

Builder/Developer: Wood, Daniel W.
Birth/Death Dates: 1851-1945
Practice Dates: 1891-ca. 1930
Firms:

Biographical Information

Daniel Wells Wood exemplifies those who moved west to find a better life, and through diligence and hard work, found a place for his skills helping build Denver and Colorado. The lure of mining for rich ores initially brought him to Colorado. Though he did do some mining, he relied on his carpentry skills to support himself. His construction talents proved of more value than his mining luck and he soon discovered his ability as a contractor and building designer. Wood began his contracting and design career in earnest in 1891 Denver, identifying his occupation as architect and builder. He moved to Cripple Creek during that town's mining boom in the mid-1890s, where he was listed in city directories as an architect and builder. He returned to Denver in 1903 and continued to design and build dwelling, schools, and reportedly, courthouses in Denver and other Colorado towns.

Wood was born in New Jersey on August 25, 1851. He first came to Colorado in 1883 and settled in Trinidad. He tried his luck as a miner in Colorado mountains before returning to Kansas where he married Julia C. Wood in 1885. Their first child, Daniel W. Wood, Jr., was born in Kansas in 1886. The Wood family returned to Colorado where Vera D. was born in 1890. A third child did not survive, but a fourth, Josephine, was born in Denver in 1904.

Obituaries referred to Wood as an early day Colorado miner and contractor, but he was listed in directories mainly as an architect and occasionally as a carpenter and contractor. The earliest entry for Daniel W. Wood in Colorado directories was the 1891 Denver City Directory which listed him as a carpenter boarding at 3411 Humboldt St.

The first reference to Wood as an architect was possibly in 1891 on a Denver building permit. On this permit "Wood & McLene" were the named architects. An architect named Louis M. Wood was also listed in directories from 1891 to 1893. No relationship has been established between the two Woods, and it is unclear which Wood was partnered with J. Bailey McLene. No formal partnership was recorded for either of the Woods or for McLene.

The records revealed collaborations by Daniel Wood on several projects in 1891 and 1892. William Noltie was listed as owner on ten building permits in 1891 where Daniel Wood was listed as the builder. There were two William Nolties living in Denver in 1891: one was a real estate broker one was a contractor. The contractor lived at 3333 Curtis St. in a residence designed and built by Daniel Wood. In 1892, three building permits listed "Noltie and Cowing" as owners where Daniel Wood was the builder. Marshall Cowing was a plumber with Cowing & Coughtry. "Wood and Utzinger" were listed as the builders on six building permits in 1891. Henry M. Utzinger was a carpenter who lived at 1812 Downing St. "Wood and Procter" were listed as the builders on three building permits in 1891. Three Procters in the building trades were living in Denver in 1891: stone cutter James S. Procter, carpenter Elliot J. Procter, and builder John N. Procter.

The earliest definite reference to Daniel W. Wood as an architect was in the 1893 Denver City Directory. He was living at 242 S. Grant St. In 1894, the Wood family lived at 315 Fox St. in Denver's South Side neighborhood, now referred to as the Baker neighborhood. The Queen

Anne style Fox St. home was designed and built by Wood. In 1895 Wood continued to be listed as an architect and his business address was 918 15th St. in downtown Denver.

The Silver Crash of 1893 abruptly slowed Denver construction. Design and construction work no longer supported the many architects and contractors once active in the vigorous economic years before the crash. In 1894, however, the April issue of *The Inland Architect and News Record* credited "architect" Daniel W. Wood with the design of a new, two-story business block of pressed brick for Stockton & Cause. The building was 50 x 125 feet in size. More information about this building or its owners has not been discovered to date. (Denver building permits do not exist for the years 1894 to 1900.) In 1895, the Denver City Directory listed Wood as architect in his main entry and also with other architects in the business section.

Despite the fact that Wood was commissioned for Denver work in 1894, the Wood family soon moved to booming Cripple Creek. In 1896, Cripple Creek suffered two sever fires, 30 days apart. The fires and the rapidly increasing population created an urgent need for architects and contractors. It was this demand that probably brought the Wood family to Cripple Creek when work was less plentiful in Denver. The Wood family rented out their Denver home during the years they lived in Cripple Creek.

Three Cripple Creek District directories from the era remain. The 1897 directory listed Daniel W. Wood as an architect living at 323 W. Warren. The 1900 directory listed him as an architect living at 136 W. Galena. In 1902, Wood was living at 136 W. Galena, but was listed as a contractor and carpenter. There are no surviving 1890s and early 1900s Cripple Creek records documenting building projects. To date, a search of the Cripple Creek newspapers of the day has not yielded relevant new construction information.

The 1900 U.S. Census enumerated the Wood family in Cripple Creek. Daniel W. Wood gave his occupation as architect. He owned his home at 136 W. Galena. In 1903, the Wood family was back in Denver living in their modest Fox Street home. In that year, Wood was listed as a carpenter. In 1904 Wood was listed as the architect on four building permits. The permits were for single-family residences. In 1905 Wood was the named architect for five buildings. These included one single-family residence, three double residences, and one "two house brick terrace." Though he was named as an architect on these projects, Wood was listed in the directory as a general contractor in 1906. His office was in the Continental Building. The Ray Apartment Buildings, the best and largest example of his work discovered to date, were constructed 1906.

With the Ray Apartment Buildings, designer and builder Daniel Wells Wood created buildings that were fine examples of the City Beautiful movement. Wood's design and contracting work was primarily for Queen Anne style residences, Classic Cottages, and Foursquare type houses until 1906. Wood reached a high point in his career with the design for the Ray Apartment Buildings. The quality and quantity of his known works suggests that Wood was a master builder and an able and imaginative building designer.

By 1915, Daniel and Julia Wood, Sr., were living at 2719 W. 32nd Ave., and he was again listed as a general contractor. By 1919, he was listed as an architect and resided at 2811 Race St. The 1920 U.S. Census listed Wood as a house contractor and verified that Wood owned his home on Race Street. Only one child, 16-year-old Josephine, lived at home in 1920.

In 1923 Wood was the builder for the Limon Elementary School, Limon, Colorado; the school was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Mountjoy and Frewen. By 1929 the Woods

lived at 3230 12th Ave. The Wood's last residence was 1169 Adams St. Daniel Wood died in 1945. He was cremated at Fairmount Cemetery, but his ashes were returned to Moore Mortuary.

Summarized from Nancy L. Widmann, "Ray Apartment Buildings," National Register of Historic Places registration form, August 29, 2000.

Credited Projects (partial list)

| Building, Project or Development | Location* | Building Types | Date** | Status |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Ray Apartment Building | 1550 and 1560 Ogden St., Denver | 5DV.7138 | 1906 | National Register |
| Limon Elementary School | Limon | | 1923 | |
| | | | | |

*Model home addresses are given when known. **Completion date or construction span is stated if known. Plan, building permit, or assessor dates are used if the completion date or period is unknown.

Reference Material

Site Files Database, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Widmann, Nancy L. "Ray Apartment Buildings," National Register of Historic Places registration form, August 29, 2000.

Revised: April 29, 2007