900.

³² *Engineering and Mining Journal* 71 (8 June 1901), pp. 721-24; *Florence Refiner*, 30 January 1900, 22 February 1901; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 2 May 1900. See also *Engineering and Mining Journal* 69 (27 January 1900), p. 118, (23 June 1900), p. 748; 70 (3 November 1900), p. 528; *Mining and Scientific Press* 81 (29 September 1900), pp. 377-78, (10 November 1900), p. 524.

³³ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 69 (5 May 1900), p. 537; 70 (29 December 1900), p. 768; 73 (4 January 1902), p. 13; 74 (18 October 1902), p. 526; 75 (3 January 1903), pp. 23-24; *Mining and Scientific Press* 81 (17 November 1900), p. 537; 82 (20 April 1901), p. 193, (11 May 1901), p. 221; 84 (31 May 1902), p. 299; 86 (7 February 1903), p. 93; 87 (21 November 1903), p. 343; 89 (2 July 1904), p. 12; *Florence Refiner*, 20 October 1899; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 26 April 1900.

The London and Cripple Creek Reduction Company, an English corporation formed in 1896, constructed the Page Mill in anticipation of extracting gold from ores by leaching with a solution in which cyanide was combined with other chemicals. The secret process, an invention of Colonel James A. Page, proved to be worthless. Following Page's death in 1900, the property, after major alterations, was owned by the Florence Milling and Leasing Company. The plant, heavily damaged by fire in March 1905, was not rebuilt.³⁴

The El Paso Mill, a Philadelphia enterprise, was erected in 1897. The El Paso Reduction Company, after operating a chlorination plant at Gillette in the mining district for two years, decided to relocate at Florence. The move was prompted by the availability of fuel and labor in the valley. John E. Rothwell designed and Stearns-Roger Manufacturing Company erected the plant. Operations commenced in September. The mill utilized the standard barrel chlorination process and treated up to 100 tons of ore a day.³⁵

The Kilton Gold Reduction Company constructed a mill in 1897. That firm operated a sampling works and a small chlorination plant at Boulder. In addition to a 50-ton bromide unit designed by Franz Cazin, a Denver consulting engineer, the corporation built a sampler at Goldfield in the mining district. Within little more than one year, the properties were purchased by the National Gold Extraction Company, a Philadelphia enterprise whose stockholders owned chlorination plants at Colorado City, immediately west of Colorado Springs. The successor firm carried out major improvements and increased the capacity of the mill to 180 tons per day.³⁶

In contrast to several mills, only one smelter was located at Florence. The Rocky Mountain Smelting Company was incorporated in 1897. The officers were C. Foster, William E. Johnson, William Kopfer, and George Ross-Lewin. The composition of this group indicated that the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad may have had, at least initially, some interest in the venture. Not until 1900 did William E. and Wilbur K. Johnson raise enough money to erect a pyritic smelter. The funds came mainly from Iowa investors. The city of Florence con-



Rubble is all that remains of the Rocky Mountain Smelting Company, operator of the only smelter in Florence.

tributed the land and local citizens subscribed \$10,000 to the capital stock.³⁷

Completed on 29 December 1900, the smelter was immediately plagued by technical problems. Sustained operation was impossible for a time because the furnace "froze up" at least once a week. Remodeling solved the problem, but the plant had to be shut down for six months while work was in progress. Within less than two years mounting debts forced the company into bankruptcy. Financial difficulties were attributed in a large measure to the inability of the firm to secure long-term contracts with mine operators for ample supplies of ores because of the competition from plants in Canon City, Pueblo, and Denver.³⁸

Eventually, the assets of the company were sold to a representative of the majority stockholders who, in turn, conveyed the property to the Colorado Smelting and Refining Company. However, the plant was not immediately reactivated. It remained idle until 1916, when it was leased by the River Smelting and Refining Company. The processing of gold and silver in combination with copper, lead, and zinc ores continued

³⁴ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 61 (6 June 1896), p. 537; (20 June 1896), p. 587; 63 (13 March 1897), p. 264; (20 March 1897), p. 288; (17 April 1897), p. 384; (12 June 1897), p. 609; 73 (14 June 1902), p. 841; 77 (21 April 1904), p. 660; 79 (16 March 1905), pp. 542, 550-51; *Mining and Scientific Press* 88 (7 May 1904), p. 320; 89 (2 July 1904), p. 12; (19 November 1904), p. 346; *Florence Refiner*, 20 November 1896, 5 January 1897, 10 May 1900.

³⁵ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 63 (17 April 1897), p. 384; 64 (4 September 1897), p. 285; 65 (26 February 1898), p. 260; 72 (3 August 1901), p. 147; *Florence Refiner*, 11 December 1896, 5 January 1897, 24 August 1897, 24 September 1897, 12 July 1899.

³⁶ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 63 (12 June 1897), p. 609; 64 (14 August 1897), p. 195; (25 December 1897), p. 764; 67 (17 June 1899), p. 719; *Mining and Scientific Press* 80 (21 April 1900), p. 435; (12 May 1900), p. 525; 81 (17 November 1900), p. 537; *Florence Refiner*, 4 June 1897, 30 November 1897, 5 May 1899, 20 June 1899, 23 August 1899, 8 May 1900; *Canon City Record*, 30 April 1908; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 8 May 1900.

³⁷ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 63 (23 January 1897), p. 97; *Mining and Scientific Press* 81 (11 August 1900), p. 160; (8 September 1900), p. 288; *Florence Refiner*, 19 January 1897; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 3, 21 May 1900.

³⁸ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 71 (22 June 1901), p. 792; 74 (12 July 1902), p. 58; 75 (21 March 1903), p. 457; 76 (8 August 1903), p. 209; *Mining and Scientific Press* 82 (12 January 1901), p. 41; (22 June 1901), p. 286; 83 (31 August 1901), p. 92; 85 (12 July 1902), p. 26; 86 (21 March 1903), p. 188; *Florence Daily Citizen*, 31 December 1901; *Florence Daily Tribune*, 29 December 1900, 4 February 1901; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 12 July 1901.

until late 1920. The post-World War I slump in prices of base metals led to the permanent suspension of operations.³⁹

The mills in Florence, unlike the smelter, had no difficulty, at least for several years, in obtaining ample supplies of ores. As a reduction center, the community was dependent on the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad. That carrier, having tapped the traffic of the mining district well ahead of its rival, the Midland Terminal Railway, controlled the major share of shipments in and out of Cripple Creek area.

The two lines merged in 1899, when Moffat and his associates sold most of their milling, mining, and transportation interests in the Florence-Cripple Creek region to Denver capitalists. The narrow-gauge and the Midland Terminal roads were placed under the control of the Denver and Southwestern Railway. That holding company assigned to the Florence and Cripple Creek primary responsibility for shipments out of the district. For that reason, most of the mines sent their milling-grade ores to the Arkansas valley.⁴⁰

The monopoly held by Florence on chemical ore reduction was eventually challenged by Colorado City, a "suburb" of Colorado Springs. The Colorado-Philadelphia Reduction Company erected in 1896 along the right-of-way of the Midland Terminal line a chloride plant, which was operated in conjunction with the Cripple Creek Sampling and Ore Company, located on Bull Hill in the mining district. Charles M. MacNeill, Spencer Penrose, and Charles Leaming Tutt were the principal owners of both enterprises. The mill did not prosper until 1901, when the Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek District Railroad, known as the Short Line, completed a standard-gauge track to the mines. Many of the owners, reacting to the long-standing monopoly of Florence and Cripple Creek on ore shipments, not only invested in but also transferred their business to the new carrier, which served the mill town east of Pikes Peak.⁴¹

Economical transportation and easy access to mines simulated milling activities at Colorado City. MacNeill, Penrose, and Tutt organized the Standard Reduction and Smelting Company, which built a large chloride mill in 1901. The Portland Gold Mining Company erected a similar plant in 1902 to treat its own ores. That year the Telluride Reduction Company constructed a large bromide mill. The new facilities

boosted the milling capacity of the region to the point where demand for ores exceeded supply. Simultaneously, the product of the mines in Cripple Creek declined in gold content, and some of the mills could not treat low-grade ores at a profit.⁴²

The leading mill entrepreneurs acted to stabilize the industry in the spring of 1901. MacNeill, Penrose, and Tutt joined with W.K. Gillette of the Metallic Extraction Company and John T. Milliken of the Union Gold Extraction Company to form the United States Reduction and Refining Company. The new corporation controlled six mills, four of which quickly ceased operations. Closed were the Colorado-Philadelphia in Colorado City and the El Paso, Metallic, and National plants at Florence. Only the Standard and Union mills, the newest and the largest in the region, remained active. Milling capacity, at least for the moment, was brought in line with the output of Cripple Creek ores.⁴³

With the curtailment of milling operations, cyanidation was largely abandoned as a process for treating Cripple Creek ores. The Metallic Mill was closed in part because its machinery, although only seven years old, was obsolete and also because most mine owners preferred chlorination over the rival method of lixiviation. The small Dorcas Mill continued to employ a cyanide process of ore reduction until it was destroyed by a fire, the result of faulty electrical wiring in March 1906.⁴⁴

The almost exclusive application of chloride to Cripple Creek ores ended the initial phase of what was called a "process war." Over a period of about a decade, individuals and enterprises had advocated, at one time or another, lixiviation by bromide, cyanide, and chloride as the most efficient method of extracting gold from ore. Bromide was quickly abandoned. Cyanide, employed on a large scale by Philip Argall for the Moffat syndicate, enjoyed a brief popularity; however, it was expensive and incapable of capturing a reasonable percentage of gold values. Chlorination, important modifications of which were applied at Florence and Colorado City by John E. Rothwell, was credited with recovering a high proportion of the precious metal at a lower cost.⁴⁵

³⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 77 (10 March 1904), p. 411; 78 (15 September 1904), p. 441; 80 (16 December 1905), p. 1133; *Mining and Scientific Press* 96 (4 April 1908), p. 445; 99 (4 September 1909), p. 314; *Florence Daily Citizen*, 16 October 1916, 27 March 1917, 28 September 1917, 20 January 1936; U.S., Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, *Mineral Resources of the United States, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 593.

⁴⁰ Campbell, *From Trappers to Tourists*, pp. 80-82; Wilkins, *A History of the Florence & Cripple Creek*, pp. 101, 103, 113.

⁴¹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 63 (20 March 1897), p. 288, (15 May 1897), p. 487; 64 (25 September 1897), p. 374; 66 (8 October 1898), pp. 425-26; *Mining and Scientific Press* 81 (25 August 1900), p. 224; 91 (16 September 1905), pp. 197-98.

⁴² *Engineering and Mining Journal* 69 (31 March 1900), p. 388; 71 (9 March 1901), p. 313; 72 (28 September 1901), p. 408; 73 (12 February 1902), p. 55, (21 June 1902), p. 873; *Mining and Scientific Press* 80 (24 February 1900), p. 210, (3 March 1900), p. 238; 82 (16 March 1901), p. 133; 84 (19 April 1902), pp. 223-24, (26 April 1902), p. 340; 86 (24 January 1903), p. 60.

⁴³ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 71 (15 June 1901), p. 762, (29 June 1901), p. 833; 72 (6 July 1901), p. 17, (3 August 1901), p. 147; 74 (9 August 1902), p. 196; *Mining and Scientific Press* 83 (5 October 1901), p. 145; 87 (14 November 1903), p. 326; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 18 June 1901.

⁴⁴ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 81 (31 March 1906), p. 632, (7 April 1906), p. 677; 83 (26 January 1907), p. 203; *Mining and Scientific Press* 92 (24 March 1906), p. 208.

⁴⁵ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 62 (19 September 1896), p. 648; 59 (18 May 1895), p. 461; 60 (21 September 1895), p. 270; 64 (4 December 1897), p. 663; 75 (28 March 1903), 493; 82 (28 July 1906), p. 164; 83 (6 April 1907), p. 677; *Mining and Scientific Press* 102 (27 May 1911), p. 715; *Mineral Industry* 6 (1898), p. 339.

The popularity of chlorination was brief. Within about ten years it was superceded by an improved cyanide process, which proved to be more readily adaptable to the ever-lower grades of ores issuing from mines at Cripple Creek. The revival of the once-discredited method of lixiviation came about mainly because of the persistence of Philip Argall in advocating improvements in reduction methods pioneered at the Metallic Mill.⁴⁶

The Golden Cycle Mining Company offered Argall an opportunity to test his innovations in ore reduction. That enterprise wanted a plant of its own in order to avoid the allegedly exorbitant treatment charges of the United States Reduction and Refining Company. As early as 1903 John T. Milliken, the president of the corporation, proposed the construction of a chloride mill at Colorado City. After the Telluride plant went into receivership, Milliken looked into the possibility of buying the property and converting it from bromide to another process. That plan was abandoned, then resurrected, and Argall was commissioned to alter the machinery and equipment to employ the most advanced cyanide process for extracting gold from the Cripple Creek ores.⁴⁷

The remodeled mill began processing ores from the Golden Cycle and Findley mines in 1907. The capacity of the plant, initially 700 tons a day, allowed it to handle with ease the output of the Milliken properties and to solicit ores for custom milling from other mines. The obviously superior cyanide process drew business away from the established mills at Florence and Colorado City.⁴⁸

The United States Reduction and Refining Company could not overcome the advantages its rival derived from the application of modern technology and volume treatment of ores. Cyanidation was more economical than chlorination and better suited to extracting gold from the ever-lower grades of ores shipped from Cripple Creek. Recognizing this handicap, MacNeill, Penrose, and Tutt closed the Union Mill in 1907 but reopened it because of increased production in the mining district in response to lower treatment charges. When the Portland Gold Mining Company and Stratton's Independence Company erected cyanide mills on their mining properties, the reduced flow of ores to Florence caused the shutdown of the one remaining mill in the city for the second and the last time in 1910.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 90 (24 December 1910), pp. 1251-52; *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 127.

⁴⁷ *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 127; 87 (17 October 1903), p. 259; (7 November 1903), p. 309; *Engineering and Mining Journal* 77 (21 January 1904), p. 135; 79 (18 May 1905), p. 964; 80 (20 August 1905), p. 367; (23 December 1905), p. 1183; 81 (10 February 1906), p. 296; 83 (16 March 1907), p. 541; 84 (3 August 1907), p. 225; 85 (25 January 1908), p. 219.

⁴⁸ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 84 (3 August 1907), p. 225; (14 September 1907), p. 513; 85 (25 January 1908), pp. 218-19.

⁴⁹ *Mining and Scientific Press* 112 (22 January 1916), p. 128; 97 (18 July 1908), p. 73; *Engineering and Mining*



The Pueblo Smelter treated mainly high-grade ore in the mid-1890s.

Two years later, the Portland Mill at Colorado City converted to cyanide, and the Standard Mill, unable to secure adequate supplies of ores because of its obsolete technology, ceased operations. The United States Reduction and Refining Company decided not to change to the more efficient process, perhaps because MacNeill, Penrose, and Tutt were well aware that the industry already suffered from excessive capacity. The closing of the last chlorination plant in the region ended the process war that had been waged over a period of nearly two decades at Colorado City and Florence.⁵⁰

When Argall inaugurated the cyanide operations at the Metallic Mill in 1894, the treatment charge had been about fifteen dollars a ton. Only ores containing more than one and one-half ounces of gold were processed, the metal being worth \$20 an ounce. At the time, the output of the district was mainly high-grade ores, about 95 percent of which were shipped to smelters in Denver and Pueblo. Values gradually declined. In 1910 low-grades predominated, and less than 10 percent of the output

Journal 83 (16 February 1907), p. 343; 84 (31 August 1907), pp. 409-10; (30 November 1907), p. 1042; (21 December 1907), p. 1185; 88 (17 July 1909), p. 133; *Canon City Record*, 14 November 1907; *Cripple Creek Times*, 29 December 1910.

⁵⁰ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 92 (29 July 1911), p. 195; (16 December 1911), p. 1172; 95 (11 January 1913), p. 1091; *Mining and Scientific Press* 103 (9 December 1911), pp. 753, 756; 104 (17 February 1912), p. 295.

was treated by smelters. By that date, the gold content of milling ores had fallen to as little as one-half an ounce per ton, which required low-cost reduction if owners of mines as well as mills were to profit from the product of the mines.⁵¹

The cost of chemical reduction fell 50 percent in the years from 1895 to 1901, a trend that continued for several years. Economies were derived from the adoption of cyanide and chloride lixiviation. The latter appeared for a time to be the better process. Cyanidation regained popularity after the Golden Cycle Mill lowered treatment costs well beyond the level attainable by the rival process. Subsequently, plants located in the mining district brought down treatment costs to less than \$1.50 a ton. Without such dramatic reductions, most of the mines of the Cripple Creek district could not have continued operating.⁵²

The triumph of cyanidation marked the end of milling activities at Florence. The Union Mill was the last of the seven, chemical, reduction plants that had been erected on the outskirts of the community. Five had fallen victim to fires, a fate suffered by many mills because of the oil- and coal-fired furnaces, or roasters, used to remove sulphur from ores prior to lixiviation. One plant was idled because of defective technology. The last unit was dismantled and its tailings dump treated with cyanide to retrieve values unclaimed by the chloride process.⁵³

Milling was a transitory industry in Florence. The city gained prominence as a reduction center because it was the southern terminus of the first railroad into the Cripple Creek district. At the lower elevation were ample resources for treating low-grade ores. The success of the Metallic Mill of the Moffat syndicate attracted investment capital to Florence from Chicago, Saint Louis, Philadelphia, and other cities to underwrite the construction of additional plants and subsidiary enterprises.

The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad, the major stimulus of milling activities in the Arkansas valley, became in time the chief handicap of the industry that it had fostered. The narrow-gauge carrier could not compete with the Short Line, which moved the ores of Cripple Creek with greater ease and less cost to Colorado City. That community

became the leading reduction center in the region because mine owners, many of whom were residents of Colorado Springs, invested portions of their earnings in the railroad and in new mills that applied advanced methods to extract at a profit a very small amount of gold from a very large quantity of ore.

Industrial greatness eluded Florence. The community did not achieve the status for which it seemed destined in 1901. Inadequate transportation, investment capital, and entrepreneurship slowed and eventually brought business expansion to a halt in the initial decade of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the town played a key role in the economic growth of the area. It was for many years the principal source of crude oil and refined products for Colorado. Local reduction plants were major contributors to the development of the technology that assured the profitable treatment of low-grade gold ores and perpetuated the prosperity of Cripple Creek long after most of the high-grade deposits in the district had been exhausted. With the demise of milling and the decline of petroleum enterprises, Florence, as a trade center, provided diverse goods and services that sustained agricultural, mining, and related activities in eastern Fremont and contiguous counties.

⁵¹ *Engineering and Mining Journal* 90 (24 December 1910), pp. 1251-52; *Boulder Daily Camera*, 16 November 1911.

⁵² *Engineering and Mining Journal* 90 (24 December 1910), pp. 1251-52; *Mining Press* 110 (23 January 1916), pp. 135-38.

⁵³ *Mining and Scientific Press* 102 (3 June 1911), p. 769; 110 (8 May 1915), p. 740, (15 May 1915), p. 770, (22 May 1915), p. 808; 111 (3 July 1915), p. 24; 112 (6 May 1916), p. 684, (20 May 1916), p. 766; 113 (2 December 1916), p. 821; *Florence Daily Citizen*, 2, 14 February 1914, 28 March 1914, 16, 17, 18, 28 November 1916, 7 December 1916, 24 July 1917.

All of the properties of the United States Reduction and Refining Company were placed in the control of a receiver in 1915 and sold at foreclosure for \$100,000 the following year to Spencer Penrose, who assigned them to the Golden Cycle Mining and Reduction Company. The Standard, Colorado-Philadelphia, and Union mills, along with all other assets, were sold, in 1919, to Morse Brothers Machinery and Supply Company in Denver for salvageable machinery, structural steel, iron, pipes, wire, lumber, and other materials.