



Joseph Harney and friend.

Czechs and Slovaks in Colorado, 1860-1920

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Czechoslovakia is located in the strategic heartland of central Europe. Not until 1918, however, did it become a unified, independent nation, when World War I gave Czech and Slovak nationalists the opportunity to throw off the yoke of Austro-Hungarian domination. For almost four centuries Czechoslovakia's largest provinces—the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia and their eastern neighbor Slovakia—had been under the control of the Austrian Hapsburg monarchy and a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Slovakia had experienced Hungarian (Magyar) control for 800 years before it finally gained independence. The Czechs and Slovaks, West Slavs who comprise just two of the ten major Slavic nationalities, are closely related ethnically and linguistically. Yet, for a millennium preceding the birth of their republic, they had been politically and culturally separate. Deprived of self rule, subjected to the suppressive racial policies of Germanization and Magyarization, economically exploited, and obliged to serve in Austrian and Hungarian armies, these particular Slavic peoples had a multitude of reasons for leaving their homelands.¹

* For research assistance, Dr. Kedro is indebted to Andrew Kutes of Denver, whose articles on Colorado Czechs and Slovaks were published during 1976 in the Chicago-based, Slovak language weekly, *Peoples' News*.

¹ Dozens of accounts in English treat Czech and Slovak history. For condensed, background reading see Kamil Krofta, *A Short History of Czechoslovakia* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1934); Thomas S. Harrison, *Czechoslovakia in European History*, 2d ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953); Joseph M. Kirschbaum, *Slovakia: Nation at the Crossroads of Europe* (New York: R. Speller, 1960); Joseph A. Mikus, *Slovakia and the Slovaks* (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1977). A nineteenth-century view by a Bohemian patriot, published in a midwestern American magazine, is L. J. Palda, "Bohemia's Struggle for Home Rule," *Midland Monthly* [Des Moines, Iowa] 5 (February, March 1896):128-39, 275-79. A guide to early English language writings on the Czechs is Thomas Capek and Anna Vostrovsky Capek, *Bohemian (Cech) Bibliography: A Finding List of Writings in English Relating to Bohemia and the Czechs* (New York: Fleming H. Revell [1918]).

For broader investigations of the Slavic nationalities, see Marija Gimbutas, *The Slavs* (New York: Praeger, 1971); Roger Portal, *The Slavs: A Cultural and Historical Survey of the Slavonic Peoples*, trans. Patrick Evans (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). An exceptional collection of published works on Slavic settlement in the United States, with many uncataloged primary sources pertaining to Colorado, is found in the Slavic Heritage Collection, Southern Colorado State University Library, Pueblo, Colorado.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the early 1900s, Czechs migrated to the United States in increasingly large numbers. They were followed by a mass movement of Slovaks from the 1880s through the First World War. Some of these immigrants eventually discovered political freedom and economic opportunity in Colorado. Often they came to the Rocky Mountains from older ethnic communities located in American cities like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Saint Louis, and Omaha. Others migrated from numerous Slovak centers of settlement in Pennsylvania and New Jersey or from the heavily Czech populated states of Iowa, Nebraska, and Texas.² On occasion they moved directly from Austria-Hungary to Colorado. The economic inducements to the region included mining coal and precious metals, working for the Denver and Pueblo smelters, and farming on the Colorado high plains. Early Czech settlers were generally well educated and brought with them a skill, a trade, or some business acumen. Slovaks of hardy peasant stock came from a province rich in mineral resources and agricultural lands.

While only of secondary importance, the environment also played some part in Czech and Slovak settlement in Colorado. Prague, the Czech and Bohemian capitol city, and Bratislava, the Slovak capitol, stand in close proximity to scenic and unspoiled natural terrain. To the west of Prague is the Bohemian Forest, a thickly wooded, mountainous region that separates Czechoslovakia from Bavaria. In eastern Slovakia, the Tatra Mountains, although less titanic, bear a striking resemblance to Colorado's Rocky Mountains. When asked today why they chose to settle in Colorado, many first-generation Czech- and Slovak-Americans will reply, "It reminds me of my homeland."³

Czechoslovakia was occupied and partitioned by Nazi Germany in 1939; it established a Communist government in 1948. These events contributed to migration to the United States, including Colorado, but they are beyond the scope of this study.

² Writings on Czechs and Slovaks in the United States are extensive. For example, see Thomas Capek, *Czechs (Bohemians) in America: A Study of Their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic, and Religious Life* (New York: Houghton, 1920); T. Capek and Thomas Capek, Jr., *The Czechs and Slovaks in American Banking* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1928); Francis Dvornik, *Czech Contributions to the Growth of the United States*, (Chicago, Ill.: Benedictine Abbey Press, 1962?). A useful early-century treatment of Slavic immigrants in America is Emily Greene Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910).

For comparison, a few studies dealing specifically with Czech and Slovak settlement in American communities are Estelle Hudson in collaboration with Henry R. Mareš, *Czech Pioneers of the Southwest* (Dallas, Tex.: Southwest Press, 1934); Rose Rosicky, *A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska* (Omaha: Czech Historical Society of Nebraska, 1929); R.W. Lynch, *Czech Farmers in Oklahoma* (Stillwater: Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1942); Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); Jay Corzine and Irene Dabrowski, "The Ethnic Factor and Neighborhood Stability: The Czechs in Soudard and South St. Louis," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 33 (January 1977):87-93.

For comparison with another Slavic group in the American West, see, for example, Joseph Stipanovich, "South Slav Settlements in Utah, 1890-1935," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43 (Spring 1975):155-71; Wayne S. Vucinich, "Yugoslavs in California," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* 42 (September 1960):287-309.

³ Andrew Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Globeville, 1876-1976," typescript, 1976, Denver (in author's possession), p. 4; tape recorded interview with Andrew Kutes, Denver, 4 December 1975 (in author's possession).

Perhaps their Slavic pioneer counterparts saw in Colorado similar memories of a world left behind in their search for liberty and opportunity.

Tracing the extent of Czech and Slovak settlement in Colorado is somewhat difficult because these immigrants, especially the Slovaks, were frequently classified by census takers as Austrians or Hungarians. The multitude of races in Austria-Hungary created problems for Americans who made any attempt to discern differences in southern and eastern European nationalities. From 1870 to 1920, most Czechs registered with the census as Bohemian or Moravian, their country of birth. Many Slovaks, however, were reported as either Slav, Slavish, or Slavonian. It was not until 1910 that the Thirteenth United States Census recorded immigrants by their mother tongue. In 1930 categorization problems were compounded again when Czechoslovaks began to be recorded as a single nationality. Even so, it has been ascertained that over six hundred twenty-two thousand Czechs and more than six hundred nineteen thousand Slovaks were living in the United States by 1920, and this is a conservative estimate.⁴

What of their settlement in Colorado? As with all of the Slavic groups, the years 1900 to 1910 witnessed the heaviest immigration of Czechs and Slovaks to the Centennial State. At the end of the first decade of this century, approximately seventeen hundred foreign-born Czechs and nineteen hundred foreign-born Slovaks resided in Colorado. In 1920 only about two thousand Czechs and Slovaks were reported. The reasons for this decline included an anti-southern and eastern European sentiment in Colorado connected with labor agitation, coal mining strikes, the First World War, and the "Red Scare" that followed the war. Partly because of immigration restrictions imposed by the United States in the 1920s, on the eve of the Great Depression in 1930, seventeen hundred Czechoslovaks represented just two percent of Colorado's total foreign-born population. (By 1970, 996 Coloradoans registered their nativity as Czechoslovakian, with 4,078 second-generation Czechoslovaks recorded in the state.)⁵ While

(possession); on the importance of Kutes's work, see Frantisek Bielek, "Zdejn Slovakov v Colorade," *Maticne Ctanie* [Bratislava, Slovakia], 12 April 1976; Stefan Blasko, *Slovensko Zemepis a Dejepis* [Slovakia geography and history], vol. 5 (Belleville, N.J.: By the author, 1973), pp. 185-201.

⁴ T. Capek, *Czechs in America*, pp. 59-68; T. Capek, "Czechoslovaks in the United States," pp. 26-29; Daniel F. Tanzone, "Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant," *Jednota Annual, Furdek*, 1973, vol. 12, ed. Joseph C. Krajsa (Cleveland, Ohio: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1973), pp. 15-16.

⁵ For a superficial discussion of "The Slavic People" in Colorado, see Colin B. Goodykoontz, "The People of Colorado," *Colorado and Its People*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen, 4 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948), 2:112-13, 83; U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census . . . 1910, Supplement for Colorado* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), pp. 589-92; *Nineteenth Census . . . 1970*, "Colorado," 7:142-43; Gerard Gilliland, comp., *Ethnic Groups in Denver, Colorado* (Denver, Colo.: City & County of Denver Commission of Community Relations, 1972), p. 196.

Figures for 1910 are derived from the use of nationality percentage breakdowns for Austria-Hungary found in Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Hapsburg*

their numbers have never been large, numbers alone are of little consequence when measured against their cohesiveness and group solidarity.

Czech immigrants found their way to Colorado as early as the gold rush of 1859. In 1860 as a census taker made his rounds, a twenty-one-year-old Bohemian, W.S. Kessick, was attempting to discover his fortune at the Gold Hill settlement near Boulder. Like many other young miners in the region, Kessick mentioned no assets in his interview with the census taker.⁶ Other Czech pioneers usually fared better. One of them, significant because of his political influence in Bohemia, was Libor Alois Slesinger.

Born in 1806 in the village of Ustí nad Orlicí, eastern Bohemia, Slesinger's early life coincided with a period of excessive Austrian oppression. Young Libor saw economic ruin stalk Bohemia, and the Czech nation was almost totally forgotten. But as he grew a spirit of Czech nationalism matured with him. All of Europe was caught up in a drive for national resurrection that culminated in the European Revolution of 1848.⁷

An ardent Czech patriot, Slesinger was in the midst of the struggle. He opposed the Germanization of his country under the Hapsburg monarchy and was arrested for inciting a riot. As the revolution escalated, political concessions had to be made, for the Austro-Hungarian Empire appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Slesinger was freed from prison when he was elected to the Czech National Assembly, *Zemsky Snem*, which met in Prague during the revolt. Hopes for political liberty were short-lived, however, and Austrian domination was forcibly restored in 1849. Conflicting nationalist desires among Germans, Italians, Slavs, and Hungarians had contributed to defeat the uprising. Harassed by state police and disheartened by the inability of his countrymen to achieve independence, in 1856 fifty-year-old Slesinger departed Europe for a new life in America.⁸

Monarchy, 1848-1918, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 2:300-305; Tolbert R. Ingram, ed., *Year Book of the State of Colorado, 1937-38* (Denver: Colorado State Planning Commission, [1939]), p. 29. Czech and Slovak figures should not detract from the extent of total Slavic settlement in Colorado. At their highest point in 1910, over eighteen thousand five hundred foreign-born Slavs and thirteen thousand second-generation descendants of Slavs resided in the state—almost four percent of Colorado's total population.

An exceptional account of one state's European immigrants that employs statistical data and is a worthy model for other state studies is Douglas Hale, "European Immigrants in Oklahoma: A Survey," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 53 (Summer 1975):179-203.

⁶ U.S., Census Office, 1860 Federal Manuscript Census of Colorado Towns, Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver (hereinafter cited as CHS).

⁷ *Olaha Kvery Americké* [American blossoms], 6 January 1886; Stanley Z. Pech, *The Czech Revolution of 1848* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

⁸ Tony Cifka, recording secretary, Mile High Czech Lodge Number 432, Czechoslovak Society of America; to M. James Kedro, 19, 27 November 1975; T. Capek, *Czechs in America*, pp. 47-48; T. Capek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe* [Fifty years of Czech letters in America] (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1911), pp. 27, 35, 247; Dvorák, *Czech Contributions to . . . the United States*, p. 56.

The Bohemian patriot made his way to Cleveland, Ohio, where he became a member of the *Svornost* ("Harmony") Lodge, Number Two, an affiliate of the Czech Slavic Benefit Society, a national fraternal organization that had been founded by Czechs in Saint Louis in 1854. This organization provided life insurance and other aid to Slavic settlers in the United States. Along with several other Czech and Slovak fraternal societies, many of which still exist today, it would later play an important role in Colorado, too.⁹

After having resided in Cleveland for only a short while, in late 1856 Slesinger pulled up stakes for Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The following year the mobile Bohemian became one of the first Czechs to homestead near Omaha, Nebraska. In 1860, with ox-drawn wagon he began transporting goods across the Great Plains to the region soon-to-become Colorado Territory. When construction of the Union Pacific Railroad started west out of Omaha, the industrious teamster moved again in 1865 to homestead on the outskirts of Denver. He retired to the Queen City in 1876, where he died at age eighty-six.¹⁰ Highly educated and certainly prestigious in Czech political circles, Slesinger perhaps found adjustments to a new life style more difficult than younger immigrants. At any rate, his German name would have afforded him easy accessibility to Denver business circles, for the city was home for numerous German entrepreneurs.¹¹ But Slesinger seemed to prefer the quietude of rural life to the bustle of urban business and politics.

Many other Czechs displayed an identical preference. In July 1867 a representative of the Pittsburgh Bohemian Association sent an inquiry to the registrar of the Colorado Land Office. Frank Ellick was anxious to obtain information on homestead land—enough land, in fact, to support the settlement of three hundred Bohemian families.¹² Conditions must have been more opportune elsewhere, for no evidence exists that this colony ever materialized in Colorado. It is apparent, nonetheless, that Czechs such as Slesinger, indirectly motivated by political and economic hardships in their homeland, were entering Colorado Territory right along with the earliest permanent settlers.

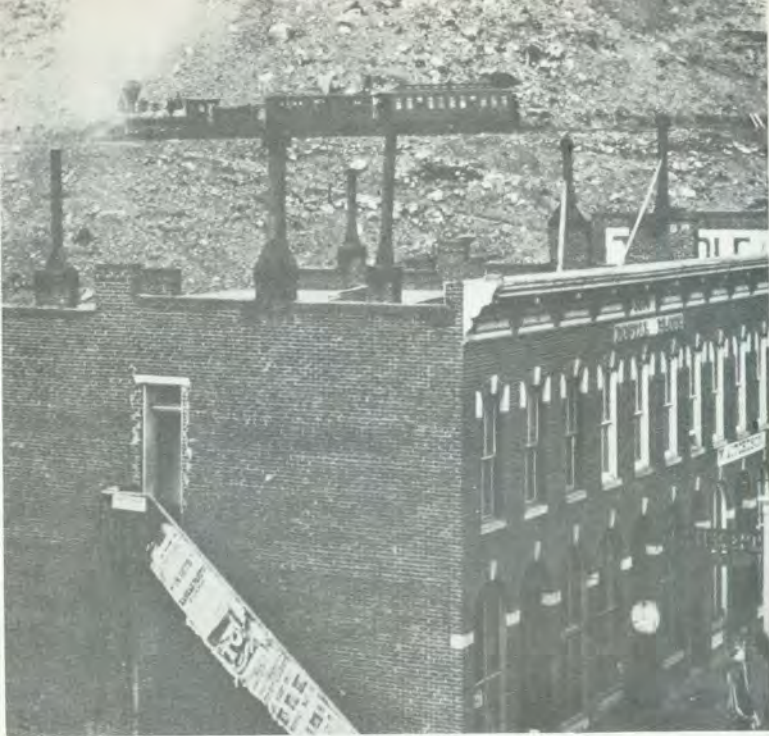
Similar to Libor Slesinger in one respect, Albert Lintz was another German-surnamed Czech pioneer who traversed the plains to settle finally in Colorado. Born in Siena, Bohemia, in 1846, Lintz attended school until age twelve when he became apprenticed as a potter. Drafted into the Austrian army at age sixteen, after six years of

⁹ Rosicky, *Czechs in Nebraska*, p. 45; T. Capek, *Czechs in America*, pp. 258-59.

¹⁰ *Denver City Directory*, 1878-88; *Denver Tribune*, 26 February 1893.

¹¹ Stephen J. Leonard, "Denver's Foreign Born Immigrants, 1859-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1971).

¹² *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 10 July 1867.



The Dostal Block in Central City in 1878, four years after completion. The building, which still stands on Main Street, was built by Czech immigrant, businessman, and rancher Joseph O. Dostal (1843-1925).

required service he migrated to the United States. In 1868 the twenty-two-year-old immigrant homesteaded near Richmond, Iowa, where he farmed for a living and met and married his Czech wife, Anna Marek. They sold their farm in 1873 and took up residence in Central City, Colorado, where Lintz operated a saloon for four years before opening a fruit, cigar, and newsstand at the local post office.¹³

Central City served as a stepstone to success for several Slavic immigrants. One of the most prominent was Joseph O. Dostal, a Czech businessman. Dostal's life story is a dramatic one, for rarely is it possible to trace a pioneer Slavic-American family through four generations. In the late eighteenth century, Joseph's grandfather George Dostal was born in the small town of Ricany, Bohemia, on the outskirts of Prague. There he worked as a millwright and builder. Like Slesinger, one of his sons took an active role in the unsuccessful European Revolution of 1848. Another son, George Dostal, Jr., was born in Ricany in 1811. He became a manufacturer of woolen cloth and married Jennie Blazek, the daughter of a fellow Ricany clothmaker. George and Jennie gave birth to Joseph Dostal, one of eight offspring, in 1843.¹⁴

The advent of the Industrial Revolution and machine manufacture brought hard times to the Dostals, who could not compete with mass production. In 1856 the family set out for America. They followed a path of migration taken by thousands of Czech and Slovak immigrants. After traveling across the European continent to the port city of Hamburg, Germany, they journeyed to Liverpool, England, where they booked passage on a sailing vessel. It took almost five weeks to cross the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁵ By the turn of the century, immigrants crossing to America on steamships would make the journey in less than half that time.

The Dostals disembarked in New York City and migrated directly to a homestead near Iowa City, Iowa. Joseph, who was thirteen when the family settled in Iowa, went to work immediately as a farm laborer. Two years later he began to learn the butcher's trade, but his pursuit of this occupation was interrupted by military service with the Twenty-second Iowa Infantry during the Civil War. Eight months after his August 1865 discharge from the army, Joseph moved to Central City and became a butcher in the employ of William Nicholson, a

¹³ W. B. Vickers, *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado* (Chicago, Ill.: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1880), p. 465.

¹⁴ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity Colorado* (Chicago, Ill.: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898), pp. 1292-93.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Scot. For eighteen months young Dostal worked and saved his income before returning to Iowa City in 1868 to marry Mary Hamlik.¹⁶

Following a pronounced pattern of ethnic intermarriage among Slavic immigrants, Joseph's bride was also a Czech. She, too, had moved with her parents from Prague to America. Racial intermarriage was an established way of life among early Slavic immigrants. Men and women who entered into wedlock in America were often from families that had known each other in the old country. Sometimes they had migrated from the same village or province. Such intermarriage was thought to ensure domestic tranquility, but more importantly, it served to preserve Czech and Slovak culture and tradition in a new environment.¹⁷

The newlywed Dostals immediately returned to Colorado. Within a year Joseph established his own meat market on Central City's Main Street. The 1874 Central City fire destroyed almost the whole town, and Dostal's market was a total loss. Undaunted, the Czech merchant pooled his capital with two other businessmen to construct a new fifty-by sixty-nine-foot building. The two-story structure, with its bold stone characters "1874 DOSTAL BLOCK," still stands today on the east side of Main Street near its intersection with Gregory Street, an impressive monument to Czech settlement in Colorado.¹⁸

After a fortunate year in business and local politics—Dostal had been elected to the town council in Central City—in 1876 the Czech-American sold his meat market and purchased a ranch near Aroya, Colorado. The JOD Ranch was well stocked with cattle, sheep, and horses, and Dostal, now an elected commissioner in Cheyenne County, was instrumental in organizing the Colorado Cattle Growers' Association. In addition to their large ranch, by the 1890s the Dostal family also owned a comfortable home in Denver, where one son, George, graduated from Denver High School to become a teller in the Denver National Bank. Another son, J.F. Dostal, would later graduate from the University of Colorado as an engineer.¹⁹

Joseph O. Dostal, who died in San Diego in 1925, had once expressed a personal maxim that might serve to describe many of the Czech and Slovak immigrants who settled the West. "My only ambition in life has been to make a success," he said. "I did not count

so much on the dollars that this success would bring as on the satisfaction that would come to me should I be successful in what I undertook."²⁰

"To make a success" meant different things to various immigrants. Obviously, most Czechs and Slovaks did not achieve Dostal's financial prominence. Yet, in comparison to conditions in eastern Europe, these new ethnic-Americans, usually employed at difficult labor for low wages, found opportunities in Colorado unknown in their homelands. Indeed, in the sparsely populated Rocky Mountain region prior to the 1890s, success was relatively easy to attain for the comparatively well-educated and trade-oriented Czech. Also, early Czech settlers in Colorado usually had some capital behind them, having lived and worked in the eastern United States before moving to the West. Unlike the East, which experienced a direct migration from Europe, initial Czech settlement in Colorado followed a path of inner-migration through the midwestern and plains states.

By 1890 there were only about four hundred fifty Czechs and perhaps five hundred Slovaks in Colorado. This vanguard had come in search of employment, for jobs were numerous and quickly obtained. From 1880 to 1890 over twenty-seven hundred miles of railroad were constructed in the Centennial State, mining development was on the upswing, and city building was in a boom period. Denver grew from 35,629 to 106,713 and Pueblo from 3,217 to 24,558. Economic conditions were such as to encourage foreign immigration.²¹ Slavs from Austria-Hungary heeded the call, even in the wake of some adverse publicity on America that circulated through eastern Europe.

In a futile effort to check the burgeoning exodus of various nationalities from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in 1882 a Vienna newspaper farcically "warned" prospective immigrants of "dangers" that lay ahead of them in the United States, particularly in the American West:

If people try to become suddenly rich by traveling further inland, they are put to hard work on the plantations and railroads, where they receive, if possible, still smaller wages. Although they are promised the highest prices, in order to attract many victims, they are, when they arrive, left on the prairies, and paid nothing, and are besides swindled terribly. Most of these unfortunates fall a prey to suffering, or they are attacked by fever or some other American sickness, and thus die. Many are sent into the mines, very far away, where they never have opportunity to return, because they never earn the money for the journey back.

¹⁶ Ibid.; *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States* (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1959; originally published Kansas City, Mo.: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1904), pp. 692-94.

¹⁷ Ibid.; T. Capek, *Czechs in America*, p. 96, where Capek notes that aside from fellow Czechs, Germans supplied more marriage partners for Czechs than all other nationalities put together—"there are still more Czechs who know German than there are Czechs who speak Russian, Polish, or Serbo-Croatian," said Capek in 1920.

¹⁸ *Portrait and Biographical Record*, pp. 1293-94; Frank R. Hollenback, *Central City and Black Hawk, Colorado: Then and Now* (Denver, Colo.: Sage Books, 1961), pp. 54-55.

¹⁹ *Portrait and Biographical Record*, pp. 1293-94; *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry*, pp. 694-96.

²⁰ *Trail* 18 (November 1925):23; *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry*, p. 696.

²¹ John Burton Phillips, "The Population of Colorado," *University of Colorado Studies*, vol. 5, ed. Francis Ramaley (Boulder: University of Colorado, 1907-8), pp. 208-10.

If a man obtains work with a farmer, the latter keeps back the wages, and when twenty dollars have thus fallen due the farmer kills the poor man in order to keep the money. Travel in America is still very dangerous. The traveler is compelled to fight with wild beasts, snakes, hunger, water, heat and cold. Many are nevertheless determined to ride, and jump on the trains in order to get to the prairies, and are afterward found starved to death on the freight trains. With the best of resolution a man cannot get work in this wilderness.²²

Still, the immigrants came. Over nine hundred Czechs and as many as one thousand Slovaks were living in Colorado by 1900.²³ Early arriving compatriots had established a foothold in the state, and they wrote home to relatives and friends in their native villages, encouraging further movement to America. Later arrivals—those who migrated from 1900 to 1920—would find that the door to opportunity and assimilation into a new society was more difficult to open. This was especially the case for Slovak peasants, who were less educated and brought with them fewer skills than the Czechs. Even so, perseverance usually paid off, and success, undreamed of in Austria-Hungary, appeared within reach in Colorado.

One of the state's earliest Slovak settlers, who evidenced the diverse special and occupational mobility of the Slavic immigrant in search of success, was Joseph Hornak. In microcosm, Hornak's life affords a model for five major areas of Slavic-American socioeconomic experience. First, it demonstrates familial and village chain migration—one relative or friend following another from the old country. Second, by tracing the activities of Hornak's life there emerges a pattern of localized inner-migration from one Colorado Slavic community to another. The social impact of these neighborhoods attests to the importance of the church and the fraternal benefit societies in Slavic cultural preservation. While maintaining Slavic traditions, Hornak's life points to the forces of Americanization. Confronted with ethnic discrimination, his ultimate attainment of United States citizenship was a major accomplishment. Finally, Hornak's employment in Colorado reveals a pronounced occupational mobility, somewhat at variance with early Slavic-Americans as a whole but not unusual for Czechs and Slovaks in Colorado.²⁴

²² *Ouray Solid Muldoon*, 8 June 1883, reprint of translation from a Viennese newspaper, cited in W.P.A., "Writers' Program, Colorado: Racial Groups," typescript, [1938], p. S-263, CHS.

²³ Phillips, "The Population of Colorado," p. 209.

²⁴ Andrew Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Louisville, 1876-1976," typescript, [1976], Denver (in author's possession), pp. 2-3; John Bodnar, "Materialism and Morality: Slavic-American Immigrants and Education, 1890-1940," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 3 (Winter 1976):1-19 offers an excellent account of cultural preservation and the Slavic immigrant's limited job mobility; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, develops the thesis of "chain migration" from Europe as a deterrent to assimilation.

²⁵ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Louisville," p. 2; Tanzone, "Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant," p. 23.

Joseph Hornak was born in the small village of Hatkovce, Abauj, in eastern Slovakia. A majority of Colorado's early Slovak immigrants had migrated from Slovakia's eastern counties, such as Zemplin, Saris, Spisska, and Abauj. Those who came from far eastern regions, especially Zemplin or Saris, would sometimes refer to themselves as Russian, Ruthenian, or Carpatho-Russian, because of their eastern Slovak dialect and their close proximity to Ruthenia, the Carpathian Mountains, and the Ukraine. Nevertheless, from ethnic, linguistic, and historic standpoints, they were Slovaks.²⁵

In 1876 at sixteen years of age Hornak left eastern Slovakia for Pueblo, Colorado. After establishing himself in the Rocky Mountain "steel city," he Anglicized his name to Harney. The hearty Slovak worked in the Colorado Coal and Iron Company smelters throughout the 1880s. From the mid-1880s to the First World War, hundreds of Slavic immigrants, especially Slovenians—South Slavs from Slovenia—settled in a Pueblo neighborhood known as the Grove. The community, often referred to as "Little Slovenia" during the early 1900s, is centered on Clark Street along the northern bank of the Arkansas

A Colorado Fuel and Iron Company float in the 1917 Children's Circus in Pueblo pointed to ethnic pluralism. The homelands of the Slavic immigrants were well represented.





River. Later, most extensively after the Pueblo flood of 1921, this Slavic neighborhood expanded south across the river to the Bessemer district, nearer the plants of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, whose agents had canvassed the East in search of immigrant laborers.²⁶

The Slovenians formed Saint Mary's Catholic parish and built their church in the Grove in 1895, and Slovaks were included in the congregation. One of the first duties of the Slovenian priest Cyril Zupan, who arrived in Pueblo in 1894, was to perform the marriage ceremony for Harney and his Russian bride, Anna Zarny. In 1899 the Reverend Adalbert Blatnik, a Slovak from Saint Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, Kansas, came to Pueblo to assist Father Cyril with the Slovaks in his congregation. Thirteen years later Pueblo's two hundred Slovak families formed their own Catholic parish in the Grove centered around the Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church.²⁷

Even before they organized a church, Pueblo Slovaks, motivated by either religion or nationalism, had initiated at least three fraternal benefit associations. These lodges protected fellow countrymen with insurance in case of death, accident, or illness, and they served to preserve Slovak religion, language, and culture in America. The

²⁶ Tape-recorded interview with Andrew Demshki and Helen Harney Demshki, Denver, 7 May 1976 (in author's possession); Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Pueblo," typescript, 1976, Denver (in author's possession), pp. 1-4; *Golden Jubilee of St. Mary Parish, 1895-1945* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 39-42; Ralph C. Taylor, "Slovenians' Impact on Pueblo," *Pueblo Star-Journal*, 1 June 1975.

²⁷ Interview with Andrew and Helen Demshki, 7 May 1976; Father Clement A. Wozniak, "History of the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, Pueblo, Colorado," typescript, St. Anthony Church, Pueblo, pp. 1-3.



Slovak Joseph Harney and Anna Zarny were wed in Pueblo in 1894. In 1912 Pueblo Slovaks constructed the Saint Anthony of Padua Slovak Catholic Church on Clark Street in the Grove.



Roman and Greek Catholic Slovak Union, lodge number 93, was established in December 1892. It was followed in 1901 with the First Catholic Slovak Ladies' Association (originally Union), lodge number 102, which later created a juvenile branch, lodge number 24. The parent organizations for these two groups had been founded in Cleveland in 1892 and 1905, respectively. Several charter members of the adult lodge 102 had been born in the eastern Slovakian counties of Spisska, Zemplin, Nitrianska, and Saris during the late 1860s. These women, all married, migrated to the United States in the early 1880s. A second women's organization, the Pennsylvania Slovak Ladies' Union, lodge number 45, was established in Pueblo in 1904.²⁸ Each of these Pueblo fraternal organizations exists today, reflecting a continuing, though obviously declining, effort to preserve Slovak heritage. In the long run, their insurance functions have proved predominate in the wake of assimilation of second-generation immigrants into American society.

Community, religion, and fraternalism were central to Slovak settlement in Colorado. While most Czech settlers were Roman Catholic or, in their spirited independence, left the church altogether, Slovak religious subdivisions in Colorado were more complex. Joe Harney professed Roman Catholicism, but some Slovaks were Lutheran and many others were of the Eastern Orthodox faith. Eastern Orthodox Slovak immigrants occasionally established churches in connection with the Russian Orthodox Church in America. Although similar in belief and ritual to Roman Catholics, these immigrants did not recognize the pope as the head of their church and their priests were allowed to marry. In 1900 Slavic immigrants in Pueblo, including Slovaks, organized Saint Michael's Serbian-Russian Orthodox Church; their church building was constructed in the Grove in 1903. A third religious group among the Slovaks were Greek Catholic Uniats, who recognized the primacy of the pope but retained their own patriarch, eastern liturgy, and priests who could enter into wedlock.²⁹

One of these Uniat priests, who aided the Pueblo Eastern Orthodox Slavs in the establishment of Saint Michael's, was the Reverend Nicholas Seregelly of Denver. A thirty-four-year-old Slovak Greek Catholic, Seregelly had migrated to the north Denver ethnic enclave of Globeville in 1898. Before he rendered assistance in Pueblo, Seregelly's



This interior view of the Transfiguration of Christ Eastern Orthodox Church taken in 1977, focuses on the icon screen and altar. Built by Slovak Greek Catholics in 1899, it was the first Slovak church in Colorado.

ly's primary function in Colorado was to help Globeville Slovaks with the organization of a parish and the building of the Transfiguration of Christ Greek Catholic Church—today the Eastern Orthodox Church—located on the corner of Forty-Seventh Avenue and Logan Street. The first Slovak church in Colorado, Transfiguration's building was completed in 1899 through the efforts of an eleven-man, Slovak parish committee that donated the land and the money for its construction. Father Seregelly, who had left his wife and children behind in Austria-Hungary when he first came to America, experienced a steady stream of problems with the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Denver, the Reverend Nicholas Matz. Horrified that Seregelly had a wife and family, Matz simply could not understand the cultural and traditional distinctions between Roman and Greek Catholics. Although

²⁸ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Pueblo," pp. 2-3; Tanzone, "Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant," pp. 18, 21, 23; Mrs. Ann Liptak Paval, financial secretary, lodge 102, to M. James Kedro, 19 January 1976; First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union, ledger book, membership entries 1901, Pueblo, Colorado, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ Capek, *Czechs in America*, p. 119; *50th Year Golden Jubilee Almanac of Serbian-Russian St. Michael's Orthodox Church, Pueblo, Colorado, 1903-1953* (Pueblo, Colo.: St. Michael's Orthodox Church, 1953), pp. 7-8; Fred A. LaGuardia, "History of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Rite," *Souvenir Book of the Dedication of the Holy Protection of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Church* (Denver, Colo.: John Steven Zerebecky, 1976), pp. 13-18.



Members of the congregation of the Transfiguration of Christ Church pose in front of a Globeville business during World War I.

in league with the Roman Catholics and the pope, Father Seregelly and his small Globeville congregation received no support from Matz.³⁰

When Seregelly arrived in Globeville, Joseph Harney and his wife, with two young additions to their family, were now residents of that immigrant community, having left Pueblo for Denver in the mid-1890s. Like hundreds of Slavic laborers—Poles, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Czechs, and Russians—Harney was employed at the Globe smelter. Similar to Pueblo's Grove in many respects, Globeville was unique in that it had originated in the late 1880s as an independent community. In 1889 the Globe Smelting and Refining Company was organized; the company purchased land and platted a small town for smelter workers. Two years later Globeville was incorporated as a city, and many of its early political officials were Slavic-Americans. The town had its own post office, city hall, hotel, several stores, and at one point as many as sixteen different saloons.³¹

³⁰ *75th Anniversary Transfiguration of Christ, Eastern Orthodox Church* (Denver, Colo.: Transfiguration of Christ Church, [1973]), pp. 12-13; Pat Agnew, "Parish Survives Flood, 1-25, New Name," *Denver Post*, 30 June 1976; Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Globeville," p. 2; LaGuardia, "Byzantine-Ruthenian Rite," pp. 13-16.

³¹ Interview with Andrew and Helen Demshki, 7 May 1976; W.L. Miles, Jr., "History of the Globe Smelter" (seminar paper, Colorado School of Mines, 1953); Yvonne Johnson, "Globeville: Denver's Melting Pot" (seminar paper, University of Colorado, 1974), pp. 1-9; Larry Betz, *Globeville: Part of Colorado's History* (Denver, Colo.: By the author, 1972), pp. 9, 12-19; Daniel F. Doepfers, "The Globeville Neighborhood in Denver," *Geographical Review* 57 (October 1967):506-22.

In 1903, one year after the annexation of Globeville to Denver, Father Seregelly died from inflammation of the liver. The Denver press had a field day with the incident, playing up the Matz-Seregelly controversy and reporting that the Greek Catholic priest, unable to speak English and deserted by his congregation, had died of starvation.³² Such newspaper reporting was typical of the misinformation connected with Colorado's Slavic immigrants. This problem persisted from the 1890s to 1920, a period when heavy immigrations of southern and eastern Europeans, Slavic involvement in labor agitation, and immigrant competition with American workers for jobs all gave rise to anti-foreign hostilities in Colorado.

Colorado's general misunderstanding of the early Slavic immigrant derived from more than antforeign sentiments, although these were predominant. Also contributing to the problem were the Slavic urban enclaves themselves. Coloradoans were naturally suspicious of immigrants who withdrew into their own ethnic quarter. Americans failed to realize that the foreigner was usually forced into this position from the natural flow of chain migration. Friends and relatives wanted to be near one another to socialize, to speak their native tongue, and to provide assistance in time of need. Moreover, spontaneous passage into American society was impossible for the Czech and Slovak immigrant who came directly to Colorado, for he neither spoke, read, nor understood English. His immediate concern was to find trustworthy assistance. This posed a very real dilemma, for even fellow immigrants, if given the chance, might make light of unnerving situations.

In the early 1900s a recent Slovak arrival to Colorado approached a fellow countryman already employed at a smelter. In Slovak, he asked, "I want to get a job. How am I going to ask for a job?" Grasping the chance to joke about this rather common predicament, in his native tongue the smelter worker replied, "Well, I'll help you. I'll tell you what to say when you go to the foreman." After he practiced his request in English to make certain that he had it right, the Slovak job seeker approached the foreman and exclaimed: "Mr. boss, you son-uv-a-bitch, give me job!" The laughter that followed was short-lived, for the immigrant's "English teacher" was summarily dismissed and replaced by the gullible newcomer.³³

Under such confounding conditions, the ethnic neighborhood was usually a haven where acclimation to a new environment might be

³² "Globeville to Be with Denver," *Denver Times*, 24 March 1903; "Has a Beautiful Church, But No Food," *Denver Times*, 4 February 1903.

³³ Tape-recorded interview with George and Katherine Olyejar by Randall Teeuwen, Ramah, Colorado, 4 January 1975, Penrose Public Library, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

achieved with less stress. The local Slavic enclave afforded a measure of stability and direction. These communities, in conjunction with the church and the fraternal benefit societies, may have retarded Americanization, but they did permit the immigrant to cope with drastically new surroundings.³⁴

An integral part of the ethnic enclaves were the saloons. "To deny the great influence of the saloon and the saloon-keeper on the immigrant," said Czech-American historian Thomas Capek, "would be disputing the obvious. Most, if not all, the lodges and clubs which honeycomb the so-called foreign quarters have had their birth under the saloon roof."³⁵ This was true of several Czech and Slovak fraternal organizations formed in Globeville and Pueblo; it applied also to those created in outlying areas of Slavic settlement in Colorado, places like Leadville, Crested Butte, Rockvale, Trinidad, Lafayette, and Louisville.

Reflecting this phenomenon in part, the Czech community in Denver organized three early-day lodges in the Queen City. The First Czechoslovak Club of Denver was established in August 1889 and ceased operation in July 1901. A Czech school, designed to perpetuate the language and traditions, functioned in Denver from 1903 to 1906. More lasting, lodge number 191, affiliated with the Czech-Slavic Benefit Society (CSPS), was founded in Denver in 1892. The eleven charter members of this group were Czech tradesmen, primarily cigarmakers, shoemakers, tailors, and clerks. They met twice a month in the tavern owned by the lodge's chairman, Vaclav Cerny. In 1897 Lodge Denver Number 37 was organized. This lodge was an affiliate of the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, with central offices in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Lodge 191 (CSPS) merged with lodge 37 shortly after the latter's founding, and this group functions actively in Denver today.³⁶

While Czech lodges were organizing in turn-of-the-century Denver, Slovak Joseph Harney moved again—a continuing example of occupational mobility. Previously a part of the Pueblo and then the Globeville Slovak communities, by the early 1900s Harney and his family were residents in a third immigrant enclave, Louisville, Colorado. Located on the Colorado Central Railroad in the Coal Creek valley about ten miles east of Boulder, Louisville was founded in 1878



Joseph Harney (front row, far left) poses with a Louisville coal mining crew in the summer of 1900.

to develop extensive subbituminous coal deposits in the region. Along with farming and prospecting for precious metals in the mountains, Harney, like many Slovaks and Bohemians, became a coal miner. He was licensed by the United States Department of the Interior as an explosives foreman in the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company mines surrounding Louisville.³⁷

After almost thirty years of labor in Colorado, Harney became a naturalized citizen in Boulder County in 1904. Two witnesses had to swear, among other things, that the Slovak-American was not involved in the "white slave" traffic and that he had helped no aliens who were "paupers" or "professional beggars" to enter the United States. Citizenship attained, Harney became an active participant in Louisville city government. He wrote to friends and family in Slovakia, prompting the chain migration of his younger brother John Hornak in the early 1900s. In the span of his eighty years—Joseph Harney died in 1942—Harney's life touched several significant Colorado Slavic communities and displayed the wide-ranging occupations of Slovak immigrants in the Centennial State.³⁸

More importantly, Harney's intrastate migration from one Slavic community to another was not a singular experience. Numerous Slavic immigrants followed a similar pattern until job security and a compati-

³⁴ Leonard, "Denver's Foreign Born Immigrants, 1859-1900," p. 169.

³⁵ Capek, *Czechs in America*, p. 77; Thomas J. Noel, "The City and the Saloon: A History of Denver, 1858-1915" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1978).

³⁶ First Czechoslovak Club of Denver, minutes of lodge meetings, 22 July 1891—17 July 1901; Frank Raska, vice-president, Lodge Denver 37, "History of Lodge Denver #37 and Other Czech Clubs," single-page typescript, [1976], Denver; Kutes, "Czechs: Over a Century in Colorado," typescript, [1976], Denver (in author's possession), pp. 2-3; *Denver City Directory*, 1892-98.

³⁷ Interview with Andrew and Helen Demshki, 7 May 1976; Vickers, *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado*, pp. 420-21; U.S., Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Explosives License No. 509561, 12 March 1918.

³⁸ U.S., Certificate of Citizenship, Boulder County, Colorado, issued to Joseph Harney, 31 October 1904; Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado, Louisville," pp. 2-5; interview with Andrew and Helen Demshki, 7 May 1976.

ble environment were obtained. Immigrant movement between distinct, identifiable, ethnic neighborhoods that were located in an area of shared economic bonds, as Colorado's immigrant enclaves were, offers a dimension to ethnic history deserving more thorough analysis by historians. This particular feature of Slavic-American experience affords a picture of mobility. However, religious, fraternal, and familial ties between ethnic communities, like the Grove, Globeville, and Louisville, point to communal stability in the seeking out or the recreating of Slavic cultural and religious institutions. This seemingly dichotomous arrangement of movement away from one area to similar social surroundings in another might well be applied to immigrant inner-migration for the nation as a whole, as well as related to chain migration from the old country. In many instances a complicated network of religious, lodge, and family interaction bound Colorado's ethnic communities together along social, economic, and political lines.

For example, as in Pueblo and Globeville, Czechs and Slovaks in the Louisville-Lafayette coal mining area organized fraternal benefit societies. In 1910 Czech coal miners in Lafayette formed the Taborite Union, lodge number 29, with home offices in Chicago, Illinois. This lodge's first treasurer, coal miner Frank Yakes, had migrated to Lafayette from Kolin, Bohemia, in 1903. Even earlier, Louisville Slovak miners had created other fraternal benefit societies. In December 1896, lodge number 255 of the National Slovak Society began operation in the town. This group was preceded by the founding of the Saint Peter the Apostle Lodge, number 30, in January 1896. Affiliated with the Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union, lodge 30 included John Hornak, Joseph Harney's younger brother, among its first members. Later, two leading lodge 30 officers were George and Michael Bodnar, who joined the Louisville group in 1921. The Bodnar brothers were born in Nagykcunczfalva, in the province of Spisska, eastern Slovakia (Hungary). They had originally moved in 1908 from Illinois to Rockvale, Colorado.³⁹

Rockvale was a Colorado Fuel and Iron Company coal town incorporated in 1886 in Fremont County. From the 1890s to the 1920s a large population of Slovak coal miners worked in the Rockvale area. Similar to other immigrant communities, the town supported at least two saloons owned and operated by Slovak saloonkeepers, John Kochan and John Marasek. Before the Bodnar brothers moved to Louisville, they had been members of lodge number 183 of the Roman



Every Slavic fraternal benevolent society had its own lodge ribbon, some of which carried an image of the patron saint of the lodge. Slovak Saint Peter the Apostle Lodge 30 was founded in Louisville in 1896.

³⁹ Kutes, "Czechs: Over a Century in Colorado," pp. 3-4; Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Louisville," pp. 3-4; lodge pendant, St. Peter the Apostle Lodge 30, P.S.K.J., Louisville, Colorado, 19 January 1896.



CF&I coal miners in Rockvale in 1913 lived in company housing units.

and Greek Catholic Slovak Benefit Association in Rockvale. The Rockvale contingent also had a juvenile branch, lodge number 113. In 1909 Rockvale Slovaks formed a Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol, lodge number 188, an athletic organization that encouraged activities to build healthy and strong bodies through gymnastics.⁴⁰

These particular Roman and Greek Catholic Slovak societies, whether fraternal, cultural, or athletic, were organized along religious lines. Members had to present proof, obtained from a priest, of either Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic religious affiliation. In some cases religious connections to the old country were very strong and created divisiveness and strain in the American Slovak community. For instance, lodges affiliated with the National Slovak Society of America, founded in Pittsburgh in 1890, were nationalistic and welcomed all Slovaks regardless of religion. This posed a threat to Hungarian-educated Slovak Catholic priests who were loyal to the Hungarian crown, for such open nationalism and liberal political thinking were obviously antagonistic to Magyar control in Slovakia.⁴¹

While these problems were more predominant in areas of heavier Slovak settlement throughout the eastern United States, old country

religious influences made an appearance in Colorado also. In 1911 an alms book sent from Nagykcunzfalva, Hungary, was circulated through Rockvale by George Bodnar and George Odnik, former residents of that eastern Slovakian village. The bearers of the book were instructed to collect money for the church in Hungary. An introductory inscription, written in Hungarian, Slovak, and English, made the book's purpose clear:

Peace in the Lord to all readers! The bearer of this book has been charged in the name of the Lord with the collection of mild alms amongst his fellow believers in America for the purpose of necessities of the Church in the Village of Nagykcunzfalva, Hungary Country. Therefore he is commended to the benevolence of all people.

[signed] Geperjes, Hungary 1911, X. 9
Cornelius Rovalicky, Vik. bishop
[Official seal of 1883]

In total, only about sixty dollars was collected. The collection book is significant, though, in its reflection of the number of Slovaks in the Rockvale area who were willing to give money for use in Hungary. Of the 120 names, signatures of donors, over 100 are of Slovak origin.⁴²

In addition to Rockvale, many other Colorado Fuel and Iron Company coal camps provided employment to Czech and especially to Slovak laborers. In 1918 the Colorado state inspector of coal mines began the publication of nationality figures for the various ethnic groups employed in the mines. Although the statistics are far from complete, they give some impression of the number of Colorado's Czech and Slovak coal miners. From 1918 to 1922 Colorado Bohemians working as coal miners ranged from a high of sixty-three to a low of thirty-four. For the same years Slovak miners were not recorded as a group, but making adjustments to Slavonian, Hungarian, and Austrian figures, which were the categories Slovaks were reported in, their numbers were consistently around five hundred. Out of a total coal mining work force that averaged twelve thousand men-per-year, these figures are not startlingly large.⁴³ However, Czechoslovaks were never among the largest Slavic nationalities in Colorado. The figures do support the fact that unskilled Slovaks were more likely to be working in the mines and smelters than the more educated, trade-oriented Czechs.

One of many Slovak coal miners in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company camps was Jacob Slota. Born in 1865 and raised as a Greek

⁴⁰ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Rockvale, 1876-1976," typescript, [1976]. Denver (in author's possession), pp. 2-3; Miss Mary Drenick, Rockvale, Colorado, to M. James Kedro, 10 September 1975; H. C. Webster, "Rockvale," Documents 366/5, 366/6, 366/7, C. W. A., "Writers' Program: Chaffee and Fremont Counties," typescript, [1934], pp. 167-72. CHS: *Colorado State Business Directory*, 1908-10; Official Charter, Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol, lodge 188, Rockvale, Colorado, 1909. Archives, *Matice Slovenska*, Division for Slovaks Abroad, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

⁴¹ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Louisville," p. 3; Tanzone, "Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant," p. 19; "The Slovak Catholic Federation Story, Told in Six Decades," *Jednota Annual*, Furdok, 1973, vol. 12, pp. 79-84; *Constitution and By-Laws of the Pennsylvania Slovak Roman and Greek Catholic Union*, Adopted . . . 1938. Trenton, N. J. (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.: Bratstvo Printery, 1938), pp. 59-62.

⁴² Nagykcunzfalva Alms Book, Rockvale, Colorado, 1911. Archives, *Matice Slovenska*, Division for Slovaks Abroad, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

⁴³ *Colorado, Sixth Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines, 1918 to Tenth Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines, 1922*, pp. 68, 50, 49, 47, 53, respectively.



Dressed in his Russian Brotherhood regalia, Slovak Jacob Slota, his wife, and sons John and Joe had their photograph taken in the early 1900s.

Catholic Uniat, Slota met his first wife while going through immigration on Ellis Island in New York harbor. John and Joe Slota were two of Jacob's sons by his first marriage. In 1913 John and his father worked together at the Rouse Mine in Huerfano County. The younger brother Joe had been a coal miner, too, before his untimely death in 1913. Both boys were in their early teens when they entered the mines, for it was usually necessary that all family members work in order to make ends meet. During August 1913, Jacob and his son John each labored twenty-four days at the mine, making a combined income of only \$178.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Interview with Mrs. Loretta Slota Marshall, Denver, 27 July 1976; interview with Mrs. John Stucka.

No. 562571

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Immigration and Naturalization Service

Section 3, Number 228

Description of holder: by 51 years, height 5 feet 4 inches, color white, complexion Dark, color of eyes Brown, color of hair Brown, visible distinguishing marks None

Name, age and place of residence of wife Dead

Names, ages and places of residence of minor children Mary Age 13 Years, Anna Age 9 Years Mike Age 7 Years, Julia Age 3 Years and Rosie Age 3 Years

All reside with me at Rouse Huerfano County Colorado

State of Colorado County of Huerfano

He is presented that Jacob Slota

born resulting as an alien Date of birth of House citizen of Austria State of birth of Colorado who previous having applied to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America pursuant to law, and also Regular term of the District Court of Huerfano County held at Halseburg on the 2nd day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand and sixteen, the court having found that the petitioner had resided one year within the United States for at least five years and in this country for at least one year immediately preceding the date of the filing of his petition, and that said petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States, and in all respects complied with the law in relation thereto, and that he was entitled to be so admitted it was thereupon ordered by the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

The testimony taken at the seat of said court is hereunto affixed on the 2nd day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand and sixteen, and of our Independence the one hundred and Fortieth

Clerk District Court

Jacob Slota became a naturalized citizen in 1916, while employed as a coal miner at the CF&I Rouse camp. Rouse was similar to many of the southern Colorado coal towns, where a large percentage of inhabitants were immigrants.



As the Slota sons demonstrate, second-generation Slavic-Americans were often denied an education because of the necessity of their income to the family's survival. Moreover, Slovak immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sometimes envisioned the American educational system as a threat to their culture similar to the process of Magyarization that they had escaped from in the old country. Concerned with finding and keeping steady jobs to survive, first-generation Slovak-Americans instilled this attitude in their children, making education less important than employment in terms of economic security and using their own religious schools to preserve Slavic culture.⁴⁵

In another area of Slavic cultural preservation, Jacob Slota, who became a naturalized citizen in 1916, secured membership in a fraternal benefit society. In fact, he helped to found the Colorado branch of the Russian Brotherhood Organization in Rouse. The Russian Brotherhood was chartered in Pennsylvania in 1903, and although its Denver lodge number 151 is inactive today, it is still operative.⁴⁶

The Slota family resided in southern Colorado during a particularly stormy time for foreigners. In September 1913 over eleven thousand Colorado coal miners went on strike to obtain the right to organize and bargain collectively with the coal companies. Many Slavic miners were involved in the dispute and several lost their lives in struggles with coal company guards and the Colorado militia, culminating in the disastrous Ludlow massacre of 20 April 1914. The immediate results of the strike were largely unsuccessful for the miners, and the militancy of the affair stoked the flames of antiforeignism. The strike only darkened the cloud of animosity that Slavic immigrants had lived under throughout the opening decades of this century.⁴⁷ "Bohunk" and "hunky" became familiar racial slurs applied indiscriminately to Czechs, Slovaks, and other Slavic immigrants.

To cite one example of ethnic discrimination, the Denver Chapter of the Junior Order of American Mechanics published a condemnation of the strikers. Their pamphlet, which was printed in the *Congressional Record* on 29 May 1914, warned the nation "of the danger that threatens the Republic through the importation into this country of these lawless forces that are breeding treason and making war upon

our dearest institutions." Striking miners were painted as "ignorant, depraved foreigners, peasants from the lowest and most hopeless class of the peoples of southern Europe."⁴⁸ Czechs and Slovaks shared the brunt of the attack with Italians, Poles, Balkan Slavs, and especially Greeks, who were singled out as murderous rabble-rousers. Such hostility was nothing new to the Slavic immigrant, and it would be repeated in Colorado during World War I and in 1919 and 1920, when postwar "Red Scare" hysteria would sweep across the United States.⁴⁹

A majority of the Czech and Slovak immigrants were city dwellers and mine workers who entered the Colorado labor market in competition with Americans. Many of these immigrants were especially susceptible to antiforeign sentiment since they were easy targets in their urban, ethnic enclaves. Less conspicuous were the Czechs and the Slovaks who became farmers on the Colorado high plains. Czech agricultural settlements in Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas have been studied to some extent by historians. Slovaks, however, have been described as predominantly an urban-labor immigrant population.⁵⁰ But wide-ranging occupational mobility among Slavic immigrants in Colorado does not conform to any standard, eastern urban model. Both Czechs and Slovaks undertook agricultural pursuits in the Centennial State.

Agricultural settlement also tended to follow a pattern of chain migration from the old country and familial migration within the United States. In 1886 four Czech sisters, three with husbands and families and one soon to be wed, moved from Iowa to take up homesteads in the Willard area of Logan County in northeastern Colorado. Between 1880 and 1883 these Czechs had left Bohemia to settle near relatives in Iowa. Together, the families of Ignatz Veverka, Joseph Walek, John Swedensky, and James Budin determined to stake their claims in Colorado. Each of these men had acquired a skill while residing in Europe, and each would make use of it while farming. Supplemental occupations for obtaining extra income were essential to

Globeville, 26 July 1977. U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Mines and Mining, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado . . . Brief of the Coal Mining Operators* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), pp. 19-21.

⁴⁵ Bodnar, "Materialism and Morality: Slavic-American Immigrants and Education, 1890-1940," pp. 1-14.

⁴⁶ U.S., Certificate of Naturalization, No. 569531, Huerfano County, Colorado, issued to Jacob Slota, 2 October 1916; Russian Brotherhood Organization, Certificate of Membership, No. 14650, lodge 151, Denver, issued to Michael Slota, 1 February 1949.

⁴⁷ A complete account of the strike is found in George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

⁴⁸ Junior Order of American Mechanics, Kensington Council No. 16, *Statement of the Strike Situation in Colorado* (Denver, Colo.: C. W. Varnum, 1914), pp. 10, 16.

⁴⁹ *Golden Jubilee of St. Mary Parish, 1895-1945*, pp. 40-41; "Where the Slovaks Stand," *Boulder Daily Camera*, 23 March 1917; Lyle W. Dorsett, "The Ordeal of Colorado's Germans during World War I," *The Colorado Magazine* 51 (Fall 1974):277-93; Philip L. Cook, "Red Scare in Denver," *The Colorado Magazine* 43 (Fall 1966):309-26.

⁵⁰ Hudson and Maresh, *Czech Pioneers of the Southwest*; Rosicky, *A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska*; Lynch, *Czech Farmers in Oklahoma*; a general overview that mentions Czechs is Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8 (October 1977):405-30. On Slovaks, see Bodnar, "Materialism and Morality: Slavic-American Immigrants and Education, 1890-1940," pp. 5, 12-14; Capek, "Czechoslovaks in the United States," pp. 26-28; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*.

For comparison with another area of the West, see Theodore Saloutos, "The Immigrant in Pacific Coast Agriculture, 1880-1940," in *Agriculture in the Development of the Far West*, ed. James H. Shideler (Washington, D.C.: Agricultural History Society, 1975), pp. 182-201.

proving up on their homesteads. Veverka was a harness-maker; Walek was away from his homestead a good deal of time working as a miner in the Louisville area; Swedensky labored on the railroad and as a cobbler; and Budin practiced his trade of carpentry. Their wives—the Czech sisters Anna, Marie, Josephine, and Barbara—worked hard caring for growing families, hauling water, tending crops, and raising livestock.⁵¹

One sister, in particular, is representative of the industrious female immigrant. The stereotype of the Slavic woman as an uneducated peasant scolding a never-ending stream of children in broken English does not offer an accurate portrayal of the immigrant woman.⁵² If economic necessity did not force her into the Colorado job market, a strong desire to achieve made her an active worker. Barbara Budin, for example, was determined that her family make good. When financial problems plagued her husband, she found employment in Cripple Creek, returning to the Logan County homestead periodically for visits with James and their three, young children. Barbara's extra income made it possible for her husband to build a home and increase their farm acreage to a more profitable level.⁵³

In Kit Carson County, another Czech woman proved that she could develop and successfully operate a homestead on her own. Augustin and Frances Severin moved from their Nebraska farm to Colorado in 1906. In 1908 Augustin died, and Frances ably took up the reins of ranch management. Severin, who learned the harness-maker's trade in Bohemia, had left his native land at twenty-one to escape the compulsory military service. Since fleeing the country under such conditions was illegal, he had traveled alternately by foot and by rail to convince authorities that he was looking for work. His two hundred fifty dollars that his father had given him before his departure was kept hidden between the sole and lining of his shoe, and he carried only a small amount of change in his pocket to avert any suspicion. Successful in his escape from Austria-Hungary, Severin had migrated to the American Midwest. In Nebraska Augustin met Frances, who had been born in Bohemia in 1863. She had come to America with her parents when she was fourteen. In 1879 she married Augustin. Together the couple had prospered. Frances raised six children, spoke several languages fluently, and evidenced a keen business intellect in the management of her Colorado homestead, following her husband's death.⁵⁴



A deserted store is evidence of Slavic settlement in Ramah, Colorado (1977).

Like thousands of Czech wives all across the Great Plains, many Slovak women also worked alongside their husbands on western homesteads. The most extensive Slovak agricultural settlement in Colorado occurred in Elbert and El Paso counties in an area surrounding the towns of Calhan, Ramah, and Simla. These towns had their beginnings as railroad sidings. In 1888 the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad was completed from Limon to Colorado Springs. Several Slovaks had worked on the railroad's construction crews. Already familiar with the terrain, these Slovak farmers saw possibilities in gainfully working the Colorado plains, and they began to settle in Elbert County in the late 1880s.⁵⁵

Slavic homesteaders in the Calhan-Ramah region were eastern Slovakian Lutherans and Greek Catholics. Several Czechs and Ukrainians also settled in the area, but Slovaks were the predominant Slavic group. Correspondence with friends and relatives in the old country encouraged further immigration, and over forty Slovak families resided in the district by the late 1890s.⁵⁶ Many of these families

⁵¹ Nell Brown Propst, "The Bohemians: The Four Sisters," in *The Logan County Ledger*, ed. Dale Wells (n.p.: Logan County Historical Society, 1976), pp. 195-203.

⁵² Maxine S. Sells, "Beyond the Stereotype: A New Look at the Immigrant Woman, 1880-1924," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 3 (Spring 1975):59-70.

⁵³ Propst, "The Bohemians: The Four Sisters," pp. 198-99.

⁵⁴ Wilbur Fiske Stone, *History of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1919), 3:628-30.

⁵⁵ Earl Pomeroy, "Colorado's Little Carpathia," *Denver Post*, 24 October 1954; *Historical Encyclopedia of Colorado*, 2 vols. (Denver: Colorado Historical Association, 1975), 1:283-87; Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Calhan-Ramah, 1876-1976," typescript, [1976], Denver (in author's possession), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶ *Denver Post*, 24 October 1954; a good account of Ukrainian settlement in the Calhan-Ramah area is M.

followed a pattern of chain migration from the village of Hradisko in eastern Slovakia. Matthew and Mary Trojanovich, for example, were residents of Hradisko. Throughout the early 1890s they had received letters from Matthew's older brother, who had homesteaded in the Calhan area. Enticed to move to America by the optimistic accounts of Colorado farm life, Matthew and Mary arrived in Pueblo in 1896. Matthew worked in the southern Colorado metropolis for two years, saving his income before taking up 160 acres of land just north of Calhan in 1898. There the Trojanovich family built a sod house and with relatives and other Slovak settlers constructed Saint Mary's Eastern Orthodox Church in 1905.⁵⁷

Hradisko Slovaks continued to flock to Calhan after the turn of the century. In 1907, seventeen-year-old George Olyejar arrived in Pueblo following the long voyage from Hradisko. After ten years of smelter and mine work in Colorado, Olyejar with his Slovak-American wife Katherine, whom he had met in Pueblo, purchased a 320-acre farm near Calhan. The Olyejars ultimately built their holdings into a 1,400-acre ranch. With pride in her European heritage, Katherine Olyejar once remarked, "I'll say it this way—all the Slovaks bought out the English-talking that was born here, 'cause they [native born] couldn't make a living, 'cause they wouldn't work as hard [as the Slovaks]."⁵⁸ Like the Trojanovich families, the Olyejars became members of Saint Mary's Church.

Testifying to the extent and the longevity of Slovak settlement around Calhan, as well as to the Slovak concern for preserving their religious heritage, other churches followed the establishment of Saint Mary's in a steady procession. In 1916 a second Orthodox church, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Eastern Orthodox Church, was built northwest of Ramah. Destroyed by fire, it was reconstructed in 1928; services were discontinued there in the 1940s. Saint Mary's of Calhan was also gutted by fire, and a new and larger Saint Mary's Church north of Calhan replaced it in 1932. Ten years earlier, Greek Catholic Uniats had initiated Saint Mary's Greek Catholic Monastery northwest of Ramah. This building was completed in 1927, but abandoned only two years later. Slovaks constructed a Lutheran Church in Calhan, too. It was completed in 1914 through the efforts of George and John Dzuris, Slovak brothers who migrated to Calhan from Streator, Illinois, in 1893. The Lutheran Church and Saint Mary's Orthodox

Pelekhatiuk and L. Bykows'kity, "Research into the History of Ukrainian Settlement in Colorado," *Liberation Path* [London] (July-August 1962):719-27, trans. Marie Halun Bloch, CHS.

⁵⁷ Interview with Steve M. Trojanovich, Calhan, Colorado, 30 July 1977.

⁵⁸ Interview with George and Katherine Olyejar, 4 January 1975, Penrose Public Library, Colorado Springs, Colorado.



The original 1905 Saint Mary's Church (1977).



The reconstructed Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church (1977).



The 1932 Saint Mary's Church (1977).



Built northwest of Ramah in 1927, the Slovak Saint Mary's Greek Catholic Monastery was abandoned in 1929.

Church are still attended by the descendants of Slovaks who settled the Calhan-Ramah region during the 1890s.⁵⁹

Partly reflecting this deep concern for cultural preservation, a Slovak fraternal benefit society was founded in Calhan on 25 June 1896. Regardless of their religious affiliation, Calhan-Ramah Slovaks were encouraged to join the Farmers' Association Lodge Number 236 of the National Slovak Society. This lodge, with over one hundred second- and third-generation Slovak-American members, continues to function actively in Calhan.⁶⁰ A certain degree of clannishness and intermarriage among Slovak families has kept the Calhan-Ramah Slovak community relatively intact. Farms have passed from fathers to children. County roads with names like Dzuris, Lemesany, Eurich, and Kobilan attest to the make-up of the agricultural area surrounding Calhan. Yet, similar to the urban settlements of Globeville and the Grove, an out-migration of second- and third-generation descendants from this rural Slavic enclave has cut deeply into its numbers. No doubt the future will see Colorado's unique Slavic communities pass from existence as assimilation and upward mobility alter established social and cultural patterns.

⁵⁹ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Calhan-Ramah," pp. 3-5; LaGuardia, "History of the Byzantine-Ruthenian Rite," pp. 17-18; Zeke Scher, "Church of the Last 'Ride,'" *Denver Post*, 5 December 1971; Andrew Gulliford and Randall Teeuwen, "As Far as the Eye Can See . . ." *Colorful Colorado* 12 (July-August 1977):31-37; see, Robert H. Adams, *White Churches of the Plains: Examples from Colorado* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1970) for photos of Ramah churches.

⁶⁰ Kutes, "Slovaks in Colorado: Calhan-Ramah," p. 3.

It is important, then, that historians address western immigrant settlement on the state and the local level. National syntheses cannot explain the intricacies of regional immigration. Neglected by Colorado historians as an ethnic factor worthy of serious investigation, Czechs and Slovaks, like several eastern and southern European nationalities, played a notable role in Colorado's development. Although few in number when compared to other European groups who made homes in Colorado, Czechs and Slovaks, nevertheless, present a partial picture of a much larger Slavic experience in the Centennial State. Shared patterns of chain migration from Europe, reliance on the close-knit family unit for economic survival, stability and community created by ethnic enclaves, intrastate migration between these Slavic neighborhoods, and cultural preservation in fraternal benefit societies and the church together evinced continuity with old country customs. This was necessary to the establishment of a workable identity in a new environment. But these links to eastern European heritage were offset by pronounced occupational diversity in search of upward mobility, active involvement in labor organizations, and naturalization, which served as a kind of rite of passage symbolic of assimilation. The ultimate effects of the latter forces provided direct political involvement and social interaction within a broader Colorado community. The road to social acceptance and economic security was not always an easy journey for the Czech and Slovak immigrant. Even so, traveling it was apparently well worth the effort. As a Colorado Slovak expressed it, "One came to Colorado and thought it was heaven here compared to the old country."⁶¹ Far from paradise, Colorado did offer hope, a factor that did not exist for many in Austria-Hungary.

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⁶¹ Interview with George and Katherine Olyejar, 4 January 1975, Penrose Public Library, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Irish, English, and Germans in Denver, 1860-1890

BY STEPHEN J. LEONARD

Early in 1870 the Denver City Council urged the federal government to relocate the national capital to Colorado.¹ Their resolution was little more than a propaganda joke uttered by an adolescent community struggling for self-confidence. Gas and water works, sidewalks, and graded streets helped convince optimists that Denver City would soon become a city in fact as well as in name.² When the young founders of the town discovered 17 different nationalities in Denver, they marveled and boasted: "We don't believe that there is another town the size of Denver in the United States that can equal this."³ They wisely hedged their bet, for they knew well that while Denver reckoned immigrants by hundreds, larger American cities counted by tens of thousands. Fewer than 1,200 foreign born lived in Denver in 1870. By 1890 the figure stood at more than 25,000, making Denver the twenty-ninth largest immigrant center in the nation. Even then the city could not brag too loudly since for every local immigrant there were 25 in New York City, 18 in Chicago, 10 in Philadelphia, and 5 in San Francisco.⁴

Until recently historians and popularizers have followed the numbers, thereby strengthening the myth of an "all-American" West perpetrated by nineteenth-century commentators. Max Lerner argued that "the best vantage points for observing the variety of American ethnic strains are on a subway in New York or a San Francisco street

or at an Army induction center."⁵ In her *American Cities in the Growth of the Nation*, Constance McLaughlin Green facetiously generalized that since many nineteenth-century Denver immigrants spoke English, "the adjustments required elsewhere were needless in Denver."⁶ Focusing on foreigners in the slums of Boston and the ghettos of New York, historians and sociologists have amassed mountains of data, recounted stories of pathos and triumph, and won Pulitzer Prizes.⁷ But they have failed to provide valid generalizations covering the complex immigrant experience. Scholars once assumed that foreign-born groups were melting together to form a new amalgam. As savants examined the cauldron, however, they found chunks of green and orange, black, brown, and white that would not melt and merge. With an eye toward saving the crock some concluded that the melting pot was actually a salad bowl, the ethnic groups vegetables, and the dressing *E Pluribus Unum*. Besides suffering from obvious problems of metaphor—who would willingly play the mung beans or the leeks—this static theory failed to explain how and why the salad was tossed and why some components blended and others did not.⁸

Recognizing that theory building requires comparative studies, historian Timothy Smith in 1964 asked his colleagues to study immigrants in medium-sized and small centers. Basing his hypothesis on investigations of selected Minnesota towns, he suggested that the cultural adjustments experienced by large immigrant groups in major cities might have differed from those faced by smaller groups in smaller places. Marriage patterns, degree of residential segregation, and numerous other aspects of intergroup relations might be affected by city and immigrant group size. Three years later Moses Rischin reinforced Smith's call by stressing the significance of far western immigration studies. Thanks to Smith, Rischin, and others, the immi-

⁵ Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), p. 77.

⁶ Constance M. Green, *American Cities in the Growth of the Nation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 143.

⁷ See Oscar Handlin's pioneer study *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941) and Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1949) for early studies that departed from the filiogetic approach of such works as Marcello Gandolfo, *Gli Italiani nel Colorado: Libro Dedicato agli Italiani, 1899-1900* (Denver: Dove, ca. 1900) and W. R. Hentschel, *The German Element in the Development of Colorado* (Denver: A. D. Meyer Press, 1930). Handlin won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951), but Rudolph Vecoli in "Conadadini in Chicago: A Critique of *The Uprooted*," *Journal of American History* 51 (December 1964):404-17 has questioned Handlin's generalizations.

⁸ See Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1963); Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955) and Philip Gleason, "The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion," *American Quarterly* 16 (Spring 1964):20-46, for consideration of different acculturation theories.

¹ Clyde King, *The History of the Government of Denver with Special Reference to Its Relations with Public Service Corporations* (Denver: Fisher Book Co., 1911), p. 71.

² Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver, with Outlines of the Earlier History of the Rocky Mountain Country* (Denver: Times-Sun Publishing Co., 1901), p. 459; William B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago, Ill.: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1880), pp. 221-28.

³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 11 May 1870.

⁴ David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 77, 177; U.S., Census Office, *Eleventh Census: 1890, Compendium*, vol. 2, pp. 604-11.

grants of Denver, like those in Indianapolis, Kansas City, and Louisville, have taken on more than local significance.⁹

As much as the nineteenth-century boosters of the Queen City may have wished to stress the cosmopolitan air of their town, they could do so only by stretching several points. Thirty-eight different nationalities were reported in the 1890 population of Denver, but only 7 mustered more than 1,000 representatives, while 22 groups had fewer than 100. In that year 4 large contingents, the English, including Scottish and Welsh, the Scandinavians, the Irish, and the Germans accounted for over eighty percent of the city's 25,464 foreign born. Longitudinal data reveals a fairly stable picture between 1860 and 1890 with the Irish, English, Germans, and Canadians consistently being among the larger groups. Growth of the Scandinavian community, comprised mainly of Swedes, was particularly evident after 1880. Similarly the 1880s, a boom decade for Denver, brought increasing numbers of Chinese and Italians. Though Russians and other eastern Europeans would eventually constitute a credible fraction of the immigrants in Denver, their numbers were relatively insignificant before the 1890s (see table 1).

None of the larger foreign-born groups in Denver, with the possible exception of the Chinese, have been accorded the study they deserve. The Swedes have been ignored, the Canadians totally overlooked, and the French forgotten. Even the most stable contingents, the English, Germans and Irish, have received only scant attention.¹⁰ Because their history spans the thirty-year journey of Denver from town to city, these three groups merit particular research. For, by unraveling their stories, scholars will gain clues necessary for an understanding of acculturation, intergroup relations, residential segregation, and socioeconomic mobility. Researching years of manuscript

⁹ Moses Rischin, "Beyond the Great Divide: Immigration and the Last Frontier," *Journal of American History* 55 (July 1968):43-47; Timothy Smith, "New Approaches to the History of Immigration in Twentieth Century America," *American Historical Review* 71 (July 1966):1,265-79, for bibliography of "Recent Articles" section. The above is not to argue that nothing has been done on immigrants in the West. Indeed there have been many extensive works such as Andrew Rolle's *The Immigrant Upraised: Italian Adventurers and Colonists in an Expanding America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968). Western immigration studies have not, however, generally drawn the scholarly attention evidenced in such books as Donald Cole's *Immigrant City: Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1845-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963).

¹⁰ This is not to say that no work has been done. Denver's Jews, many of whom were foreign-born, have been treated by Ida Uchill in *Pioneers, Peddlers and Tsadikim* (Denver: Sage Books, 1957), by Allen Breck in *A Centennial History of the Jews of Colorado, 1259-1959* (Denver: A. B. Hirschfeld Press, 1961), and most recently by Marjorie Hornbein in *Temple Emanuel of Denver: A Centennial History* (Denver: Congregation Emanuel, 1974). Lyle Dorsett's "The Ordeal of Colorado's Germans during World War I," *The Colorado Magazine* 51 (Fall 1974):277-93 details anti-German prejudice; Daniel Doeppers has done a geographical study of Globeville, "The Globeville Neighborhood in Denver," *The Geographical Review* 57 (October 1967):506-22. On the Chinese, see Patricia Ourada, "The Chinese in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 29 (October 1952):273-84; Roy T. Wortman, "Denver's Anti-Chinese Riot, 1880," *The Colorado Magazine* 42 (Fall 1965):275-91; Helen Webster, "The Chinese School of the Central Presbyterian Church of Denver," *The Colorado Magazine* 40 (January and April 1963):57-63, 132-37, and most importantly Gerald E. Rudolph "The Chinese in Colorado, 1869-1911" (M.A. thesis, University of Denver, 1964).

censuses, translating and reviewing dozens of foreign language newspapers, and making tedious mobility studies are some of the tasks facing the serious student. Practically no rigorous research has been published on the immigrants of Denver nor does this essay purport to be anything more than a preliminary sketch relating to only three groups, albeit important ones, over a thirty-year period.

The 1860 census tallied fewer than 2,700 foreigners in those portions of Kansas and Nebraska that were soon consigned to Colorado Territory. A decade later foreign immigrants had more than doubled their share of the total population, claiming fifteen percent of the territory's nearly 40,000 citizens. Arapahoe County, all except a few hundred of its 5,129 residents situated in Denver, boasted the largest foreign-born population in Colorado, counting over 500 Irish, nearly as many Germans, and some 250 English—including the Scottish. This raw data, however, reveals little about the significance of these foreigners during the turbulent 1860s.

TABLE I
FOREIGN BORN POPULATION OF DENVER, 1860-90

Country (N= 20)	1860 ^a	1870 ^b	1880	1890	Rank in 1890
Austria	....	27	94	311	14
Bohemia	....	....	26	63	18
Canada	684/96	142	1,070	2,672	5
China	....	....	236	1,002	7
Denmark	16/ 2	36	122	470	10
England	352/50	201 ^c	1,436	3,338	4
France	103/15	91	250	414	11
Germany	576/82	443	2,095	5,373	1
Holland	16/ 2	....	30	65	17
Hungary	....	....	9	108	16
Ireland	624/89	545	1,922	4,216	2
Italy	6/ 1	....	86	608	8
Mexico	25/ 3	7	7	38	20
Norway	12/ 2	....	78	297	15
Poland	11/ 2	....	43	52	19
Russia	1/ 0	....	66	477	9
Scotland	120/17	46	321	1,339	6
Sweden	27/ 4	59	455	3,622	3
Switzerland	25/ 3	39	133	352	13
Wales	38/ 5	....	129	381	12

SOURCE: Figures derived from U.S., Census Office, *Eighth Census: Population*, 1:620-23; *Ninth Census: Population*, 1:347; *Tenth Census: Population*, 1:536-39; *Eleventh Census: Compendium*, 2:604-7; *Twelfth Census: Population*, 1:796-99.

^a1860 figures are for Colorado Territory. Approximate data after slash for Denver based on its portion of the entire population.

^b1870 figures are for Arapahoe County.

^c1870 data includes Welsh in English totals.

None of the large foreign contingents played much of an organized part in the affairs of Denver until after the end of the Civil War. The town itself was unstable with many of the original settlers drifting to the mountains or returning to the states. The *Denver Rocky Mountain News* honestly commented that "there are perhaps more blacksmith shops, more practicing physicians, more stocks of goods, more saloons and restaurants and fewer churches and school houses, fewer gardens and grave stones, and fewer furnished parlors in this portion of Pikes Peak than there are to be found in any other section of the Union, of the same size and age."¹¹ "Uncle Dick" Wootton, one of the earliest landlords in Denver, found his Confederate loyalties out of keeping with majority sentiment. Later he explained that "the population had fluctuated continually during the four years I remained there . . . until I made up my mind it was a good place to get away from."¹² During those trying war years the Fourth of July passed without German oratory or Irish pyrotechnics, and Saint Patrick's Day faded without parades.¹³ Germans managed to staff a company of the famed First Colorado Volunteers, and the *News* sometimes praised Saint Patrick.¹⁴ For the most part, however, the young single males of Denver confined their ethnic activities to barroom brawls and saloon theatricals. Overcome by patriotism and drink on the Fourth of July, an American boasted that he could lick three Irishmen. After one Irishman proved him mistaken, the crowd concluded that the fight was caused "by the effect of bad whisky upon bad brains."¹⁵ Mike Dougherty, "champion of Irish comedy," returned from a prospecting tour, Lincoln was elected, a Mexican was seen drunk, Sumter fell, French John attacked William Moore at the Cibola Saloon, and Grant took command—as Denver struggled for permanence.¹⁶

The waning months of the war brought increased ethnic activity as Irish veterans throughout the United States flocked to the anti-English, Fenian brotherhood. By early 1865 the Denver Irish had their own unit that baited John Bull while seeking funds to arm "our brothers who intend in the coming spring to take the field." Spring came, but no fields were won since the brotherhood's projected invasion of Canada fizzled.¹⁷ Territorial Governor Edward McCook bravely told the Fe-



Organized by Germans in the mid-1860s, the Denver Turnverein offered a variety of cultural activities and entertainment, including masquerade balls.

nians of Denver that he could not soon see the day "when the green flag of old Ireland would wave over the Tower of London . . . because I don't believe it and you don't believe it."¹⁸ Apparently the Irish privately agreed, for local Fenian's fires dimmed by the early 1870s.¹⁹

As Irish sparks died German organizing successes shone. Informally in 1865, formally the next year, Germans (predominantly Prussians) established the Denver Turnverein. Destined to be the longest-lived, continuously operating Colorado ethnic association, the Turn stressed physical culture and treated members to a regular round of masquerade balls, commemorative dinners, and special festivities.²⁰ During the Franco-Prussian War, Turners sent \$175 to German charities gloating that \$25 had been raised by subletting their meeting room to a French society "thereby compelling Denver Frenchmen to aid their enemies."²¹ In early 1873, tired of paying rent, the athletes spent \$13,000 to build their own hall.²² Other German associations—including the Denver Maennerchor, its musical entertainments "practically the chief amusement of the Denver people," the Schuetzen-

¹¹ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 20 September 1860.

¹² Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 367.

¹³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 17 March, 29 December, 2 January, 5 July 1861, 6 July 1863, 5 July 1865.

¹⁴ William C. Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign in 1862* (Boulder: Colorado Historical Society and Pruett Publishing Co., 1963), p. 49; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 17 March 1863.

¹⁵ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 5 July 1865.

¹⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 8 August, 15 September, 10 October 1860.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17 March, 26 June, 16 August 1865. Fenians are mentioned in all of the foregoing articles, but it

appears that a new Fenian organization was being formed in 1866 (see *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 20, 25 April, 8 May 1866, 18 March 1867, 18 March 1868, 31 August 1869).

¹⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 5 July 1869.

¹⁹ There are reports of local Fenian activities in the late seventies (see *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 8 February 1877). In 1882 a new Fenian group was organized in Denver with Martin D. Currihan, a prominent local politician, serving as centre.

²⁰ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 25 October 1866, 15 September 1869, 26 April, 18 October 1874; *Denver Turnverein. Souvenir des Denver Turnvereins* (Denver: n.p., 1890), p. 95.

²¹ *Denver Turnverein. Souvenir*, p. 99.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Verein, whose members' love of outdoor sport spurred the creation of a ten-acre park, the Swiss dominated Grutli Verein, and the all-inclusive German American Association—complemented the Turner's fraternal spirit by the mid-1870s.²³ Smaller numbers of English waited until 1872 before establishing their first organization, the Saint George's Protective Association, and the Mitchel Guards, an Irish para-military group, was not founded until 1874.²⁴

The Germans apparently outprayed as well as outplayed other pioneer foreign groups, for they managed to organize ethnic congregations rapidly. The Reverend Philip Kuhl gathered German Methodists in 1872. Within a year they completed their "Methodist gothic" church at Eighteenth and Arapahoe.²⁵ The German Reformed sought funds for four years before opening their building at Twenty-Third and Lawrence in 1874.²⁶ More than a decade was to pass before Denver Irish could claim their own parish—Saint Leo's at Ninth and Colfax.²⁷

A combination of factors explains the relative solidarity and the success of the Germans during the formative period of Denver. To argue that the Germans had more money and hence were more successful is perhaps to beg the question. Yet the figures, subjective though they may be, do merit attention. When census taker George Mills pried his way from door to door in 1870, he queried residents about their personal wealth. Some undoubtedly overestimated and others underestimated. Still the results do give some indication of the wealth of the members of the different ethnic groups (see table 2). Why were the Germans relatively rich? In part the answer is circular since their sense of community enhanced their financial well being.

TABLE 2
WEALTH OF FOREIGN BORN IN DENVER, 1870

Country (N= 10)	Individuals with \$4,000 or more (real estate and/or personal property)	Total wealth of \$4,000 or more
Austria	1	\$ 8,400
Canada	5	\$117,500
England	6	\$ 68,500
France	9	\$129,500
Germany	22	\$465,200
Holland	1	\$ 15,000
Ireland	7	\$118,800
Poland	3	\$ 39,000
Scotland	6	\$ 54,000
Switzerland	3	\$ 98,000

SOURCE: Figures compiled from U.S., Census Office, "1870 Census Arapahoe Co.," pp. 1-121. The \$4,000.00 figure represents a natural break in the wealth sequence since there were relatively few holdings in the \$3,000.00 range.



Prosperity exudes from the Denver home of Louis Bartels.

"The Germans," commented the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, "as a people are the most sociable on the Globe living closely together, with all their interests thoroughly identified, animated by the same ambition for thrift and the same love of industry; self reliant each one depending upon his own exertions for the fortune they all expect."²⁸ These close knit Germans exercised together, prayed together, sang together, often drank together, celebrated holidays together, and not uncommonly or unexpectedly patronized, hired, elected, and married their conationalists.

Besides reaping advantages from community solidarity, Germans enjoyed successes born of talent. Louis Bartels, born in Hanover, came to the United States as a teenager in 1845. Quickly abandoning New York City, he briefly located in Saint Louis. After the Mexican War he went to Albuquerque, learned Spanish, and engaged in trade. He then tried merchandising in Nebraska, lost his money but not his talents, which, after 1861, he applied in Denver, rapidly becoming a prominent politician and wealthy businessman.²⁹ The Nassau-born brothers William and Moritz Barth learned bootmaking long before they came to Denver. Their humble trade gave them a real estate stake

²³ *Denver Times*, 21 April 1902; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 13 March, 5 April, 3 June, 4 July 1873.

²⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 4 November 1873; *Denver Times*, 17 January 1874.

²⁵ *Denver Times*, 18 October 1873; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 16 May 1873, 19 October 1874.

²⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 18 January 1873, 29 May 1874.

²⁷ William Jones, *The History of Catholic Education in the State of Colorado* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1955), pp. 100-101.

²⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 21 July 1874.

²⁹ Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, pp. 329-30; Wilbur F. Stone, ed., *History of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918-19), pp. 334-35.

that, by 1870, allowed them to boast a collective fortune of \$45,000.³⁰ George Tritch, who reached Denver via New York, Cincinnati, and Pittsburg, also made thousands mundanely—he sold hardware.³¹ With patterns of movement and settlement similar to those of native-born Americans, many early Germans arrived in Denver partially acculturated without language handicaps and with valuable trades.³²

Other data reveals that the pioneer Irish and English in the territory lacked skills while the Germans enjoyed occupational patterns similar to those of native-born citizens. Over one-half of the Irish were counted among miners, laborers, and railroad employees; fewer than one German in four laid tracks, dug ditches, or picked at the earth. More than one-quarter of the English tunneled after silver and gold in 1870; only one German in sixteen did so. In some skilled trades Germans were overrepresented even when compared with the native born. One in forty Germans was a shoemaker; only one in four hundred Americans. Germans also had greater numbers of brewers, butchers, barbers, carpenters, coopers, harness and saddle makers, tailors and seamstresses per capita than did the native born (see table 3).

The Germans' abilities brought double blessings, making them the foremost ethnic contingent in Denver by the early 1870s and giving their fellow citizens the benefit of German talents. Before the Wurttemberg-born caterer Otto Baur arrived, local parties often flopped.³³ The Bavarian Louis Anfenger fixed watches and sold insurance.³⁴ Charles Bohm was an engraver; the Prussian R.H. Bohn, a

dentist; Peter Gottseleben, a jeweler.³⁵ Surveyor Frederick Ebert drafted the first map of Colorado Territory in 1862, became Denver city engineer in 1863, and eventually prospered in banking and real estate.³⁶ Civil War hero E.P. Jacobson was United States district attorney for the southern district of Mississippi before illness forced him to Denver where he practiced law and served in the legislature.³⁷ The list could be extended for pages.

To explain why Germans had skills when many Irish did not, the eastern United States and Europe must be examined. While the Irish were in the process of driving New York slum densities to 300,000 people per-square-mile, while cholera raged through the Irish wards of Boston, while Philadelphians burned Irish ghettos, many Germans were gaining the respect of the native-born Americans. Both Ohio and New York, for example, had laws fostering the teaching of German in public schools twenty years before the Civil War.³⁸ Boston intellectuals admired Beethoven and struggled with Kant. Oscar Handlin summarized the Boston Brahmins' attitudes: "Germans and Americans, they were the same kind of people, their ideas and feelings were rooted in the same social background; there was no occasion for serious conflict."³⁹

By 1848 millions of starving Irish peasants were reduced to living in bog holes and eating blighted potatoes. Fleeing their homeland with savings counted in shillings and farming skills measured by medieval standards, most of them were ill-prepared for city or farm life in America. Many did well if they simply survived the ocean passage and the rigors of slum life.⁴⁰ Viewed against this backdrop, the Irish of Denver were fortunate to have escaped from Cork and Dungarvan,

TABLE 3
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN COLORADO, 1870

Occupation	Country of Birth			
	United States	Germany	Ireland	England and Wales
	Population Ten Years Old and Older			
	23,885	1,426	1,654	1,493
Barbers	39	8	1	
Brewers	8	31		2
Carpenters	402	43	12	33
Domestics	263	19	39	12
Farmers	2,765	114	75	90
Laborers	1,513	80	162	50
Miners	1,216	89	271	462
Railroad Employees	531	54	235	40

³⁰ Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 343; *Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity* (Chicago, Ill.: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898), p. 208.

³¹ Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 205; Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado . . . from 1858 to 1890*, 4 vols. (Chicago, Ill.: Blakely Printing Co., 1889-95), 3:205.

³² Conclusion based on an analysis of biographies in Hall and Vickers, U.S., Census Office, "1870 Census Arapahoe County," available on microfilm from the National Archives, was checked using children's place of birth for less prominent individuals. It is likely that a higher proportion of more easily mobile single men were "just off the boat" immigrants.

³³ "Colorado's Territorial Days," *The Trail* 1 (October 1908):10.

³⁴ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4:649-51.

³⁵ *Denver Post*, 22 December 1919; Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 356.

³⁶ Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, pp. 346-47.

³⁷ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4:485-86.

³⁸ Albert B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Steuben Society of America, 1927), 2:151-52.

³⁹ Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, pp. 56-59.

⁴⁰ Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) covers conditions in Ireland; Thomas Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Co., 1966), p. xvii touches on the cruelty of history, and Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 180, tells of the difficult ocean crossings.



Compared to New York and Boston, 1874 Denver was a frontier outpost.

Dublin and Liverpool, New York and Boston. Some twenty percent of Denver public hospital charity patients in 1874 were Irish,⁴¹ twice their proportion of the general population. But consider that in New York City, a decade earlier, eighty-four percent of the patients in Bellevue Hospital were foreign-born and over three-fourths of the foreigners were Irish.

Denver's double distance from Europe made it difficult for many of the poorest to reach the frontier outpost. As late as 1880 the steerage and immigrant train fare from Liverpool to Chicago was \$43.74; to New Orleans, \$57.42; to Denver, \$72.66.⁴² Hundreds of thousands of Irish, especially those with families, could not afford to venture west of Brooklyn or Boston. The rough winning process of dollars and distance helped determine the character of Denver immigrant communities, especially before the era of cheap transportation. For a decade and one-half the town was spared the trauma of rapidly absorbing culturally diverse groups. Certainly many incoming foreigners to Denver were poor laborers, but at least some of them had capital and skills. In the eastern port cities many native-born Americans, burdened with the poorest of Erin's peasants, rapidly concluded that the Irish "crawl and eat dirt and poison every community they infest."⁴³ Labor hungry western businessmen took a different view.

⁴¹ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 26 November 1874; Ernst, *Immigrant Life*, pp. 53-54.

⁴² Evan Jones, *The Emigrant's Friend* (London: Hamilton, Adams, Co., 1880), pp. 47, 68, 91.

⁴³ George Templeton Strong, *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*, ed. Allan Nevins, 4 vols. (New York:

"An immense tide of emigration is about to set in from the old to the new world," reported the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*. Colorado, urged the paper, should "take such steps as will secure to her a share of these emigrants."⁴⁴ Governor Edward McCook agreed that "the territory needs muscle, as much as, or more than capital."⁴⁵

In 1872 the legislature funded a short-lived Board of Immigration that concentrated its feeble efforts in the United States though it did claim an unpaid London agent.⁴⁶ Local employers sometimes preferred Swedish or German domestics, but they rarely appended "No Irish need apply" to their advertisements as was often done in the East. Anti-Irish jokes were common, but they were hardly as bone shattering as the sticks and stones hurled during the Philadelphia riots in the 1840s. "An Irishman once told a painter to draw his picture and present him standing behind a tree." An Irishman wrote his brother: "Dear Patrick come! a dollar a day for ditching, no hanging for staling, Irish petaties a dollar a bushel and Whisky the same! Dear Patrick come: If you can't come in one vessel, come in two!"⁴⁷

Spared hostile, but unifying outside pressure, without large numbers and beset by internal divisions, the major immigrant communities in Denver faced an erosion of ethnic cohesiveness during the 1860s and early 1870s. Although they boarded together, drank together, and to some degree enjoyed fraternal organizations, those pioneer foreigners could hardly maintain ethnic exclusiveness in a town that covered only a few square miles. The primitive jail accommodated fifty prisoners in one 450-square-foot cell; the one Roman Catholic parish, Saint Mary's, mixed Irish, German, French, and native-born Americans.⁴⁸ Bishop Joseph P. Machebeuf's rectory reported five clergymen in 1870—three French and two Irish.⁴⁹ The Roman Catholic girls' school, Saint Mary's Academy, charged tuition leaving most Catholics to educate their children where they would or could. It appears that the

Macmillan Co., 1952) 3:343. On antiimmigrant attitudes see Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Rinehart, 1938) and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955).

⁴⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 28 June 1865.

⁴⁵ Edward McCook, "Message to the Legislature," Colorado Territory, Legislative Assembly, Council, *Council Journal: Eighth Session, 1870* (Denver, 1870), p. 21.

⁴⁶ Colorado, Territorial Board of Immigration, *Report of the Board of Immigration* (Denver, 1874), p. 109; Ralph E. Blodgett, "The Colorado Territorial Board of Immigration," *The Colorado Magazine* 46 (Summer 1969):245-56.

⁴⁷ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 14 December 1864, 14 July 1865. Testifying in a Denver court an Irish woman was asked how long it would take her to get to court. She replied: "If I should walk like an Irish woman it would take ten minutes; if I walked like a lady it would take longer." Asked how she would walk, she replied: "Like an Irish woman sir, its that on which I pride myself" (*Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 25 September 1873).

⁴⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 3 January 1874; *Denver City Directory, 1874*, pp. 44-46.

⁴⁹ U.S., Census Office, "1870 Census Arapahoe Co.," p. 16.

other early Roman Catholic parochial establishment, the Cathedral Boys' School, accepted all nationalities during the 1870s.⁵⁰ Germans, anxious that their language and culture be preserved, attempted a separate school in 1866, but it soon languished.⁵¹

The successes and the failures of the Germans in maintaining ethnic solidarity illustrates the integrating and disintegrating forces affecting all foreign contingents. Though Denver generally welcomed foreign labor in the 1860s and early 1870s, the city sometimes worried about ethnic exclusiveness. The *Denver Times* lectured Germans: "The well being of our American Society rests upon the unity of the various elements that compose it."⁵² Unchastised, the Germans pressed for German language courses in the public schools. By 1873 they had enrolled 100 pupils in the German division under territorial legal authority, which they "considered a strong inclination for the German element to immigrate and settle in Colorado."⁵³ Harrassed by a conscientious policeman, Turners ejected the officer. "We want it clearly understood that we want no policemen at our hall in any official capacity."⁵⁴ Mayor Francis Case, sensitive to German political power, promised to wink at liquor code infractions.⁵⁵

Acting Governor Frank Hall was less obliging when Germans asked him to commute the death sentence imposed on Theodore Meiers, a young German, "in a strange land entirely away from friends and relatives" whose conviction was based on circumstantial evidence. Meiers was hanged.⁵⁶ When reform-minded Germans petitioned the city to reconsider the favorable franchise granted the gas company, they found their ranks divided with some supporting fellow German Louis Bartels, the secretary of the firm.⁵⁷ One semi-weekly and two weekly German language papers failed before the *Colorado Journal* survived.⁵⁸ Revered religious traditions were abandoned as pastorless German Lutherans shifted their allegiance to the Methodists.⁵⁹ Even drinking customs were not sacred. "Buck [*sic*]

⁵⁰ Jones, *History of Catholic Education*, pp. 95-96.

⁵¹ *Denver Republican*, 13 September 1883, gives the date as 1868, but more contemporary evidence shows that the school taught by Frederick Steinhauer opened in late April 1866 (*Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12-28 April, 23 May 1866).

⁵² *Denver Times*, 18 October 1873.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1873.

⁵⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 18 February 1874.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 February 1874.

⁵⁶ Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 228; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12 January 1873.

⁵⁷ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 22, 23 March, 5, 6, 8 April 1873.

⁵⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 9, 17 July, 18 August 1870, 2 March, 3 April, 11 May, 27 July 1872; Donald E. Oehlerts, *Guide to Colorado Newspapers, 1859-1963* (Denver: Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region, 1964), p. 30. Oehlerts does not list two early German papers, *Die Deutsch Presse des Grossen Westens*, founded by August Knoflach, which appeared weekly for nine issues, and *Die Denver Deutsche Zeitung*, a weekly published by Frank Kratzer that survived for twelve issues.

⁵⁹ Carl A. Geiseler, "A History of the Colorado District of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church" (Ph.D.

Beer Day is usually considered a German institution," said the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, which further reported that in Denver "all nationalities took part in its observance."⁶⁰

Marriage patterns, conversely, reflect a general commitment to ingroup solidarity. In 1870 there were two men between ages fifteen and fifty-nine for every woman in the same category in Colorado Territory. Despite this imbalanced sex-ratio, foreigners tended to marry within their own communities: eighty percent of the German males had German wives; seventy percent of the Irish males took Irish spouses; only one-half of the English males wed English women. These statistics mirror the general pattern of ethnic cohesiveness, with the Germans showing the most.⁶¹

From 1860 to 1870 Denver foreigners were forced, as were those in Minnesota towns studied by Timothy Smith, to undergo "an astonishingly rapid adjustment . . . to American folkways."⁶² Nevertheless, local immigrants were not particularly ill used or subjected to unbearable cultural shocks. Germans found considerable opportunity to apply their skills while the Irish and English were welcomed by labor hungry empire builders. Intergroup friction was minimal; ethnic consciousness was restricted. When John Harper ran for mayor in 1871 the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* did not bother to mention his Scottish birth.⁶³ A need for population coupled with pride in seventeen different nationalities far outweighed any concerns Denver may have harbored about Northern European immigrants. The foreign born, in turn, found that their small numbers and their general acceptability to the Americans led to an erosion of ethnic solidarity. Had Denver continued to grow slowly the patterns of toleration and acculturation established during its formative period likely would have persisted. Such was not to be. Between 1870 and 1890 disintegration of ethnic cohesiveness was temporarily checked as the population of Denver spiraled from less than 5,000 to over 100,000.

During those two decades Germans increased their numbers by a factor of ten. By the early 1880s Turners were forced to enlarge their hall; nine years later they spent \$60,000 for a new facility. Within a few years the organization split with the formation of a West Denver Turn.⁶⁴ Masons and Odd Fellows established German lodges, German

diss., Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver, 1947), p. 30; U.S., Works Projects Administration, *Life in Denver* (Denver: Writer's Program, 1941), p. 35.

⁶⁰ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 2 May 1874.

⁶¹ Figures derived from random survey of approximately one-fourth of total Denver population as listed in U.S., Census Office, "1870 Census Arapahoe Co.," pp. 1-121.

⁶² Smith, "New Approaches to the History of Immigration," p. 1,268.

⁶³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 28, 30 March, 2 April 1871, 1 January 1875.

⁶⁴ Joseph E. Smith, "Seventy-Five Years of Community Service—Toil—Sacrifice," *Pep and Punch* 13

veterans flocked to the Deutsche Krieger Verein, and musical enthusiasts both played in and listened to Sigel's Band.⁶⁵ During most of the 1880s and 1890s Germans supported eleven Christian congregations and one synagogue. Roman Catholic Germans essentially had their own large parish, Saint Elizabeth's, by 1878.⁶⁶ German Lutherans organized Saint John's in 1879, and by 1900 boasted a school.⁶⁷ Russian-Germans established two groups, one Congregational, the other Lutheran.⁶⁸ In 1890 the *Colorado Journal* was distributing 1,750 papers daily despite competition from the *Denver Herald*, founded in 1884.⁶⁹

City prosperity, fed by the population boom, insured continuing affluence for pioneer German businessmen. Real estate speculation rewarded William Barth whose four lots on the corner of Sixteenth and Stout, purchased for \$800 in the 1860s, were in the center of the business district by 1880.⁷⁰ Herman Wagner simply preempted 320 acres that were developed within a decade.⁷¹ George Tritch, whose hardware store grossed some \$600,000 in 1878, invested part of his profits in two, large buildings.⁷² Frederick Schinner platted a 160-acre addition within walking distance of downtown, and Frank Goody held valuable west Denver property.⁷³ Brewers and bankers also prospered. After Adolph Coors bought out his partner, he moved his establishment to Golden, leaving a good share of the Denver market to Zang's and Holzman's breweries.⁷⁴ Both were eventually purchased by an English-financed combine for \$2.5 million.⁷⁵ Prosperous real estate speculators and brewers found fellow German Charles Kountze happy to accept their deposits at the Colorado National Bank, while George



Born in Baden, Germany, in 1829, George Tritch owned extensive real estate in Denver, where he settled in 1860. His 1865 Denver residence sported lavish "gingerbread" trim.



(September 1940):3-5; "Pioneer German Theatricals in Denver," *Pep and Punch* 11 (March 1939):1; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1 February 1872, 18 February 1876; *Denver Times*, 3 November 1901.

⁶⁵ *The Coloradoan*, 1 November 1892; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 16 March 1878, 8 January 1879, 6 January, 30 November 1881, 16 December 1883, 18 January 1884, 9 May, 20 June 1885, 4 May 1891. Fred Habrl, "Scrapbook," Western History Department, Denver Public Library contains numerous clippings on German band activities. See also Ella B. Pathorne, *The Musical History of Colorado* (Denver: Charles Westley, 1889), pp. 51, 66-79, 164.

⁶⁶ Jones, *History of Catholic Education*.

⁶⁷ Geisler, "A History of the Colorado District of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church," p. 31. An earlier German Lutheran congregation had faltered (see Lyle L. Schaefer, "A History of the Schools of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in Colorado" [M.A. thesis, University of Denver, 1963], pp. 1-31).

⁶⁸ George J. Eisenach, *A History of the German Congregational Churches in the United States* (Yankton, S.Dak.: Pioneer Press, 1938), pp. 88-89; Doepfers, "The Globeville Neighborhood in Denver," p. 509.

⁶⁹ N.W. Ayer, comp. *N.W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual . . . 1884* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer, 1884), pp. 311, 189, 1,196. Oehlerts, *Guide to Colorado Newspapers*, pp. 27-42.

⁷⁰ Samuel D. Leach, "Early Day Reminiscences," *The Trail* 4 (August 1911), p. 21.

⁷¹ Hall, *History of Colorado*, 4:623.

⁷² *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1 January 1880; *Denver Republican*, 4 November 1881; Hall, *History of Colorado*, 3:205.

⁷³ "Frank Goody," *The Trail* 12 (November 1919):32; "Adolph Schinner," *The Trail* 4 (August 1911):26-27.

⁷⁴ Charles Ryland, "Adolph Coors of Golden," *The 1967 Denver Westerners Brand Book*, ed. Richard A. Ronzio (Boulder: Denver Westemers, 1968), pp. 54-69.

⁷⁵ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 7, 20 July, 4 August 1889.

Charles B. Kountze, whose father was a German Lutheran from Saxony, followed his older brothers in banking. He arrived in Denver in 1864 and took charge of the Kountze Brothers' Colorado banks in 1866. Their two-story, brick bank, located at Holladay (Market) and Fifteenth streets in Denver, was built in 1863.



Tritch and Swiss-born John J. Reitman were glad to be of service at the German National.⁷⁶

Germans who arrived after 1870 do not appear to have done as well financially as did some of the pioneers, unless the latecomers had previously amassed some capital. The flashy promoter Baron Von Richthofen courted and nearly won bankruptcy through his scheme to develop Montclair miles from the city's center.⁷⁷ Sensible Charles Boettcher quickly parried his small fortune into a large one through shrewd investments in sugar beet refineries and cement plants.⁷⁸ While the wealth gained by a Boettcher or a Coors might tempt some into wishing for the bygone days, it is sobering to consider that for every Boettcher, Coors, Barth, Bartles, Tritch, or Zang, there were hundreds of Germans who labored sixty-hour weeks for twenty-five cents an hour. Irishman Edward Keating estimated that during the depression-marred 1890s skilled laborers averaged only \$2.00 to \$2.50 a day.⁷⁹ Even during the prosperous 1880s some Germans living in tar-paper shacks along the South Platte River were "earning as little as \$2.00 a week."⁸⁰

As was true of the Germans, Irish population gains helped insure the growth of their organizations. Bellicose Fenian nationalism may have suited the pioneer temper in Denver, but Fenianism soon distressed Irishmen striving for acceptance. When the brotherhood called upon fellow Celts to join them in a central society, many refused.⁸¹ The Mitchel Guards, a private military company, did most of the marching and much of the entertaining for the Irish during the late 1870s.⁸² More intellectual in tone and eventually more influential was the Michael Davitt Branch of the Land League, which welcomed Protestants and Catholics, rich and poor.⁸³ In 1882 parading leaguers waved signs reading "North and South" and "Orange and Green."⁸⁴ This Protestant-Catholic fraternity was based in part on the antipathy Irish Catholics felt toward their French-born bishop, Joseph P.

⁷⁶ Hentschel, *The German Element in the Development of Colorado*, p. 18; Richard E. Leach, "The Banks of Denver," *The Trail* 7 (September 1914):8.

⁷⁷ Thomas J. Noel, *Richthofen's Montclair: A Pioneer Denver Suburb* (Denver: Graphic Impressions, 1976), pp. 1-18; Louisa Ward Arps, *Denver in Slices* (Denver: Sage Books, 1959), pp. 155-71.

⁷⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 3 July 1948.

⁷⁹ Edward Keating, *The Gentleman from Colorado: A Memoir* (Denver: Sage Books, 1964), p. 47.

⁸⁰ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 30 November 1891.

⁸¹ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 4 September 1882, 19 February 1883.

⁸² Vickers, *History of Denver*, p. 296; *Denver Republican*, 29 May 1883; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 18 January 1874, 18 March 1876, 19 March 1878, 25 February, 29 April 1880, 4 February, 17 March 1883; *Denver Times*, 10, 17 January, 28 March 1874.

⁸³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 15 February, 1, 12 April, 30 September, 17, 24 October, 14, 28 November, 5, 12, 19 December 1881, 12, 30 January, 22 May, 5, 12 June 1882, 18, 19, 26 February, 9 July, 19 November 1883, 4 February 1884.

⁸⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12 January 1882.



Called the "Apostle of Catholicism" in Colorado, the Very Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf (1812-89) reached Denver in 1860. Eight years later he became a bishop and was made Vicar Apostolic of Colorado and Utah.

Machebeuf and his coadjutor Nicholas Matz, whom they accused of discriminating against Irish priests by ordering them "to outlying posts of the diocese, where a few jack rabbits can barely get a living."⁸⁵ When Machebeuf objected that the Irish Progressive Association had asked a Protestant clergyman to speak, the bishop was publically told to stop making "the altar a political platform in favor of England" and was accused of treating Irishmen like children on leading strings.⁸⁶

The wealth that helped dozens of pioneer Germans reach the top rungs of the economic ladder in Denver continued to elude most of the Denver Irish. Having little surplus during the formative period of the city and initially untrained in skilled professions, the mass of the Irish had limited opportunity to take full advantage of the boom. Apparently better off economically than their brethren in many eastern cities, local Irish trailed the Germans and the English.⁸⁷ This is even more apparent

when the Protestant Irish are excepted from the bulk of the Roman Catholic Irish, for some local Protestant Irish were highly successful. James Archer, builder of the city gas works, Thomas Patterson, publisher of the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* and long-time leader of the Colorado Democrats, and M.J. McNamara, a department store owner, were all of non-Roman Catholic Irish background.⁸⁸ Jesuits lamented the lack of monied men as did Bishop Machebeuf who had to dredge for supporters in the 1870s.⁸⁹ Fortunately some affluent Roman Catholics, such as John K. Mullen and Dennis Sheedy, were of a philanthropic bent.⁹⁰

Although poorly represented among the power elite of the city, the Irish eventually established themselves in some professions and skilled trades (see table 4). A greater percentage of Irish were still common

TABLE 4
OCCUPATIONS OF DENVER MALES OVER TEN YEARS OLD IN 1900

Occupations	United States ^a	Germany	Great Britain	Ireland	Scandinavia
	Total Males in Denver				
	20,383	5,387	4,325	3,930	2,227
Number/Percentage in Each Occupation					
Bankers	329/1.64%	50/0.93%	51/1.15%	30/0.76%	3/0.13%
Bartenders	294/1.44%	77/1.29%	14/0.32%	40/1.02%	25/1.12%
Clerks	1,237/6.06%	181/3.36%	205/4.74%	166/4.22%	50/2.24%
Clergymen	124/0.61%	24/0.45%	22/0.51%	25/0.64%	8/0.36%
Journalists	556/2.73%	37/0.69%	54/1.25%	44/1.12%	2/0.09%
Lawyers	123/0.60%	12/0.22%	19/0.44%	7/0.18%	6/0.27%
Merchants	1,158/5.68%	407/7.55%	248/5.73%	178/4.53%	73/3.28%
Physicians	354/1.74%	37/0.69%	27/0.62%	28/0.71%	7/0.31%
Salesmen	1,127/5.53%	267/4.96%	217/5.02%	148/3.76%	74/3.32%
Teachers	127/0.62%	15/0.28%	15/0.35%	12/0.30%	7/0.31%
Blacksmiths	155/0.76%	73/1.35%	65/1.50%	86/2.19%	22/0.99%
Brewers	4/0.02%	99/1.67%	1/0.02%	3/0.08%	0/0.00%
Draymen	823/4.04%	191/3.52%	128/2.96%	159/4.04%	91/4.09%
Laborers	3,785/18.6%	402/7.46%	242/5.59%	593/15.1%	440/19.7%
Railroad Employees	929/4.56%	151/2.80%	158/3.74%	302/7.68%	85/3.82%

SOURCE: Figures derived from U.S., Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900. Special Reports Occupations*, pp. 561, 569, 575, 585.

^a Figures are for males whose parents were both native-born.

⁸⁵ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12 August 1889. Machebeuf wrote in 1887: "Yes, a coadjutor is to be given me. I am getting old, and there is work for two. For some time I feared that Rome might send me an outside man, either a German or an Irishman. Understand, however, that I have no prejudices against these nationalities" (Jones, *History of Catholic Education*, p. 129).

⁸⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 15 February 1876.

⁸⁷ U.S., Census Office, *Tenth Census of the United States: 1880. Manufacturers*, pp. 379-80; *Eleventh Census of the United States: 1890. Compendium*, 2:706-9. In both 1880 and 1900 the Mountain West ranked second

only to the Far West in regional per capita wealth. Harvey Perloff et al., *Regions, Resources and Economic Growth* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), p. 27.

⁸⁸ Hall, *History of Colorado*, 1:420, 2:114-15, 4:509-10; Vickers, *History of Denver*, p. 534; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 10 May 1879; *Denver Tribune*, 27 August 1882.

⁸⁹ *The Jesuit Fathers in Denver* (n.p., ca. 1924), p. 54; William J. Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf* (Pueblo, Colo.: Franklin Press, 1908), pp. 371-72.

⁹⁰ *Denver Times*, 22 April 1899; *Pueblo Star Journal*, 1 February 1953.

laborers in 1900 than were either Germans or British. However, Hibernians could comfort themselves by citing statistics on journalists and clergymen and by reflecting on their occupational superiority to the more recently arrived Scandinavians. Denver police reports from 1892, on the other hand, afforded little cause for pride (see table 5). Providentially the Irish mania for mayhem and misdemeanor created job opportunities for them. By 1900 the Irish comprised nearly twenty percent of the Denver firemen, policemen, and watchmen.

TABLE 5
ARREST RECORD OF FOREIGN BORN IN DENVER, 1892

Nationality	Number of Arrests	Nationality	Number of Arrests
Chinese	56	Italian	293
English	98	Irish	1,986
German	623	Swedish	286

SOURCE: Denver Police Department, *Annual Report*, 1892, p. 11.

Between 1870 and 1890 the Irish and the Germans of Denver formed dozens of societies. Comparable numbers of British and Canadians, including the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish, and English, were satisfied with a handful of organizations. With a felicity that might have startled both the Germans and the Irish, who continually struggled for cooperation among their various organizations, the English Albions, the Welsh Cambrians, and the Scottish Caledonians formed the Union Club in 1884, established their own hall, and enjoyed joint picnics and socials. In the 1890s the Albion Club declined, but the Caledonians and Cambrians flourished while the English centered their cultural and social activities first in the Saint George's Association and later in the British-American Society. Not to be outdone by German Turners or Irish Shamrocks, the English helped establish a cricket club in the early 1890s.⁹¹

Their small numbers (only 384 were enumerated in 1890) belied the strength of the Welsh in Denver. Their churches, their societies, and their fondness for a doomed tongue brought them together. British Canadians, despite their large numbers, never rivaled the Welsh in community solidarity, nor were the Cornish sufficiently tight knit to match the Welsh, though many Cornishmen concentrated in the small

suburbs of Swansea and Elyria near the smelters that gave them employment.⁹²

In some respects the experience of the British in Denver mirrors that of the Germans. Both claimed large numbers of wealthy men, both were well represented in skilled trades and professions. British investments in western mines, cattle operations, railroads, and real estate insured the presence in Denver of managers, entrepreneurs, and mining experts, such as Richard Pearce, William James, Arthur Crebbin, James Duff, Thomas Arthur Rickard, and Humphrey B. Chamberlin.⁹³ Other wealthy British and British-Americans had no need for trans-Atlantic connections. Some simply married wisely. Elizabeth Fraser, Canadian-born representative of the Singer Sewing Machine Company in Denver, wed cattleman John Iliff. His death left her the wealthiest woman in the state.⁹⁴ The first and second Baroness Von Richthofens were English-born.⁹⁵ Mrs. Frederick Ebert, wife of the prosperous German real estate developer, was likewise British.⁹⁶ Scottish-born John D. McGilvary married his employer's daughter; soon he was a partner of his father-in-law. A successful contractor McGilvary was representative of a small coterie of Scots and Canadians, which included Charles McPhee and David Seerie who, arriving in Denver too late to take advantage of the spectacular real estate bargains, turned to the building trades. The construction boom of the 1880s rewarded them handsomely.⁹⁷ McGilvary settled on fashionable Capitol Hill in the 1890s where he constructed a small replica of a Scottish castle. His neighbors hardly thought him eccentric for they were prone to the same weakness. The brewer John Good, remembering his native Alsace Lorraine, fashioned a chateau, while the metallurgist Richard Pearce, recalling his Cornish-English background, patterned his mansion after a Tudor manor house.⁹⁸

⁹¹ *Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, Compendium*, 2:604-7; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 19 April 1899.

⁹² Thomas A. Rickard, "Richard Pearce: The Biographic Sketch of a Pioneer Metallurgist," *Engineering and Mining Journal* 125 (10 March 1928):407-8; Hall, *History of Colorado*, 2:448; *Colorado Scientific Society Proceedings*, 7:45; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 24 November 1896; William C. Ferrill, ed., *Sketches of Colorado* (Denver: Western Press Bureau Co., 1911), p. 339; Herbert O. Brayer, "Interview with Mr. Eisenlord, April, 1946," typescript, Colorado Historical Society, Western Range Cattle Industry file, p. 2; Otis E. Young, "A Dedication to the Memory of Thomas Arthur Rickard, 1864-1953," *Arizona and the West* 11 (Summer 1969):105-8; Henry D. Teetor, "A Chapter of Denver's History: H.B. Chamberlin," *Magazine of Western History* 10 (June 1889):148-52.

⁹³ Agnes Wright Spring, "A 'Genius for Handling Cattle': John W. Iliff," *When Grass Was King*, ed. Maurice Frink (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1956), pp. 430-41.

⁹⁴ Edith Eudora Kohl, *Denver's Historic Mansions: Castles to the Empire Builders* (Denver: Sage Books, 1957), p. 196.

⁹⁵ *Portrait and Biographical Record of the State of Colorado* (Chicago, Ill.: Chapman Publishing Co., 1899), p. 401.

⁹⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 23 October 1883, 29 October 1901; Hall, *History of Colorado*, 4:511, 572.

⁹⁷ Kohl, *Denver's Historic Mansions*, pp. 27, 38.

⁹¹ *Denver Republican*, 23 October 1892; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 4 November 1873, 27 January 1880, 9 October 1881, 7, 14 May, 3 August, 22 October, 30 December 1882, 11 February, 15 March, 25 November, 2 December 1883, 2 October 1884, 28 January, 12 February, 3 March, 16 July 1885, 11 October 1893; *Denver Times*, 27 December 1899, 1 January, 21 June 1900, 8 December 1901.



Incorporated in 1880, the Denver Club was built in 1888.

Both Germans and English, particularly those with money, usually enjoyed the respect and the admiration of the top strata of Denver society, though being rich and foreign they were not always loved by the pit. Pearce, Duff, Herman Beeger, Eddy, William James, and numerous other Germans and British were members of the exclusive Denver Club.⁹⁹ Indeed, it appears that the refinement and the money of these well-educated foreigners may have had as much to do with setting the tone of Denver society as did the attitudes of the native born. Horace Tabor found that money alone would not buy social acceptance while Englishman Thomas A. Rickard, though he lacked Tabor's millions, was an eminently acceptable Victorian. Rickard wrote that "Tabor is typical of the shiftless and irresponsible men that were lucky enough to become millionaires . . . only subsequently to lose their money, their health and their standing in the community by wild speculations, unhealthy ways of living and moral obliquities."¹⁰⁰ Rickard believed that sudden wealth ruined the mining magnates' lives by subjecting them to the wiles of women, drink, and French cooking.¹⁰¹

Unlike the Germans and the Irish, a majority of Denver British had little need or desire to establish exclusively ethnic congregations. The Welsh, it is true, required Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches.¹⁰² The Scottish, conversely, settled into their historic Presbyterianism. Some among the English opted for the Methodists while others found Saint John's Episcopal Cathedral to their liking, particularly after the church enticed Henry Martyn Hart to venture from London to the wilderness. Hart, whose Anglophobia was matched by his zealous ardor for Holy Christian Sunday, ran afoul of the beer-drinking Germans, whose thirst knew no commandments. Though hounded, Hart was undaunted for his congregation loved, respected, and paid him well. As dean of the most prestigious parish in Denver and a member of the most exclusive city clubs, he could afford his preference for things English.¹⁰³

All three groups were occasionally subjected to the bigotry of the native-born American and other nationalities. Both Hart and the Reverend Henry Buchtel, chancellor of the University of Denver, were chided for their pro-British leanings.¹⁰⁴ When Thomas Rickard told a local audience that it was nonsense to believe that all men were created equal, indignant Denverites demanded his resignation as state geologist, and when he questioned the honesty of some mining promoters he was called a "conglomerate burro."¹⁰⁵ The British-born broker Thomas Tonge winced when his brothers proclaimed their loyalty to the Queen. Such men, he insisted, "should return to England by the first boat they can board."¹⁰⁶ Distressed by radical activity in Dublin, the Irish Catholics in Denver were urged to march proudly on Saint Patrick's Day or people would say: "Oh they are the murderers of Cavendish and Burke or of somebody else."¹⁰⁷ And beer-loving Germans constantly risked being smeared as the "boozy Teuton" Sabbath breakers.¹⁰⁸ Fortunately the slurs rarely went beyond words. A large measure of tolerance of northern Europeans lasted throughout the 1880s. Irishman Robert Morris was elected mayor in

¹⁰² *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 15 1874; *Denver Republican*, 15 December 1892; *Denver Times*, 16 May 1890; Evan Williams, *History of the Welsh People of Colorado* (Denver: n.p., 1889), pp. 3-7.

¹⁰³ George N. Rainford, "Dean Henry Martyn Hart, 1838-1920" (M.A. thesis, University of Denver, 1964), pp. 69-70; Henry M. Hart, *Recollections and Reflections* (New York: Gilb Bros., 1917), pp. 136-38; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 9 September 1882; *Denver Republican*, 13 March 1889; Carl Lammers, "Scrapbook," Western History Department, Denver Public Library, p. 129.

¹⁰⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 27 May 1889.

¹⁰⁵ Rickard, *Retrospect*, pp. 68, 77.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Tonge, "Scrapbook," 20 vols., Colorado Historical Society, 1:162.

¹⁰⁷ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 13 March 1883. The allusion is to the Phoenix Park murders of 6 May 1882.

¹⁰⁸ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 27 March, 3 April 1889, 2 March 1891; *Denver Republican*, 24, 26, 28 March, 1 April 1889.

⁹⁹ Denver Club, *Constitution, Rules, . . . List of Officers and Members* (Denver: Denver Club, 1900).

¹⁰⁰ Thomas A. Rickard, *The Romance of Mining* (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 221.

¹⁰¹ Thomas A. Rickard, *Retrospect: An Autobiography* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1937), p. 78.



Irishman Edward Keating



Irishman Robert Morris

1881, defeating the German George Tritch.¹⁰⁹ Eight years later the "boozy Teuton's" candidate Wolfe Londoner took the mayor's chair. Removed from office toward the end of his term, he was briefly replaced by Durand C. Packard, a Britisher.¹¹⁰ Not until the depression days of the 1890s, when the America Protective Association waged a temporarily demoralizing vendetta against Roman Catholics, did any of the major immigrant groups in Denver suffer severe economic or political discrimination.¹¹¹

During Denver's first three decades its Irish, German, and English contingents were threatened less by external foes than they were by centrifugal forces, some of which were internally generated. Population gains between 1870 and 1890 slowed the breakdown of ethnic cohesiveness, but that growth was not sufficient to insure the long term maintenance of ethnic communities. All three groups were split religiously. Irishmen attempted to gloss over their differences, even to the extent of not holding public Saint Patrick's Day celebrations from 1883 to 1887.¹¹² Still neither they, nor the Germans, could forget centuries of religious conflict. Lucille Hagus, a German Roman Catholic, heard stories from her father about evil Jewish rent collectors, and the Reverend Louis Dornsdeif let his imagination run unchecked when after baptizing a Jewish woman he claimed that he lived in fear that he would be murdered.¹¹³ The anti-Semitism that split

the Germans was not limited to that nationality. Neither the Denver Club nor the Lotus Club admitted Jews. Wealthy German Jews responded by organizing their own groups: the Standard and another Lotus Club.¹¹⁴

Economic, social, and geographic cleavages also divided the immigrants. The Welsh-born mining engineer William James led Colorado troops against Leadville strikers, many of them foreign-born, in 1880.¹¹⁵ Thomas Rickard favored the eight-hour day, but he had no love for Populist Governor Davis Waite who refused to side with management.¹¹⁶ The prosperous Irish miller J.K. Mullen introduced profit sharing and donated generously to Roman Catholic causes. Even he, however, abandoned his less affluent Irish neighbors in old west Denver for a Capitol Hill mansion, though his sister Hannah continued to live at 944 Ninth Street for many years.¹¹⁷ Residential patterns reveal no Irish, English, or German ghettos in nineteenth-century Denver. Ward I with thirty-five percent foreign born and Ward IX with thirty-seven percent were the only Denver wards among nine to show foreign-born concentrations above twenty-six percent in 1890. Five wards reported between twenty-three and twenty-six percent and only two had fewer than twenty percent foreign born.¹¹⁸ Different yardsticks could be used to produce slightly different results. For example, if the number of immigrants and natives living within a mile of the South Platte River between Sixth and Thirty-eighth avenues was charted, the foreign percentage would probably exceed thirty-five or even forty. Random samples of German and Irish surnames drawn from the 1890 *Denver City Directory* indicate that those groups were widely scattered throughout the older neighborhoods of Denver. Blacks, Chinese, and Italians lived in easily identifiable, though small areas. The major foreign-born groups, including the Scandinavians, did not.

¹⁰⁹ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 4, 11 November 1881; *Denver Republican*, 1, 9 November 1881.

¹¹⁰ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 3, 5, 8 April 1881, 14 March, 27 April 1891; *Denver Republican*, 3 April 1889.

¹¹¹ Donald L. Kinzer, *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. 46; Edward Keating, *The Gentleman from Colorado*, pp. 63-64.

¹¹² *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12, 18 March 1883, 17 March 1884, 17, 18 March 1885, 18 March 1887, 18 March 1890, 18 March 1891.

¹¹³ Lucille Hagus Imherr, "The Hagus Family," typescript, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, p. 18; Giesler, "A History of the Colorado District Missouri Synod Lutheran Church," p. 41.

¹¹⁴ Uchill, *Pioneers, Peddlers and Tsudikim*, pp. 130-31; *Denver Republican*, 31 October 1881; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1 December 1881.

¹¹⁵ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 6 January 1891.

¹¹⁶ Thomas A. Rickard, *Interviews with Mining Engineers* (San Francisco: Mining and Scientific Press, 1922), pp. 34, 37.

¹¹⁷ C.W. Hurd, "J.K. Mullen Milling Magnate of Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 29 (April 1952):104-18; Sally Davis and Betty Baldwin, *Denver Dwellings and Descendants* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), pp. 150-67.

¹¹⁸ *Eleventh Census of the United States: 1890, Compendium*, 1:541.



No longer a frontier outpost, turn-of-the-century Denver was a city.

Language, the glue that bound some ethnic groups together in large cities, was not a particularly effective cement in Denver. Obviously neither the Irish nor the English could count upon linguistic exclusiveness to preserve their communities. German politicians insisted that German be taught in the schools and persuaded the state to publish legislative proceedings in German. Their efforts may have promoted bilingualism, but even in the short run, they were fated to fail. Fearful that their children would not succeed in school, the Hagus family stopped speaking German when they moved to Denver from their farm.¹¹⁹ In 1885 the state legislature discovered that two-thirds of the German language edition of the governor's annual message remained on hand; four years later the state ceased publishing laws in German.¹²⁰

The experience of the major immigrant groups in Denver between 1860 and 1890 suggests that the process of acculturation was hastened by their lack of large numbers, by their familiarity with English, and by the fact that many of them, particularly in the pioneer period, were pre-aculturated. Some of them amassed fortunes, though most had to be content with modest incomes and moderate economic progress. Patterns of toleration established during the formative period of Den-

ver persisted during the prosperous 1880s. Plagued by internal centrifugal forces, larger immigrant groups in Denver could not even count on exterior threats to hold them together. Probably their situation was not unusual, though it differed from that of their fellow countrymen in the largest cities. Howard Chudacoff has shown that Omaha, like Denver, lacked immigrant ghettos, and he has raised significant questions about the implications of this evidence.¹²¹

Perhaps the story of American immigration and, by extension, the history of this nation of immigrants has been distorted by the narrow geographical focus of many studies. Research on immigrants in cities such as Grand Junction, Pueblo, and Denver, as well as the study of western, foreign-born farmers, ranchers, and miners may bring us closer to an understanding of the total history of the United States. At the very least such work will reward those who undertake it, for in studying immigration they will deal with complex evidence, uncover interesting stories, and not infrequently learn something about themselves.

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¹¹⁹ Imherr, "Hagus Family," p. 19.

¹²⁰ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 7 January 1876, 13 January 1885; *Denver Republican*, 25 June, 2 July 1893.

¹²¹ Howard P. Chudacoff, "A New Look at Ethnic Neighborhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium Sized City," *Journal of American History* 60 (June 1973):76-93.



“Unsere Leute”: The Germans from Russia in Colorado

BY KENNETH W. ROCK

Anyone perusing the telephone directories of Colorado's front range cities cannot fail to be struck by the large number of German surnames and will naturally conclude that the “German element” comprises a significant portion of contemporary Coloradoans. History confirms that German-speaking peoples have played a major role in Colorado's destiny—in the mining camps, in the mountain valleys, in the growing cities, and on the irrigated plains.

Territorial Colorado's first “Anglo” colony was organized in 1869 by a Prussian, Carl Wulsten, who persuaded some three hundred German-speaking men, women, and children from Chicago to settle in the Wet Mountain Valley by March 1870. Although this initial introduction of “thrifty German farmers into Colorado's economy” did not flourish (many settlers drifted off to form German communities in Denver, Pueblo, and Canon City), some descendants make their homes in the towns of Colfax, Silver Cliff, and Westcliffe to this day.¹ By 1875 German-speaking people resided in the Territory of Colorado to the extent that the official documents of the state constitutional assembly were published in English, Spanish, and German. At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 nearly ten percent of Colorado's population was of German or Austrian origin.² Although acknowledging that “high country society” was composed primarily of immigrants from the British Isles, Germany, Italy, and Mexico, with Sweden, Japan, and China somewhat less numerous represented, accounts of Colorado and its populace rarely point out that a large number of German-speaking peoples in this state came not from Bismarck's Germany, nor from Austria-Hungary, nor from Switzer-

¹ Robert G. Athearn, *The Coloradans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), pp. 111-13. See also Zeke Scher, “Inspiration in the Valley,” *Empire Magazine* 28 (10 April 1977):12-14

² Athearn, *The Coloradans*, p. 236.

land, but rather from Imperial Russia.³ These "Germans from Russia" have, in fact, played a major role in Colorado's economic and social development. They comprise a fascinating chapter in that intermingling of cultures that characterizes twentieth-century Colorado.

Descendants of Germans from Russia constitute the second largest ethnic group in contemporary Colorado. Only Spanish-speaking people number greater. The United States census of 1920 enumerated 21,000 Germans from Russia residing in Colorado. By 1930 it was estimated that there were nearly 50,000.⁴ Between 200,000 and 300,000 of their descendants reside in the Centennial State today, primarily in the front range metropolitan centers and in the sugar-producing Arkansas and South Platte river valleys. By the 1970s descendants of German-Russian immigrants have become a thoroughly Americanized component of United States society. They have even been termed an invisible minority.⁵ Together with other Americans, German-Russians have commenced to search for their ethnic identity. Recent scholarship has endeavored to record this people's heritage before it vanishes from history.⁶

Reasons abound for the widespread lack of knowledge about the German-Russians of Colorado. Many immigrant children learned little of their past, for both they and their parents were too preoccupied with survival to think in historical or literary terms. Spurred on by economic necessity, but also prompted by an essentially peasant *Weltanschauung*, many German-Russians preferred to remain silent about their ethnic and geographic origins when confronted by the strident and overhasty American reactions to political events in both

³ To illustrate the general absence of information, none of the following general accounts discuss Colorado's Germans from Russia: Carl Abbott, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1976); Mildred S. MacArthur, *History of the German Element in the State of Colorado* (Chicago: German-American Historical Society of Illinois, 1917); Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1968); Marshall Sprague, *Colorado: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976); Carl Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, and Duane A. Smith, *A Colorado History*, 3d ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1972). See, however, Athearn, *The Coloradans*, pp. 180-81; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People*, 4 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948), 2:107-8, 142; and Alvin T. Steinel, *History of Agriculture in Colorado 1858 to 1926* (Fort Collins, Colo.: State Agricultural College, 1926), p. 406.

⁴ Richard Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, trans. LaVern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1974), pp. 110-12. See also David J. Miller, "German-Russians in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 21 (July 1944):129-32.

⁵ Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "They Came over the Clouds," *Empire Magazine* 27 (30 May 1976):10-14.

⁶ The leading authority on the German-Russians today is Karl Stumpp of Tuebingen, Germany, whose *Die Russlanddeutschen: Zweihundert Jahre Unterwegs* (Freilassing in Bayern: Pannonia-Verlag, 1965) has been translated into English by Joseph Height, *The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering* (Bonn: Atlantic-Forum, 1967). See also Adam Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* (Battleford, Saskatchewan: Marian Press, 1974); and Hattie Plum Williams, *The Czar's Germans: With Particular Reference to the Volga Germans*, ed. Emma S. Haynes, Phillip B. Legler, and Gerda S. Walker (Lincoln, Neb.: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1975); as well as Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "The Volga Germans in Old Russia and in Western North America: Their Changing World View," *Anthropological Quarterly* 48 (October 1975):209-22; and Kenneth W. Rock, "Germans from Russia in America: The First Hundred Years" (Fort Collins: Germans from Russia in Colorado Study Project, 1976); *Work Papers* (Lincoln, Neb.: American Historical Society of Germans from, 1969-).

Russia and Germany during the early twentieth century. To this day many older Colorado residents are reluctant to speak of their past as if ashamed of their heritage, of their lack of formal education, and of their low socioeconomic origins. This silence from within and taunting from without occasioned some members of the younger, rural generation to believe that their ancestors had come from "over the clouds." A few even spent hours gazing into Colorado skies in search of lost relatives, a natural misunderstanding of references by their elders to a journey *ueber die Wolga* ("over the Volga"), which untrained ears recalled as *ueber die Wolken* ("over the clouds").⁷

There is some question regarding the best nomenclature for this ethnic group: German-Russians, Russian-Germans, *Deutsch-Russlaender*, *Russlanddeutsche*, or "Rooshun"—as they were colloquially hailed by many native Americans since they arrived in this country bearing czarist passports and dressed in Russian fashion: felt boots (*Felzstiefel*), long sheepskin coats for the men, and black headshaws (*Halstuche*) for the women. This group always insisted upon their "German" identity. Although they had lived a century in Russia, they spoke German dialects from Hesse, Baden, Alsace, and the Palatinate, and they would counter inquiries of their nationality with the proverb: "A hen may lay an egg in an oven, but that doesn't make it a biscuit!" Both in Russia and in the United States they cherished their own customs, associated largely among themselves, attended their own churches, joined no "foreign" clubs or organizations, regarded both Russian and *Englische* neighbors "not of our kind," and referred to themselves simply as *unser Lait—unsere Leute*—"our people." The more current version is Germans from Russia, which has found favor with the dawning historical consciousness among descendants of *unsere Leute* today.⁸

The Germans from Russia who appeared on the North American prairies by the mid-1870s were products of a double migration. Originally residents of the Rhinelands, they formed part of a large eighteenth-century peasant and artisan emigration from the war-scarred and religion-ravaged Holy Roman Empire. Some traveled northward to Denmark and Prussia, some southward to Hungary, some westward to Pennsylvania (where they became America's "Pennsylvania Dutch"); others journeyed eastward to Russia, where Empress Catherine II sought "colonists" to populate the Russian Empire's newly-acquired Volga and Black Sea territories. Catherine II's manifesto of 22 July

⁷ Kloberdanz, "They Came over the Clouds," p. 10.

⁸ See the June 1973 *Newsletter* of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) and Emma S. Haynes, "By What Name Should We Be Called?," AHSGR *Work Paper*, no. 16 (December 1974), pp. 33-34.

1763 offered generous grants of land, exemption from taxation for thirty years, religious freedom, and exemption from involuntary military and civil service.⁹ In the first decade approximately twenty-three thousand settlers, whom Russian authorities termed *nemetskie kolonisty* ("German colonists") established over one hundred villages upon the western hills (the *Bergseite*) and the eastern meadows (the *Weisenseite*) of the Volga River near the then frontier town of Saratov. In 1804 Emperor Alexander I invited "good, well-to-do farmers," whose lives had been disrupted by the Napoleonic holocaust, to relocate in the Ukraine from the Russo-Turkish frontier province of Bessarabia to east of the port city of Odessa.¹⁰ The residents of these Volga and Black Sea villages composed the two major groups, many of whose descendants subsequently immigrated to North and South America. The Volga Germans and the Black Sea Germans can be further subdivided by religious-denominations into Evangelical or Protestants (the majority), Roman Catholics, and Mennonites, a relatively smaller element who formed a distinct religio-cultural-economic component of their own.

For a century the colonists resided on Russia's steppe frontier where they prospered and multiplied in closed denominational, agricultural communities. Their privileged status, coupled with their geographical and cultural isolation (the latter true more upon the Volga than along the Black Sea) enabled them to retain their German dialects, ethnic customs, and religious beliefs.

In 1871 Tsar Alexander II, as part of his measures to modernize and integrate his far-flung realm, suspended the colonists' right of self-government. The German villages would henceforth be governed as other communities within the Russian Empire.¹¹ In 1874 the Russian military began to conscript German youths. The desire to escape service in the tsar's legions (especially during the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish and the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese wars), letters from relatives, and enticements by American railroad agents, prompted many families, often at the urging of wives and grandmothers, to consider emigration. After 1880 when the Russian language became mandatory for instruction in German-Russian schools, except for the subjects of German and religion, fears arose that the villagers would be forced to assimilate Russian ways. Compounding these obvious threats to personal liberty were real problems confronting a rapidly growing population restricted by limited amounts of arable land. Land

hunger, falling agricultural prices (for Russia was then buffeted by the growing global economy that brought American agricultural products to the cities of Europe less expensively than Russian grains could be shipped via Odessa), droughts, and famine (particularly in the early 1890s), occasioned severe economic and social dislocation. To many Volga and Black Sea Germans, *Amerika*—the United States, Canada, and Argentina—with its bountiful, inexpensive land and multiple economic opportunities offered a solution to their tribulations.

German-Russian immigration to the New World commenced in 1873, reached its highpoint in 1912, halted during the First World War, resumed in the early 1920s, waned after the United States Immigration Act of 1924, and reoccurred sporadically in the early 1950s following the dislocations of the Second World War. Since the tsar's former subjects instinctively sought land similar to the "old country," they bypassed America's eastern cities to settle in the Missouri, Platte, and Smokey Hill river valleys bisecting the limitless prairies of the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas. Here they endeavored to recreate their former life upon the Russian steppes.

Although many German-Russian dryland farmers ultimately reaped the bounty of the Great Plains, crop failure on the Great American Desert brought German-Russians from Russell County, Kansas, westward into Colorado in 1880-81. The first Volga Germans to enter Colorado were young men seeking work as section hands for the Kansas Pacific (subsequently Union Pacific) Railroad.¹² Six years later, between 1885 and 1887, Evangelical Volga German families from Lincoln, Sutton, and Hastings, Nebraska, and additional families from Kansas established Colorado's first permanent German-Russian urban community at Globeville, in what is now a semiindustrial region of north central Denver. Male Volga Germans together with the newly-arrived Slavic and Italian immigrants, found employment in the smelters, railroads, and later meat-packing, biscuit, brickyard, and trash hauling industries of Globeville. German-Russian women obtained jobs in the garment shops, laundries, and packing houses, while many crossed the South Platte River to do housework for Denver's rising society. The First German Congregational Church of Globeville, founded in July 1894 at Forty-fourth Avenue and Lincoln Street, became the nucleus of the German-Russian community in Denver, while the Garden Place School, established in 1882, was the site where generations of young German-Russian Coloradoans learned their "three R's" and subsequently attended citizenship classes.¹³ By

⁹ The major provisions of Catherine II's manifesto are published in Stump, *The German-Russians*, p. 10, and are discussed in Williams, *The Czar's Germans*, pp. 31-42.

¹⁰ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 11; Williams, *The Czar's Germans*, pp. 94-95.

¹¹ Stump, *The German-Russians*, p. 29; Williams, *The Czar's Germans*, pp. 170-80.

¹² Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 49.

¹³ On Globeville see Chester G. Krieger, ed., *First German Congregational Church: Diamond Jubilee 1894-1969* (Denver: Schwartz Printing Co., 1969); Larry Betz, *Globeville: Part of Colorado's History*

The First German Congregational Church in Globeville was founded in 1894. Its second building, constructed in 1927, is now the Globeville Senior Citizen's Center.



the year 1930 approximately five hundred Evangelical Volga German families, primarily from the *Bergseite* colonies of Norka, Goebel, Beideck, and Dobrinka, had made Globeville, as well as the adjacent hill to the east, which the Volga Germans called "Dobrinka," their home.¹⁴

The urban environment, alternate sources of income, and exposure to other ethnic cultures, tended to break down the isolation of the German-Russians in Denver and to mold their character rather differently from the majority of rural Colorado German-Russians, who clung more steadfastly to their German traditions and agricultural ways. Still as late as the 1920s some Globeville residents would close up their houses and journey to the beet fields for the season. The dissection of the community caused by the construction of Interstates 25 and 70 after 1953, the growing prosperity of the 1950s, economic opportunity elsewhere, and the influx of Chicanos, gradually changed the character of Globeville. Even before the Second World War the economically more successful often moved away. A stream of sons and daughters followed, which largely accounts for the fact that many Denverites who spent their youth in Globeville, are residents of Wheat Ridge and Arvada or California and Texas today. Aside from Globeville, Pueblo was the other Colorado urban area that early attracted German-Russian settlement. The smokestacks of the factories in Pueblo symbolized economic opportunity to the Roman Catholic Volga Germans, primarily from *Wiesenseite* colonies, who moved westward from Ellis County, Kansas, to Pueblo in the 1890s.¹⁵



Crumbling adobe and the Immanuel Lutheran Church are all that remain of "the Settlement" (Landsmann), the site of a Black Sea German settlement in the late 1880s.

Except for Globeville and Pueblo, practically all other German-Russian immigrants to Colorado settled in rural areas or smaller towns in the South Platte River watershed. Larimer, Logan, Morgan, and Weld counties drew the largest number of immigrants; while Adams, Boulder, Kit Carson, Sedgwick, and Washington counties drew smaller amounts. Crowley, Otero, Prowers, and Pueblo counties in the Arkansas River valley of southeastern Colorado as well as Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties on the Western Slope also attracted German-Russian settlement.

The uplands of northeastern Colorado became home for individual Black Sea Evangelical German-Russians who in the 1880s pioneered on the prairies. At the turn of the twentieth century, the irrigated fields bordering the South Platte River became a major area of settlement for Protestant, Volga-German sugar beet laborers. Black Sea German-Russians from Kherson to the east of Odessa in transit from Scotland, South Dakota, first appeared at Burlington in Kit Carson County in 1887. Their numbers increased by 1890 when Bessarabian Germans also by way of Scotland, South Dakota, established residence some nine miles north of Bethune.¹⁶ To this day residents of Burlington speak of "the Settlement," which oral tradition alleges was the home of "Dutchmen." A neatly-painted white Immanuel Lutheran Church, a parsonage, a cemetery, and some crumbling adobe walls are all that mark what was once Landsmann, Colorado. Although the Immanuel Lutheran Church still serves a rural congregation, religious strife, prolonged drought, and the dust storms of the mid-1930s terminated life in "the Settlement."¹⁷

(Denver: By the Author, 1972); interview with Paulina Hahn, Denver, 5 July 1977; interview with Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel G. Reibick, Denver, 24 May 1977 (interviews, unless otherwise noted, were conducted by the author and are located in the Germans from Russia in Colorado Special Collection, Morgan Library, Colorado State University, Fort Collins).

¹⁴ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 49.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷ Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "A Preliminary Field Survey of Sources and Informants in Eastern Colorado, Aug. 20-21, 1975," manuscript, 1975, Germans from Russia in Colorado Collection, Colorado State University.

Not far away at Joes, some fifty miles southwest of Wray near Kirk in Yuma County, a large, rectangular, white frame Mennonite Brethren Church shelters one of the few Mennonite congregations in contemporary Colorado. Isolated sentinels, these "white churches of the plains," crumbling soddies, and deserted frame houses bear testimony to a largely unrecorded Black Sea German-Russian presence in Colorado.¹⁸ Evangelical Black Sea Germans also established residences in 1901 at Loveland in Larimer County and at La Salle, south of Greeley in Weld County, when they, in contact with Volga Germans in Sutton, Nebraska, were attracted to the sugar beet fields. Although some of their descendants remain to this day, many Black Sea Germans, who disliked beet cultivation and preferred the independence of wheat farming moved elsewhere. A few Black Sea and Volga families, nonetheless, settled at Keota in northern Weld County, near the Pawnee Buttes and at Haxtun and Holyoke in Phillips County, where they became diversified dry-land farmers.¹⁹ It was this pioneering, independent way of life that Clara Hilderman Ehrlich memorialized in her beautifully-written, somewhat romanticized, reminiscences entitled *My Prairie Childhood*, which is about one Volga German-Russian family's life in the 1890s on northeastern Colorado's ribbon of grass between Greeley and Sterling.²⁰

German-Russians arrived in quantity in Colorado during the first decade of the twentieth century with the advent of the sugar beet industry. Although sugar beets were first grown in Colorado during the 1860s near Littleton, and the first factory was constructed at Grand Junction in 1899, rapid development of the industry shifted to the upper Arkansas and South Platte river valleys when refineries rose at Sugar City in Crowley County and Rocky Ford in Otero County in 1900 and at Loveland in Larimer County in 1901.

The beet sugar industry brought to the newly-irrigated, semi-arid eastern slope of Colorado increased land values, population growth, greater agricultural diversity, and a wave of prosperity.²¹ It also created a demand for labor since the management of the sugar companies rapidly discovered that resident Colorado farmers were

¹⁸ *Ibid.* See also Robert Hickman Adams, *White Churches of the Plains, Examples from Colorado* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1970).

¹⁹ Interview with John Schultz, Ault, 7 October 1975, by Dennis Means.

²⁰ Clara Hilderman Ehrlich, *My Prairie Childhood*, ed. Sidney Heitman (Fort Collins: Germans from Russia in Colorado Study Project, 1977); see also portions of the same published in *The Colorado Magazine* 51 (Spring 1974):115-40.

²¹ The Dingley Tariff of 1897 provided sufficient protection for a domestic sugar industry to make capital investment profitable while experiments at Colorado's State Agricultural College by 1898 resulted in the statement: "It can be said in general that the results of the season of 1898 are so inclusive, that we may feel justified in saying that Colorado can raise as good sugar beets and as large crops of beets as any place in the world" (Henry W. Hugener, "A History of the Beet Sugar Industry of Northeastern Colorado" [M.A. thesis, Colorado State Teachers College, 1927], p. 19).

personally unwilling to undertake the long hours of manual labor that beet cultivation required. After unsatisfactory experiments with juveniles, the companies decided to import the labor force necessary to cultivate beets.

The sugar agents particularly sought laborers with large families, since sugar beets was a crop requiring extensive handwork, tasks then deemed ideal for children. In Denver and Pueblo as well as in the larger towns of Kansas and Nebraska, especially along the Burlington and the Union Pacific railways, the sugar agents encountered German-Russian families. The result was a large influx of German-Russians into Colorado, either directly from the Volga villages (primarily from the *Bergseite*) or often in transit from southern Nebraska or central Kansas. The decade from 1900 to 1910 witnessed the largest immigration into the state.²²

The first "boom town" was appropriately christened "Sugar City," when in April 1900 several hundred Evangelical, Volga, German-Russian families from Denver, Pueblo, Herington, Kansas, and Hastings, Nebraska, converged upon this site in the upper Arkansas River valley, some fifty-six miles east of Pueblo, where the National Beet Sugar Company was erecting its refinery.²³ Because their first habitations were tents, after harvest nearly three-fourths of the German-Russian families journeyed to Globeville to spend the winter with fellow countrymen. Since the National Beet Sugar Company pledged to construct housing for its workers and offered liberal credit to finance individual purchases of company land, many of the first year's laborers, accompanied by friends and relatives, returned to the fields of Sugar City in 1901. These inducements, and the fact that the earnings of the first season for a family of six had totaled almost one thousand dollars, persuaded over one-half of the 1901 work force to make Sugar City their home.²⁴ If company officials were impressed by these "hard-working, sober people," for their part the German-Russians saved their money and began first to lease then to purchase land. "Within five years of their arrival, the majority of German-Russians had become land owners. By 1909, one-quarter of National's holdings of 12,000 acres had been purchased by these immigrants."²⁵ This rapid transition by German-Russians from migrant laborers to owners and growers prompted the management to import Mexican laborers as early as 1903. Thus "while all of Sugar City's contract

²² Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, pp. 49-51.

²³ On Sugar City see Dena Markoff, "Beet Hand Laborers of Sugar City, Colorado, 1900-1920," manuscript, 1976, Germans from Russia in Colorado Collection, University of Colorado, Boulder; see also Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 49.

²⁴ Markoff, "Beet Hand Laborers of Sugar City," p. 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

workers were German-Russians in 1900, by the early 1920s two-thirds of the beet field workers were Mexican."²⁶ This pattern would be repeated elsewhere in Colorado.

If Sugar City mushroomed into a flourishing company town in the first decade of this century, complete with refinery, Edwardian mansions for the managers, and modest frame houses for the laborers surrounding the spire of its German Lutheran Church, today the silence is striking, for despite attempts to obtain additional water, the community perished economically with the arid 1930s. Many German-Russian families moved away. Oral tradition, county naturalization records, and historical research confirm that Evangelical and Roman Catholic Volga Germans once flocked to Pueblo, Crowley, Otero, and Prowers counties in the Arkansas River valley, causing the old highway from La Junta to Swink and Rocky Ford to be known familiarly as "Rooshun Row." To this day residents of Lamar (Prowers County) assert that "the whole town of Wiley," ten miles northwest of Lamar, "is made up of 'Rooshuns'."²⁷ German-Russians, long residents of northern Colorado, still recall their parents' first Colorado jobs in Sugar City, the cantelopes and watermelons of Rócky Ford, the fruit orchards and sweet-smelling hay of Wiley, and the hazard posed to beet worker's children by the Fort Lyon Canal. They remember, too, the "English" children taunting "Rooshun" children in rural school playgrounds until a compromise was effected. Sandwiches of dark, homemade bread filled with spicy "Rooshun" sausage were traded for "English" sandwiches of store-bought, white bread oozing with tantalizing peanut butter.²⁸

The northeast quadrant of the state, particularly the South Platte River valley, proved to be the more extensive and permanent region of German-Russian settlement. Commencing at Loveland, thirteen sugar refineries rose between 1901 and 1926. With towns competing for these coveted prizes, factories materialized at Eaton and Greeley in 1902; in Fort Collins, Longmont, and Windsor in 1903; in Sterling in 1905; in Fort Morgan and Brush in 1906. Additional factories followed at Brighton in 1917, at Fort Lupton in 1920, and at Ovid and Johnstown in 1926.²⁹ Despite insufficient local capital, capricious weather, skeptical farmers (who preferred potatoes to beets), and

concern over the protective tariff, irrigated northern Colorado embarked upon a wave of prosperity as the sugar industry expanded. Beet sugar proved to be a reliable cash export while beet tops and processed pulp provided feed for cattle and especially for lambs.

In 1905 the South Platte refineries were consolidated into what became the giant of the industry, the Great Western Sugar Corporation. By 1909 79,000 acres were planted to sugar beets in the South Platte River valley, the year when "Colorado became the leading beet sugar producing state in the Union. . . . Of the 10,724 beet workers in northern Colorado in 1909, 5,870 were German-Russian, 2,160 were Japanese, and 1,002 were Spanish-American."³⁰

The majority of the German-Russians in northern Colorado were Evangelical Volga Germans who arrived with their families via the Burlington and Union Pacific railways from southern Nebraska to provide "stoop labor" for the Great Western Sugar Company. In contrast with the Black Sea and Volga Germans who arrived in prior decades, immigrants from the Volga to Colorado after 1900 arrived too late to acquire homestead lands, and on the whole they were economically poorer.

Elderly German-Russians recall that the trip on the beet trains to Colorado was one of the most exciting events of their year, an excursion that they eagerly anticipated. A family would take provisions for six months: clothing, bedding, crockery, pots and pans, quantities of food (in particular sausage), and perhaps an umbrella to place over the infants parked at the edges of the beet fields. Contract in hand they would disembark at the station nearest to their summer locations, and the beet farmers would take them in spring wagons to the shacks or tents that would comprise their temporary homes for the beet season.³¹

Their arrival in northern Colorado communities was recorded by the newspapers, indicating both curiosity and observing that these immigrants were highly welcome. One week after the first special trainload of about three hundred fifty German-Russians arrived in Loveland on 1 May 1901, the *Loveland Register* concluded that "the new people appear to be quiet and industrious, and will no doubt prove a valuable addition to our country and a great aid to our farmers."³² "Nearly Six Hundred Settlers for Colorado in One Day," the *Denver Times* headlined in April 1902:

The population of Colorado was increased 586 today by the arrival of . . . immigrants from Southern Nebraska to settle in the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁷ Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "Field Report: A Preliminary Investigation of Sources and Informants in Southeastern Colorado: Oct. 15-18, 1975," manuscript, 1975, Germans from Russia in Colorado Collection, Colorado State University.

²⁸ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Henkel, Longmont, 21 March 1977; *see also* interview with Mrs. John P. Geringer, Pueblo, 5 May 1976, by Timothy J. Kloberdanz.

²⁹ These factories and towns were located in Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Logan, Morgan, Weld, and Washington counties (Robert G. Dunbar, "History of Agriculture," *Colorado and its People*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen [New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948], 2:141).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:141-42.

³¹ *Historical News*, (Hastings, Neb.: Adams County Historical Society), 6 (June 1973):1-6.

³² *Loveland Register*, 8 May 1901.



German-Russian "stoop labor" (above) bags potatoes south of Windsor in 1925; note the "beet shacks" (right background) and the "Englische" farm (center background). Similar to digging potatoes, "pulling beets" was done with a two-horse team and German-Russian labor. Wagon number 157 (bottom) weighed about four tons when loaded during sugar beet harvesting on a Great Western Sugar Company farm near Windsor.



vicinity of Loveland. . . . They were Russians . . . coming to Colorado to engage in the industry which offers greater opportunities than any other pursuit open to them at this time. . . . As the industry is one requiring a great deal of child labor, these families are peculiarly adapted to the work, several of them having from five to nine children ranging from babies in arms and toddling youngsters to youths of 18. They were all healthy, vigorous specimens of humanity.³³

Simultaneously a trainload of five hundred men, women, and children, arrived in Greeley from Lincoln, Nebraska. The *Greeley Tribune* noted that although they came from Russia, "they were of German stock."

They are a ruddy, hardy, healthy lot, clean and intelligent. The children are fat and chubby, the girls strong and nice-looking, with their bright colored dresses and flowing garden hats. All the younger generation, many of whom were born in the United States, talk good English as well as German and Russian while the older ones as a rule stick to the language of their ancestors. . . . It is a godsend to the farmers to be able to get these people here, who are honest and industrious and don't get drunk.

The *Tribune* even hinted at the future, for "eventually some of these families will acquire small farms about here and grow wealthy as they grow into genuine Coloradians [*sic*]." ³⁴

In April 1903 the *Fort Collins Evening Courier* noted that "forty-eight German families, 300 persons in all, arrived in the city on Friday by special train from Lincoln, Nebraska. They came out under contract to work in the beet fields and have already been placed among the farmers. Indeed, their employers were in town with teams waiting for them to arrive, so that the newcomers could be taken to their homes without delay. The arrivals are bright, intelligent looking people and will no doubt make good citizens."³⁵ Three days later a letter to the editor of the *Evening Courier* enthusiastically welcomed the "Russians." "We must consider the Russians not as strange beings to be looked upon with curiosity, but rather as friends whom we can trust and esteem, since for the next few months it will be their labor, their knowledge of the soil which will cause our land to bring forth wealth in the form of sugar beets."³⁶

April to November found entire German-Russian families straddling the rows, stooping upon their hands and knees, thinning, hoeing, and topping beets. Women and children performed the most menial

³³ *Denver Times*, 24 April 1902.

³⁴ *Greeley Tribune*, 24 April 1902, cited in Hugener, "A History of the Beet Sugar Industry," p. 187.

³⁵ *Evening Courier*, Fort Collins, 18 April 1903.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1903.

“stoop labor,” while the men, in addition to beet culture, aided the local farmers by putting up hay, threshing, helping with sheep and cattle feeding, and assisting with the irrigation network. With the beets harvested many families returned to their homes and relatives in Nebraska or sought seasonal labor in the industries of Denver or on the railroads of Cheyenne. This seasonal hejira to and from beet fields became a well-established practice in the first decade of the twentieth century and continued as economic necessity required throughout the First World War and into the early 1920s.

By the second decade of the twentieth century seasonal migration to Colorado became less significant, for many beet workers chose to remain permanently in the South Platte River valley. Here the “Rooshuns,” who as strangely-clad, foreign-tongued, newcomers formed the lowest socioeconomic stratum of the community, initially clustered in tents, shacks, or modest houses at the edge of town, usually adjacent to the beet refineries or the railroad yards. Whole neighborhoods were termed by the *Englische* (resident Americans), “little Saratov,” “Little Moscow,” “St. Petersburg,” “Rooshun Corner,” or “Shag Town.” One such example would be Andersonville and Buckingham, located northeast of Fort Collins (Larimer County) across the Cache la Poudre River near the site of the beet refinery. Some thirteen box houses, measuring twenty by twelve, were erected on Charles Buckingham’s place in 1902, while others rose on Peter Anderson’s farm in 1903. “The houses while small seem comfortable and new ones are being built daily,” the *Fort Collins Courier* noted in December 1902.³⁷ This area, while associated with the Chicanos today, still bears evidence of its German-Russian origins. Into the 1920s, however, it remained closed to outside interference from “across the Rhine” and was popularly labeled “Russianville” or “Saratov” as late as the 1930s.³⁸ It was never so termed by its German-Russian residents. To them it remained “the jungles.”³⁹

From “the jungles” German-Russians issued forth as contract laborers for American and the more prosperous German-Russian farmers until they could become renters and property owners. Here too they held religious services until 1904 when they erected a stone and brick “pointed-Gothic” German Congregational Church across the river “within” Fort Collins at Whedbee and Oak streets. A second Gothic



German-Russian home in Buckingham Place, formerly called “the jungles.”

stone “Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem Kirche” rose one block further south in 1914.⁴⁰

Loveland (Larimer County) claims northern Colorado’s oldest permanent German-Russian settlement since approximately twenty families from McCook, Nebraska, originally from the *Bergseite* Volga colony of Frank, founded a German-Russian community in Loveland in May 1901.⁴¹ Additional families from Denver, Sutton, Culbertson, and Hastings, Nebraska, arrived the same year. Although hundreds of people were forced to live in tents near the sugar factory in Loveland, by 24 November 1901 their faith had inspired the founding of the Loveland First German Congregational Church. By December, German religious services were being conducted in the town hall every Sunday.⁴² Between two hundred and four hundred German-Russians spent the winter of 1901-2 in the city. Settling in family units, many came to stay. “They came without money and they went where there were jobs,” recalled a Volga German born in Norcka in 1887, whose family had established residence in Loveland in 1904.⁴³ By the beginning of the 1902 season, the *Loveland Reporter* observed candidly that the German-Russians “have proved thus far good citizens, quiet, inoffensive, ready to work—and ready to charge good prices if there is a show of getting the money,” for the Volga Germans quickly discovered that they controlled the burgeoning labor market.⁴⁴

³⁷ Cited in Evadene Burriss Swanson, *Fort Collins Yesterdays* (Fort Collins: Don-Art Printers, 1975), p. 57.

³⁸ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 50. Spanish names intermingled with German names in Buckingham Place as early as 1906, while in 1923 Great Western Sugar announced plans for a Spanish “colony” for its Mexican hand laborers to be constructed north of Buckingham adjacent to Andersonville (Swanson, *Fort Collins Yesterdays*, p. 61).

³⁹ Interview with David J. Miller, Greeley, 1 April 1975; interview with Delbert Blehm, Fort Collins, 12 April 1977.

⁴⁰ *Fort Collins Weekly Courier*, 9 December 1903; see also Swanson, *Fort Collins Yesterdays*, p. 57.

⁴¹ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 50.

⁴² *Loveland Register*, 5 December 1901.

⁴³ *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, 26 March 1976.

⁴⁴ *Loveland Reporter*, 24 April 1902.

Gradually, modest, white frame houses punctuated at intervals by church steeples, marked the eastern edge of Loveland. The large, brick First German Congregational Church constructed on Lincoln Avenue in the heart of the city reflected the faith and the prosperity of its congregation. By 1903 Loveland possessed its own "German-American Store," while the year 1909 saw the founding of what became the Miller and Wacker Mercantile Company, whose proprietor, Jacob Miller—originally from the village of Norka—became a leader of the German-Russians and indeed the Loveland community. Over the decades Loveland German-Russians acquired the ownership of many fields on which they initially labored, and they came to participate fully in business and public affairs. To this day some recall Loveland German-Russians for their musical abilities, both their singing in church choirs and as the best musicians to hire for German-Russian weddings and polka festivals, the so-called "Dutch hops."⁴⁵

The expanding beet acreage and additional refineries not only kept wages high but also enabled German-Russian families to radiate outward from Loveland into the surrounding communities. Immigrants from the *Bergseite* villages of Frank and Norka established themselves eastward toward Kelim, Johnstown, Milliken, Platteville, Windsor, Greeley, and Eaton. Some went north to Fort Collins. Others journeyed south to Berthoud (whose settlers came primarily from Norka). Additional immigrants from the northern *Bergseite* villages of Jagodnaja and Pobotschnoje took up residence in Longmont.⁴⁶

A fascinating settlement arose in the small town of Windsor (Weld County), where Evangelical Volga German-Russians from the *Bergseite* colony of Norka first arrived in 1902. They were joined in 1904 by immigrants from Doenhoff, another Evangelical *Bergseite* village. By the 1930s approximately nine hundred Volga German families resided in Windsor, and this small town with its ultra-English name became a community that appeared predominantly German in speech and culture.⁴⁷ Its three German churches within as many blocks, whose bells rang out to their congregations from Russiantesque belfries, the monuments in the local cemetery, its wide streets lined with modest, hip-roofed frame houses (whose porch steps and floors were often painted mustard yellow) still suggest a Volga village transplanted to the Colorado plains.

⁴⁵ On Loveland, see Clara Ball, ed., *Loveland-Big Thompson Valley 1877 Centennial 1977* (Loveland: Johnson Litho., 1975), pp. 55-57; *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, 28 July 1976; interview with Mr. and Mrs. Carl Amen, Loveland, 23 May 1977; interview with Gus Lebsack, Loveland, 25 April 1977; interview with Phillip B. Legler, Fort Collins, 30 March 1977; interview with David J. Miller, Greeley, 1 April 1975.

⁴⁶ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 50; interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Henkel, Longmont, 21 March 1977.

⁴⁷ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 50.



Jacob Aab, Sr., a Windsor grocer (far left), and his German-Russian family pose for an early-century portrait. Locust Street in Windsor offers a contemporary view (1977) of "typical" German-Russian houses; similar street scenes can be found in Fort Collins, Loveland, Sterling, Greeley, and other cities.



Indeed, for decades Windsor was colloquially termed "little Moscow." Before the arrival of Kodak and recent urban renewal, Windsor probably epitomized Colorado's most unique German-Russian community. In addition to seasonal beet cultivation on the surrounding acres and labor at the refinery during the sugar-producing "campaigns," the Great Western Sugar Company research station provided year-round-jobs for numerous German-Russians. Many engaged in commerce, milling, and meat-packing. Within half a century German-Russians became the largest landowner and tenant group of the irrigated farms in the area.⁴⁸ At Windsor's Park School both the summer school classes for children of beet workers and the citizenship classes sponsored by the Reverend Paul Jueling, pastor of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1914-29, played a major role in integrating younger and older generations of Volga Germans into a wider American life.⁴⁹

East of Windsor lay Greeley (Weld County), where the demand for labor drew German-Russians via Nebraska, many of whom originally came from the *Bergseite* colonies of Frank and Walter as early as 1902. By August 1904 sixteen German-Russian families had purchased building lots near the sugar refinery on the east side of town. Simultaneously ground was broken to construct Saint Paul's Christian Church, which became the largest of Greeley's five German-speaking congregations. By 1913 the *Greeley Tribune-Republican* commented that

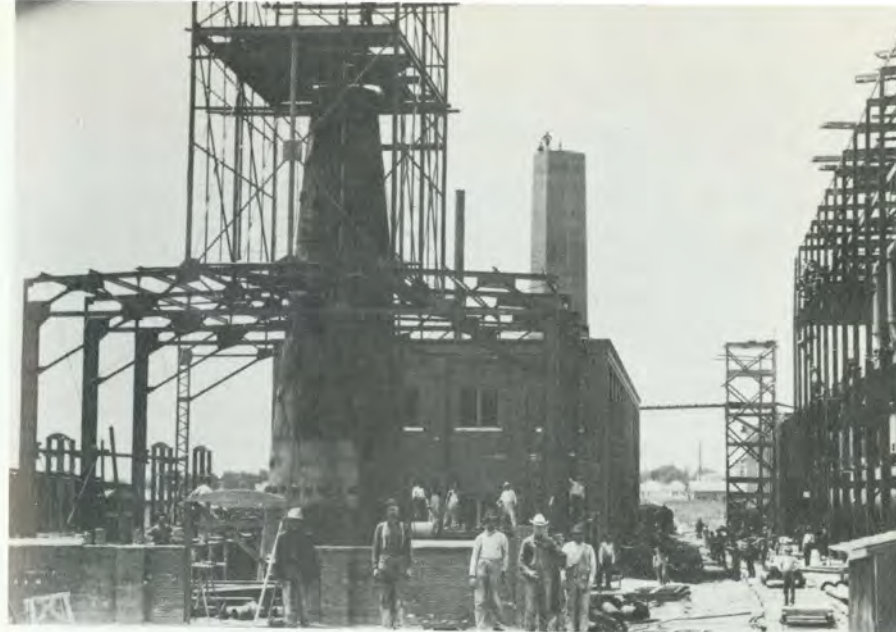
German-Russian workers have about solved the labor problem for the farmers of Weld County. These foreign helpers not only care for the beet crop of the county but do the spring plowing, the planting and all the extra work for the farmers . . . as well as that which is needed in harvesting other crops besides beets. . . . The German-Russians support their families during the spring and summer on the wages received for the extra work and have their beet labor money clear to put in the bank. By this careful and frugal method, practically all the German-Russians earn their own homes within a few years.⁵⁰

A 1915 report based upon the Greeley city directory indicated that between 1910 and 1915 the German-Russian population in the rural districts near the Weld county seat increased nearly one hundred percent. Many of the new immigrants, according to the report, came

⁴⁸ Alton David Hill, Jr., "Volga German Occupance in the Windsor Area, Colorado" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1959), p. iii.

⁴⁹ On Windsor see Roy Ray, comp., *Highlights in the History of Windsor, Colorado* (Press of the Poudre Valley, 1940); interviews with Phillip B. Legler, Fort Collins, 23 February, 30 March, 6 April 1977; interview with Peter Stoll, Windsor, 20 April 1977; *Windsor Beacon*, 19 June 1975, 25 March 1976.

⁵⁰ *Greeley Tribune-Republican*, 3 April 1913, cited in Norman A. Stroh, "The German-Russians in Weld County, Colorado" (M.A. thesis, Colorado State College of Education, 1941), p. 25.



The Great Western Sugar Refinery in Windsor was under construction in 1903. Looking east on Elm Street in Windsor (1977), the church in the foreground is the Evangelical Congregational Church; the second church is Saint John's Lutheran Church; and rising in the background, are the smokestack and the towers of Great Western, which was demolished during 1977.

directly from Russia.⁵¹ Similar to other northern Colorado cities, German-Russians of Greeley came to play a substantial role in the economic and commercial development of Weld County. David J. Miller, today a prominent Greeley lawyer, has long been a community leader involved with irrigation and legal activities, as well as one of the founders and the first president of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, established in Greeley in 1968.

German-Russian settlement spread throughout the South Platte River valley when immigrants from Frank via Hastings, Nebraska, and Fort Collins established residence in Fort Morgan (Morgan County) in 1904 and acquired farmland around Brush in 1905. By the 1930s numerous new arrivals from the *Bergseite* village of Kraft had expanded the Fort Morgan community.⁵²

Sterling (Logan County) deserves special mention, for while the vast majority of the Colorado Volga Germans were Protestant, the Volga Germans of the Sterling community were largely Roman Catholic. These were not the first German-Russian Roman Catholics to enter the state. As early as 1885 immigrants, primarily from the *Bergseite* Catholic village of Goebel, left the heavily Roman Catholic settlements in Ellis County, Kansas, to immigrate to Denver. In the 1890s other Catholics from Kansas, mainly from *Wiesenseite* villages, relocated in Pueblo. These groups were attracted by the economic opportunities in the Denver and the Pueblo factories and railroads. Similarly, the new sugar refinery at Sterling built in 1905 drew Roman Catholic families, primarily from Topeka, Kansas, and Pueblo to the Logan County beet fields. By the 1930s some two hundred thirty families resided in Sterling, many of them descendants of two *Bergseite* Catholic villages: Rothammel and Seewald.⁵³ In contrast with the Protestant congregations, who were sectarian, village-oriented, and often kept their distance from one another, the congregation of the Sterling Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church—consisting of German-Russians, Czechs, Italians, and Mexicans—intermingled. Further to the northeast around the towns of Iliff, Proctor, Crook, and Julesburg (Sedgwick County), Roman Catholic and a few Protestant German-Russians also made their homes. Those in Iliff came largely from the *Bergseite* village of Pfeifer.⁵⁴

Between 1910-12 Roman Catholic Volga Germans, originally from the southern *Bergseite* colony of Marienfeld, settled in the Brighton and the Fort Lupton areas (Adams and Weld counties), attracted by the beet and fruit-canning industries. Most of this group moved north from Denver; others came from Kansas. In February 1914 the *Brighton Blade* noted that twenty families of "Russian-Germans" had moved to Brighton in a matter of ten days. "Most came to the United States from Russia about eight years ago . . . and are glad to get away from the war. . . . They came from Sugar City in the Arkansas Valley, some from the western slope of Colorado. . . . Every house in Brighton is filled and some homes house a number of families."⁵⁵

Brighton was also home for numerous Protestant *Reichsdeutsche* and Volga Germans, whose chief nucleus was the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and school. Over the years the Adams county seat became a community almost evenly balanced among Protestant and Catholic Germans, Mexicans, and Japanese. The Great Western Sugar Refinery, established in 1916, became a showplace for the company offering work for many German-Russians during its winter campaigns. Other families acquired farms in the area. In addition the Kuner-Empson vegetable and fruit-processing company provided employment for many German-Russian women, ensuring a stable year round economy for the community.⁵⁶

In tracing the "roots" of many Colorado German-Russian families today, it is apparent that they were a "wandering people." When wages for beet hand laborers in Colorado were low and the cost of renting beet acreage was high (the case during 1910-11), many left Colorado seeking employment in Michigan, Montana, and Wisconsin. In the years 1906-7 a number of Evangelical Volga Germans traversed the Colorado Rocky Mountains to Garfield, Mesa, Delta, and Montrose counties and to the valleys of the Colorado and the Gunnison rivers.

Between 1910 and 1915 Roman Catholic Volga Germans from Denver journeyed to Delta (Delta County) and Montrose (Montrose County) to work for the Holly Sugar Company.⁵⁷ A few families remained on the Western Slope to become independent diversified farmers and ranchers, but some felt uncomfortable living between the

⁵¹ *Greeley Tribune*, 28 April 1915, cited in Hugener, "A History of the Beet Sugar Industry," p. 190. On Greeley see the excellent collection assembled by AHSGR, Greeley Public Library; interview with David J. Miller, Greeley, 1 April 1975; interview with Lydia Alles Miller, Greeley, 28 February 1977.

⁵² Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 50.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁴ On Volga German Catholics see Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "The Volga German Catholic Life Cycle: An Ethnographic Reconstruction" (M.A. thesis, Colorado State University, 1974); on Sterling, see interview with Mr. and Mrs. Carl Amesen, Loveland, 23 May 1977; interview with Amelia Luft Vendegna, Sterling, 21

January 1976; by Timothy J. Kloberdanz; Harold Hamil, "The German-Russians," *Farmland News*, 31 July, 15, 31 August 1972; *Whistlewind: Recollections of Northeast Colorado* 1 (Spring 1976), 1 (Spring 1977).

⁵⁵ Cited by Albin Wagner, *Brighton Reflections: Bicentennial Years, 1776-1976* (Brighton, Colo.: Brighton Federal Savings, 1976), p. 25.

⁵⁶ On Brighton, see interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Henkel, Longmont, 21 March 1977; interview with Albin Wagner, Brighton, 4 March 1977; interview with Jacob Wagner, Denver, 28 April 1977; *Brighton Blade* 21 January, 7 October 1975, 13 April 1976.

⁵⁷ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, pp. 50, 61.

mountain ranges. It was "too hilly" they said, and so different from their former Volga *Heimat* or even Colorado's eastern plains, where the mountains lay, naturally in their minds, to the west. This instinct, and the disappointment with the poor soil, caused the majority of the Western Slope migrants to recross the Rockies as early as 1911 where they reestablished residence in the towns and on the farms of north-eastern Colorado. Today few remember the German-Russians at Fruita, the "German church" of Grand Junction, or the "Rooshun Corner" of Montrose.⁵⁸

Nearly all of the German-Russians arrived in Colorado as humble individuals, unskilled and poorly-educated from the American point of view but staunch in their faith and willingness to tackle disagreeable, grueling work. "Thrifty and industrious, however, many . . . lifted themselves far up the social and economic scale."⁵⁹ The key to their ascent was that experience on the steppes of Russia that had accustomed them to hard agricultural labor in which all family members participated. It also had taught them how to carve a living from arid lands. With these inherent skills a *Hausvater* (head of a German-Russian household) could not only contract for large beet acreages but, by placing his family in the fields, could also amass a sizeable total family income. Determined to better their lot, German-Russian families saved their earnings and rapidly made the transition from laborer to renter to landowner. The sugar companies, eager to colonize their acreage with resident labor, often assisted their ambitious workers by granting them credit to rent or to purchase company land.⁶⁰ By 1919 the Spanish-Americans and Mexicans were suppling most of the "stoop" labor.⁶¹ The estimates of 1930 suggest that more than fifty percent of Colorado's German-Russians were beet farmers, while some figures state that as early as 1910 "probably seventy-five percent of all the farms between Sterling and Denver were operated by Volga Germans."⁶²

Not all of the German-Russians in Colorado or in the other states have been economically successful, but unquestionably for many

⁵⁸ Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "Field Report: A Preliminary Investigation of Sources and Informants in Western Colorado, September 23-26, 1975," manuscript, 1975, Germans from Russia in Colorado Collection, Colorado State University; interview with Mr. and Mrs. Jake Shaeffer, Boulder, 6 June 1977.

⁵⁹ Colin B. Goodykoontz, "The People of Colorado," *Colorado and Its People*, 2:107-8.

⁶⁰ Harry Schwartz, *Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States with Special Reference to Hired Workers in Fruit and Vegetable and Sugar-Beet Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 108.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112; see also Dunbar, "History of Agriculture," 2:142. Great Western, Holly, and other sugar companies in Colorado and neighboring mountain states encouraged Mexicans and other Spanish-Americans to settle near or in their beet areas by the 1920s. The object was to create a resident labor supply to replace the German-Russians and to end the necessity of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to recruit workers and to move them to the best areas.

⁶² Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 31. In 1924, twenty-two years after the first Volga Germans came to Windsor as sugar beet workers, a review of conditions in the Windsor fields revealed that the Volga

immigrants and their descendants, there has been an astonishing and rapid upward mobility. Second- and third-generation German-Russians today include the leading farmers, livestock feeders, merchants, and professional people throughout the irrigated valleys of Colorado and neighboring states. The third and fourth generations have dispersed across the nation and have merged into the mainstream of American life. From modest beginnings and by their own efforts, many German-Russians have entered the ranks of the "immigrant upraised."⁶³

Socioeconomic progress did not come easily in Russia or Colorado, since the promises of free transportation, adequate housing, and decent wages often proved lacking. Harassment by Kirghiz raiders, Russification policies, and the droughts of the 1890s might be compared with the strident anti-Germanism during the First World War, harassment by the Ku Klux Klan, or the dust storms of the arid 1930s. If the immigrants "talked funny" upon their arrival along either the Volga or the South Platte, one season in the fields was sufficient to make indelible the significance of the word "work." In both countries German-Russians idealized work in folklore and song. Work "rendered life sweet" ("*Arbeit mach das Leben suess*"). "*Arbeit, komm her, ich fress dich auf!*" ("Work, come here, I will devour you!") became their century-old cry.⁶⁴

German-Russians encountered difficulties in adjusting to American life, a process that many immigrants resisted as strongly as their forefathers had resisted Slavic encroachments in Russia. The first generation, mainly in Colorado rural districts, clung to their dialects, religion, traditions, and dress. Mothers and grandmothers were especially tenacious in this regard. *Unsere Leute's* clannishness, patriarchal characteristics, German religious services, exuberant three-day wedding festivals, and their reluctance to participate in American social activities—except for the Fourth of July, understood by all to be a celebration of "freedom"—set them apart from the *Englische* of rural Colorado.⁶⁵ Yet, inevitably the long sheepskin coats and the Russian

Germans formed 53.5 percent of the beet workers, 73.9 percent of the beet farm renters, and 72.7 percent of the beet farm owners. By 1930 Volga Germans accounted for only 15-25 percent of the beet workers, but 85 percent of the beet farmers (Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 80).

⁶³ Andrew F. Rolle, *The Immigrant Upraised: Italian Adventures and Colonists in an Expanding America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

⁶⁴ Cited by Kloberdanz, "The Volga Germans in Old Russia and in Western North America," p. 213.

⁶⁵ Studies of all aspects of German-Russian life in Colorado need to be conducted before these distinctive ethnic manners and customs are lost to history. An excellent beginning has been made by Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "The Volga German Catholic Life Cycle: An Ethnographic Reconstruction." See also the pioneering studies by Conrad H. Becker, "A Historical Survey of the Social Background of the German-Russians from the Volga District in Russia Living in Northern Colorado" (M.A. thesis, Colorado State College, 1938); Emma D. Schwabenland, "German Russians on the Volga and in the United States" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1929); and Hattie Plum Williams, *A Social Study of the Russian Germans*, no. 16 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Studies, 1916).

caps yielded to the denim overalls (with padded and patched knees) and wide-brimmed sun hats. In addition the American practice of individual farming undermined the closed communal desires of the village-oriented German-Russians.

Relations with neighboring Coloradoans were sometimes strained, often because of mutual ignorance on the part of both *Englischer* and "Rooshun," but the issue was also economic. Colorado farmers quickly noted that they possessed economic rivals in the industrious German-Russians, and *Englische* attitudes expressed concern over German-Russian materialistic acquisitiveness and demands for higher wages. The economic interrelationship was aggravated annually when the sugar companies, farmers, and beet laborers negotiated their contracts.⁶⁶ Native Coloradoans commented about the German-Russians' "tightness" with their money, their cantankerousness and lack of courtesy, especially to their wives and families. "Well, they ought to save money, just look how they work their women and children!" was a typical remark.⁶⁷ But, when steady industry resulted in German-Russian acquisition of property, attitudes turned from toleration to admiration. The dollar spoke eloquently for the successful German from Russia in Colorado, as it did for new Americans anywhere. Those German-Russians who did not prosper remained apart in their foreign world.

A further yardstick of acceptance into Colorado communities was the concern shown by Americans that German-Russian children were often absent from school. Most German-Russian *Hausvaters* saw little value in education beyond religious catechism. They considered their children to be economic assets until age twenty-one and thus, school attendance unquestionably suffered. Although some German-Russian parents (primarily urban residents or pastor's families) encouraged their children's schooling, child labor in the beet fields remained an important economic and educational issue into the 1930s.⁶⁸

In addition to misunderstandings with the *Englische*, German-Russians found little understanding with Americans from the German *Reich* except for a number of pastors. "These other Germans, who considered themselves culturally superior, all too often showed con-

⁶⁶ *Loveland Reporter*, 12 February 1903; Markoff, "Beet Hand Laborers of Sugar City," p. 28; Hugener, "A History of the Beet Sugar Industry," pp. 73-108.

⁶⁷ Schwabenland, "German-Russians on the Volga and in the United States," p. 163.

⁶⁸ Except for the unpublished Masters' theses cited in footnote 65, practically the only studies on German-Russians in Colorado dating to the period before 1930 that this author has to date discovered, deal with child labor inquiries into the absence of the "Russian" children from the schools of northern Colorado and their subsequent "retardation." See, for example, Edward N. Clopper and Lewis W. Hine, *Child Labor in the Sugar-Beet Fields of Colorado* (New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1916); B.F. Coen, W.E. Skinner, and Dorothy Leach, *Children Working on Farms in Certain Sections of Northern Colorado* (Fort Collins: Colorado Agricultural College, 1926).

⁶⁹ Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev*, p. 373.

tempt for the 'ignorant Russians,' who did not speak 'good German' and generally had but little education. These, and even more their children, reacted in an understandable way: since their German was not 'good,' they soon gave it up entirely and spoke English."⁶⁹ German-Russians, thus, found themselves in the precarious position of a stateless people, turning inward among their own kind, troubled, and often ambivalent toward their own ethnic heritage.

The years of the First World War brought increased torment. Although loyal to their new homeland, they, who formerly had been branded "Russians," together with Germans from the *Reich* and Austria-Hungary now found themselves castigated as "Germans" and their language banned.⁷⁰ The elder generation who still "talked funny" were especially harassed. Many denied their ancestry and changed their names: Jakob became Jake, Johann became John, Mueller became Miller. Some claimed to be "Dutch" rather than *Deutsch*. Although no lynchings took place, some serious incidents did occur, particularly in rural Colorado. German-Russian dogs were killed, hay wagons were overturned, church windows in Montrose were broken, a German-Russian in Severance was forced to subscribe to a \$500.00 Liberty Bond and to take an oath of allegiance. Both known and unknown observers appeared at German-Russian church services in Globeville and in Fort Collins to certify that there had been no disloyalty.⁷¹ Ministers, mayors, and school principals mediated to allay suspicion. All welcomed the return of peace.

The tales brought by German-Russians, who in 1923 reached Colorado directly from the Soviet Union, sowed further suspicions. These refugees recounted bitter experiences of turmoil and dislocation during the Bolshevik revolution and ensuing civil war. The 1923 immigrants were much more antagonistic toward the Russians than were the immigrants who had arrived before 1914.⁷² Although generous funds to aid "our people" were raised by the Volga Relief Society in Colorado, wary Volga Germans denied knowledge of their ancestry and committed no memoirs to paper. They were not particularly careful to preserve records. Humble work and second-class citizenship, coupled with distrust and fear of being associated with the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* See also Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, pp. 100-105; Frederick C. Luecke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans during World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); and Lyle W. Dorsett, "The Ordeal of Colorado's Germans during World War I," *The Colorado Magazine* 51 (Fall 1974):277-93.

⁷¹ See Klobedanz, "Field Report: A Preliminary Investigation of Sources and Informants in Western Colorado"; Krieger, *First German Congregational Church*, p. 26; and Swanson, *Fort Collins Yesterdays*, p. 56.

⁷² Interview with Mary Strauch, Denver, 5 July 1977; see also "Jacob Guenther's Story" (interview by Jacob Zeiler, 1975).

Communists, made many Colorado German-Russians even more introverted.⁷³

By the 1920s, while their elders continued to labor, the youth born in this country, who had not experienced life in Russia and who had glimpsed American ways when attending school or on their Saturday excursions into town, yearned to escape from the ceaseless, back-breaking stoop labor. Simultaneously, many *Hausvaters* became renters and moved from "the jungles" onto farms, a decisive socioeconomic and psychological advance. Their pride in accomplishment made it even harder when their children began to rebel. The younger generation, girls as well as boys, sought to finish elementary school, to enroll in high school, and some even aspired to a college education. Girls left home to work for the minister's family or took up careers as store clerks or housemaids, while boys became mechanics or construction laborers. This break-up of Volga German families brought misunderstanding and alienation between generations. It also meant an estrangement from farming—the only life the older generation knew—and with that, however painful, Americanization for some had begun. It was also a conscious attempt on the part of the German-Russian youth to overcome inferiority complexes. "The young considered everything German to be inferior. The old people will take their German world with them to the grave. The young will live in an American world."⁷⁴

This was the situation vividly portrayed by Hope Williams Sykes in her 1935 novel, *Second Hoeing*, a chronicle of a fictional German-Russian family's total involvement with the beet culture in Fort Collins during the years 1924-29. Praised by critics, but denounced by German-Russians at its publication, the book was emotionally received by everyone. *Second Hoeing* was too realistic a commentary on German-Russian family relationships and child labor practices to be taken calmly in the 1930s. Now, from a distance of forty years, it is possible to consider Sykes's novel a historical document.⁷⁵

If many Colorado German-Russians had achieved modest agricultural prosperity by the late 1920s, the depression brought difficulties to all. A 1938 Master of Arts thesis asserted that many of northern Colorado's Germans from Russia, then fourteen percent of the population of Larimer, Weld, Morgan, and Logan counties, were "malad-

The Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem Kirche in Fort Collins (1930) was referred to by Hope Williams Sykes in her novel Second Hoeing.



justed."⁷⁶ Evidence suggests, however, that German-Russians, who had not invested in the "necessities" of a credit-oriented American society nor had overcommitted themselves financially for their farms, machinery, or livestock, managed to survive the 1930s without undue hardship. Those who were overextended suffered as did their American neighbors. But as a German-Russian from the Sterling area reflected, "I can't say when the depression started or when it quit. For some people, it's depression all their lives. It didn't make any economic difference to us. We had to work for a living. The prices we received for our crops went up and down just like they do now. Sometimes you got what they were worth and sometimes you didn't. . . . In those days, there were a lot of things we done without. . . . the eggs, milk, and cream paid for our groceries, and if we made anything farming, that paid for equipment or other expenses."⁷⁷

Hence, for many German-Russians the 1930s was simply another decade of frugality. A German-Russian from Loveland recalled that "it was done with the help of the women who could stretch the food and cook despite the scarcity."⁷⁸ The role of the strong and enduring German-Russian woman who kept the family going despite hardship emerges again and again. The women managed the family cow (which in many cases meant survival for the children and income when the milk and cream were sold), the hens (whose eggs could be sold), and the vegetable garden, while "mamma's" *grebbles*, watermelon pick-

⁷³ Timothy Kloberdanz told this author that to this day older representatives of Colorado Volga German communities are often reluctant to talk or be interviewed. More than once he was met with the phrase, "Are you going to tell this to the Russians?" Others pause awkwardly and are hesitant to speak of their humble beginnings, still conditioned by the prejudice against them experienced in their youth.

⁷⁴ Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements*, p. 108.

⁷⁵ Hope Williams Sykes, *Second Hoeing* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1935); see also Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "The Novel *Second Hoeing*: A Reappraisal," *AHSGR Work Paper*, no. 20 (Spring 1976), pp. 15-20.

⁷⁶ Becker, "A Historical Survey of the Social Background of the German-Russians," p. iv.

⁷⁷ Cited by Kris Heckel, "You Couldn't Have Made It Any Better," *Whistlewind* 1 (Spring 1976):58.

⁷⁸ *Loveland Reporter-Herald*, 26 March 1976.

les, *blina*, soup, and *Revel Kucha* were always present. The preacher might get the chicken and the best melons, but families managed to obtain food. "We didn't know we were poor. There was always plenty to eat."⁷⁹ Despite hardships, some German-Russian couples today recall that "now, looking back, the 1930s were the good years; that was when our children were born and we acquired our farms."⁸⁰

The depression decade was also a time of increasing naturalization and saw a rise in German-Russian applications for citizenship. For decades many had been so busy working that they had never become American citizens. Often at the urgings of sons and daughters, who were Americans by birth, many immigrants, men especially, applied for and received United States citizenship. Children tutored their parents at home. Citizenship classes were conducted in the schools (for example by the Reverend Paul Jueling at Windsor's Park School and Principal Matthew E. Eagleton in Garden Place School at Globeville) or in the Lebsack's grocery store in Loveland. Leaders of the local communities, such as the Reverend Conrad Becker in Fort Collins and Jacob Miller in Loveland, sponsored elderly German-Russians for citizenship. An additional reason for the rise in German-Russian naturalization petitions in Colorado in the 1930s was that while German-Russians always prided themselves for their self-sufficiency and refused to accept charity, many children now felt that their elders had worked long enough to receive the pensions introduced by the social security system, for which citizenship was a prerequisite. Thus, Colorado, which they had adopted thirty years earlier, at last acquired many diligent and stalwart citizens.⁸¹

As the United States emerged from the depression and passed through the war years, increasing numbers of German-Russians began to enter nonagricultural occupations. These years also witnessed the German Evangelical and the Reformed churches in Colorado abandoning the regular Sunday services in the German language. However, such decisions were always bitter and congregations often split. Widening horizons, nonetheless, prompted gradual toleration of nonethnic marriages, although to this day the majority of Colorado's German-Russian families are interrelated. The early 1940s saw hundreds of young German-Russian Coloradoans join their fellow Americans in the United States armed forces. Minimal ethnic discrimination

⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Henkel, Longmont, 21 March 1977; interview with Delbert Blehm, Fort Collins, 12 April 1977; interview with Phillip B. Legler, Fort Collins, 23 February 1977; interview with Lydia Alles Miller, Greeley, 28 February 1977.

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Carl Amen, Loveland, 23 May 1977.

⁸¹ Interview with Phillip B. Legler, Fort Collins, 6 April 1977; see also Dennis Means, "Handbooks of Larimer County: Colorado Naturalization Petitions," manuscript, 1977, Germans from Russia in Colorado Collection, Colorado State University.

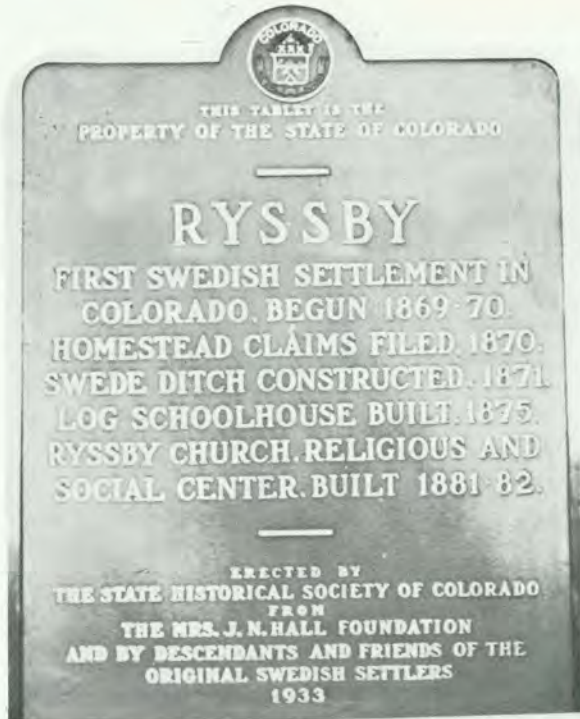
occurred in Colorado during this second global conflict. The G.I. Bill and the prosperity of the 1950s brought interdenominational marriages and an increasing access to higher education as both men and women attended college, although individual German-Russians had achieved university degrees in Colorado long before 1950. Some members of the older generation regretted such transformations and today lament that Americanization has gone too far: their grandchildren have even abandoned the work ethic!

In the past decade an emerging ethnic and historical consciousness has arisen among adult German-Russian-Americans as evidenced by the advent and widespread acceptance of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. The society's goal is to bring together individuals interested in the Germans from Russia, to correct misunderstandings, to preserve and to disseminate information about their heritage not only in the United States but throughout North and South America, in Germany, and in the Soviet Union. The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is both historical and social in nature.⁸² Its efforts to encourage additional scholarly inquiry can be applauded, for since the Second World War assimilation and acculturation have inevitably swept forward. An observation recorded in 1970 by a young German-Russian scholar in conversation with a ninety-two-year-old Volga German in a Sterling, Colorado, nursing home epitomizes the German-Russian experience: "Ja, my children can speak German but whenever I use it they answer me in English. Not one of their own children—my grandchildren—even knows any German. I never would have believed 'our people' would ever act this way. We have Americans become."⁸³

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⁸² Founded in Greeley, Colorado, in 1968 the AHSGR's headquarters are currently located in Lincoln, Nebraska. There are chapters in California, Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming and lines of communication to Germany, South America, and individually to the Soviet Union. To date the AHSGR has held eight international conventions. Its *Work Papers* (beginning in 1969) and monographs have inaugurated a new historical consciousness among *unsere Leute*. See its latest publication, a novel by Mela Meisner Lindsay, *Shukar Balan: The White Lamb* (Lincoln, Neb.: Augustus Printing Service, 1976).

⁸³ Kloberdanz. "The Volga Germans in Old Russia and in Western North America," p. 221.



BY DAVID P. NELSON

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A Youth to Fortune and to fame unknown

These lines from the epitaph in Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church Yard* strike a chord running through the story of the Swedish settlers of Ryssby, Colorado, in the late 1860s. These adventurous immigrants traded the security of their life in Sweden for the promise of the good life in America. Their lives bore little significance, if measured by standards that are generally associated with fame, such as power, prestige, and wealth. However, these Swedish immigrants invested their dreams, energies, and basic good sense and turned wilderness into settlement. Their legacy is traced to the risks that they took, the problems that they faced, and the roots that they established for generations to come.

The story of Ryssby begins in the old country, Sweden, the eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. Christianity did not reach the Scandinavian countries until five hundred years after the death of Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-430). The Protestant Reformation, launched by Martin Luther in Germany in 1517, a full ninety years before the settlement of Jamestown, virtually gave birth to Sweden as a nation. By 1525 Sweden had been freed of all foreign influence.¹

For the next three hundred years, Swedish monarchs of the Gustavas Vasa line strengthened the bond between the Lutheran church and the state. The isolation of Sweden from the political and military squabbles of Europe protected these iron-clad ties. By 1809, however, the Gustavas line of kings had come to an end. The new Bernadotte line (which continues to this day) never would retrieve the strong control possessed by the former monarchy. Realizing that the power structure had altered, the Lutheran clergy, one of the four bodies called estates in the Swedish Parliament, worked to protect its interests and promote itself by cooperating with representatives of the other three estates.²

Swedish society became less restrictive. Even though the Lutheran church still claimed a majority of the people, a series of laws welcomed all other denominations. By the 1840s Methodists, Mormons, and Baptists found a warm reception in many areas. The reform-minded Swedish Parliament directed its attention to improving the quality of life in other areas as well. A comprehensive educational system and a temperance movement, the latter designed to protect society from what had become regarded as a national scourge, were also founded in the 1840s.³

In another effort to liberalize its system the Parliament opened the doors for the immigration of over one million Swedes to the United States. The lawmakers repealed an old law forbidding any and all emigration from Sweden. By 1850 news of the economic development in the United States was viewed as the promise of the good life. Sweden had not entered the industrial age, and only four percent of the land was under cultivation. In short, the Swedish economy was stagnant, unemployment was high, and social unrest was imminent.⁴

¹ Ingvar Andersson, *A History of Sweden*, trans. Carolyn Hannay (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 101, 113; Wilhelm Moberg, *A History of the Swedish People from Renaissance to Revolution*, trans. Paul Britten Austin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp. 135-38, 157.

² George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969), pp. 1-2; Moberg, *A History of the Swedish People*, p. 2.

³ Florence E. Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1970), pp. 215-16, 172-75; H. Arnold Barton, *Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840-1914* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 112; Andersson, *A History of Sweden*, p. 336.

⁴ Kendrick Charles Babcock, *The Scandinavian Element in the United States, The American Immigration*

The story of Swedish immigration to the United States following the Civil War cannot be tied to the religious repression that led the Puritans and the Pilgrims to settle in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. Swedes were drawn across the Atlantic Ocean because of economic opportunities—land and jobs. The prospect of owning free land, impossible in Sweden, was encouraged in America under the Homestead Act; and jobs in the mining fields and in the bustling cities of America were plentiful. In addition, the Swedes did not fear that they would have to trade their religious values for their portion of the good life. The many religious sects flourished side by side in America, where they had often fought each other in Europe.

During the last third of the nineteenth century, over 13.5 million immigrants entered the United States coming from all points on the globe.⁵ It was at the outset of this period, in 1869, that the first seven pioneers settled at what they would call Ryssby (named after their parish in Sweden). Ryssby was located in the province of Smaland from which more immigrants came to the United States than from any other area of Sweden. Smaland was reputed to have "the poorest soil" and the "most versatile and energetic people" in the nation. "Perhaps Providence," one author contended, "has endowed the Smalanning with a spirit that enables him to overcome the obstacles that nature has thrown in his way; or perhaps his will has been rendered indomitable and his wit sharpened as a result of a contest with rocks and stones that defy his hoe and dull his scythe and with late and early frosts that blight his crops."⁶ (Swedish-Americans who have visited the homeland of their forefathers readily confirm this observation.)

Three successive years of crop failure (1867, 1868, and 1869) triggered the first wave of immigration from Sweden. Over thirty-two thousand used their passports in 1869 alone, establishing a well-worn path that would be followed by thousands more.⁷ The first leg of the journey took them by ship from Gothenberg, on the west coast of Sweden, to the east coast of England. From there they boarded a train for a short trip across the country to Liverpool. Then, in what marked their total break with the past, crews of the White Star or the Inman Steamship lines welcomed them for their three thousand-mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean to New York City. Like most Swedes before

The old parish church of Ryssby in Smaland, Sweden, served as an architectural model for the Boulder County Swedes.



and after, they headed westward ending up in Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Utah, or Colorado.

Sven Johan Johnson was the acknowledged leader of the first Ryssby settlers. Seeking raw frontier land, he set his sights on the yet unclaimed acreage in Township 2 North, 70 West, in Boulder County. Johnson, an agent for the White Star Steamship Line, aimed to establish an attractive base for settlement that would lure countless immigrants from Sweden. Along with Johnson, other early settlers included his younger brother Bengt, Aaron Peterson, Sven Magni, Peter Johnson, Lars J. Larson, and Samuel Gummesson.⁸ They had not all come directly from Sweden. Peter Johnson had spent time in Minnesota earlier in the 1860s before heading for Colorado. Reflecting upon his trip as an old man in 1913, he recalled, "I came down the Mississippi to Clinton, Iowa. From Omaha to Cheyenne my ticket was \$35 and from Cheyenne to Burlington I paid \$16 to ride on the top of a crowded stage."⁹

The first two years did much to determine the success or the failure of the venture. First the Swedish settlers built one-room cabins from logs cut in the foothills eight miles to the west. Having come from forest country, the distance itself posed a new problem for them. Sven Johnson, better set financially than the rest, constructed a two-room frame house that served as the community center in the early years.¹⁰

Before they could send for their families in Sweden, most Ryssby pioneers had to find jobs in addition to cultivating their land. As a result, some of them worked as hired men on other farms, as

Collection (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969), p. 67; John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 55; Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration*, p. 6; Barbara Kay Greenleaf, *American Fever: The Story of American Immigration* (New York: Four Winds Press, 1970), p. 106.

⁵ Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1965), p. 237.

⁶ Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration*, p. 29.

⁷ Barton, *Letters from the Promised Land*, p. 107.

⁸ Ruth I. Nelson, "Ryssby: A Swedish Settlement," typescript, 1970, p. 1, Longmont Public Library, Longmont, Colorado.

⁹ Esther Gunnison Kingdon, "Ryssby, the First Swedish Settlement in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 10 (July 1933): 122.

¹⁰ Nelson, "Ryssby: A Swedish Settlement," p. 1.

lumberjacks, or traveled to Black Hawk to work the mines. By early 1871 all of them had filed claims to their land under the Homestead Act of 1862 and had paid a \$10 registration fee for the 160 acres permitted by the law. Before taking full title, they had to remain on the land for five years, clear at least 50 acres, and maintain their cabins.¹¹

While tending their own plots, they combined to build a twelve-mile fence around all of the homesteads to corral their livestock. When they found a mutual need for water, they made what proved to be an ill-fated effort to build an irrigation system by diverting waters six miles to the west. At first the Swedes found that whatever engineering skills they had brought with them were irrelevant when applied to the arid conditions of Colorado. Within four years, in 1875, they learned some of the techniques of irrigation and filed for some of the earliest water rights under the territory's "prior appropriation" laws.¹²

During the early years when survival was in the balance, they drew upon what they regarded as their richest cultural base, their religious heritage. Their church, central in all aspects of their lives in Sweden, remained paramount for them. Their religion sustained them in the sometimes painful adjustment to American life, made more difficult when drought or grasshoppers (they were devastating in the three successive summers beginning in 1873) took their toll. But plans for a church building had to wait until the settlers had enough money. In the meantime, Sven Johnson offered his home as a meeting place. While not yet served by a minister, they congregated to sing and to pray in the traditional ways of the old country.¹³

The first Julotta services were held in the Johnson home on Christmas of 1871. The Aaron Peterson family, among the earliest to arrive at Ryssby, was in charge of the program. The two daughters, Sophie and Hulda, by their decorations, made the house into a chapel. Peterson read the Psalm of the day and then joined everybody in singing two familiar hymns: "Had Blessed Morn By Prophets' Holy Works Forcloth" and "Oh, Thou Blessed! Oh, Thou Holy!"¹⁴

Hymns of praise and thanksgiving at Ryssby notwithstanding, in 1873 the United States suffered what was up to then the most serious

¹¹ Barton, *Letters from the Promised Land*, p. 108.

¹² Judge A.W. McHendrie, noted irrigation expert from Pueblo in the 1950s, wrote an authoritative account of the legal and constitutional background of Colorado water law. (*A Hundred Years of Irrigation in Colorado: 100 Years of Organized and Continuous Irrigation, 1852-1952* [Fort Collins: Colorado Water Conservation Board and Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1952], pp. 13-18).

¹³ Lorraine Miller, "Midsummer Day at Ryssby Church, Sunday, June 24, 1962," typescript, p. 2, First Lutheran Church of Longmont, Longmont, Colorado.

¹⁴ Patrice North Proett, "Ryssby Church: A Monument to Pioneers," *Lutheran Companion* 18 (2 September 1953):12-13.

economic depression in its history. Primarily brought on by over-capitalization of railroads and an unsteady monetary policy, this crisis weighed heavy upon the Ryssby community, to say nothing about the grasshoppers that took their toll on any marketable crops the settlers had planted. While the economic outlook was not bright, the 1873-74 period marked a watershed in the development of Ryssby. As Sven Johnson had been aware, no community stood a chance of surviving without the arrival of new settlers. In 1873 alone, Hugo Anderson, Gume Johnson, A.P. Larson, August Olander, and August Nelson settled on nearby land. Nelson's brothers, Louis and John, came a year later after forsaking the mines in Black Hawk. Also in 1874, Johannes Nelson with his wife and four children arrived at Ryssby following the nearly five thousand-mile journey from Sweden.¹⁵

Ruth Nelson, whose research has preserved many traditions tied to Ryssby, has recorded the story of how her father-in-law acquired his property. Giving up on the Black Hawk mines, August Nelson rode partly by horseback and then by train (the Colorado Central) to Longmont. There on 2 June 1873 he hired a rig and drove west toward the Ryssby settlement. After crossing the Hygiene-Boulder Road "he saw a large group of men gathered near a shed; he thought it might be a farm sale. He tied his horse to a fence and a bystander told him what was happening. Angry, excited farmers were about to 'string up' or hang the fifteen year old son of the homestead owner (C.E. Hoover) because the boy had set fire and burned the Pella District School House the night before. His excuse was that the man-teacher had horse whipped him . . . for a deed he had not done."¹⁶ Frontier justice was liberally applied. The self-appointed vigilante committee promised it would not hang the boy if he and his family left within twenty-four hours. Without delay, Hoover accepted Nelson's offer of \$1,000 for a plow, a log cabin, a shed, and some crops already planted on the 160-acre homestead.

Another story of the early period tells of an incident between the Ryssby settlers and the Arapaho in the area. One day a dozen Arapaho, without an invitation, entered Sven Magni's house as his wife was baking bread. While striking fear at first, they apparently intended no harm. They simply waited until the bread was ready and took all of it with them as they departed.¹⁷ Since the Sand Creek massacre near La Junta in 1864, the white man had decisively

¹⁵ Nelson, "Ryssby: A Swedish Settlement," p. 2; Church Register of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ryssby, Boulder County, Colorado, p. 6, First Lutheran Church of Longmont.

¹⁶ Nelson, "Ryssby: A Swedish Settlement," p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

eliminated the Arapaho as well as the Cheyenne as threats to the settlements.

By 1875 the settlers had passed their first tests. The construction of a schoolhouse, often an early sign that a community had come of age, gave Ryssby a new identity. In addition to performing its educational function, the schoolhouse replaced Sven Johnson's house as the site for church meetings and services.

Colorado Territory, too, was maturing. Unlike the 1860s, when mining usually consumed ill-fated dreams and energies, the 1870s witnessed a population boom that paved the way to statehood in 1876 and gave Colorado a permanent foundation upon which to build for the future. The 1880 census recorded an increase from 39,844 to 194,327 people during the decade.¹⁸

Ryssby was no longer an outpost of civilization. By the end of the 1880s five railroad companies competed for business in Colorado. In Europe the steamship lines promoted Colorado as a garden for farmers and a health spa for the sick. The territorial legislature had set up a Board of Immigration in 1872 that was abolished two years later when lawmakers realized that their efforts to attract settlers were unnecessary.¹⁹ The Ryssby Swedes, having built a successful network of ditches drawing water from Left Hand Creek and the Saint Vrain River, recorded their first abundant harvests in 1876 and 1877 and wanted more machinery and more acreage.²⁰

Following the second, consecutive, good year of harvest, the Ryssby community looked optimistically to the future and decided to carry out its long-range aim of building a church and organizing a congregation. As a first step, the prospective charter members of the church agreed that they wanted to affiliate with the Augustana Synod of the Lutheran church. They sought the help of the Reverend Frederick Lagerman, fresh from the seminary at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Arriving in the fall of 1877, Lagerman set the base for establishing what would become the "Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation—Ryssby in Boulder County, Colorado." On 3



In 1877 the Reverend Frederick Lagerman arrived in Ryssby to assist in organizing a parish. The first Ryssby confirmation class was confirmed in the fall of 1878 (from left to right, back row: Peter Johnson, Charles Johnson, John Nelson, John Gummeson, Frithiof Johnson, August Larson; front row: Hulda Peterson, Mary Nelson, Pastor Lagerman, Amanda Larson, Sophia Peterson).



¹⁸ U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census: 1880*, table 4, p. 378.

¹⁹ The five competing lines at this time were the Kansas Pacific, the Denver Pacific, the Union Pacific, the Colorado Central, and the Denver and Rio Grande. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe operated without competition in southern Colorado.

The steamship line agents, like Sven Johnson at Ryssby, generally lived in the locale they promoted. They sent literature to Sweden telling of the advantages of immigrating to the area. Sometimes they returned to Sweden to promote immigration with their own firsthand accounts of life in the United States (Barton, *Letters from the Promised Land*, p. 110); Ralph Blodgett, "The Colorado Territorial Board of Immigration," *The Colorado Magazine* 46 (Summer 1969):253.

²⁰ Nearby Longmont, established in 1870 by the Chicago Colony and already populated with 800 residents, was a center for purchasing groceries and supplies. *Colorado Business Directory and Annual Register* (Denver: J.A. Blake, 1877), p. 196.

January 1878 Lagerman met with the eleven charter members—A.P. Larson, Aaron Peterson, Bengt Johnson, Sven Johan Johnson, August Nelson, Sanuel Gummesson, John Larson, Peter J. Johnson, J.H. Anderson, A.P. Anderson, and Johannes Nelson—and formally consummated their efforts.²¹ Within a month, they had adopted a constitution, elected church officers, and added new members to the congregation.

The church constitution was drawn directly from recommendations provided by the headquarters of the Augustana Synod. Among the provisions were guidelines for electing officers and adding members. Article VI, Section I, specifically ruled out Masons or members "of other secret and nonbelieving societies" as church members. Elected for staggered terms, Aaron Peterson, A.P. Larson, and Samuel Gummesson became the first deacons. Peter J. Johnson, Sven Johnson, and John Larson were named to the Board of Trustees. At the outset, relations between Pastor Lagerman and the congregation were friendly and harmonious. The church leaders decided to provide him with a parsonage, petition the Colorado and Southern Railroad for a free pass for him, and build a church as soon as possible. A special meeting was held on 27 February 1878 to issue a formal call to Lagerman. After receiving unanimous approval, Lagerman was informed that he would be paid a \$300 salary for the first year.²²

Before the end of the year, however, church leaders discovered that they clearly did not have the financial resources to meet all of their objectives. At their first meeting in January 1879, they notified Lagerman that his salary would remain at \$300 but that plans for the parsonage might have to be delayed. The pastor, according to the *Protocols Book* recording church business, then informed those in attendance that he would remain as pastor until 1 April "but not much longer if he ha[d] to pay for a house out of the present salary."²³

The minutes of the next three meetings indicate that the church leaders realized the gravity of the situation. They directed John Mork, a Norwegian immigrant and a carpenter, to draw up plans for a parsonage. By mid-February, Mork unfolded his plans for a 6-room structure (20 feet wide, 30 feet long, and 10 feet high). He explained that he could build the house for \$425 with a 1 May completion date.

Agreement was reached to proceed with the parsonage. As part of the accord, Lagerman was to give 10 days work on the Table Mountain Ditch as rent for his share of the water. Sven Johnson, secretary of the ditch company, agreed to work with Lagerman on this matter.²⁴

For the next two years, Lagerman's relations with the congregation were strained. While he now had a parsonage, he was not happy about the work requirement. Also, progress on building the church seemed stalemated. Finally, at the church meeting on 28 February 1881, Pastor Lagerman announced his resignation, which, according to the constitution, would take effect in three months.²⁵

The congregation's search for a replacement lasted for two and one-half years. Church leaders asked Pastor Telleen of Denver for help. Still a member of the congregation and now relieved of the tension that had accumulated over the years, Lagerman led them in prayers to find a new minister; his wife also directed the church choir at this time. Five calls were extended before the congregation finally obtained its next minister. The Reverends Eric Norelius of Minnesota, E.J. Nystrom, and N.S. Johnson all declined their invitations. A Professor Olson was asked; but within three months of his arrival at Ryssby, he resigned. It was not until August 1883, when the Reverend L.J. Sandeen accepted his call, that Ryssby found a new minister.²⁶

Virtually all of the planning and the construction of the church took place during this period when Ryssby was without a minister. Hugo Anderson donated the three acres of land, and August Olander gave the sandstone located on his homestead to build the church. As indicated in the *Protocols Book* of the church, L.P. Kimmons was awarded the construction contract with total cost running to \$530. One provision of the contract stated that if Kimmons determined that his costs were less than expected, he would likewise reduce his final charge. As it turned out, however, while the church was under construction, it was voted to expand the planned size of the church to 50 feet in length at an additional cost of \$100.²⁷

Pastor Telleen came from Denver to lay the Ryssby Church cornerstone on Reformation Day in October 1881. Over the next eight months, a monument to a hardy religious tradition and thirteen years of life at the foot of the Rockies took form. The structure, capped by a tower, matched as closely as possible the church of their memories in Sweden. Already some members of the congregation had removed their loved ones from nearby burial places to the cemetery in the

²¹ "Protokolls-Bok for Svenska Evangeliskt-Lutherska Forsamlingen Ryssby i Boulder Co., Colorado From och med Forsamlingens stiftelse den 3 Januari 1878" (Protocols-book of Swedish evangelical Lutheran congregation—Ryssby in Boulder, County, Colorado from the beginning of the congregation's organization, the 3rd of January, 1878). University of Colorado Libraries, Boulder, translation typescript, First Lutheran Church of Longmont (hereinafter cited as "Protokolls Book").

²² "Protokolls Book," 17, 3 January, 13, 27 February 1878.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6 January 1879.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1879.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1881.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 March, 11, 13, 26 October 1881, 30 November 1882, 25 August 1883.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 October 1881, 9 February 1882.



The cornerstone of the Ryssby Church was laid on 31 October 1881 and the sandstone building, pictured here shortly after completion, was dedicated in June 1882.



churchyard overlooking the countryside. And, on 24 June, Midsummer Day of 1882, the settlers of Ryssby celebrated the completion of their church with dedication services.²⁸

The Ryssby community had grown to fifty families by the mid-1880s. After relatively good times in the 1870s, the Swedish economy suffered a major relapse; tens of thousands uprooted themselves and headed for the United States. There had been only 180 Swedish immigrants reported in Colorado in 1870; the 1890 census pointed to an astonishing increase to almost 10,000 Swedes, ranking them in fourth place among foreign-born residents in the state.²⁹

Between 1890 and 1913, however, members of the Ryssby congregation experienced major problems. The nationwide depression of 1893 hit the farmers first, forcing them to apply for high interest loans in the spring before economic conditions reached a crisis stage with the downward spiral of prices. By the turn of the century land closer to Longmont and eastward into Weld County proved more fertile and had better access to water for irrigation. The last minutes of the *Protocols Book* were recorded on 3 January 1905. The entries testified to the troubled financial picture of the church. The Swedish families moved away, Ryssby became deserted, and in 1914 the congregation merged with the Elim Lutheran Church in Longmont.³⁰

Even though the small church no longer served a permanent congregation, Pastor Luther Stromquist of Longmont's First Lutheran Church (Elim) and Pastor Peter Berg from Loveland were determined to preserve the legacy of Ryssby. Beginning in 1924, they reinstated Midsummer Day services at the old church, a gathering that has been held without exception since then. Annual services, marked for the second Sunday before Christmas, have become a settled tradition, and in recent years, the Ryssby church has also been the site of numerous weddings.

In the late 1960s descendants of the Swedish pioneers launched a major restoration project. The Ryssby Advisory Committee, comprised of Lawrence Nelson (chairman), Ernest Johnson, and John H. Nelson, directed the fund-raising and planning. Kent Anderson, whose grandfather Hugo Anderson had given the land for the church, headed the Ryssby Committee as president and supervisor of the project. The church received a total face lifting. Fresh mortar reinforced the limestone exterior. A tower, replacing one destroyed by lightning

²⁸ Nelson, "Ryssby: A Swedish Settlement," p. 6.

²⁹ There were 9,659 Swedish-born residents in 1890. Only Germany, Great Britain, and Ireland provided more foreign-born residents (U.S., Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Population of the United States at the 11th Census: 1890*, pt. 1, table 21, pp. 606-7).

³⁰ "Protokols Book," 3 January 1905; Miller, "Midsummer Day at Ryssby Church," p. 3.



The Ryssby Midsummer Day service and picnic has a long tradition as evidenced by this 1890 gathering and a contemporary Midsummer celebration in the same grove near the church. Two services are held, the morning service continues the tradition in Swedish and the afternoon service is in English.



years before, was built atop a new roof. Except for the flooring, the inside of the church was totally renovated and freshly painted. The churchyard with its cemetery, regularly irrigated and groomed, was



The old pot-bellied stove still heats the Ryssby Church, the same picture of Martin Luther hangs near the organ, and above the altar is inscribed "Glory to God in the Highest."



treated to new trees to provide a finishing touch. The work was completed early in 1976, the centennial-bicentennial year.



The Ryssby story, from pioneer settlement to the recent restoration of the church, testifies to the continued importance of immigration in an overall understanding of the history of the West. Years after the closing of the frontier and the establishment of strict limitations on new immigration, Americans still reflect upon the enduring force and the contributions of the foreign born who helped to build this country. The Ryssby Church stands as a monument to Swedish pioneers who saw the promise of a better life in Colorado. Often confronted by difficult economic circumstances and a harsh environment, these immigrants persisted in their endeavor to establish new homes while never losing sight of their transplanted faith.

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