

The Enemy in Colorado: German Prisoners of War, 1943-46

BY ALLEN W. PASCHAL

On 7 December 1941, the day that would "live in infamy," the United States became directly involved in World War II. Many events and deeds, heroic or not, have been preserved as historic reminders of that presence in the world conflict. The imprisonment of American soldiers captured in combat was a postwar curiosity to many Americans. Their survival, living conditions, and treatment by the Germans became major considerations in intensive and highly publicized investigations. However, the issue of German prisoners of war (POWs) interned within the United States has been consistently overlooked.

The internment centers for the POWs were located throughout the United States, with different criteria determining the locations of the camps. The first camps were extensions of large military bases where security was more easily accomplished. When the German prisoners proved to be more docile than originally believed, the camps were moved to new locations. The need for laborers most specifically dictated the locations of the camps. The manpower that was available for needs other than the armed forces and the war industries was insufficient, and Colorado, in particular, had a large agricultural industry that desperately needed workers. German prisoners filled this void.

There were forty-eight POW camps in Colorado between 1943 and 1946.¹ Three of these were major base camps, capable of handling large numbers of prisoners. The remaining forty-five were agricultural or other work-related camps. The major base camps in Colorado were at Colorado Springs, Trinidad, and Greeley. Each base camp had several branch camps. Camp Carson (later Fort Carson) at Colorado Springs was by far the largest internment center in Colorado with a POW capacity of 12,000 men, as compared to 2,500 at Trinidad and 3,000 at Greeley.²

¹ Arnold Krammer, "German Prisoners of War in the United States," *Military Affairs* 40 (April 1976): 65.

² [F. A. Anderson], "A Resume of the Emergency Farm Labor Program in Colorado (1943 to 1947 Inclusive)," Extension Service, Colorado A&M College (Fort Collins, 1947), p. 3 (hereafter cited as *Emergency*).

CAMPS OPERATED IN COLORADO IN 1945¹

County	Location	Owner or Description ²	Number Housed	Kind of Workers
Adams	Brighton	Armory Old cannery GWS dormitory	589	POW
Baca	Springfield 1945	CCC camp	300(1944) 200(1945)	POW
Bent	Las Animas	WFA camp	250	Jamaicans and POW
Boulder	Longmont	GWS dormitory County barn County garage	419	POW
Crowley	Sugar City Crowley	Fairgrounds NSM-Bob Creek camp	300 300	POW Jamaicans and POW
Delta	Delta	H.S. sugar camp	200	POW
Las Animas	Trinidad	Fairgrounds	298	POW
Larimer	Fort Collins	GWS warehouse	680	Jamaicans and POW
	Loveland	GWS dormitory	165	POW
	Johnstown	GWS dormitory Ford garage Sugar warehouse	465	POW
Logan	Sterling	Fairgrounds & adds GWS dormitory	709	POW
Mesa	Grand Junction	CCC camp	250	Mex. Nationals POW, etc.
	Fruita	CCC camp	250	POW
	Palisade	CCC camp	250	POW
Montrose	Montrose	CCC camp	250	POW
Morgan	Brush	GWS terraces GW dormitory & new structure	500	POW
	Fort Morgan	Armory, store bldg. Temporary barracks	252	POW
	Wiggins	Association camp and tents	350	Jamaicans and POW
Otero	Rocky Ford	Fairgrounds	225	POW
Prowers	Holly	HSC warehouse	229	POW
	Lamar W. Farm	ACS hotel	110	POW
Rio Grande	Monte Vista	Armory Association camp State soldier's home	640	POW
Saguache	Center	High school	200	POW
Sedgwick	Ovid	Store building temporary barracks and tent camp	300	POW

County	Location	Owner or Description ²	Number Housed	Kind of Workers
Weld	Ault	High school gym and attached units	300	POW
	Eaton	GWS dormitory	180	POW
	Galeton	Association-exten- sion camp	250	POW
	Keenesburg	Association camp ³	350	POW
	Kersey	Association	230	POW
	Pierce	Miscellaneous stores buildings & structures	150	POW
Yuma	Yuma	Association	160	POW

NOTES: ¹1945, year of maximum use of contracted workers; ²abbreviations of owners: GWS — Great Western Sugar Company, ACS — American Crystal Sugar Company, HSC — Holly Sugar Corporation, NSM — National Sugar Manufacturing Company; ³partly altered in 1946 with farm labor funds for use by families.

SOURCE: "Emergency Farm Labor Program," pp. 25-26.

The yearly prisoner statistics indicate the large number of POWs who were interned in the United States. Between May and October 1943 an average of 20,000 prisoners a month arrived. By November 1944, 281,344 German prisoners were being held in 132 base camps and 334 branch camps, and by April 1945, the number of German POWs had increased to 340,407.³ The first prisoners shipped to this country, however, were Italian, captured primarily in North Africa in 1942. Several hundred were sent to Colorado Springs and the army installation at Camp Carson.⁴ Following the successful Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943, the Mussolini dictatorship in Italy was overthrown by the Bagdolio coup, and since the Bagdolio government was favorable to the Allies, all forms of treatment of Italian POWs were relaxed in 1943. Many of the prisoners were formed into service units and actively aided the Allied cause for the duration of the war. In the summer of 1943 the Italians at Camp Carson were evacuated and replaced by German prisoners captured in further Allied advances in North Africa.⁵

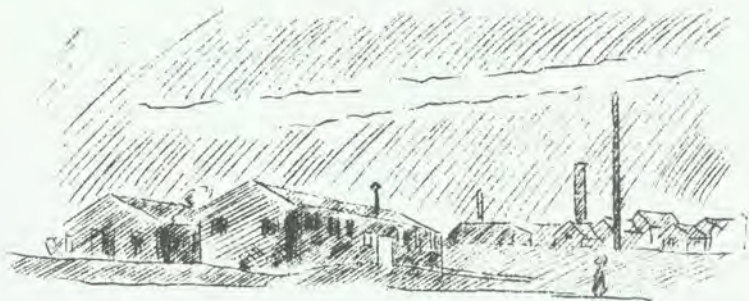
These early German POWs were the remnant of Rommel's crack Afrika Korps—panzer tank crews and infantrymen. Before their induction into the German army, they were technicians, artisans, and workers from every imaginable walk of life. They could be described as disciplined, arrogant, proud, and primarily young.⁶

¹Farm Labor Program). Copy in Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

²Krammer, "German Prisoners of War," p. 68; U.S., Congress, House, "Investigation of the National War Effort," H. Rept. 1992, 78th Cong., 2d sess., 20 November 1944, p. 1.

³*Denver Post*, 28, 29 June 1943.

⁴*Ibid.*, 1 September 1943.



The administration of the internment camps was the responsibility of the United States Army Provost Marshal General's Office. The Colorado area was administered by the Seventh Service Command with headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. In terms of such a large-scale program, there was no precedent in United States history. The camps were administered according to the "bible" of prisoner internment, the Geneva Convention. This was the "constitution" that ultimately shaped all policy decisions regarding the operation of the camps and the treatment of the prisoners. In spite of a claim by the commanding officer at Camp Carson that his guards consisted of "the usual surplus of psycho-neurotics and ill-disciplined soldiers," the German prisoners, in general, were afforded relatively good treatment by their American captors.⁷ In comparison with their American counterparts in Germany, they were treated exceptionally well. Not only the army but also the International Red Cross regularly investigated the internment camps to determine if Geneva guidelines were being strictly adhered to by the camp administrators. According to the *Denver Post*, the Red Cross found that the Germans were well treated not only in Colorado camps, but also in all of the other United States internment centers. It was believed that the treatment of the German prisoners in America directly affected the treatment of the American captives in German camps.⁸

The architecture and appearance of the base camps in the United States were similar to that of the German camps. Nine- to ten-foot high barbed wire fences, sometimes two to three layers deep, and heavily armed, elevated guard towers with night searchlights encircled the camp. Barrack dormitories housed the prisoners at the base camp, and at the branch camps the men usually were housed in industrial dormitories, armories, or old Civilian Conservation Corps barracks, sometimes without any prohibiting security enclosures. The camps were generally

separated into compounds. A standard compound consisted of twenty barracks, each capable of quartering fifty men. In addition, there were four kitchens and accompanying mess halls, four wash and laundry facilities, and four officer rooms.⁹

As specified in the Geneva Convention, the German POWs were permitted to wear their army uniforms within the camps, as was the case with American POWs in Europe. Since the majority of these captives were from Rommel's panzer divisions in North Africa, the sight of muscular German youths parading within the camp compounds in their Afrika Korps uniforms was common. Even in the cold Colorado winter months, some of these prisoners wore their desert shorts and short-sleeved shirts. American and German officers exchanged salutes in the camps as dictated by the guidelines. The prisoners were considered equals, men unfortunately captured in the course of war. In the letters destined for the homeland, censored by the Army Office of Censorship, many moving emotions and a number of blatant grievances were expressed by the captives. One German captive at Trinidad wrote that "they transported us like the lowest criminals about which they seem to have plenty of experience in this country . . . conditions here are indescribable and primitive . . . four of us in a room; no tables or chairs."¹⁰ However, the benevolent treatment received by the German POWs is evidenced by their return to Colorado following the war. A Catholic priest, the Reverend Leo Patrick, regularly associated with prisoners in Brush while on religious errands. He persuaded some of the prisoners to return to Colorado, and one prisoner, Nahomed Mueller, sent his son to live with Rev. Patrick and to attend Brush High School from 1950 to 1952.¹¹

The relatively favorable treatment accorded the German POWs generated criticism from the public sector of American society. The army defended its administration by contending that the criticisms were due to a lack of knowledge of the Geneva Convention and the applicable international law. A congressional investigation responded to the public, stating that "treatment is not a question of army policy but a question of law."¹²

A charge of preferential treatment of the German captives was made at Camp Trinidad. The situation was attributed to the commanding officer, whose removal from duty was sought by Americans administering the camp because of his "unAmerican ideas, his coddling and catering

⁷ "Roster of Waffen-SS Officers" (memorandum), Prisoners of War Personnel Office, Camp Trinidad, Colorado, p. A, Record Group 389, "Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General," National Archives, Washington, D. C. (hereafter cited as PMGO Records).

⁸ Field Service Report, Camp Carson, 22 February 1945, Office of the Provost Marshal General, PMGO Records.

⁹ *Denver Post*, 22 August 1944.

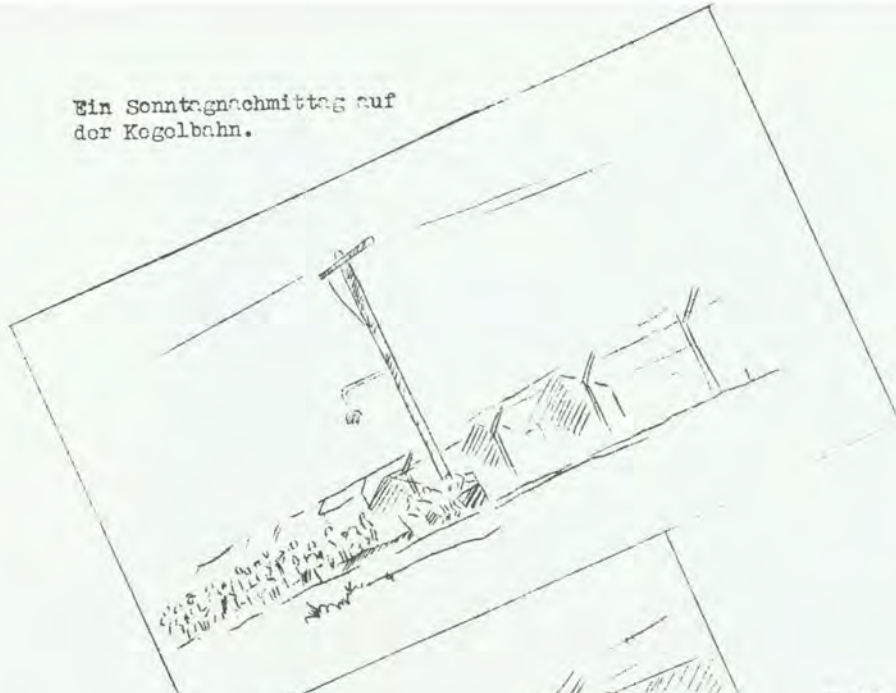
¹⁰ Arthur M. Kruse, "Custody of Prisoners of War in the United States," *Military Engineer* 38 (February 1946): 71-72.

¹¹ Kramer, "German Prisoners of War," p. 72.

¹² James E. Mills, "A History of Brush, Colorado" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1965), p. 90.

¹³ U.S., Congress, House, "Investigation of the National War Effort," H. Rept. 728, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 12 June 1945, p. 2 (hereafter cited as H. Rept. 728).

Ein Sonntagnachmittag auf
der Kugelbahn.



Fachlouto bei der
Kritik.



Die Preisverteilung.



to the German prisoners, and his inhuman treatment of all American personnel."¹³ The American soldiers at Camp Hale tell of a similar situation. Andrew Hastings, a member of the Tenth Mountain Division Ski Troop, recalled German POWs marching and singing every morning. "It used to make us mad as hell because the Germans were singing their songs as they marched and the U.S. Army wouldn't let us sing!"¹⁴ At Camp Carson, however, a prisoner spokesman claimed that an army soldier threw tear gas at a truckload of Germans as they were being transported to a work site. Carson authorities claimed that the captives were not guinea pigs for army maneuvers but were "inadvertently driven through a tear gas demonstration on the main post."¹⁵

Daily life for the POWs varied only slightly from camp to camp. They rose to the sound of the bugle at 5:00 A.M. and spent most of their day at various work projects. The army attempted to allow the Germans to engage in activities similar to their prewar vocations. The artisans naturally were more content than the laborers. While recreational facilities were limited, physical activity was encouraged. At most camps, teams were organized for competition in various sports. For example, during February 1946, ninety-seven different sports events were held at Camp Carson, and ninety-nine musicians staged eighteen concerts.¹⁶ Catholic or other religious services were common in the camps, with religion practiced freely and fervently.

The diet of the prisoners was equivalent to the rations of American combat soldiers overseas in the early months of the war. However, the army altered the menu, claiming a shortage of food, but the policy can probably be attributed to increasing public pressure. In the early years of the war, the public questioned the food policies of the army, contending that the German prisoners were fed better than armed forces personnel. The Office of the Army Provost Marshal General defended its policy publicly, explaining that German cooks were given the rations and allowed to prepare them in any manner which they chose. The cooks were experienced and exceptionally imaginative and, therefore, prepared the rations rather well for their comrades behind the wire. On 1 July 1944 the army instituted its food conservation program within the internment camps. In February 1945 the food policy was tightened again with substitutes for sugar, butter, and beef.¹⁷ "John Hasslacher, a former prisoner at Camp Trinidad, Colorado, remembered that food was not ideal, but there was enough meat and variety until V-E Day. 'The moment the

¹³ Anonymous letter to Major General Danielson, Office of the Provost Marshal General, Seventh Service Command Headquarters, Omaha, Nebraska, 5 March 1945, PMGO Records.

¹⁴ Telephone interview with Andrew Hastings, 8 January 1980.

¹⁵ Camp Carson inspection memorandum, 18 December 1943, p. 7, PMGO Records.

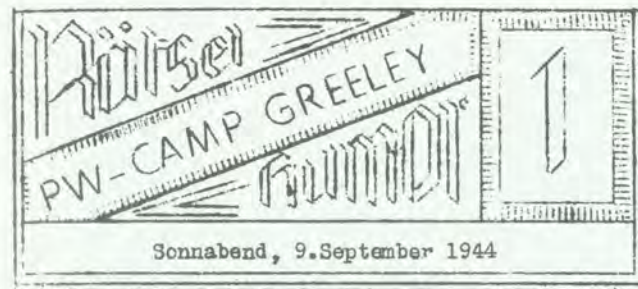
¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 26 March 1946, PMGO Records.

¹⁷ H. Rept. 728, p. 2.

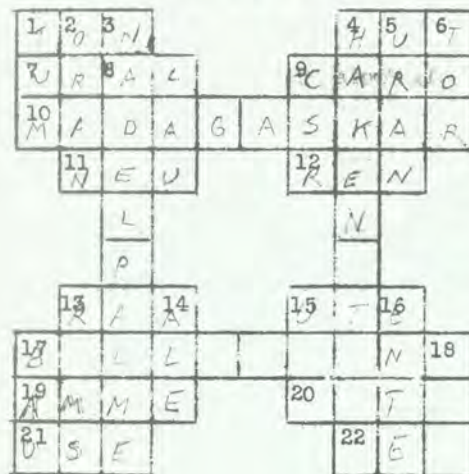
war was over, . . . the daily rations consisted of: Porridge with a bit of milk in the mornings, pea soup with lettuce salad and a slice of soft bread . . . at noon and in the evening."¹⁸ A ration for one prisoner cost the United States twenty-five cents.¹⁹

One of the benefits that the German POWs received was their pay—paid, however, by the United States government. Payment was not in cash, but local banks would maintain credit for the prisoners or the camp canteen would issue coupons for the purchase of necessary supplies. Officers were not required to work, yet they received an allowance of twenty, thirty, or forty dollars a month depending on their rank. Enlisted men received ten cents per day to cover basic essentials such as toothpaste, razor blades, and tobacco. The government claimed that these allowances would be repaid by Germany following the war. In addition, the prisoners received eighty cents per day for any labor performed for the benefit of the United States.²⁰

Interesting insights into the lives of the prisoners can be gleaned from the publications produced within the camps. None of these was, of course, political in content. They were entertaining and provided information to the prisoners. The Camp Carson prisoners published *Die PW Wolke* [The POW weekly]. *Rätsel Humor* [Fun with puzzles], published at Camp Greeley in 1944-45, primarily concentrated on amusing the captives with crossword puzzles, songs, and cartoons. In contrast, *Deutsche Kriegsgefangenschaft* [German prisoner of war]: *Colorado-Amerika, 1944-45*, apparently also published at the Greeley camp, was literary and more sentimental in nature, which makes it more enlightening concerning the prisoners' daily lives and thoughts. This publication contains descriptions of Colorado written by the POWs. They wrote of their fascination with the Moffat Tunnel as an engineering feat and marveled at the beauty of the countryside, especially the Rocky Mountains. The Colorado peaks were more jagged and dynamic than the old and worn mountains of their homeland. In addition, place names of the communities interested the POWs. Particular attention was paid to the work side camps and their origin. They wrote of Boulder, Fraser, and Deadman Mountain, all side camps of the Greeley installation. The rivers of Colorado were compared with the Mississippi River. The Columbine, the Colorado state flower, was explicitly defined and illustrated. Thus, the publications were a form of education, containing valuable information for the prisoners.²¹



Nr. 1. Preisrätsel



Waagrecht:

1. Musikalischer Klang, 4. Kopfbedeckung, 7. Asia-tisches Gebirge, 9. Spielkarte, 10. Insel im Indi-schen Ozean, 11. Ungebraucht, 12. Nordisches Tier, 13. Segelstange, 15. Gestalt aus dem Nibelungen-lied, 17. Stadt in der Schweiz, 19. Pflegefrau, 20. Lateinisch: acht, 21. Englisch: ge-bräuen, 22. Dau-ergebaeck,

Senkrecht: 1. Aegyptischer Gott, 2. Nordafrikanische Ha-fenstadt, 3. Palmenart, 4. Spiess mit Haken, 5. Chemisches Element, 6. Einfahrt, 8. Geringe Waerme, 13. Zufluss zum Neckar, 14. Englischs Bier, 16. Schwimm-tier, 17. Gebaeu-de, 18. Abkuerzung einer militaerischen Dienststelle.

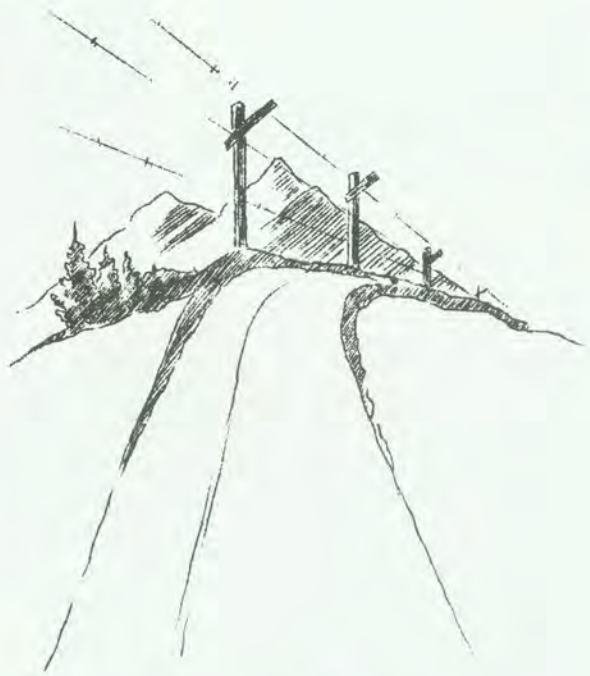
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¹⁸ Judith M. Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1977), p. 40.

¹⁹ *Denver Post*, 22 August 1945.

²⁰ H. Rept. 728, p. 9.

²¹ Copies of *Rätsel Humor* and *Deutsche Kriegsgefangenschaft* are located in the Documentary Resources Department, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.



DEUTSCHE

KRIEGSGEFANGENSCHAFT

COLORADO - AMERIKA

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Drawings from Deutsche Kriegsgefangenschaft: Colorado-Amerika, 1944-45 of the Rocky Mountains, the State Capitol, and a tunnel.

Popular American publications were distributed among the POWs as well. They included daily newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, and such magazines as *Life*, *Time*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Esquire*, even though commanding officers complained that *Esquire* contradicted the army policy of withholding oversexed media from the POWs.²²

Life in the camps was not always a routine of work and recreational activities. At various times during their internment, the prisoners would refuse to work. The response of the army was immediate disciplinary action. A "no work, no eat" policy proved extremely successful when these sit-down strikes occurred. Most of these strikes were inspired by Nazi influence within the camps.²³

Another factor that produced ill feelings was the policy of not allowing the army personnel to fraternize with the prisoners. Although policy was interpreted more liberally by some camp administrators than by others, it was particularly frustrating to camp personnel who supervised prisoners' work assignments, as they felt that it hampered work production. Fraternization between prisoners and civilians was strictly forbidden for security reasons. However, this was not always effective. A Del Norte woman engaged in a romantic affair with a German prisoner stationed there at a side camp. For several months she would drive her car out to a farm road in the evenings where the prisoner would be waiting; then they would return to her home in Del Norte. When the relationship was discovered, no action was brought against the woman, even though the incident titillated the social circles of Del Norte for some time. The prisoner was sent back to his base camp at Trinidad.²⁴

Ironically, the POW internment system in the United States provided valuable assistance to the agricultural industry through the Emergency Farm Labor Program. The army also viewed the farm-labor program, which allowed prisoners to be transported to and employed in areas in need of labor assistance, as an important feature of the internment system. Due to the tremendous manpower resources demanded by the armed forces and the war industries, acute labor shortages occurred in the agricultural sector, including Colorado. Harvest crews were particularly needed because crops lay rotting in the fields; thus, side camps were built to accommodate the need for additional farm labor.²⁵

Although the Farm Security Administration had made arrangements to import Mexicans and local schools and communities cooperated, the labor force was still insufficient to assure a good crop. At the Agricultural Farm Labor Conference in Salt Lake City on 1 May 1943, the War

Department suggested that POWs could be utilized to alleviate the labor shortage and that additional camps should be located with that consideration in mind. The Colorado Extension Service immediately requested a camp near Greeley, an important sugar beet production area, and the camp was ready for occupancy in early 1944.²⁶

Authorization was given to the Extension Service to negotiate directly with the War Department for POW labor. In Colorado, the Extension Service divided the state into districts to administer the farm-labor program, and it also worked very closely with county agents, county labor organizations, and private firms to coordinate the placement and the utilization of the workers. A placement office was maintained at the Greeley camp during the busiest work seasons and at most of the larger camps during the 1945 harvest. From fall 1943 to spring 1946 the POWs were a major factor in the farm-labor force in Colorado.²⁷

The first time the POWs harvested beets in 1943 the yield averaged about one and one-half tons per man per day. Through improved methods of training and supervision, the average rose to about four tons in 1945.²⁸ Such impressive results were not initially foreseen by the farmers and the communities, for they were concerned about the security risks and the possible crop loss.²⁹ Immediately after the first harvest season, however, the results were applauded by the farmers. A newspaper headline told the story: "War Prisoners Earn Way, Farmers Agree."³⁰

Other advantages of using POWs as a labor force became apparent to the farmers and the government officials. Because of the demands of war, Trinidad had declined, but it boomed again when construction began on the POW camp. "Every hotel room, house and apartment in Trinidad is full, every citizen who wants to work has a job and hundreds of new workers and their families have migrated to the city."³¹ Using POWs also highlighted the employer-employee relationship. While "the use of prisoners of war relieved employers of nearly all direct relationship problems with workers" and "on the whole, Colorado farmers liked this type of labor very much after they got used to it," this indirect relationship pointed out the need for an educational program directed toward the farmer.³² With wages for laborers rising, the POWs also proved to be less expensive for farmers. The Geneva Convention states that prisoners employed by private employers must be compensated; however, the federal government received most of the profits

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-10, 16, 19-20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12 November 1943.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1942.

²⁸ "Emergency Farm Labor Program in Colorado," pp. 40-41.

²² Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, p. 105.

²³ H. Rept. 728, p. 9.

²⁴ *Monte Vista Journal*, 13 April 1945.

²⁵ "Emergency Farm Labor Program," pp. 3-3.



Cards composed of pictures and explanations were used with a reflectoscope to train workers. The text was prepared in German for the POWs. Training the POWs to harvest crops was a never-ending task for extension service employees and farmers. Farmers often failed to realize how many years it had taken them to learn how to raise a good, weed-free crop and get it safely to the market. Here, a group of German POWs and two army officers receive on-the-job instruction in topping beets.



from this type of transaction. In 1944 the Ault-Eaton area harvest program had 330 POWs who harvested \$712,208 worth of crops for 291 farmers. From these two areas the federal government earned an estimated gross of \$135,954; the net profit for the government, after deductions were made for housing and feeding the prisoners, was \$99,545. These were crops that might otherwise have been left to rot in the fields.³³



This is the type of building some sugar companies made available as housing for POWs. This particular one was owned by the Great Western Sugar Company at Eaton.

Many mistakes were made in using POWs in the farm-labor experiment. Work production continually necessitated increased yields, and various techniques were applied to the prisoners to achieve this end. At Eaton the farmers tried giving the POWs sandwiches and cases of beer in hopes of getting more work out of them. The Germans interpreted this kindness and cajoling as fear and their work yield began to wane; this lenient treatment stopped. On 16 June 1946, using POWs in the farm-labor program officially ended and on 31 December 1947 the Emergency Farm Labor Program concluded, deemed a success.³⁴

Another program, one more difficult to evaluate, was the move to "democratize" the German captives. The army questioned the validity and the effectiveness of such a program. Despite the objections of Secretary of War Henry Stimson, however, the Special Projects Division of

³³ *Ault Progress*, 7 December 1944.

³⁴ *Denver Post*, 31 August 1944; "Emergency Farm Labor Program," pp. 1, 2, 4, 50, 52.

the army undertook the task of politically educating the German POWs. It was an experiment in a "democratic leadership" for postwar Germany.³⁵ Books that had been banned by Hitler's Nazi regime and books "representative of the American spirit" were distributed in the camps. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* was one such book that was widely circulated. Several Colorado universities contributed books from their libraries, and educational degrees were available to POWs through the coordination of the Swiss and German governments.

As the Allied victory in Europe appeared imminent, the political education program evolved more rapidly in preparation for the prisoners' return to their homeland. The moving force behind the Intellectual Diversion Program was Colonel Edward Davison, a former faculty member of the University of Colorado. Emphasis began to shift from the original "Americanization" aims to three new objectives: "to awaken or sharpen the feeling for the political responsibility of the citizen; to arouse a capacity for spontaneity on the part of men whose training and education had placed a special value on obedience and a respect for hierarchy; and to provide sorely needed encouragement to men who were asked to welcome the ruin of their individual and collective existence as the precondition of a new 'good life.'"³⁶ The German people would need new leadership, and four special training centers were established for this purpose. Although there were no centers in Colorado, the Colorado camps participated in choosing men for the program.

The German internment camps did not receive much publicity during or after the war, being overshadowed by events overseas. However, occasional escape attempts from the camps produced sensational news stories. Because of the tremendous manpower required by the armed forces and the war industries, the camps were operated on a "calculated risk" policy. Escapes were a plausible and accepted phenomenon by the army. However, the public did not fully appreciate this policy and disliked the idea of the enemy freely roaming the countryside. There were approximately forty-seven thousand soldiers guarding the POWs, which was only fourteen percent of the total POW population. The guards were strictly perimeter guards, so no armed patrol circulated within the camp proper. Dogs were used to walk the perimeter of the camps, especially at night, and the Carson and Greeley camps used these animals extensively.³⁷

A prisoner will employ ingenious means to effect his escape. Within

³⁵ Henry W. Ehrmann, "An Experiment in Political Education: The Prisoner-of-War Schools in the United States," *Social Research* 14 (September 1947): 305.

³⁶ *Ibid.* The centers were located at Forts Kearney, Getty, and Wetherill in Rhode Island and Fort Eustis in Virginia (p. 304).

³⁷ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 8 April 1944.

the inter-camp exchange, the Germans' ability to gather information relating to escapes was remarkable. When the army investigated German escape tactics, they uncovered several enlightening procedures that were utilized. They also found that the prisoners knew the exact train schedules in the locality of the camps. The people in Germany aided this effort by sending secret information in letters. To combat the exchange of mail with the homeland, the army issued special stationery that turned green anytime moisture contacted it. This was an unsuccessful attempt to halt any attempts at secret nonvisible writing, but the prisoners soon discovered that by placing wax paper over the stationery they could still conceal a message.³⁸

The Germans were also very adept at forging counterfeit documents. Army induction cards and birth certificates were produced in large quantities. The Germans, believing that any document with a rubber stamp on it looked authentic and official, fabricated rubber stamps by cutting off the end of a raw potato, carving the desired lettering, dipping the stamp in an ink dye, and stamping the falsified documents. Although prisoners were forbidden to possess any American currency, they managed to acquire it. In one instance, the army discovered that one prisoner had concealed money in his pet dog. A small slit had been cut in the outer fur, the money inserted, and the skin then sewn together.³⁹

During the war 2,671 POWs escaped from the internment camps within the United States, and Colorado contributed to this statistic. Most of the escapees would flee to Central or South American ports where cargo ships were destined for German-occupied soil. The journey from Colorado, however, was difficult, and the Afrika Korps uniforms were easily identified and provided inadequate protection from the cold Colorado nights.⁴⁰

It was relatively easy for prisoners to walk away from the branch work camps, for security was almost nonexistent. The prisoners at the Brush camp were even allowed to attend Sunday morning services at the community Catholic parish without guards. Three POWs walked away from the agricultural camp at Fruita near Grand Junction while harvesting beets, but they were apprehended the following morning when a farm boy spotted them sleeping in a haystack and notified the authorities. Three prisoners also left the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Camp to visit Denver, and they were picked up by a state trooper who noticed them walking down a nearby highway.⁴¹

³⁸ William E. Kirwan, "Escape Tactics of German War Prisoners," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 38 (January-February 1945): 357-58. In camps on the East Coast, authorities found prisoners who had information on exact Coast Guard ship deployment and activity on the Atlantic seaboard.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *New Yorker*, March 1950, p. 41.

⁴¹ *Denver Post*, 14 August 1944.

The camp at Trinidad was riddled with escape attempts. Several prisoners systematically escaped from this compound until a tunnel 150 feet long, 5 feet high, and 30 inches wide was discovered by guards. The tunnel ran to a point 65 feet beyond the beam of the night searchlight, which skimmed the outreaches of the camp. The tunnel was entered through a trap door in the German officers' compound. A reporter at the *Denver Post* later claimed that Japanese-American women employed at nearby farms gave the German captives crude implements to dig the tunnel, which was completed in one month.⁴² The *Denver Post* may have been correct, but this particular allegation was never proven. However, the discovery of the tunnel and the involvement of American citizens aiding the enemy provided an interesting perspective into the administration and the security problems at the internment centers.

Around ten in the evening of 4 September 1943 Karl Gallowitz, a lieutenant in the Luftwaffe, and his companion Horst Erb escaped from Compound 4 in the Trinidad camp. They had both fashioned their Afrika Korps uniforms to resemble those of American Boy Scouts. At 12:15 P.M. on 5 September 1943 their absence from the camp was discovered when they did not respond to their names during roll call. Two other German captives, Gustaf Wilhelm and Willie Weineg of Compound 4, also were missing. A general alert was sounded and Karl and Horst were almost immediately discovered near a farm to the west of Trinidad. Not only was the pair apprehended with seven dollars of United States currency but they apparently had bought bacon without any food ration stamps, indicating the cooperation of someone in or near Trinidad. Soon after, Wilhelm and Weineg were apprehended heading in the direction of the New Mexican border. Army investigation reports reveal that both Gallowitz and Erb claimed that they had escaped through a fence in Compound 3. No wire cuts could be found to support this claim. An informer told investigators that the pair had jumped over Gate 1 in Compound 4 between guard changes at 10:00 P.M. The guards testified that the gate in question was only out of sight of the sentries for three seconds during the change. The investigative report stated that "the testimony of the prisoners themselves have [*sic*] many contradictory statements and cannot be relied upon," and the report concluded that "the prisoners escaped by unknown means." Both Wilhelm and Weineg refused to state how they escaped. Nowhere in the investigation report is there a mention of the possibility of a tunnel route for escape, even though four POWs escaped in one evening by suspicious means.⁴³

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8 November 1943, 1 April 1944.

⁴³ "Investigation Report on Escaped POWs at Camp Trinidad," p. 2, Office of the Provost Marshal General.

The Trinidad tunnel saga became even more interesting one month later. Word had circulated among the prisoners regarding some friendly women who worked on a nearby farm where a work detail of German captives regularly worked. POW Heinrich Haider felt this provided a much-needed opportunity to solicit aid for an escape. On 9 October 1943 Haider assumed the name of another POW and slipped into a harvesting work detail destined for the farm, which was located about ten miles from Trinidad. Five sisters, all American citizens of Japanese ancestry, worked and lived on the farm. It was a blistering hot Colorado day, and on a work break Haider made his way to the small farmhouse kitchen for a drink of water. Alone with the girls, Haider, speaking excellent English, suddenly switched from a flirtatious conversation to a low whisper, asking for civilian supplies to aid in an escape. One of the girls, whose name was Tsuruho Wallace, also known as "Toots" locally, replied, "We'll see what we can do." On the same day the girls took souvenir photos with Haider in the fields.⁴⁴

Two days later Haider again assumed another prisoner's name and found himself on the same work detail on the farm. He worked most of the day without any contact with the girls, who were working nearby. At 3:00 P.M. he sat down to relax from his harvesting task. Within moments he heard a girl's voice from behind telling him that he would "find a package in the bushes near [his] lunch basket." He found the package and inside were two blue hats, two pair of pants, two shirts, several road maps, and prints of the souvenir pictures taken with the girls just two days previously. Haider smuggled the package back into Compound 4 where he divided the spoils with Martin Bazkes and Herman Loescher. On the evening of 15 October 1943 Martin Bazkes, Heinrich Bente, Heinz Echold, and Julio Hoffman fled into the open country beyond the fences. Two hours later, in the early morning hours of 16 October 1943, Haider and Herman Loescher entered the tunnel and made their way to freedom. Their freedom was short-lived. All six escapees were soon apprehended by local authorities and returned to the camp for interrogation.⁴⁵

The American investigators had been frustrated in their attempts to determine the means of escape until Julio Hoffman finally relented under questioning. He had learned of the tunnel two and one-half months before, after it had already been completed. He was told that it had taken twenty-six nights to build and that the dirt excavated from the

⁴⁴ Seventh Service Command, PMGO Records. The records of the army are inconsistent in the spelling of Gallowitz's name; at times he is referred to as Goldwitz.

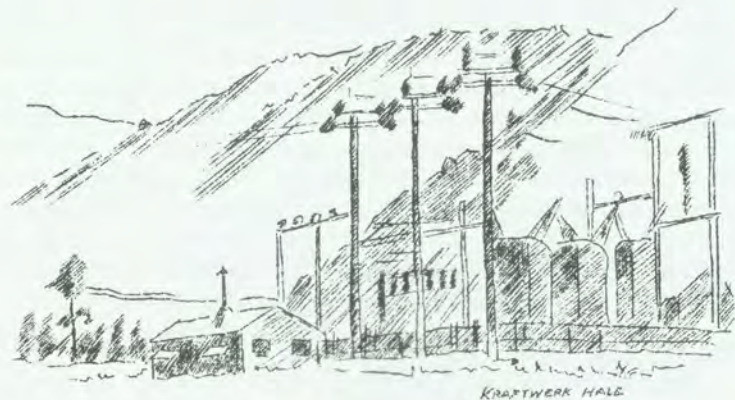
⁴⁵ "Preliminary Investigation Report," 2 November 1943, p. 1, Office of the Provost Marshal General, Seventh Service Command, PMGO Records.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

tunnel had been secretly mixed with topsoil in the flower beds surrounding the barracks. Hoffman further revealed that Karl Gallowitz and Horst Erb had escaped through the tunnel on 5 September and that construction was in progress on two more tunnels within the same compound. It was not until 6 November 1943 that the army investigators finally found the completed tunnel and the two currently under construction. The main tunnel was discovered in Barrack 1271, the opening being in a closet where floorboards had been removed and lumber, dirt, and rocks concealed the entrance.⁴⁶

With Haider's capture the souvenir pictures of him with the Japanese-American girls on the work farm were confiscated by the American authorities. Investigators eventually found the girls, but Haider refused to implicate them in any way. Finally, "Toots" was positively identified as having purchased the road maps found with Haider, but further evidence eluded the officials, causing them to drop all charges connecting the girls with the escape even though Haider eventually related the entire tale.⁴⁷ Throughout these months of escapes, the army officials displayed an obvious lack of professionalism. Even after several successful escapes during the month of September, where the escape tactics were a mystery to investigators, no general search was ever conducted.

Perhaps the most sensational and publicized escape occurred at the Camp Hale installation. Approximately three hundred German prisoners were detained there, high in the Rocky Mountains near Leadville. The prisoners performed general sanitary and maintenance work for the Camp Hale center, which housed the specialized and famed Tenth



A sketch by a German POW of electrical works at Camp Hale.



Camp Hale was located high in the Rockies near Leadville. Maple's escape from here caught the attention of the nation and the president.

Mountain Division Ski Troops. The escape was apparently orchestrated by Dale Maple, an American stationed at Camp Hale with the 620th General Engineering Corps, a unit composed of about two hundred men. They were labeled engineers, but in fact knew little about engineering. They were antiwar sympathizers and some were suspected of being pro-Nazi. "The 620th general services consisted of making camouflage nets, digging ditches, sawing wood, and performing other tasks of a more or less menial and insensitive nature." The men of this unit were not issued guns or given sensitive assignments.⁴⁸

Dale Maple had graduated first out of a class of 585 in high school and had also graduated cum laude from Harvard. While at Harvard, he was ousted from the Army ROTC program for singing Nazi songs at the meetings. When war broke out with Germany, Maple unsuccessfully tried to leave with the departing Washington, D.C., German embassy corps in hopes of joining the German army. He was then assigned to the 620th because of his questionable loyalty to the United States.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "Investigation Report on Escaped POWs," p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *New Yorker*, March 1950, p. 42.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 44. Seven years later, Maple testified at his court-martial that he had graduated first in a class of 1,500.

Members of the 620th participated in and planned many illegal activities that aided escapees and furthered the Nazi cause. They had "maps of Central and South America, documents relating to the administration of the 620th stolen from the company commander's trash basket, and tables of organization for guerrilla forces."⁵⁰ Sabotage operations were also planned by the group. On several occasions the 620th generously entertained their German captives. One prisoner spent several days traveling in northwestern Colorado visiting hamburger stands and beer joints with two members of the unit after having been supplied with an American uniform and currency. He later told authorities, "I have seen beautiful America."⁵¹

During a leave of absence, Maple spent his vacation with German POWs in Camp Hale. Dressed in an Afrika Korps uniform, he hid in the back of a truck and stole into the German compound where he spent three days joyously singing and drinking with the captives. It was at this time that Maple persuaded two prisoners to accompany him on an escape attempt. Having solicited his Nazi companions, Maple bought a car in Salida, reported in sick, and drove the two Germans to the Mexican border where the vehicle broke down. On 18 February 1944 Maple and the two Nazi POWs were arrested by a Mexican immigration official, three miles inside the Mexican border. They were picked up on a farm road seldom used by tourists, waving American and Mexican flags as if to convince the officer that they were not escapees but tourists. If the official had not suspected that they were the participants in a recent escape from a Texas camp, they might have succeeded. The details are numerous and complicated, but eventually Dale Maple was court-martialed for the military equivalent of treason. He was convicted and sentenced to death, but President Franklin D. Roosevelt commuted the sentence to life.⁵²

There were two instances in Colorado of prisoner fatalities resulting from gunshot wounds. At the Trinidad camp a POW was fatally shot when a guard apparently "got excited" as the prisoner ventured too near a perimeter fence. At Fort Morgan, a POW was killed as he charged a guard in an alley behind the prisoner compound. Four Germans had escaped the night before, and although three of them had slipped back into the camp by morning, the guards were taking no chances.⁵³

It is perhaps understandable that the public criticized the security in

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 1950, p. 48.

⁵² Ibid., p. 78, March 1950, p. 34; *Denver Post*, 8 December 1944. After Maple had served seventeen months, however, his life sentence was further commuted to ten years.

⁵³ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 4 November 1974; *Denver Post*, 2 November 1944.

the camps. The army responded to this criticism by publishing a report to Congress. "As of the year ending June 30, 1944, federal prisons had an average population of 15,691 from which 60 men escaped for a rate of 0.44 of 1 percent. During the same period, the average POW population was 288,292 with 1,036 escapes for a rate of 0.45 of 1 percent. When you consider that federal penitentiaries have sophisticated and modern devices (designed to eliminate escape) compared to a line or two of barbed wire with most guards carrying guns ruled unfit for combat, this percentage is impressive."⁵⁴ However, the army report conveniently studied only the first year of German internment in this country. The average monthly escape rate from June 1944 to August 1945 was over one hundred, an average of three to four escapes per day. It is interesting to note that despite public fears, the records indicate that no escaped POW ever committed an act of sabotage against the United States.⁵⁵

Aside from the continuous accumulation of fraudulent documents and the development of tactics to aid their flight to freedom, the Germans provided themselves with means to enjoy their captivity. Illegal and secretive production of liquor was a favorite pastime of the prisoners. They sorely missed their German ale, but they were ingenious in making substitutes. Liquor stills were discovered periodically in the compounds, usually hidden in the walls of the barracks. The *Denver Post* reported on 7 March 1944 that three to four stills and forty to fifty gallons of liquor were seized at Camp Hale. At the Trinidad camp the German blacksmith frequently went to work "drunk as a skunk." The operation of stills in Trinidad was openly acknowledged by the camp commanding officer in 1945.⁵⁶

Nazi violence within the camps was a security problem that proved to be a national trend. From September 1943 to April 1944 fanatical Nazis attempted to seize control of the internment camps by coercion. "Within that period, six murders, two forced suicides, forty-three voluntary suicides, a general camp riot, and hundreds of localized acts of violence occurred. In every instance, investigation by army authorities pointed directly to the influence of hard-core Nazis, which followed a pattern that saw the prisoners accused by their comrades of anti-Nazi activities, sentenced by kangaroo courts, and hanged, beaten, or coerced to death by Gestapo methods."⁵⁷ The army subsequently attempted to isolate hard-core Nazis within the camps and interned them at a special high-security camp at Alva, Oklahoma. Identifying these

⁵⁴ H. Rept. 728, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 4 November 1974.

⁵⁷ Krammer, "German Prisoners of War," p. 71.

individuals was usually done by informers. Intelligence officers at Carson, Greeley, and Trinidad utilized informers extensively. Trinidad apparently was more of a haven for Nazi activity than any other camp in the region. In a preliminary report on intelligence to the provost marshal, Lieutenant Schoenstedt stated that "all information received in connection with Camp Trinidad points to a very strong Nazi group which controls the whole camp."⁵⁸ Consequently, the army considered Trinidad to be one of the most important centers in the country for counterintelligence work.

Despite the burdening problem of security, the internment program during World War II proved to be successful. The Emergency Farm Labor Program in Colorado helped save several harvests. The educational programs attempted to prepare Germans for a new Germany. Regardless of civilian apprehension, acts of sabotage were not committed by escaped POWs and no POWs remained at large from Colorado camps during or after the war. The German prisoners were treated well, according to the Geneva Convention, and morale was generally better than could be expected from POWs held captive thousands of miles from their homeland.

⁵⁸ "Preliminary Report on Intellectual Diversion Program," Trinidad, Colorado, 11 December 1944, PMGO Records.

A Typhoid Fever Epidemic and the Power of the Press in Denver in 1879

BY GRETCHEN CLAMAN

An outbreak of typhoid fever in 1879 was the first epidemic of serious proportions in Denver, and this epidemic was the prime force in securing a water and sewer system for the frontier city. The management of this crisis is a demonstration of the interaction between politically motivated citizens and a powerful and influential newspaper, the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*.

The year 1879 was a boom year in Denver due to the discovery in 1878 of rich silver-bearing deposits in Leadville. Fortune seekers poured into the state, and the population in Denver of forty thousand increased at the rate of one hundred a day. According to a July 1879 issue of the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, "twenty-four hundred houses are a good many to go up in one season, yet between May and November, that many will have been erected in the city." Every sort of trade and business thrived, especially manufacturing and building construction. The town spread eastward from the South Platte River along both sides of Cherry Creek. Today this area includes the downtown business district and the new Auraria three-college campus. The hill on which the State Capitol now stands was still unbroken prairie.¹

The broad, unpaved streets were already lined with cottonwood trees offering shade and beauty. Horse-drawn streetcars on Larimer and Fifteenth streets carried townspeople on their errands. Young boys drove cows out to a common grazing field in the morning and back in the evening for milking. People kept up with the news of the day with the aid of fourteen local newspapers, many of them in foreign languages, the telegraph system, and two rival telephone companies. Although the *News* called the telephone "a galvanic muttering machine," the new invention caught on quickly and up-to-date merchants advertised that "prompt attention will be paid to telephone orders."²

¹ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 9, 8, 17 July 1879 (hereinafter references will be cited only by date).

² Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver: Sun-Times Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 464-65.



In this rare photograph of Denver about 1870-1879, a drainage ditch is visible alongside the unpaved street.

Housewives purchased staple or fancy groceries in a number of retail stores and could treat their families and boarders to fresh oysters received daily at the market by rail from the East. Children attended public, private, or parochial schools as their families' inclinations and income allowed. The city built public schools at the rate of almost one a year during the 1870s, and rented rooms were still needed to take care of the overflow of students.

Houses were mainly one-story and two-story structures, the older ones wood and the newer, brick. Hotels, as tall as four stories, served the traveler, although he would not enjoy the convenience of elevators for several more years. Those unfortunate enough to be injured or taken sick were cared for at Saint Joseph's Hospital or at the Arapahoe County Hospital, forerunner of Denver General Hospital, if they had nowhere else to go. In practice, hospitals were seen as pesthouses and were used mainly by the destitute, the improvident, and the transient. Respectable people were nursed at home or in their boardinghouses or hotels.

However, the newcomers to town could not always find a ready-made shelter with the necessary amenities. Dr. Charles Denison, a leading pioneer physician, recalled his first typhoid fever patient of the 1879 season:

He was what we call a "walking case," and it was in July that I first visited him where he lived, in a tent on the banks of Cherry creek, beyond the county jail. He had lately arrived from the east, and having just commenced building a house for his family, had there none of the conveniences of out-houses. I suppose the bed of the conveniently-near Cherry creek was his only privy. Please do not understand me to say that *that* was the cause and commencement of the typhoid fever epidemic. The responsibility for such a statement is too strong; but may a kind Providence keep us in future from having our drinking water contaminated by even one decillionth dilution of Cherry creek's contents, for we do not know how small a thing the typhoid fever germ is.³

The epidemic was a surprise to no one. Widespread diseases were frequent occurrences to people living in the nineteenth century. Typhoid fever, along with typhus, cholera, dysentery, yellow fever, and other such diseases, periodically ravaged populations all over the world. Little was known about their cause or their mode of transmission from person to person, but it was common knowledge that all were associated with poor sanitation.

A disease of the temperate climates, typhoid fever was especially virulent in the fall. Epidemics occurred more often in hot, dry seasons when the level of ground water in the soil was unusually low after prolonged drought. Typhoid fever had been identified as early as 1858 in Colorado. Mining towns would spring up overnight along streams where gold might be found, and the streams would serve as both water supply and sewer. In 1868 an editorial in the *Denver Tribune* headed "Sanitary Affairs" called for measures "to secure the health of our people during the coming year." The newspaper asked the city government to introduce a system that would provide safe water and would control hogs running at large, although attempts to control them met with too much protest from hog fanciers who preferred the "open range."⁴

In 1873 Denver physicians called upon town officials to complain of unsanitary conditions and to urge that the town build sewers, clean trash and garbage from the streets, and control other nuisances. Nothing came of their requests and the incidence of disease continued unabated. When Saint Joseph's Hospital, then called Saint Vincent's Home, first opened its doors to the sick on 22 September 1873, the first patient admitted,

³ 12 December 1879.

⁴ *Denver Tribune*, 14 November 1868. Typhoid afflicts its victims with a high and prolonged fever, prostration, a skin rash, ulcers in the lining of the intestinal tract, and mental confusion or delirium. Before modern treatment with antibiotics, a case typically ran for six weeks or longer and was followed by a lengthy convalescence with possible complications in the lungs, heart, nervous system, or other body parts. It was a disease of young adults, seldom seen in children or the aged, and about one victim in ten died (William Osler, *The Principles and the Practice of Medicine* [New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1893], pp. 3-10).

Denis O'Morrow, was listed as having typhoid fever. The twenty-six-year-old Irishman died in the hospital one month later.⁵ Because the art of precise diagnosis, depending on identification of specific organisms, was years in the future, the early admission records of Arapahoe County Hospital contained many listings of typhoid fever, fever, autumnal fever, or mountain fever.

Conditions in 1879 were ripe for an epidemic. The summer was unusually dry, even for Denver. Water levels in the South Platte River were low, and the rapid increase in population had overtaxed the primitive sanitary facilities.⁶ Denver had no sewers. Ditches along the sides of streets and alleys served housewives, who tossed their kitchen garbage into them, and merchants, who added their discarded meats and produce too old to sell. Chickens, dogs, and hogs ran loose in the streets, acting as scavengers but also adding their own refuse. As the censorious Mrs. Frances Trollope observed in Cincinnati, "though it is not very agreeable to live surrounded by these unsavory animals, it is well that they are so numerous . . . for without them the streets would soon be chocked up with all sorts of substances in every stage of decomposition."⁷ Water would flush out the ditches only with a melting snow or an infrequent rain shower. Most of the time the decaying material simply accumulated, rotting and drying in the sun and blowing around. This primitive, natural sanitation system, admirable in its simplicity and economy, was a menace to public health.

Human waste went into privies behind every house and commercial building. Cesspools were common and, like privies, were rarely cleaned or disinfected. The vaults of these necessary facilities were seldom lined with cement to make them waterproof and the contents seeped into the surrounding soil, which soon became saturated with contaminated water. Other cities across the country had sewer systems by this time or had ordinances requiring cemented vaults and regular cleaning and disinfection. The city charter of Denver, adopted in February 1875, called for similar measures. Under article 6, section 3, listing the powers of the city council, were ordinances "to establish a system of sewerage" and appropriation of funds to pay for it; "to prevent the introduction of contagious disease into the city"; and "to secure the general health of the inhabitants, to declare what shall be a nuisance, and to prevent and remove the same." The council adopted the ordinances but took no action to enforce them.⁸

⁵ Harvey T. Sethman, ed., *A Century of Colorado Medicine, 1871-1971* (Denver: Colorado Medical Society, 1971), pp. 181-82; Denver, Saint Joseph's Hospital, *Patient Admissions Ledger*, 1873.

⁶ Denver, Arapahoe County Hospital, *Patient Admissions Ledger*, 1879.

⁷ Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, quoted in Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1959), p. 284.

⁸ Denver, *Charter and Ordinances*, Art. 6, sec. 3, 1875.

In 1876 Dr. Frederick Bancroft, the first president of the Colorado Board of Health, listed seven topics of immediate interest in his presidential address. He gave top priority to sanitary regulations and with great foresight emphasized health education for children

in commodious, cheerful, well ventilated and heated school buildings, and a safe average of studies for the growing child, to recommend forcibly the teaching, first and last, of physiology and the rules of hygiene. If half of the deaths in the human family are caused by preventable diseases, and death represents but imperfectly the suffering made by them, it should be early and clearly impressed on the mind of the young, that filth, and excesses in labor and enjoyment, are the instruments of misery, disease and early death, and that cleanliness in its broad sense, and moderation, are conducive to happiness, prosperity and long life.⁹

From early summer to November in 1878 the newspapers across the country had carried daily front-page accounts of the yellow fever epidemic plaguing Memphis, Tennessee. Everyone who could leave that city did, and among the 19,600 who remained there were 17,000 cases of fever with 5,150 deaths. When the contagion struck Memphis again in 1879, city dwellers all over the United States panicked. Yellow fever, like typhoid, is caused by poor sanitation. Denver citizens received daily reminders in their newspapers that they were in danger. The *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, the earliest daily in the region, was especially vociferous when it reported that "sunstrokes and fever throughout the Mississippi region will pour a flood of tourists into Colorado. . . . Before Denver can maintain her boast as the great sanitarium of the continent, she must have a complete and perfect system of drainage." On 20 July the *News* reported that many of the people who were leaving Memphis because of yellow fever planned to settle in Denver. On the same date the *New York Times* stated that "Denver is admirably situated for a great city, but its lack of sewerage causes diphtheria to an alarming extent." On 5 August the *News* adopted a new tone:

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin
One touch of malaria will make this whole town yell for sewers.¹⁰

The lack of a sanitary water supply was also a major problem for Denver by 1879. Water for home use came from backyard wells or was purchased from the privately owned Denver Water Company, which pumped it from the South Platte River, "then a stream of sparkling mountain water, pure and undefiled."¹¹ The company used equipment

⁹ Colorado, State Board of Public Health, *Annual Report*, 1876.

¹⁰ J.M. Keating, *History of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1879 in Memphis* (Memphis: Howard Association, 1879); 11, 20 July, 5 August 1879; *New York Times*, 20 July 1879.

¹¹ Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 640.



The Rocky Mountain News occupied this building between 1866 and 1887.

manufactured by the Holly Company, and the water was therefore known as "Holly Water." Although the pumping capacity increased several times, city growth far outran the available water supply. Farmers upstream also drew off water to irrigate crops and the water level would drop alarmingly. After the discovery that water near the pumping station was contaminated with sewage, the water company became a major villain. As a letter to the editor of the *News* pointed out, however, knowing the source of the problem did not make a solution easier to find. "Urgent as is the question of the adoption and construction of a proper system of sewers for this city . . . there is one even more urgent, namely: How to now so dispose of the contents of vaults and cesspools so as to avoid a pestilence of diphtheria and typhus. . . . The

holes from which death is ready to issue must be properly disinfected. . . . The water we drink, too, is contaminated from the same sources. Cherry Creek receives the drainage of not a few cesspools and vaults, and Cherry Creek enters the Platte above the Holly [Company's] wells. If anyone thinks his water pure, let him look in the bottom of his water pitcher."¹²

Fearing an outbreak of water-borne diseases, Denver citizens looked to city authorities for help. The *News* launched a crusade for a clean water supply and a sewer system. Ironically, this crusade was probably prompted as much by partisan politics as by public outrage and civic concern. Since its founding in 1859, the *News* had vigorously endorsed Republican politics, but on 16 July 1879 it switched its allegiance overnight when W.A.H. Loveland of Golden bought a controlling interest. The next day he announced that he would run for governor of Colorado on the Democratic ticket.¹³

The mayor of Denver in 1879 was Richard Sopris, a Republican. The *News* linked its campaign for sewers and clean water to civic corruption and neglect and called for the defeat of Mayor Sopris on the



Richard Sopris, the mayor of Denver for three, one-year terms between 1878 and 1881. As park commissioner later, he founded the city's park system and is commemorated by a memorial gate on the Seventeenth Avenue side of City Park in Denver.

¹² 14 July 1879.

¹³ Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 666.

upcoming election day that fall. Editorials on the risk of disease took on political tones. On 9 August the newspaper stated that "every vault and sink should be water tight and frequently cleaned by a scavenger corps. Until we get sewers this is imperative. Will our fossilized city council ever move in the matter?" One week later the newspaper attacked the mayor directly. "Had it not been for the negligence of the council, bonds to begin sewers would have been voted and the work begun before now. The plan of the General Sopris is to poke about and potter until the municipal election time, and then control the votes of a large number of men by having them build sewers." By 9 September the party lines were clear. "Democratic pioneers have made Denver Queen of the desert—sercuers [*sic*] of the plains; but republican politics are making it a cess pool of Typhus and disease."¹⁴

The municipal election was set for 8 October 1879. The *News* focused on two issues, the defeat of Mayor Sopris and the proposition on sewer construction during the coming year. The newspaper demanded to know "on what theory the amount is limited" to \$15,000, clearly far too little to complete the project. It accused the city council of framing a proposal that would authorize the city "to spend a sum too insignificant to accomplish any practical good, and yet large enough to afford some fat contracts and justify additional taxation." On election eve the *News* advised that "the way to treat the unsatisfactory sewer proposition presented by Sopris is to vote for it as being better than nothing, and at the same time to vote against Sopris, as being worse than nothing."¹⁵

The *Denver Daily Republican* and the *Denver Daily Times*, both of Republican political persuasion, had little to say about the epidemic or the water supplies or the sewers or the city government during this time. The *News* and the Democrats supported George Miller for mayor, and surprisingly, even the *News* had little to say about him. It appears that the newspaper was not so much for Miller as against Sopris. Whether the mayor and the city council were as bad as the *News* claimed or were simply of the opposition party is impossible to assess. In any case, Sopris was returned to office with a comfortable majority of 1,998 votes to Miller's 1,128.¹⁶

The sewer proposition passed by 1,158 votes to 340. After the election the *News* returned its attention to sewers and water supplies. As October advanced, the predicted epidemic gathered force and the *News* wrote an account headed "The Fever Scare":

The publication in yesterday's *News* regarding the large number of cases of fever there were in this city, was by no means exaggerated,

¹⁴ 15 July, 9, 16 August, 9 September 1879.

¹⁵ 1 October 1879.

¹⁶ 8 October 1879.

and, in fact, was but a mild statement of the actual condition of things. The fact is that well informed physicians state that there are now upward of 300 cases of fever being treated in this city. The complaint is greater than it has ever been in Denver before. Every physician numbers among his patients persons suffering from the fever, the number to each physician ranging from three to thirty. There is no doubt as to the cause for the increase in the malady. Every well-informed physician is ready to locate it where it belongs—in the filthy condition of the city, the lack of drainage and the poor enforcement of the sanitary ordinances.¹⁷

The *News* continued to keep the story of the epidemic in the forefront. Day after day it ran news stories, interviews, and letters to the editor. As the toll of sick and dead mounted, the *Denver Daily Times* timidly recognized the crisis for the first time. "Our readers all know that there is an unusual amount of sickness from fever in Denver this season—the cause of which is attributed to the condition of the atmosphere. This is the result of numerous causes, the accumulation of filth, the indiscriminating casting of refuse into alleys and back yards, the dust of the streets and building materials, and the lack of rain. . . . The sewer system should not be put off longer. . . . Further postponement of the matter will be little else than criminal."¹⁸

The *Times* had supported Sopris for reelection and was more cautious than the *News* in assigning blame.

A *Times* reporter this morning met the Mayor in his office and asked him his opinion of the causes of the prevalent, almost epidemic, fevers. The Mayor is in the habit of receiving on his broad shoulders the weight of condemnation for the existence of all nuisances in the city, both public and private, and we were a little curious, in view of his patient bearing of the yoke, to know the cause thereof. "Dry weather," said the Mayor, "lack of rain. It's just so in the East, all over the country, in Kansas City. There has been no rain of consequence during the season, and these low fevers, lingering sicknesses are prevalent everywhere."¹⁹

Mayor Sopris could not or would not admit that there was a serious epidemic in his city or that his city government had any responsibility for enforcing its own public health ordinances. His administration could hardly be blamed for the lack of rain.

The newspapers repeatedly called for the city board of health to pass and enforce simple regulations providing for the removal of refuse from the streets and drainage ditches. The citizens who recognized that constructing a sewer system would take time also realized that immediate cleaning of the city would reduce the risk. In a letter to the editor, one

¹⁷ 29 October 1879.

¹⁸ *Denver Daily Times*, 7 November 1879.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

citizen wrote that "the members of our city government do not appear to know what a garbage cart is, and all their ideas of city sanitary science seem to have been gathered from their observations in country villages. . . . All will admit that any city without sewers and with a crowded population should above all other things have a brigade of garbage carts which would pass by every house in the city every day and empty its garbage box."²⁰

In addition to a city council composed of twelve aldermen, one of the several standing committees on which aldermen served was the five-member board of health. The mayor and the city clerk served ex officio on the board of health and they were joined by three aldermen. None of these men brought any medical or scientific training to the supervision of public health. The *News* repeatedly criticized the board for doing nothing, and a search of city records backs up that criticism.²¹ An angry citizen took the city health board to task in a letter to the editor, headed "How Health Complaints Are Ignored."

On the 11th [of November] I dropped into the box in front of the city hall, on which is printed the words "Complaints for the board of health," a written complaint against the occupants of the house at No. 287 Fourteenth Street. The ditch in front of this house and the alley at the side on the same, have been and still are made use of daily by said occupants for reception of garbage. . . . Were it not for the errant chickens and wandering cows the ditch in front of the above house would be inches deep in decaying vegetable matter. Now the question is, have these people ever been notified by the board of health to stop this lawbreaking? Has the board of health ever read the complaint? Is the big, wooden complaint box ever opened by the board of health? Is there any board of health? If there is, has it any power to abate nuisances? Does it ever exercise this power?²²

The city council records for 1879 reveal four reports from the board of health. Its November report recommended to the mayor and the full council "to have a perfect and complete sewer system"; to require cesspools and privy vaults to be made watertight and to be frequently cleaned and disinfected in thickly settled parts of town; to hire an additional force of men and teams to keep streets and alleys clean at city

²⁰ 9 November 1879.

²¹ Although these were part-time jobs, they paid well and may have provided their holders with supplements in the form of graft—or so the *News* hinted. City council records for December 1879 list the salaries of some city employees: Richard Sopris, mayor, \$150.00; H. Parmelee, city clerk, \$100.00; Mr. Bailey, street commissioner, \$100.00; C. Nadler, city scavenger, \$90.00; H. C. Lowrie, city engineer, \$75.00; J. M. Graham, city physician, \$41.67; policemen, \$80.00; and aldermen, \$62.50. The city physician apparently was paid according to the number of patients in the city hospital. Some payrolls for the year show him earning as little as \$19.45, but in November, probably owing to fever patients, he earned \$63.89 or about the same as an alderman. In the administrative year from October 1878 to October 1879, the aldermen were Robert Morris, land commissioner for the Denver Pacific Railroad; George L. Aggers, grocer; and Robert Aurich, bookkeeper for the Rocky Mountain Brewery. The next year they were replaced by C. H. McLaughlin, clerk at the post office; George A. Meyers, clerk for the Kansas Pacific Railroad; and Flavius M. Davis, who was not otherwise identified in the city directory (*Denver City Council Records*, 1879).

²² 25 November 1879.

expense; and, most importantly, to examine "the present Holly Water Works and . . . while we think they are only in a medium condition yet we feel that with the suggestions we will make to the proprietors they will be sufficient until we have the new works." The board, which had evidently regarded spending money as worse than the epidemic up to this time, went on to exhort the full council and the large audience in city hall.

We feel that the exigencies of the case are such that united effort should be made by all city officers to remove every just cause of complaints and thus avoid any further dread of the return of dangerous epidemics. . . . You will no doubt be called upon to appropriate for this purpose a much larger sum than during the past year—but we feel satisfied that you will see the necessity of this request when you remember the unprecedented growth of the city. . . . We cannot but think our City Scavenger has been derelict in his duty—else many of these nuisances would have been abated. It may be that this officer has too much to do—and if so we would recommend that you appoint one Sanitary Policeman . . . to make a full and complete inspection of all premises, note nuisances, order them abated, and report the same daily in writing to the Committee. Public notice should be given to all to clean up their houses and lots. There should be a penalty for violation. Also a supply of good and cheap disinfectant should be given to those who apply in person.²³

The *News* reported that the lobby of city hall was filled with citizens attending this special session. What moved the board of health to take notice at last can only be conjectured. Popular opinion may have been the spur.

While the *News* mobilized public opinion through its editorials, other sections of the paper reinforced the message to readers. Day after day obituaries listed typhoid fever as the cause of death. Many readers must have wept over the death notice of fourteen-year-old Ida Lowe of Idaho Springs.

Miss Lowe had been a pupil at Wolfe Hall [a private girls' academy in Denver] for a month previous to her death. . . . Dr. Bancroft, who was consulted, failed to discover threatening or dangerous symptoms. Miss Lowe left Wolfe Hall two weeks ago yesterday for her home at Idaho Springs, and was attacked with typhoid fever shortly after her arrival. . . . She was watched and tended by Dr. Cline, . . . but mortal skill was of no avail, and the beautiful and beloved child sank peacefully into eternal rest. A favorite canary of Miss Lowe's, which hung in her own chamber and which had been silent and moulting for some time before, suddenly filled the room with its melody, and as the weeping friends hung about the couch of the dying girl, clearer and sweeter were the notes of the tiny warbler, as though it sung a heavenly greeting from the spirit land to a new born angel.²⁴

²³ Denver, *City Council Records*, 1879.

²⁴ 5 November 1879.

As is often the case, some sought to reap profits from the fear and misfortune of others. Advertisers used the epidemic to promote their products, such as "Messrs. A. Jacobs & Co." on the corner of Fifteenth and Larimer streets that sold clothing because "to preserve health, other things are essential, one of which is to dress properly."²⁵ Another advertisement was more to the point, stating that "a great deal of the ill health of the city is ascribed to the water we drink. Why hasn't some enterprising citizen brought up by means of the artesian well the pure water that lies beneath us? Rief & Co., practical plumbers, bronzers and gas fitters, are prepared to dig and set in complete order these wells. This firm is completely reliable, and all work entrusted to them will be thoroughly well done."²⁶

The newspapers continued to carry helpful hints on cleanliness. Housewives bought patented filters and attached them to faucets to strain out impurities. The filters consisted of a hollow metal globe filled with charcoal and were worthless for removing microscopic disease organisms.

Still, people did what they could and hoped for the best. Many drank only coffee and tea, since these were known to be safer than unboiled water, and a bit of toast was sometimes added to boiled water to overcome the flat taste. Whiskey had its supporters too, and one writer to the *News* asked, "If a man drinks water he imbibes wiggletails. If he drinks whisky he gets the jim-jams. Now what is a body to do?" The temperance movement was strong and one reporter, who dropped in on a meeting to hear the water question discussed, heard a Mr. Campbell endorse the Denver water because "I never was in a place yet, that no matter if the water was bad, the liquor was worse."²⁷ Even the Colorado Board of Health in its formal report commented on whether or not "water can be rendered 'impure,' 'unwholesome,' by the addition thereto of any substance whose name the human tongue can pronounce. The conviction appears to be so deeply rooted in the minds of others that all water is either impure, or otherwise unwholesome to drink." The report went on to state that many indulge in fluids that "exert a more marked influence over the tint of the nose than does water."²⁸

With public interest focused on the health situation, a "Citizens' Movement" arose, headed by A.H. Estes, proprietor of the Wentworth House, a popular hotel for tourists and commercial travelers. Hotels and boardinghouses received considerable criticism for the filthy condition of their grounds and outbuildings. In rebuttal Estes replied that "we are

²⁵ 14 December 1879.

²⁶ 2 November 1879.

²⁷ 16, 21 December 1879.

²⁸ 16, 21 December 1879.

denied public improvements. I could afford to pay \$2,000 for sewerage, but am debarred the privilege and denied the convenience. . . . Why? They say there is no sewage system, and that the water is bad. It is time we, as citizens, should take some steps for the future." He suggested in a letter to the editor of the *News* that "any live business man can buy pipe, freight it here, and lay it down, and this, so far as I can see, is all the secret and mystery there is to the matter." Later on, when a sewer plan was made public, Estes objected to the large size of the pipes proposed, saying that they would never be needed so large, even if the city reached a hundred thousand.²⁹

The privately owned Denver Water Company had installed its first "Holly" equipment in 1872. It pumped from the Platte just below the mouth of Cherry Creek, which was partly fed from two open ditches that merged to form the West Denver mill ditch. Both the ditches and the creek were used as dumps for all manner of debris, garbage, stable manure, and human waste. The ditch received piped sewage from the county jail where inmates had typhoid and from the Lindell Hotel where guests were confined with fever. Typhoid organisms were circulated into the water pumping station and then to customers' taps.

Although the company had been selling water since 1872, many continued to draw water from private wells sunk ten to fifteen feet on low-lying property near the South Platte River and as much as forty feet deep in higher neighborhoods. These wells were at the same depth as the ground water of Cherry Creek. When the Holly waterworks went into operation, some of the old wells were converted to vaults for privies. Dr. Bancroft observed to the Colorado Board of Health that "an ordinance is extant prohibiting use of wells for such purposes, but as it is my intention to report simply what the practice is in such matters, and since the ordinances in relation thereto seem to be of little or no effect, I shall refer to the laws as seldom as possible, leaving investigation of them to the curious student of ancient and forgotten lore."³⁰

During the summer of 1879 there was widespread complaint about the foul appearance, taste, and odor of Holly water. The company responded by hiring Richard Pearce, a chemist, to analyze it. He drew a sample of water from a hydrant in the center of town and compared it with a sample drawn from the Platte River several miles upstream from town. Looking for chemical or inorganic constituents, he concluded in his report published on 12 July that the two waters were equally fit to drink. He did not look for organic material so he did not find "germs" in it. Although the specific organism causing typhoid fever was identified by Karl Joseph Eberth, a German, the following year, Pearce

²⁹ 22 August, 15 November 1879.

³⁰ 21 December 1879.

could have established with a microscope that living organisms were present in Holly water. A chemical analysis, however accurate it may have been, was irrelevant.³¹

Physicians and prominent citizens, led by Dr. Denison, continued to protest to the mayor and the council that the company was pumping water from polluted sources. Company spokesmen asserted that the water was drawn only from an arm of the Platte above the polluted section. Meanwhile, the typhoid cases continued to multiply. Dr. Denison went to the waterworks and obtained a key to a closed section behind the reservoir. He described what he saw to a meeting of the Denver Medical Society, which passed a resolution censuring the company and reported to the *News*:

To this little reservoir . . . the necessarily foul water mentioned flows in a small ditch from the mill run stream. In the little ditch I saw broken slop buckets, etc., detained by the shallowness of the water there. That water was perceptibly not wholesome as drinking water, yet it flowed under the edge of the [sluice] box, and [discharged into the reservoir]. . . . I ask, was this addition necessary, even were the water as good as that in the reservoir? . . . Did it occur to the gentlemen managing the conduit in the first place, that an iron pipe of about twice the length of the conduit, would have reached the Platte river and an abundant supply of reasonably pure water; and that too, at a cost of less than one-half of one percent of the actual loss to inhabitants of this city during the past four months, in cost of sickness, funeral expenses, etc.?³²

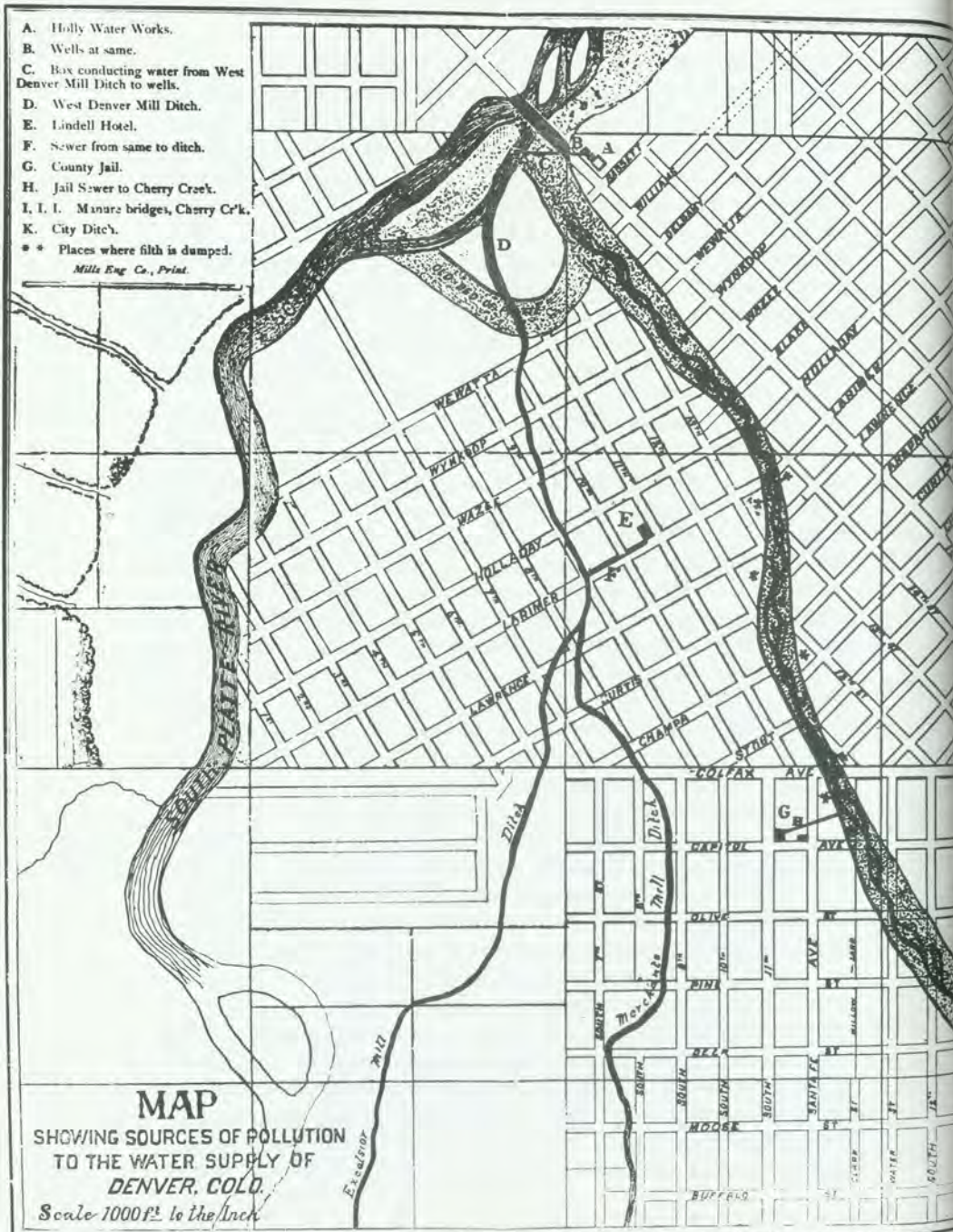
Dr. Denison closed his report by advising the *News* readers to "have water hauled" by the barrel from vendors who brought it from the mountains, adding that he had purchased such water for his family since the epidemic began.

Allowing both sides the use of the press, the *News* carried the reply of Col. James Archer, president of the water company.

At a recent meeting of the Medical Society, this company received pretty rough handling at the hands of the M.D.s. . . . Please contrast the work of Colonel Archer and associates to that of the Medical society. First, we put \$100,000 in the works, on which the dividends have been less than three per cent per annum. Second, the colonel and his associates are taxing themselves heavily in the construction of additional works to enable them to meet the rapid growth of our city. Third, we secure the services of a thoroughly competent chemist to

³¹ 15 July 1879. Richard Pearce, metallurgist at the Argo Smelter and a chemist by early training, was influential in the development and improvement of smelting and refining techniques—particularly in the separation of gold. A native of England, he attended the Royal School of Mines in London before coming to the United States in 1871. Years after the 1879 epidemic, Pearce built a Dutch Colonial cottage in Denver as a wedding gift for his son Harold and the daughter of Dr. William A. Bell, another prominent British figure in Colorado. The Colorado Historical Society assumed possession of the Pearce-McAllister Cottage in 1970, and two years later it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafen, eds., *History of Colorado*, 5 vols. (Denver: Linderman Co., 1927) 2:698-702.

³² 12 December 1879.





Colonel James Archer, president of the Denver Water Company.

tell you what you drink. Now what has this "Medical Society" done? [Met] in solemn conclave to determine that this company is responsible for all the ill-success of their experiments on your bodies, which experiments have sent so many to fill our cemeteries.

Dr. Denison replied with "let me state here that the doctors are not to blame if the people are 'frightened.' Probably over six hundred cases of fever and nearly forty deaths had already quite effectually stirred up the inhabitants of this city. Nothing is so panic inspiring as ignorance; and that the people have been kept in ignorance of what they were drinking in Holly water can be demonstrated by facts."³³ The next day the *News* carried a letter from Dr. Davis of the medical society, who observed that "it was your experiments, James, with the waters of the West Denver mill ditch and Cherry Creek that has sent so many to fill our cemeteries, not ours."³⁴

Thankfully, the cold weather of December brought a decline in the number of new cases of typhoid. Progress was made in cleaning up the city. The board of health began to enforce sanitary regulations that had been on the books for years. On 22 December the council adopted City Engineer Harvey C. Lowrie's plan for a complete sewer system. The *News* warned that "the sewers will cost immensely, and a blunder in building them will be worse than a crime. . . . Any attempt on the part of members of the city government to get their fingers into the pockets

³³ 12 December 1879.

³⁴ 13 December 1879.

of the people while this vast amount of money is being spent will be closely watched. The politicians who control this community will never have another such an opportunity for wholesale stealing, and we may look for a cat in every meal tub."³⁵

Sewer tax districts were laid out, work began, and the system went into use later in 1880. A second epidemic, less extensive, occurred in the summer and fall of 1880. Other outbreaks took place over the next few years but advances in science and technology gradually rid the city of typhoid fever. In 1903 the water company introduced slow-sand filtration, and later on chemical disinfectants were added. Each improvement brought a lowering of the typhoid rate.

It is tempting, with one hundred years of hindsight, to criticize the actions or the failures of our forefathers to act. However, it is likely that a similar picture of unsanitary conditions could be found by looking at any city on the American urban frontier in the late 1800s. What is particularly interesting and revealing, in this account of the acceptance and then the commitment to a water and sewer system in Denver, is the role played by a newspaper, in particular, the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*.

Perhaps the best summary of the typhoid epidemic of 1879 and its attendant political controversies appeared as an adaptation of a biblical admonition (Prov. 5:15) in the 17 December 1879 *Denver Daily Republican*, a rival to the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
and running waters out of thine own well."

Holly water is a mocker;
and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Purchase thou thine own cow,
trust not the endorsement of the milk man.

Hear ye people the admonition of the M.D.'s,
incline thine ear unto their sayings,
lest thou have typhoid.

Sewerage exalteth a city,
but filth is a reproach to any people.

My son, follow thou the example of the president of the City Medical Society;
filter and boil the Holly, and thou shalt live.

Neglect not to read his frequent appeals through the public press.

A prudent man concealeth knowledge,
but a foolish man proclaimeth the little he knows.

Even thou, O Homoeopathy, infinitesimal [*sic*] as is thy knowledge,
thou hast shown wisdom in silence.

The supposed investigation of that which is beyond thy knowledge,
is as calamitous as the investigation of the final extremity of a wasp.

There is one thing which is too deep for my understanding,
yea, two things I know not:

³⁵ 14 December 1879.

How to find the typhoid germs by chemical analysis;
All the sources of the present epidemic (?) of typhoid.

It will be more tolerable for Leadville on the day of reckoning,
than for Denver, for had the former been admonished,
as has the latter, she long ago would have had sewerage and pure water.

Better for the wicked Colonel Archer that a millstone
should be tied about his neck, and he cast into his own lake,
than that he should poison (?) Denver with Holly,
and turn a deaf ear to the voice of Pillbags.

The stubborn Mayor, being oft reproved, hardeneth his heart.

A wise Council hearth instruction from their superiors;
but an unwise one closeth their ears against the "*Resolutions of the learned.*"

Shame and confusion shall be the portion of the City Council,
because they refuse instruction, and regard not
the reproof of the medical faculty.

A city which magnifies, not rectifies, its supposed impurities,
shall not increase.

Now, therefore, O ye people, hear instruction and be wise.

Watch daily thine own backyard,
disinfect thine own vault and cesspool,
make home cleanliness thy first consideration;
then shall the Holly venders have peace,
and typhoid shall be a thing of the past.

A Bittersweet Saga: The Arkansas Valley Beet Sugar Industry, 1900-1979

BY DENA S. MARKOFF

On 17 January 1979 the residents of Rocky Ford, Colorado, heard the final blast from the whistle of the local beet processing plant. This signaled the end of the eighty-year-old sugar industry in the region.¹ In response to the turn-of-the-century sugar beet craze, seven factories had been erected in communities in the lower Arkansas River valley. Beets had been an integral part of the agriculture in the region and had annually infused several million dollars into the economy. The various phases of sugar production touched thousands of lives: growers, immigrant field laborers, skilled factory workers, and employees of support facilities. The story of beet culture in southeastern Colorado provides insight into the emergence, development, and subsequent decline of an important industry.

As a cash crop, with its price guaranteed in advance of planting, the sugar beet stimulated an agricultural boom. Between 1897 and 1907, seventy-two processing plants were erected in seventeen states. Although promotional schemes began as early as 1838, the necessary technology and investment climate were lacking until the late 1890s. With the first burst of construction, Michigan and California recorded the greatest number of facilities. The success of the pioneer factories at Rocky Ford and Sugar City in the Arkansas valley focused attention on the utilization of irrigated lands. In less than a decade, the beet sugar industry in Colorado led the nation, and efforts for additional expansion shifted to the arid areas of the western United States.²

The advent of the sugar beet industry in the Arkansas valley was tied to land promotion schemes. In the mid-1890s several eastern financial

¹ Telephone interview with Ed Kidder, last general manager of the Rocky Ford factory, 27 July 1979.

² C.A. Browne, "The Centenary of the Beet Sugar Industry in the United States," *A Century of Sugar Beets in the United States* (New York: Facts about Sugar, 1937), pp. 12-16; U.S., Department of Agriculture, Sugar Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, *Beet Sugar Factories of the United States*, rev. ed. (March 1961), pp. 2-8; U.S., Department of Agriculture, *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1900*, Report no. 69, pp. 28, 42, 44, 63-64.



Rocky Ford beet-processing plant in operation, 1902.

Idle Rocky Ford sugar factory, 1978.



institutions were forced to foreclose on incomplete irrigation projects: the Colorado Canal, starting twenty miles east of Pueblo; the Great Plains Ditch, near the eastern border of Colorado; and the Great Eastern Ditch in the Garden City, Kansas, area. Canal construction had been undertaken to make more than one million acres of land blossom into a garden, but the ventures were too ambitious for available resources. The reluctant new landowners sought an added inducement to encourage settlers to locate in the region.³

Building a beet sugar factory apparently offered an agricultural panacea through high returns to investors and farmers alike. Experimental plots grown near Rocky Ford as early as 1889 produced beets with an extraordinarily high sugar content. Irrigation seemingly ensured against crop failures while the beets provided farmers with a reliable cash crop. Backers of the sugar factories would supply the substantial capital needed to complete the canal projects. Land, which sold for several dollars an acre, would increase in value to as much as \$100 once irrigation laterals were completed and beet processing was under way. Throughout the early 1890s, rumors circulated of prospects for a factory in southeastern Colorado, but plans did not materialize for a number of years.⁴

Construction of the first sugar mill in the state took place on the Western Slope at Grand Junction in 1899. Its prominent financial backers included Charles Boettcher, John F. Campion, James J. Brown, and James R. McKinnie. Convincing promotional rhetoric had led them to expect substantial returns on their investment, but the early experience with the facility was disappointing. Unworked ground, drought, and scarcity of field labor reduced the crop yield to less than one-fourth of the contracted acreage. Mill construction delays and inexperienced operators compounded the problems of the fledgling enterprise.

Once the building of the Western Slope plant began, Colorado became a general field for similar promotions.⁵ Investors undertook two

³ Dan Gutleben, *The Sugar Tramp, 1961: The Oxnard Beet Sugar Factory, Oxnard, California; The Last Chapter* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Dan Gutleben, 1961), pp. 129, 138-39; U.S., Department of Agriculture, *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1902*, Report no. 74, and *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1906*, Report no. 84, pp. 15-16, pp. 74-75, respectively; "Abstract of Title to the E½ of the SW¼ of Section 7, Township 21 South, Range 56 West of the 6th P.M.," David J. Clarke records (attorney for the successor trustee in bankruptcy of the National Sugar Manufacturing Company, Denver, 1975); A. J. Hamman, "Theodore C. Henry: Champion Irrigation Project Promoter," *A Hundred Years of Irrigation in Colorado: 100 Years of Organized and Continuous Irrigation, 1852-1952* (Denver: Colorado Water Conservation Board, and Fort Collins: Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1952), pp. 79-87; Joseph O. Van Hook, "Settlement and Economic Development of the Arkansas Valley from Pueblo to the Colorado-Kansas Line, 1860-1900" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1933), pp. 285-304; Joseph O. Van Hook, "Development of Irrigation in the Arkansas Valley," *The Colorado Magazine* 10 (January 1933): 3.

⁴ *Pueblo Chieftain*, 27 May 1890, 1 May 1891, 26 March 1892; Margaretta B. Carey, "Notes on the Early History of the National Sugar Manufacturing Company," personal collection, Denver; Dan Gutleben, "Abstracts from the Ware Scrapbooks, Library of the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," vol. 1, Arkansas Valley (San Francisco, 1957); the three volumes of the original of this typescript are in the author's possession, a gift from Benjamin A. Oxnard, Gutleben's friend.

⁵ "Articles of Incorporation of the Colorado Sugar Manufacturing Company," Colorado Division of State

separate sugar factory projects in the Arkansas valley in 1900, and their plans were substantially complete before the Grand Junction mill began operations. By the time news of its poor performance reached them, an irresistible momentum had already been created, for these southeastern Colorado ventures were launched with supreme confidence.

A group of capitalists from Buffalo, New York, started the first sugar factory in the valley. With \$2 million invested in the Colorado Canal and the Twin Lakes Reservoir, they became impatient waiting for outside interests to introduce the industry. In mid-1899, they began their own plans for construction of a beet processing facility—along with completing the irrigation system and building a new town, appropriately called Sugar City.⁶

Later that year the Oxnard brothers—James, Benjamin, Henry, and Robert—surveyed Colorado for a mill site. Their family had been in cane refining since the 1830s, and in the 1890s entered the business of processing beets as well. The Oxnards had constructed beet factories at Grand Island and Norfolk, Nebraska, and at Chino and Oxnard, California, by 1899. They were convinced that the success of the indus-

The Oxnard brothers: (back row) James, Benjamin, and Henry; (front row) Robert.



George W. Swink

try required tariff protection and they sought to create a broad base of support by distributing their plants as widely as possible. The Arkansas valley had produced excellent test crops and offered an opportunity to determine the suitability of irrigated lands for the crop. Also, a large amount of cheap land was available there. A local booster par excellence, George Washington Swink, helped clinch the decision to build at Rocky Ford. This was the first production unit of a new corporate organization called the American Beet Sugar Company.⁷

The construction of the plants at Rocky Ford and Sugar City increased the population of each of these towns to nearly two thousand inhabitants, producing a level of prosperity coveted by all valley towns. One year earlier, Rocky Ford had been a hamlet of less than five hundred persons while Sugar City had been a barren plain populated only by prairie dogs. The Sugar City backers planned to build other refineries once their first unit was established. The firm located at

Archives and Public Records, Denver; Dan Gutleben, "Sugar Thesaurus," Papers of Dan Gutleben, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Gutleben, "Abstracts from the Ware Scrapbooks." After his retirement Dan Gutleben spent several decades traveling more than 120,000 miles in the United States and Canada visiting all of the towns that had once had sugar factories. He collected twenty-seven loose-leaf binders of facts, legends, biography, lore, anecdotes, and tall tales about the industry that he called his "Sugar Thesaurus."

⁶ Carey, "Notes on the . . . National Sugar Manufacturing Company"; James A. Roberts, personal investment notebook, container 4, James A. Roberts-Frank S. Sidway Collection, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, New York (hereinafter cited as Roberts-Sidway Collection); *Denver Times*, 18 October 1899; *Denver Republican*, 21 December 1899.

⁷ Gutleben, *The Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 3; "Rocky Ford, Colorado" (September 1949), copy of typescript of notes from American Crystal Sugar Company, Moorhead, Minnesota; interviews with Benjamin A. Oxnard (named for his father, one of the four Oxnard brothers who started the American Beet Sugar Company), Denver, 14, 16 September 1977.

Rocky Ford sought to foster beet sugar culture throughout the area. It intended to erect as many as twenty-four mills. Speculation over the location of each new factory excited local boosters.⁸

Not only towns in the Arkansas valley but also communities of any size throughout the western states talked of having sugar factories. More than forty towns in Colorado alone actively sought processing plants.⁹ Local boosters went to great lengths to bring the sugar industry to their area. Municipalities offered bonds and building sites. Some state legislatures gave additional inducements in the form of bounties. While these were not available in the Colorado portion of the valley, they were used to secure a factory for Garden City, Kansas.

Although capital was lacking, residents did not allow this to dampen their enthusiasm. They raised some funds to finance experiments. If these proved successful, they launched a drive to secure contracts for acreage sufficient to support a mill and thereby induce others to build a processing plant.

The American Beet Sugar Company, pursuing its planned expansion in the Rocky Ford area, insisted on guaranteed acreage for the first few campaigns. Valley businessmen wholeheartedly supported contracting efforts, even forming organizations to cultivate a portion of the crop themselves. Since intensive labor requirements usually limited one farmer's cultivation to 20 acres of beets, contracts for 5,000 to 7,000 acres demanded considerable support over a large territory.¹⁰

The Oxnards, in partnership with Equitable Life Assurance Company, created the Arkansas Valley Sugar Beet and Irrigated Land Company (A.V.S.B.I.L.C., called the "alphabetical organization") in 1901 to promote beet sugar culture in the region. They planned to divide the 120,000 acres into 40-acre farms to sell to colonists. Low prices were to be granted to those agreeing to raise 10 acres of beets for a period of years. The Oxnard Construction Company would build factories as fast as the area could be developed, and the American Beet Sugar Company would buy and process the beets. These activities led directly or indirectly to the erection of facilities at Lamar and Holly in 1905, at Swink

⁸ Gutleben, "Abstracts from the Ware Scrapbooks"; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 129; U.S., Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population*, 1:440, 451; Roberts correspondence, 1900-1905, container 1, Roberts-Sidway Collection.

⁹ Colorado towns that actively sought sugar factories between 1901 and 1908 included: Alamosa, Amity, Arapahoe City, Argo, Arvada, Ault, Berthoud, Bloomington, Boulder, Brighton, Brush, Colorado Springs, Craig, Delta, Denver, Durango, Erie, Florence, Fountain, Fowler, Fort Collins, Fort Lupton, Fort Morgan, Glenwood Springs, Greeley, Hillrose, Holly, Johnstown, Julesburg, La Jara, Lamar, Las Animas, Longmont, Manzanola, Montrose, Olathe, Pleasant Valley [View], Pueblo, Salida, Swink, Wellington, Wiley, and Windsor (towns listed as such in U.S., Department of Agriculture publications: *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1901*, S. Doc. 316, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 1902, p. 28; *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1903*, S. Doc. 2400, 58th Cong., 2d sess., 1904, pp. 16-22; *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1902, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907*, Reports 74, 80, 82, 84, 86, pp. 103-7, 49-54, 84-86, 112-16, 71-73 respectively).

¹⁰ *Lamar Daily News*, 16 March 1908; *Denver Times*, 24 September 1901; *Holly Chieftain*, 26 April 1901; *Progress of the Beet-Sugar Industry in the United States in 1906*, pp. 19-23.



The Garden City, Kansas, sugar factory, 1906.

Las Animas sugar factory about 1910.



and across the state line in Garden City in 1906, and at Las Animas in 1907.¹¹

William M. Wiley, formerly a New York insurance broker, was sent to Colorado to direct the lower Arkansas valley promotion. He possessed the administrative ability and the energy needed for the task of preparing the area for settlement. Wiley supervised construction of 150 miles of canals, 750 miles of irrigation laterals, and a 14,000-acre storage reservoir to serve the new farmland. At the height of the project, excavators used 3,200 mules. By 1905 the work was completed at a cost approaching \$3 million. Everything was in readiness. However, the settlers, who were expected to buy the lands, did not arrive.¹²

Eager to get on with the promotion, Wiley encouraged the selection of Holly as the site for American Beet Sugar's next factory, but the management at Rocky Ford disagreed. The officials preferred Lamar because superior beets had been raised there and local farmers had pledged 4,000 acres of the crop for the coming season. Furthermore, the owners of a defunct Kalamazoo, Michigan, factory were looking for a new location and were hovering about Lamar. The Oxnards wanted to avoid additional competition in the region and decided to relocate their idle Norfolk facility in Lamar.¹³

Wiley was incensed by the choice. He decided to build an independent factory at Holly and secured backing from Dennis Sullivan, one of the founders of the Denver National Bank. The first unit of the Holly Sugar Company was completed in time for the 1905 season. The following year the enterprise erected a second plant at the new town site of Swink. The same ill feelings that led to the formation of the Holly firm probably motivated expansion into the Rocky Ford territory.

The rivalry between the Holly and American Beet Sugar companies was so intense that the two firms built parallel railroads to transport beets, and they actively competed to secure contracts from area farmers. Emotions ran so high that American Beet Sugar hired sixty armed men to prevent further work on the Holly and Swink Railroad. Construction crews tore up each other's tracks in the evenings. Occasionally gunshots were exchanged. Saner minds finally prevailed, and both lines were sold to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in the fall of 1906.¹⁴

Reacting to the success at Lamar, the citizens of Las Animas decided that they too had to have a factory. After a vigorous effort in

¹¹ *Denver Republican*, 19 July 1901; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, pp. 128-33; Gutleben, "Abstracts from the Ware Scrapbooks"; Kelly Kraybill, *Arkansas Valley* entry, pp. 1925-43. American Crystal Sugar Company, Moorhead, Minnesota.

¹² Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, pp. 128-33; Kraybill, *Arkansas Valley* entry, pp. 1925-43.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Prowers County News*, 17 February 1905; *Holly Chieftain*, April 1901-March 1902, 9 February 1905; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, pp. 128-33; Kraybill, *Arkansas Valley* entry, pp. 1925-43.



The Holly sugar factory about 1912.

The Holly and Swink Railroad.



1907, they secured the requisite beet acreage. This factory ended the expansion of American Beet Sugar, far short of its grand design. Fluctuations in the beet supply dictated the number of factories that were operational each season. Idleness of the units at Las Animas or at Lamar injured local pride and meant that farmers in the area raised even smaller crops the following year.¹⁵

Beet sugar cultivation spread from Colorado to the Kansas portion of the Arkansas valley, where interest in a factory was considerable. Swink urged the Oxnards to build a mill at Garden City, but their demand of at least 12,000 acres of beets could not be met. The unrealistic acreage requirements and a United States Department of Agriculture evaluation of Garden City beets as unsuitable only angered area residents. Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Foster D. Coburn commented that "the best way to incite Kansas to do some unusual or impossible thing is to have a Washington authority say it can't be done."¹⁶

Local boosters would not be deterred. With the aid of Oliver H. Shoup, a Colorado Springs attorney and later governor of Colorado, and George W. Swink, Garden City secured another source of financial backing. Three other men—Spencer Penrose, who had made a fortune in mining at Cripple Creek, General William Jackson Palmer, founder of Colorado Springs, and Colonel David C. Dodge, who was associated with Palmer in founding the Denver and Rio Grande Railway—formed the United States Sugar and Land Company to build the factory. In return for a bonus of \$30,000 in land donated by prominent townsmen and a guarantee of 12,000 acres of beets, they spent \$3 million to erect the mill, purchased 80,000 additional acres of land, and completed the irrigation system.¹⁷

The last concerted effort to establish a beet processing facility in the region took place in 1908. Farmers from the Manzanola area founded the Arkansas Valley Beet Sugar Company, determined to operate a mill themselves in anticipation of great profits. That year the area experienced a severe drought, halting the project. Labor shortages and bitter controversies between sugar companies and growers over the price of

beets followed, undermining the prospects of the industry. By this time the valley already had more factories than the farmers and the land were willing to support.¹⁸

The largest group of beet growers were German-Russians who had been brought to the region as hand laborers in the early years of the century. Within five years the typical immigrant family had saved enough money to purchase a farm. Liberal sugar company credit policies helped to foster this settlement. Cultivation of an acre of beets required more than one hundred hours of work, three-fourths of that effort performed by hand. German-Russian families were willing to do the back-breaking labor, while the local farmers and cattle ranchers were more reluctant to raise the crop. Each factory had to obtain contracts annually from several hundred farmers to operate at capacity. Sugar companies solicited migrant field workers for those growers unwilling to perform the work themselves. German-Russian, Mexican, and Japanese immigrants, as well as native Indians, labored in the beet fields.¹⁹

Local difficulties obtaining beets were minor compared to the problems created by congressional actions. One of the antitrust investigations of the Progressive era focused on the sugar industry. Concern shifted from expansion to survival when public sentiment aroused by the investigation led to the passage of the Underwood-Simmons Tariff in 1913. The duty on sugar was to be eliminated gradually during the next three years, threatening domestic processors with heavy losses. In the climate of financial stringency that began with the tariff reduction, sugar companies attempted to consolidate operations as a way of maximizing efficiency. Certain calamity for the domestic industry was averted by the abnormal demand for sugar during World War I.²⁰

Repeated operational losses due to inadequate supplies of beets and the general need for retrenchment led to the closure of three valley factories. After a succession of disappointing campaigns, due primarily to the poor soil and the quality of irrigation water near the state line, the Holly mill was closed in 1913. Wiley was sent away in disgrace.

¹⁵ *Las Animas Bent County Democrat*, 1 January, 8 February 1906, 7 March, 31 October 1907, 22 November 1918, 21 March 1919, 8 April 1921; *Holly Chieftain*, 19 February, 11 March 1904, 9 February 1906; *Lamar Register*, 16 December 1903, 17 February 1904, 24 January 1906; *Lamar Sparks*, 25 February 1904, 25 January 1906, 10 July 1913; Van Hook, "Settlement and Economic Development of the Arkansas Valley," p. 462.

¹⁶ Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 141.

¹⁷ Tiburcio Joe Berber, "The Sugar-Beet Industry in Kansas" (M.S. thesis, Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1949), pp. 23-32; Barbara Oringderff, "A Short History of the United States Sugar and Land Company: Now Called the Garden City Company," and Eugene Stoeckley, "A Company and Factory" (1965), Garden City Company files, Garden City, Kansas; Kansas, State Board of Agriculture, "The Beet-Sugar Industry in Kansas," prepared by George B. Harrison, in *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture to the Legislature for the Years 1905 and 1906*, pp. 909-12; R. T. Tutt, president of the Garden City Company, to author, 29 September 1976.

¹⁸ Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 131; *Manzanola Sun*, 8 May, 9 October 1908; *Sugar City Saccharine Gazette*, 13 March 1908; *Lamar Daily News*, 29 February 1908; *Bent County Democrat*, 6 March 1908; *Rocky Ford Enterprise*, 14 February 1908.

¹⁹ For the detailed study on which these generalizations on field workers are made, see Dena Markoff, "Beet Hand Laborers of Sugar City, Colorado, 1900-1920," *Germans from Russia in Colorado*, ed. Sidney Heitman (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Western Social Science Association through University Microfilms International, 1978), pp. 81-103.

²⁰ Francis King Carey Correspondence, 1908-1920, National Sugar Manufacturing Company Manuscript Collection no. 462, Colorado Historical Society, Denver; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, pp. 133, 146; U.S., Congress, House, Special Committee on the Investigation of the American Sugar Refining Co. and Others, *Hearings Held before the Special Committee on the Investigation of the American Sugar Refining Co. and Others on 27-30 June and 11-15, 17-20 July 1911*, vol. 1, pp. 854-924; Frank W. Taussig, *Some Aspects of the Tariff Question* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), chaps. 1, 4-7.

American Beet Sugar continued to run its plants at Lamar and Las Animas until they needed costly overhauls in 1913 and 1921, respectively. The firm was reluctant to finance costly renovation of the marginal facilities when improved transportation made it more profitable to operate the larger Rocky Ford plant at capacity.

Costly experience had revealed the limitations of the beet-producing abilities of the area and the inefficiency of small plants. During the 1920s, four firms each had a single facility in the Arkansas valley. These were: the American Beet Sugar Company at Rocky Ford, the National Sugar Manufacturing Company at Sugar City, the Holly Sugar Company at Swink, and the Garden City Sugar Company in Kansas.²¹ A series of problems plagued farmers and processors during the decade, forcing many sugar firms to come under foreclosure. The four Arkansas valley factories, however, managed to survive the difficulties.²²

Unfavorable conditions in the 1920s provided little incentive for farmers to raise a crop as labor-intensive as sugar beets. Early in the decade, a beet disease called "Curly Top" ravaged many crops near marginal lands that had been plowed up to meet abnormal wartime demands. The blight so drastically reduced tonnage per acre that many western factories could not operate. Some of the closures were permanent. The disease took its toll in Colorado, but it was not as severe as in many other areas. Intermittent water shortages further reduced yields from the crop. Extremely low postwar sugar prices sharply decreased or eliminated profits.²³

The agricultural depression and drought of the 1920s worsened with the general economic crisis and the dust bowl of the 1930s. The sugar industry, as well as many other segments of the economy, verged on collapse. Senator Edward P. Costigan from Colorado designed the Sugar Act of 1934, which brought stability to the industry. A combination of quotas, tariffs, and deficiency payments prevented recurrence of disastrously low sugar prices. Extensive federal regulations governed every aspect of production, including a prohibition against child labor. The terms of the legislation were renewed with some modifications for a

period of forty years, protecting marginal operations and barring entry of new firms.²⁴

Even with the government controls of the first Sugar Act, the industry members struggled for survival throughout the 1930s. All four of the firms in the valley verged on bankruptcy and several of them underwent reorganization to avert dissolution. The agricultural crisis created by the prolonged drought was so severe that the company at Sugar City was forced to find additional water supplies. The chief executive of the National Sugar Manufacturing Company, Francis King Carey, conceived and brought to completion a transmountain diversion tunnel under Independence Pass to bring water from the Western Slope for the benefit of farmers in Crowley County.²⁵

Company executives saw the best chance for the survival of the beet sugar industry in maximizing efficiency by gradually enlarging processing capabilities. This effort was accelerated during World War II when manufacturers were called upon to increase production substantially. The tonnage at Rocky Ford tripled while that of the others was doubled.²⁶ The existing framework of regulation under the Sugar Act facilitated the process and just as output was again to be curtailed, the Korean War required additional sugar supplies.

By the 1950s, the companies again faced the problem of an inadequate beet supply. Their combined slicing volume of 3,300 tons in the 1920s had required approximately 33,000 acres of beets. With increased capacities, the Arkansas valley plants required an annual beet harvest of from 55,000 to 60,000 acres. The industry, regulated by the government on the basis of the abnormally low production levels of the 1920s, suffered from insufficient acreage.²⁷

All but one of the beet sugar factories in the valley closed by 1967.

²¹ The U.S. Sugar and Land Company underwent financial reorganization in 1920 and its name was changed to the Garden City Company (Stoeckley, "A Company and a Factory," pp. 10-11).

²² Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, pp. 131-32; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Ways and Means, "Statement of the American Beet Sugar Company," *Schedule E: Beet Sugar*, H. Doc. 1447, 62d Cong., 3d sess., 1912-1913, *Tariff Schedules, Hearings*, 3, 2481-83.

²³ J.R. Bachman, *Story of the Amalgamated Sugar Company* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1962), pp. 67-99; Leonard J. Arrington, *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), chap. 6; John M. Townley, *Turn This Water into Gold: The Story of the Newlands Project* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 1977), chap. 8; interview with Richard J. Hecker, research geneticist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Sugarbeet Investigations, Crops Research Laboratory, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, 14 October 1977; telephone interview with Don L. Miles, Colorado State University Extension irrigation engineer at Rocky Ford, 30 January 1978.

²⁴ U.S., Tariff Commission, *Costs of Producing Sugar Beets*, Pt. 4, *Colorado*, and Pt. 10, *United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1928); Ronald Sidney Brockway, "Edward P. Costigan: A Study of a Progressive and the New Deal" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1974), pp. 217-35; Jack T. Turner, *Marketing of Sugar*, Indiana University, School of Business, Bureau of Business Research Study no. 38 (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1953), pp. 73-82; Gordon Gemmill, "The World Sugar Economy: An Econometric Analysis of Production and Policies" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1976), pp. 1-17; National Child Labor Amendment file, Edward P. Costigan Papers, Western Historical Collections, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder.

²⁵ Stoeckley, "A Company and a Factory," p. 10; T.W. Brown, *Fifty Years in the Valley* (Moorhead, Minn.: American Crystal Sugar Co., 1976), p. 16; "Born of Foresight, Nurtured on Adversity: Holly Observes 70th Anniversary," *Holly Hi-Lites* 12 (Summer 1975):7; Francis King Carey Correspondence, 1920-1940; Francis King Carey, "Transcontinental Diversion Tunnel Press Release Scrapbook," David J. Clarke records.

²⁶ Changes in daily capacity were: Rocky Ford from 1,000 to 3,350 tons per day; Sugar City from 500 to 1,200 tons; Swink from 1,000 to 2,400 tons; Garden City from 600 to 1,200 tons (Tutt to author, 29 September 1976; R.A. McGinnis, ed., *Beet-Sugar Technology*, 2d ed. [Fort Collins: Beet Sugar Development Foundation, 1971], pp. 747-57; Truman G. Palmer, *Beet Sugar Industry of the United States* [Washington, D.C.: United States Beet Sugar Industry, 1913], pp. 67-72; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 12; J.F. Rasmussen, "Report on Survey of Sugar City Factory" [December 1941], William O. Young files, Denver).

²⁷ While operating costs were lowered a certain amount by processing beets in a shorter length of time, there were only small changes in beet acreage allotments, and these would not have justified the increased volume. Each factory's augmented capacity made competition for beets more strenuous; McGinnis, ed., *Beet-Sugar Technology*, pp. 747-51; Francis King Carey Correspondence, 1920-1940; *Denver Post*, 7 August 1943.



Remains of the Garden City sugar factory, 1978.

The deserted Holly sugar factory in 1978.



Increasing costs, partially due to operating below capacity, were a factor. Farmers did not grow sufficient beets due to rising labor expenses and an extended period of drought in the 1950s. New mechanized equipment for beet cultivation was too costly for small farmers. Sugar prices continued to be low during the 1950s and 1960s and did not yield a high enough return to justify the effort to raise them. To obtain adequate supplies, sugar companies had to transport beets from greater and greater distances.



The Sugar City factory site, 1978.

Officials of the Garden City Company did not think that the marginal production of the plant justified the expense of a costly overhaul that was needed by the mid-1950s. Holly Sugar Company, seeking additional beet acreage for its Swink facility, bought the beet allotment of the Kansas firm. In 1955 the Kansas firm was reorganized as a land management corporation, and it continues to operate in that capacity. Three years later, Holly closed its Swink plant and traded its entire Arkansas valley acreage to American Crystal for use at the Rocky Ford plant. In return, Holly acquired American Crystal's Imperial Valley acreage in California for its plant at Carlton.²⁸

The elimination of the Garden City factory temporarily augmented

²⁸ *La Junta Arkansas Valley Journal*, 15 March 1949, 30 July 1959; *Hutchinson (Kan.) News*, 26 November 1959; Tutt to author, 29 September 1976; *Pueblo Chieftain*, 25 July 1959; Gutleben, *Sugar Tramp*, 1961, p. 12; T. W. Brown, *Fifty Years in the Valley*.

the beet supply for the National Sugar Manufacturing Company, which remained in business as long as the government imposed acreage allotments.²⁹ Generally, beets had not been profitable for farmers during the 1960s, but while government controls were in force, farmers continued to raise the crop each year to protect that option in future seasons. With the end of allotments in 1967, farmers turned to crops producing higher returns.

An added drain on acreage for the factory at Sugar City was the higher contract price of Great Western for beets to be processed at its new Goodland, Kansas, plant. When the officials at National were unable to secure contracts for more than a few hundred acres in the spring of 1967, they decided to terminate operations. The firm instituted an antitrust suit against Great Western for depriving the Sugar City factory of its beet supply. That action was unsuccessful and National declared bankruptcy on 26 August 1968. Rocky Ford retained the only processing facility in the valley. However, even this plant was unable to obtain the volume of beets needed to operate at capacity.³⁰

In the 1970s continued low sugar prices and increasing production and transportation costs made the sugar industry unattractive to stockholders. In 1972 farmers in Minnesota formed the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association to purchase the American Crystal factories in five states, and Colo-Kan Sugar, a grower cooperative, leased the Rocky Ford plant. Market conditions during the ensuing years discouraged the farmers from exercising the option to purchase the facility.³¹

Congress did not renew the Sugar Act in 1974, and government regulation of the industry expired the next year. Sugar manufacturing had long since passed the developmental stage, and consumer groups argued convincingly for the elimination of the artificially high price for sweeteners created by the tariff.

However, the end of government controls coincided with a worldwide cane crop failure, and prices, reflecting short supply and high demand, quickly quadrupled. This had the effect of stopping Great Western from selling its factories to growers and following the lead of

American Crystal. For the first time in the history of the industry, profits were sizeable and stockholders were pleased with their investments. But, inevitably, prices dropped when a new crop glutted the market.

The profits made in 1975 and 1976 sustained domestic sugar companies during the next two years. However, wild price fluctuations impaired company-grower relations and depressed retail sales. Average yearly per capita consumption before 1975 was 100 pounds. Prices that ranged between sixty and eighty cents per pound decreased use by twenty percent. Even when lower prices returned, sugar substitutes and changing dietary habits caused consumption to drop to an average of 90 pounds.³²

Currently, the situation has been further complicated for beet sugar producers by a technological breakthrough in corn or high fructose. With the ability to split a molecule of high fructose, it is possible to obtain twice the sweetness from a given amount of corn. Industrial use of sugar accounts for ninety percent of domestic sugar consumption. The two largest manufacturing users of sugar, Pepsi and Coca-Cola, have switched from beet to corn sweetener.³³

The beet sugar industry has entered upon a period of struggle for survival. Processors have been unable to secure favorable legislation to reinstitute the stability of the Sugar Act years, though some still hope for this remedy. They warn that once domestic production has ceased, there will be an embargo on sugar similar to that of the Arabs on oil. Sugar is used by virtually all food processors, and costs for their products would skyrocket. Holly chief executive John Bunker disagrees with those seeking government regulation and has asserted that if the industry cannot survive without protection then it deserves to collapse. Still others view an international agreement to limit production as the only answer. Such efforts earlier in the century failed.³⁴

In the absence of external solutions, sugar company executives are instituting retrenchment programs or are entirely abandoning the processing of beets. Since the expiration of the Sugar Act, Holly has closed its Delta factory and Great Western has dismantled its plants at Longmont, Brighton, Johnstown, and Eaton. Great Western is in the process of converting its monosodium glutamate plant to a high fructose facility. Of a total of twenty-two beet processing facilities that once operated in Colorado, Great Western owns the five still in operation:

²⁹ Government regulations did not specify the company to which the growers sold their beets but rather limited the total acreage each farmer could raise and the total sugar production of each factory.

³⁰ National Sugar Manufacturing Company v. Great Western Sugar Co. et al., Civil Action 67-C-206, 24, 25 June 1968, Federal Archives and Record Center, Denver; National Sugar Manufacturing Company bankruptcy file, no. 68-B-2694, U.S. District Court, Bankruptcy Court, Denver; interview with W.O. Young, last general manager of the National Sugar Manufacturing Company and presently head of Stearns-Roger Sugar Machinery Division, Denver, 21 September 1977; telephone interview with Brush Beckwith, sales representative for American Crystal Sugar Company, Denver, 30 January 1978; *Rocky Ford Daily Gazette*, 25 April, 4 May 1967; *Ordway New Era*, 5 September 1968.

³¹ U.S., Department of Agriculture, Farmer Cooperative Service, *American Crystal Sugar: Its Rebirth as a Cooperative*, FCS Information 98 (June 1975); *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 27 January 1976; *La Junta Arkansas Valley Journal*, 23 November, 21, 28 December 1972, 19 January 1978, 11 January 1979.

³² Gemmill, "The World Sugar Economy," pp. 1-17; Young interview, 1 February 1978; Beckwith interview; telephone interview with Jack Powell, president of Great Western Sugar Company, 16 February 1978; A.C. Parker, director of Corporate Communications, Holly Sugar Company, Colorado Springs, to author, 27 July 1977; U.S., Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Division, *Sugar and Sweetener Report*, November 1977-July 1979.

³³ Young interviews; interview with C. Ross Nichols, C.F.&I. Engineers, Denver, 1 October 1975; *Wall Street Journal*, 3 August 1978.

³⁴ Powell interview; Oxnard interview; Young interviews.

Loveland, Greeley, Sterling, Fort Morgan, and Ovid. At the end of the 1978-79 season, Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, the pioneer sugar enterprise in the Rocky Mountain area, announced that it would not offer beet contracts for the coming year.³⁵

Throughout the country, beet sugar companies are in a precarious position. The final chapter on the industry has already been written in the history of the Arkansas valley with the permanent closure of the Rocky Ford factory in 1979. Transportation rates are too high to permit beets to be shipped elsewhere for processing, and prohibitively high replacement costs preclude the possibility of erecting a plant. The entire valley suffers from the loss of an important contributor to the economy.³⁶

Today, small farmers face a questionable future. In December 1977 many agrarians marched on state capitols, shouting protests against prevailing prices in order to dramatize the crisis. The movement, calling itself American Agriculture, threatened to plow up some acreage each week until Congress met demands for "100 percent parity." The goal was not attained. Again, early in 1979, farmers tried to make Congress aware of their plight by snarling up Washington, D.C., traffic with a tractor blockade. Other farmers talked of the need for self-regulation as the means of securing a fair return for their labors. The change in conditions, attitudes, and expectations compared with those at the turn of the century is striking.³⁷

Since 1900 the sugar beet industry in the Arkansas valley has traveled full circle. The optimism and unbounded enthusiasm of the early years have turned into disappointment and despair. By 1967 seven factories had dwindled to one. Men who had invested in the hope of securing high returns have divested themselves of their interests, forcing farmers to become owners of the surviving factory, but the growers could not make a success of the enterprise either. The vision of irrigation waters making the desert blossom has been permanently blighted in some parts of the region by farmers selling water rights to support urban growth elsewhere. The industry has gone through a phase of experimentation, promotion and growth, consolidation and retrenchment, and struggle for survival. In 1979 beet culture was finally eliminated from the Arkansas River valley. Perhaps this action is a portent of the fate of the entire industry.

³⁵ Powell interview; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 27 January 1976, 3 June, 27 July, 7, 22 October, 1 December 1978, 7 January, 17 March, 13 May 1979; *Denver Post*, 2, 18 October 1978, 2, 18 March 1979; *Wall Street Journal*, 25 April 1978; Young interviews.

³⁶ *La Junta Arkansas Valley Journal*, 26 January, 2 February 1978, 11 January 1979; interview with Clair H. Iverson, vice-president of U.R.S. Company, a firm that designs sugar factories, Denver, 14 September 1977.

³⁷ *Denver Post*, 10, 11 December 1977, 12 February 1978, 15 July 1979; Milton Booth, "Viewing the Valley," *La Junta Arkansas Valley Journal*, 26 January 1978, 18 January 1979.

A History of the Nordrach Ranch: Colorado's First Sanatorium of the Open Air

BY DOUGLAS R. MCKAY

"The object of Nordrach Ranch is to get people away from civilization and make them lead a quiet, simple life."

Dr. John E. White, 1905

For more than fifty years after its founding, Colorado Springs flourished on a bedrock of bacteria. While the gold from Cripple Creek enlarged the bank reserves in the city, the enduring human prosperity of General William Jackson Palmer's resort town resided in its populace of consumptives, those wasted, hacking lungers who had dragged their diseased frames across hundreds of miles by wagon or train to chase the cure on the eastern slopes of Pikes Peak. The editors of *Mountain Sunshine*, a magazine founded in 1899 to promote Colorado Springs as a haven for sicklings, estimated that as much as sixty percent of the population in the town was diseased exiles from all parts of the United States and other countries.¹ The migration of health seekers from the East may have accounted for one quarter to one third of the settlement of the entire Southwest. Frank Fossett, one of the earliest statisticians in Colorado Springs, was quoted as stating that on top of a base population of eight hundred permanent residents in 1872, "the yearly tourist and invalid entourage" to Colorado Springs reached thirty thousand by 1880 and two hundred thousand by 1890. These startling figures were upheld by E.P. Tenney, who, as president of Colorado College in 1876, invited the parents of invalid sons to send their boys to Colorado Springs both for a cure and an education.²

While at first it was good business to encourage transient tuberculars to visit the state, by the late 1890s the Colorado State Board of Health

¹ "Consumptives Welcome," *Mountain Sunshine* 1, no. 1 (September-November 1899):34.

The author expresses his appreciation to the staffs at the Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College and the Local History Collection, Pikes Peak Regional Library, for access to documents and photographs used in the preparation of this study.

² Billy M. Jones, *Health-Seekers in the Southwest, 1817-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 160; Edward P. Tenney, *The Colorado Health Resorts: Colorado Springs and Manitou* (Colorado Springs, 1883) and *Colorado: And Homes in the New West* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900), p. 40.

had become alarmed over the mounting numbers of invalids in the Pikes Peak region. Annual figures disclosed an increase in the local contraction of phthisis "through careless association with consumptives." Despite statements from the medical community refuting these reports, the city council enacted ordinances against promiscuous coughing and spitting, adopted stiff quarantine measures, enforced the disinfection of boarding homes where consumptives lived, and placed rigid regulations on public conveyances carrying diseased citizens. Once encouraged to establish long-term residences and to invest their talents and wealth in the growth of the city, the health seekers soon found that public sentiment had turned against them. Hospitals exacted heavy deposits and restricted admission to patients with large bank accounts; sanatoriums discriminated against the indigent; boardinghouses turned away the seriously ill; and newspaper articles pleaded with invalids of limited means to stay out of Colorado Springs. A similar display of public antipathy was also apparent in Denver. In addition, a bill was apparently submitted before the Colorado State Legislature that would have required lungers to wear bells around their necks. It was not passed.³

Thus, by the early 1900s the warm hospitality of the 1870s had shifted to a mood of overt hostility. In addition to the legal restrictions and fumigation regulations, homeowners who resented the proliferation of tent colonies and boardinghouses for tuberculars in their neighborhoods became more vocal.⁴ The consumptives protested and attempted to refute the allegation that their presence was a menace to the

³ Colorado, Colorado Springs, *Revised Ordinances of the City of Colorado Springs* (1896), sec. 3, art. 2, p. 72. This document reports forty-nine cases of nonimported consumption in 1893, fifty-one cases in 1894, and sixty-four cases in 1895. Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner, for instance, one of the most colorful and avid promoters of the fresh air cure in the area, insisted that a "careful inquiry of all physicians . . . failed to reveal" evidence to support the exaggerated statistics published in so-called official documents (Gardiner, "Is Consumption Contagious?," *Mountain Sunshine* 1, no. 1 [September-November 1899]:32). Another prominent local physician, Dr. Robert K. Hutchings, stated that between 1882 and 1902 there had been fewer than thirty cases of consumption contracted in Colorado Springs (*Colorado Springs Gazette*, 19 January 1902); *Ordinances of the City of Colorado Springs* (1890), secs. 2, 3, 16, 18, and 21, pp. 272, 276, 279, 280, and 284 respectively; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 12 January 1902; Thomas Crawford Galbreath, *Chasing the Cure in Colorado*, 5th ed. (Denver: By the author, 1907), p. 31. Concerning this curious item of discriminatory legislation, Galbreath adds wryly that "I don't know why it failed of passage—for the reason, perhaps, that the clatter would be so great, the street-car gongs and automobile honks could not be heard above the din."

⁴ One such ordinance enacted a quarantine period for thirty-five days following occupancy by anyone known to carry an infectious disease. Andrew Gulliford, in an unpublished study on the health-seeker movement in Colorado Springs, observed that three years after the passage of the restrictive health regulations, an eight-page edition of the *Colorado Springs Gazette* listed only three board and room advertisements and thirty-two notices "to rent," whereas in 1897 a similar *Gazette* section had listed nine hotels, nine boardinghouses, fourteen advertisements for room and board, and forty-four vacancies "to rent" (Gulliford, "Come Only If Rich," 18 October 1974, Pamphlet File, Western History Collection, Colorado College, Colorado Springs); *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 19 January 1902.

⁵ The sanatorium in question is Sunnyside, now a rest home for the aged. It formally opened on 22 March 1911 after the city council approved its relocation one mile east of the then existing city limits (*Colorado Springs Gazette*, 19 October 1909, 6, 12 March 1910). A lively account of this citizen-consumptive warfare is documented in *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 30 April, 10, 11, 21 June 1910.

⁶ One notable example was the successful effort by Dr. S. Edwin Solly to secure 100 acres and \$50,000 from General William Jackson Palmer for the establishment of the Cragmor Sanatorium in 1902 (William J. Palmer, entry for 30 September, "1901 Notebook," Glen Eyrie, Colorado).

health of the community. The confrontation came in June 1910 with the proposal to construct within city limits a sanatorium for the care of indigent patients. Citizen groups vehemently resisted the proposal with petitions and town meetings, pointing out the dangers of widespread community infection. The angry consumptives wrote blistering letters and circulated petitions of their own, labeling the politicians and the voters that the politicians represented as biased and misinformed hypocrites. Eventually, pressure was again brought to bear on the Colorado Springs City Council, and it passed an ordinance against the erection of facilities for tuberculars within the city limits.⁵

It was during these unsettling years of invalid oppression that the private sanatorium movement gained its strongest impetus. As consumptives were expelled from hotels and boardinghouses and discouraged as well from gathering in tent colonies about the city, the medical proponents of climatology persuaded business and civic leaders to donate land, lease country estates, and establish funds for the development of private as well as public sanatoriums outside of the city limits.⁶

William A. Otis, a prominent Colorado Springs banker, stockbroker, and member of the famed elevator clan, was one such supporter of the harried and harassed lungers. Otis owned a palatial home located one and one-half miles beyond the northeastern fringe of the city, the

The William Otis manor, a fine sixteen-room home.



only edifice hugging the south side of Austin's Bluffs Park, far beyond the reach of the city smoke, dust, and anti-lunger sentiment. Otis had obtained his large tract of land in 1884 from the Colorado Springs Company, the corporation that was chiefly responsible for the development of properties, lots, and houses when the city was founded. Five years earlier one of the finest residential homes in Colorado Springs had been constructed on the Otis property, a sixteen-room manor destined to become the central building for one of the most unusual sanatorium operations in the world, the Nordrach Ranch.

Otis supported the concept of the open air sanatorium for tubercular treatment, and his personal physician, the young and energetic Dr. John E. White, encouraged Otis to consider the financial merits of leasing his home for that purpose. An astute businessman, Otis agreed in October 1901 to lease his mansion for the establishment of a curative ranch, to be directed by Dr. White and to be designed exclusively for consumptive patients. Later that winter, Otis's friend, General Palmer, agreed to donate one thousand acres of Austin's Bluffs Park to the city, which

Far from the city smoke and dust, the Nordrach Ranch with its tent colony hugged the south side of Austin's Bluffs Park. Pikes Peak and Colorado Springs could be seen off in the distance.



Featuring the tent open air cure, the sanatorium stressed village tent living. The tent colony consisted of nine terraces with each terrace holding eight tents, for a total of seventy-two.



assured Otis of a vast wooded area directly behind and adjoining his property.⁷ Otis's property was then ideal for the sanatorium, for the proximity of one thousand acres of an undeveloped, protected park area and a stately home assured White and his staff that they could promote their health resort without interference from the imminent enactment of city ordinances against consumptives and the heated protests from alarmed neighbors.

In mid-October 1901 Otis withdrew from the scene. He moved into town and turned the entire project over to Dr. White. The ranch formally opened on 1 November 1901, attended by a handful of local incipient tuberculars whom Dr. White and his assistant, J.E. Crane, had wooed from their former downtown practice.

⁷ Palmer deeded the park to the city in the winter of 1901. The land was renamed Palmer Park the following April (*Facts* 10, no. 2 [12 April 1902]:17).

Dr. White christened his operation the Nordrach Ranch, a name borrowed from the successful Nordrach Sanatorium in the Black Forest of central Germany, located thirty-five miles from Strasburg and renowned in the second half of the nineteenth century for its systematized treatment of tuberculosis. Its founder, a Dr. Walthers, had stressed living in the open air and indulging in a rigidly controlled regimen of overfeeding.⁸

The Colorado experience resembled Dr. Walther's German Nordrach Sanatorium in four major features. First, Dr. White prescribed the same open air life for every variety of case, whether acute or chronic, in all weather and seasons, and all day and all night. "That meant tent living the year round," reported one long-term invalid of the Nordrach plan, "and it was dreadful. I remember every one of those cold winter nights. I lived in a tent for thirty-two months, through three long, miserable Colorado winters. I think it must have snowed all the time. . . . The wind blew my tent over twice."⁹

White was unrelenting in his insistence that patients sleep outdoors in tents. "We think we have proved beyond a doubt that cold air is the most important aid we have at our command in the treatment of tuberculosis, providing one will stay out in the open air and not remain indoors."¹⁰ Everything about Nordrach was calculated to encourage outdoor life. The motto of the institution, which White had inscribed over the front entrance of the Otis home, read, "Every hour spent in the house is an hour lost." Inside the house he posted other reminders to urge recovery out of doors. "The inhalation of cold air is a tonic and a fever reducer. . . . No one ever caught cold by breathing pure, outside air."¹¹

The second characteristic modeled after the German program was the management of a disciplined gluttony. Each patient was stuffed beyond satiety with a rich and varied diet given in numerous quantities three times a day. The intent was to enable each invalid to gain between twenty-five and fifty pounds as an integral part of his or her cure. Dr. S. Edwin Solly, the genial Englishman who founded the Cragmor Sanatorium for well-to-do consumptives, commended this notion of overfeeding when he observed it in practice at Nordrach, Germany.¹²

⁸ The oldest known sanatorium for open air treatment was founded in 1854 by a Dr. Brehmer at Gorbersdorf, Silesia. Brehmer's emphasis on open air life and forced feeding was perfected by Dr. Walthers at Nordrach, Germany, in a small sanatorium with a capacity of forty-five patients. Dr. Brehmer had boasted a 27 percent cure out of 5,032 cases, while Walthers claimed better than 30 percent at Nordrach (*Colorado Springs Gazette*, 12 January 1902).

⁹ Personal communication of 27 October 1977 with the son of the late J. Raymond Davies, originally of Cincinnati, who chased the cure at Nordrach from August 1902 to March 1906.

¹⁰ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 31 January 1904.

¹¹ *The Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium and Hotel Company* (Nordrach Ranch, 1905), pp. 23, 29, 41.

¹² Jones, *Health-Seekers in the Southwest*, p. 181.

"It is very important to watch patients at their meals. . . . There, Dr. Walther carves and serves a special portion of the food to each patient, and if, at the end of the meal, or when the plates are changed, the portions are not eaten, he wants to know why. The plate is put aside and unless the patient can give a good excuse he is expected to consume the food."¹³ Mealtime supervision at the Nordrach Ranch in Colorado was similar. Dr. White's philosophy was simply that of obliging the patient to eat double the quantity of food desired, whether hungry or not. "It is a matter of daily routine," insisted Dr. White. "It is a question of either eating or dying."¹⁴

Breakfast was served at eight o'clock and consisted of coffee, bread and butter, cold meat, and one-half liter of milk. The patient was not allowed to leave the table until every morsel was eaten and every drop consumed. Lunch, served at one o'clock, was a three-course banquet.



Dinner was served at 7:00 P.M. in the dining room and usually consisted of both a hot and cold meat course, eggs, tea, and one-half liter of milk.

First, each patient was required to eat between four and six ounces of meat, followed next by an equal portion of fish; both were served with "plenty of potatoes and green vegetables and sauces in which butter is the main ingredient." Then came pastry or farinaceous pudding, fruit and ice cream with coffee, and another one-half liter of milk. Dinner was served at seven o'clock and usually consisted of one hot and one cold meat course, tea, and a third one-half liter of milk. Eggs accompanied every meal. "Servants are instructed they must not take away plates until everything has been eaten," ordered Dr. White, adding the understandable observation that "patients are not infrequently sick

¹³ S. Edwin Solly, "The Cragmor Sanatorium," *Mountain Sunshine* 3, no. 1 (Colorado Springs, 1902):30.

¹⁴ *The Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium and Hotel Company*, pp. 43, 45.

during or shortly after a meal."¹⁵ It was commonly believed at Nordrach that Dr. White had succeeded in stamping out any sense or remembrance of hunger.

The third area in which the Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium conformed to its German cousin was the head physician's insistence on physical and mental quietude. This practice was exaggerated at the Colorado institution to the degree of prohibiting excessive talking among patients and restricting certain reading preferences. A strict rest hour of total silence before and after each meal was exacted as an aid "to complete assimilation." As a patient's condition improved, modified exercise was allowed, usually in the form of lawn croquet, chess, parchesi, crokinole, billiards, or an occasional carriage ride. The most closely regulated form of physical exercise was a prescribed stroll along the bluff, following specially designed pathways:

The first part of the walk is usually an ascent, then a horizontal portion and a descent home. As energy revives the distance is cautiously increased, regard being given to the temperature until several miles can be done, involving a climb of 500 or 600 feet during the morning, but a slow, steady gait must always be observed. The afternoon is usually spent in rest or a short walk and patients go to bed about 9:00 or 9:30.¹⁶

Finally, Dr. White's constant personal care for every patient paralleled the German plan. He established a system of electric bells in all the tents, enabling patients to communicate day and night with the nurses and from there with him. He oversaw mealtime activity, rest periods, and exercise, and molded the reading habits of his patients. He personally supervised a bathing program based on the time of day and level of fever. If the patient carried a temperature above 103 degrees at three o'clock in the afternoon or eight o'clock in the evening that individual was required to have a full cold bath of at least ten minutes with a rest hour to follow each bath and huge quantities of food to follow the rest hour.

Nordrach Ranch was known throughout the Pikes Peak region for its firm and undeviating code of discipline. "That place was a prison," claimed one former inmate. "We called Dr. White 'Master Warden,' even to his face. But he didn't seem to mind. . . . He was very stern, sometimes severe. He never wavered in his purpose. . . . He got results; those of us who stuck it out got better. He filled us so full of food

¹⁵ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 1 January 1903.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Interview with John Clark, 6 January 1978. Clark spent two years recuperating at the Nordrach Ranch.

¹⁸ Emeline L.J. Hilton, *The White Plague* (Duluth, Minn.: M.I. Stewart Co., 1913), p. 6.

¹⁹ Henry Williamson Hoagland, *My Life* (Colorado Springs: Privately printed, 1940), p. 78.

and froze us so badly that it scared the hell out of the bacilli, and then we were cured!"¹⁷

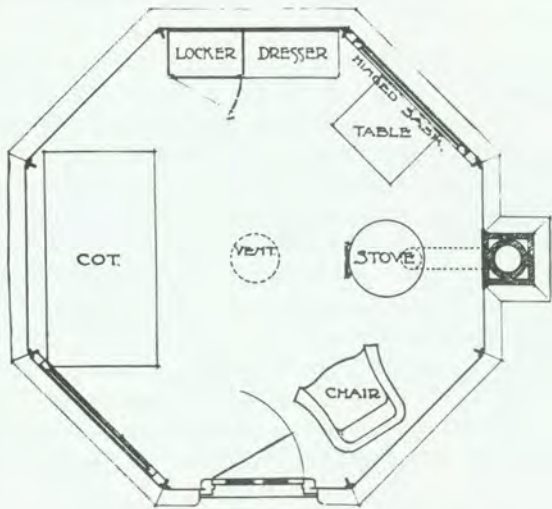
The institution influenced the course of tubercular treatment in other regional sanatoriums. Emeline Hilton, who wrote a lively essay in 1913 on the white plague cure at Glockner Hospital, found the abundance of food at the hospital absolutely staggering. The early dietary program at Glockner was inspired by the Nordrach "heavy-eater's" plan. Mrs. Hilton's first meal consisted of "a fair sized piece of beef steak, two baked potatoes, three slices of rye bread, a dish of rice pudding, two soft-boiled eggs, and one pint of milk," all brought to her on "a tray that one could readily believe was intended for a circus freak whose income depended upon steady gain in bodily proportion."¹⁸ As was the case at Nordrach Ranch, Glockner regimented the patients to live by the clock, day after day exactly the same with no deviation from the program.

One of the early directors of the Cragmor Sanatorium also utilized the Nordrach practice of overfeeding in his treating tuberculosis in 1910. Dr. Henry W. Hoagland described one little woman, a patient of his who came from a prominent family in Chicago, as being obliged to eat twenty-eight raw eggs a day. "She was only about five feet two," wrote Hoagland. "She recovered and went back to Chicago—despite the twenty-eight eggs!"¹⁹

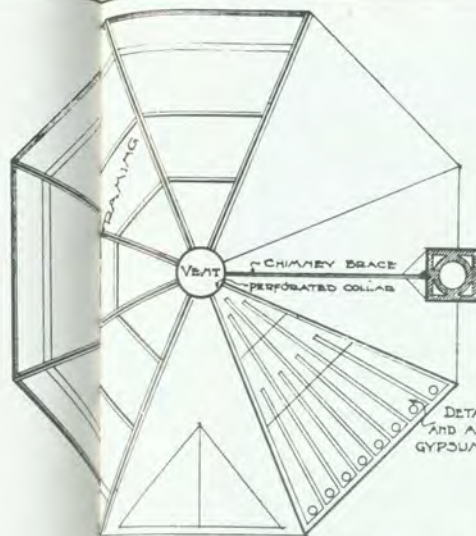
The Nordrach plan also affected early architectural developments in the region. Although the Cragmor Sanatorium did not have a tent colony until 1907, and then only briefly, Thomas MacLaren, the chief architect, and Dr. Solly, the director, had previously developed an innovative application of the European and American Nordrach open air

With Austin's Bluffs in the background, the inhabitants of the tent colony at the Nordrach Ranch gather in front of the tents.



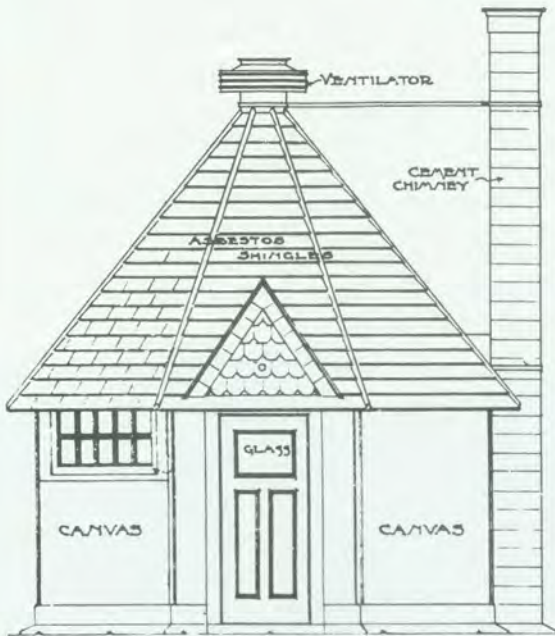


PLAN.

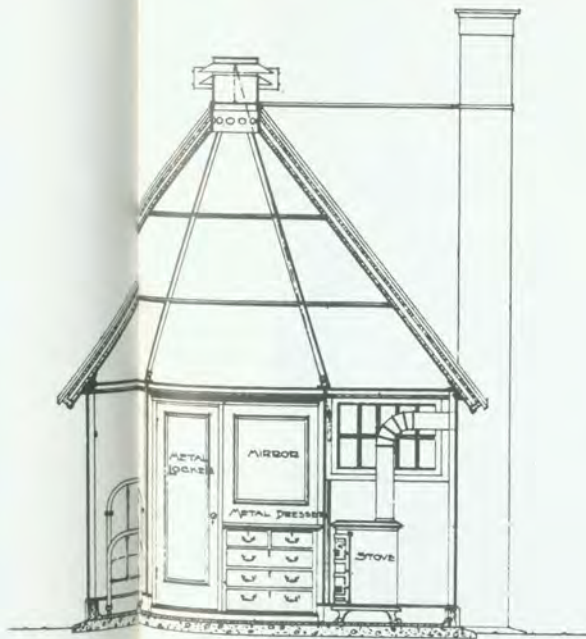


DETAIL SHOWING RIBS AND AIR-SPACES OF THE GYPSUM ROOF SLABS.

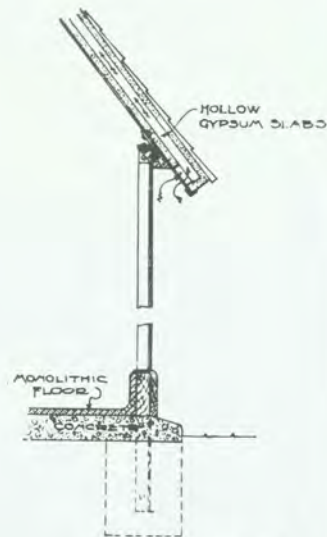
DETAILS OF ROOF.



ELEVATION



SECTION.



DETAILS

concept by constructing corner sleeping porches on all of its original cottage units. Since the porches were attached to the patient's suite at Cragmor, they had an advantage over the tents at Nordrach because they could not be blown away. The strong influence of the sleeping porch concept is still evident in the designs of numerous Colorado Springs residences.²⁰

The most pervasive influence generated by the Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium was, however, its fashionable, yet controversial, stress on village tent living. At one time or another every major sanatorium in the Pikes Peak area featured the tent open air cure, patterned after the Nordrach plan.²¹ Dr. White reserved the Otis manor rooms only for advanced cases of consumption and for those recalcitrant patients who stubbornly resisted the tent experience. "We have a few very choice rooms in the house for those that do not wish to occupy tents," he wrote, "but we insist upon plenty of fresh air if in house."²² The guests who occupied the Otis home were few in number. Of the nearly ninety patients who came to Nordrach in 1903, for example, seventy-two resided in the tent village. The average tent stay that year was four and one-half months per patient.²³

The Nordrach tent was a modified and improved version of the earlier Gardiner tent. Dr. White described it as "octagonal in shape, with shingle roof, oiled floor and a strong army canvas on the sides. A galvanized stationary ventilator, shaped somewhat like an umbrella, fits

The tents at the Nordrach Ranch were a modified and improved version of the Gardiner tent. The tent furnishings (interior of Gardiner tent below) were simple and utilitarian.



into the apex of the tent and can be opened or closed by means of a damper controlled by a cord fastened usually to the head of the bed. In addition there are two good-sized windows in each tent on opposite sides of the octagon."²⁴

The tent furnishings were the same as would be used in a small cottage—an iron bed, abundant bedding, a bureau, toilet, table, rugs, chair, and stove. A wardrobe and washstand were built into the tent itself. Before the patient retired for the night, an attendant would build a fire, then close the ventilators. The patient reopened the ventilators at bedtime and would sleep warmly. Then, the fire was rekindled the next morning before the invalid arose. This was the design in theory. "In actual fact," declared one ex-patient, "I never knew what it meant to be warm at night until I returned to my home in Minnesota."²⁵

The tent colony at the Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium consisted of nine 25-foot terraces, 200 feet long, running parallel to each other. During the prime period at Nordrach from 1902 to 1907, each terrace held eight tents, providing a total of seventy-two open air constructions. The remains of two or three of the nine original terraces can still be seen today in the heavily populated area of Austin's Bluffs (now Austin Bluffs) just off Chelton Road near the Benet Hill Academy.²⁶ Seventy years ago those terraces were supported with rough stone walls and were surrounded by cement sidewalks, trees, lawns, and flower gardens. This setting presented one of the most attractive features among the remote resort areas of the Pikes Peak region.

While Dr. White strongly advocated tent living, many of the patients had mixed feelings about the agony of outdoor survival. Some of

²⁰ The Gardiner tents were present at Cragmor following Dr. Solly's death in November 1906 for a period of about four years. It was during that time that Dr. Gardiner, who had developed the tents first used at Nordrach, shared the directorship of the Cragmor Sanatorium with Drs. Henry W. Hoagland and Will Howard Swan (*Colorado Springs Gazette*, 16 February 1908; Hoagland, *My Life*, p. 61); Thomas MacLaren, "Sanatoria for Consumptives," *The Brickbuilder* 17, no. 9 (September 1903):177-83.

²¹ The first sanatorium to adopt the Nordrach tent colony plan was the Union Printers' Home. Ten Nordrach tents were set up near the hospital in 1904 and ten more were added in 1907. "The Nordrach tent was selected as being the most complete and the most practical for the purpose" (*The Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium and Hotel Company*, p. 33).

²² *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 1 January 1902.

²³ *Ibid.*, 31 January 1904.

²⁴ MacLaren, "Sanatoria for Consumptives," p. 181. Portable tents became one of the major manufacturing industries in Colorado Springs around the turn of the century. The concept was launched on a large scale in 1896 as a means of relieving distress and of furnishing hasty shelters for the hundreds of survivors who were rendered homeless by the Cripple Creek fire. Portable houses and tents were first shipped to Colorado from Chicago, then local manufacturers, having accepted Gardiner's innovative octagonal design, developed their own lucrative enterprise. The tents were popular for their simplicity of erection, adaptability, and interchangeable parts. They are still to be seen today throughout the Pikes Peak region, used now as storage sheds and playhouses ("Octagonal Tent Cottages," *The Shooks Run Inventory of Historic Sites*, [Colorado Springs: City Planning Department, 1979], pp. 17-19).

²⁵ Davies communication, 27 October 1977.

²⁶ The original site of Nordrach is now the home of Thomas H. Thompson, 2525 North Chelton Road. During Prohibition the reconstructed Otis manor served as a gambling casino run by the notorious Lucky Luciano. It was also the site of the Red Rocks Restaurant before again becoming a private residence in the late forties (Red Top, Block K: Record of Transactions, 1871-1978).



"Chasing the cure" meant exposing yourself to plenty of fresh air—in all types of weather.



the early Gardiner frames blew over, others collapsed in heavy blizzards, and the canvas sidings flapped and ripped in strong winds, causing the alarmed occupants to flee to the Otis home for warmth and refuge. However, with each passing year the Nordrach tent was improved. Shingle tops and wooden sidings were added, and by 1908 the tents were securely anchored on four sides. The covering then varied from a fifteen-ounce, double-filler army canvas to an all-wood frame, fully impervious to snow, wind, and rain. Yet, structural changes did not always improve tent morale. Mrs. W.D. Hemming, a daughter of Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner, refers to the great distress that hundreds of tuberculars suffered because of her father's widespread tent fetish.

They sat there with rugs over their legs and nearly froze to death. It was agony for them. I would say to my father, "I'd rather die with TB tomorrow than sit out there!" He'd reply, "Oh, but fresh air means so much!" It didn't mean a thing. The "well" person wouldn't have dreamed of sitting outside in such inclement weather.²⁷

When White founded his unique country retreat, he claimed nothing original. He simply advertised a physical setting superior to anything else in the sanatorium world, citing the conviction expressed by other medicine men of the region that the incomparable climate in Colorado was the decisive factor in the long and painful business of getting well. Using this low-key, nature-oriented approach, White lured hundreds of invalids of the horizontal life to "Puker's Paradise," as one inmate colorfully termed the ranch. To secure his out-of-state clientele in 1902, Dr. White mailed pamphlets to fifteen thousand physicians throughout the United States and Canada. Then, he set up exhibits for the International Tuberculosis Commission in Baltimore, Maryland, and the American Tuberculosis League in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1903. Along with Drs. Solly and Gardiner, White was largely responsible for propagating to specialists everywhere the idea that Colorado Springs was destined to become the sanatorium capital of the world. Without an endowment he operated Nordrach at minimal profit for several years, keeping the rates at a break-even level.²⁸ Until 1910, the year he resigned his post, White continued to serve large quantities of nourishing food to every patient, including as many as three quarts of milk, six to eight eggs, and the best of tenderloin steak per day.

Nordrach was one of the first institutions of its kind in the United States, a fact that prompted Manly D. Ormes, some twenty years after

²⁷ *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 19 November 1972.

²⁸ In 1909, for instance, Dr. White's last full year of active service at Nordrach, it cost \$29,189 to run the sanatorium, while he derived \$31,716 from the care of patients. The profits, which totaled just over \$2,500, represented the salaries for Dr. White and his staff. The cost of tent living at Nordrach in 1902 was \$30 per month, room and board. These rates had doubled by 1905. To discourage patients going to town, White charged them ten cents per errand and twenty-five cents per round trip for transportation in the ranch carriage (*The Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium and Hotel Company*, pp. 63-64).

the venture closed, to hail the ranch as "the second strictly tubercular sanatorium in the country, Dr. [Edward Livingston] Trudeau's at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks being the first."²⁹ White's institution provided the first and most economical accommodations for money-conscious invalids in a rural setting.³⁰ It was the first successful effort in the Colorado Springs area to provide health care for tuberculars who were no longer tolerated in the downtown community. And, it set a pattern for outdoor tent living that influenced the construction and the development of other sanatoriums, hospitals, and private homes throughout the region.

But, did the Nordrach treatment save lives? Reportedly, only one patient died of pneumonia at the ranch. Several ran away, fearing they would die of pneumonia. Dr. White complained that "some of our patients were not charitable enough to make allowances."³¹ Of the first forty-five patients who entered Nordrach, ten died of consumption at the ranch and four left without a trace. By the time White resigned, the Nordrach population had tripled and the death rate had decreased by half. White's progressive success was heralded as one of the best evidences that a tubercular establishment worthy of the reputation of the city was desperately needed in Colorado Springs. It was his example that gave impetus to a strong local movement of support to construct the more enduring and prosperous Cragmor Sanatorium.³²

Fire, snow, and financial tribulations cooperated in the final destruction of the Nordrach sanatorium. William Otis's stately mansion burned to the ground in 1907, the result of spontaneous combustion in the coal bins of the basement. No one was injured, although several patients had to jump out of the upper story windows to escape the early dawn flames.³³ Six years later a severe blizzard wiped out the remnants of the declining business venture. Even the improved tents were too precarious to withstand the rigors of December 1913 in Colorado. For several days seventeen patients remained stranded at Nordrach until the roads could be reopened. They were transferred to Glockner and the Nordrach Ranch was closed. Dr. White had long before left the institution; he had been lured into accepting a fresh challenge as superintendent of the new Modern Woodmen of America Sanatorium, which

opened in 1909. At Woodmen, located some twelve miles northwest of Nordrach, White spearheaded the establishment of a monumental operation of tent colonies, utilizing the same methods he had employed at the ranch. Woodmen eventually became the largest and most sophisticated private sanatorium in the world, a fully self-sustaining, fresh air empire on the grandest scale imaginable. Yet, it was at the small Nordrach Ranch where the vast sanatorium movement began, giving Colorado Springs its first among many institutional retreats for tuberculosis victims.

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²⁹ Manly Dayton and Eleanor R. Ormes, *The Book of Colorado Springs* (Colorado Springs: Dentan Printing Co., 1933), p. 242.

³⁰ Only Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau's plan at Saranac Lake offered a higher form of charity. There each patient paid \$5 per week, with the actual cost being nearly \$10 per week per patient, the balance being made up by endowment. There was no endowment fund at Nordrach, which explains in part its early demise (*The Nordrach Ranch Sanatorium and Hotel Company*, pp. 61-62; Edward Livingston Trudeau, *An Autobiography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1916).

³¹ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 31 January 1904.

³² *Ibid.*; U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Benevolent Institutions, 1910*, pp. 262-66; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 29 June 1902.

³³ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 17 August 1907.

Cheyenne

Aug 28th 1910

Dear Mr. Lomax,

You have done a work emphatically worth doing and one which should appeal to the people of all our country, but particularly to the people of the west and southwest. Your subject is not only exceedingly interesting to the student of literature, but also to the student of the general history of the west. There is something very curious in the reproduction here on this new continent of essentially the conditions of ballad-growth which obtained in medieval England; including, by the way, sympathy for the outlaw, Jesse James taking the place of Robin Hood. Under modern conditions however, the native ballad is speedily killed by competition with the music-hall songs; the cowboy becoming ashamed to sing the crude horse-pump ballads in view of which Owen Wister calls the "ill-smelling salubrious clearness" of the far less interesting compositions of the music-hall singers. It is therefore a work of real importance to preserve permanently this unwritten ballad literature of the back country and the frontier.

With all good wishes,

I am

very truly yours

Theodore Roosevelt

European Legends and American Cowboy Ballads

BY DOUGLAS J. McREYNOLDS

John A. Lomax's *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* clearly marks the focal point in the recorded history of western American folklore. When the book was published in 1910, Lomax was hardly an amateur in the field; he was a Sheldon Fellow for the Investigation of American Ballads at Harvard University. Nevertheless, *Cowboy Songs* made his scholarly reputation. This book was the first serious attempt at the comprehensive collection and linguistic consideration of a significant and apparently indigenous—and still then living—folk idiom. Theodore Roosevelt, to whom the collection was dedicated, wrote an appreciation that was incorporated into the text, and the volume was reprinted six times within the decade. By 1938 it had been expanded twice.

Although the Lomax book has been frequently—and justifiably—assailed, no subsequent study of cowboy songs or poems has appeared that is not in some way indebted to it. Major collections following Lomax's work have similarly presented few cowboy songs that did not appear originally in *Cowboy Songs*.¹ Likewise, the collector's note that preceded the ballads has been studied, paraphrased, quoted, revered, and argued so widely that it has finally become itself not only a component of the romantic interpretation of the American cowboy in the twentieth century but a piece of folklore as well. By 1917, for example, Alice Henderson visualized for the erudite readers of *Poetry* magazine "dogie songs created for the purpose of preventing cattle stampedes" and thus coming "straight from the heart of the cowboy, speaking familiarly to his herd in the stillness of the night."² And when Louise

¹ These collections include, among others, Carl Sandburg, *American Songbag* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927); Jules Allen, *Cowboy Lore* (San Antonio, Tex.: Naylor Printing Co., 1933); H.M. Belden, ed., *Ballads and Songs* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1940); Benjamin A. Botkin, ed., *A Treasury of American Folklore* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1944); Vance Randolph, ed., *Ozark Folksongs*, 4 vols. (Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50). William Owens, *Texas Folk Songs* (Austin: Texas Folklore Society, 1950); and Austin and Alta Fife, comps. and eds., *Ballads of the Great West* (Palo Alto, Calif.: American West Publishing Co., 1970).

² Alice Henderson, "Cowboy Songs and Ballads," *Poetry* 10 (1917): 256. She is quoting from Lomax's introduction to *Cowboy Songs*.



Pound took issue with Lomax's assertion that cowboy ballads were created through the same generic process that produced Anglo-Saxon folk ballads, her point was that only in the American West did songs truly spring from the soil; the English ballads must have been written first and then preserved by the popular culture.³

Lomax certainly deserves whatever homage is still being paid him. But his professional reputation as both a compiler and editor of folklore material has been irreparably damaged by the revelations of D.K. Wilgus, made to an already suspicious public in his 1959 study *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898*. "The most charitable conclusion," says Wilgus, "is that Lomax was extremely careless in documenting and preserving his field material." In his eagerness to prove the unprovable theory of communal, spontaneous ballad composition, Lomax was guilty, according to Wilgus, of everything from plagiarism to personal "improvement" of song texts. The concept that songs

³ Louise Pound, "Cowboy Songs and Popular Ballads," *Modern Philology* 11 (1913-14): 207.

spring naturally from the cultural environment was shown to be essentially fanciful in Gordon Gerrould's *The Ballad of Tradition* as long ago as 1932. Furthermore, although it can still be argued that a few songs are indeed the products of a community's composing as a unit, the leap from consideration of these few to Lomax's all-inclusive claim seems almost deliberately deceptive. It is perhaps time for another kind of approach to American cowboy songs and ballads.⁴

The body of folk songs generally conceded to be indigenous to the American West, and especially related to the cowboys themselves, can be separated initially into four major structural and thematic groups and then into any number of lesser groups and hybrids.⁵ The first of the larger groups consists of songs that are either demonstrably or at least likely to have been composed according to the Lomax theory of communal, utilitarian songwriting. Characterized chiefly by simplicity, these songs emphasize onomatopoeic, often nonsensical, choral refrain and a general thematic fragmentation. They offer little in the way of story line and require less in the way of comprehensive memory retention; they are, in short, the kinds of songs that can be made up as they are sung. A classic example of this genre is "The Old Chisholm Trail," a song consisting of rhyming four-beat couplets alternating with a simple refrain:

Coma ti yi youpy, youpy ya, youpy ya,
Coma ti yi youpy, youpy ya.

The verses can be made up spontaneously and for as long as anyone cares to do so; there is sufficient time during the refrain for the practiced singer or singers to think up another answering, continuing, or unrelated couplet. In these verses the rhyme itself is usually the determinant of the sense, such as

Oh it's beans and bacon most every day,—
I'd as soon be a-eatin' prairie hay.

or

Foot in the stirrup and hand on the horn,
Best damned cowboy ever was born.

Narrative detail and semantic complexity are always insignificant to these songs and in fact are usually considered undesirable, a hindrance to spontaneity.

⁴ D.K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1959), pp. 160-61.

⁵ Of the four larger groups, three have been discussed at great length elsewhere and need be mentioned only briefly here. Into these three someone has at one time or another attempted to fit *all* of the cowboy ballads. They are significant to this study primarily because none of them encompasses the fourth.

The second group includes songs that have clear ties to English, Irish, or Scots predecessors. These are songs whose lineage can be traced, usually through Ozarkian or Appalachian intermediaries, to the Child collection of English and Scottish ballads. Sometimes they are Child variants preserved intact; more often they are structural bastards whose themes and even syntaxes are similar to those of their antecedents, but whose language and subject matter have been Americanized. Thus, "O Bury Me Not on the Deep Blue Sea" becomes "O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," and "Bring Back My Bonnie to Me" becomes "Roll On, Little Dogies, Roll On"; similarly, the "Maiden Freed from the Gallows" in the Child collection becomes the "White Captive," in which the maiden is ultimately rescued from an Indian torture stake in *Cowboy Songs*. The songs in this group depend heavily on continuity of story line and on narrative simplicity. Although the so-called "ballad" or "old hymn" measure—the four-line stanza pattern whose lines are alternately four and three beat and whose rhyme scheme is *a b a b* or *x a x a*—is not the exclusive versifying force, it is easily the most common verse determinant. These songs exhibit many practical variants in both rhyme scheme and line length but rarely depart from the four-line stanza itself.

The third group consists of traditional historical or locally topical ballads that are without particular models in the Child or similar collections. Like those in the second category, these songs are structured largely according to variations of the typical ballad stanza form; they are also similar in that they employ direct narration as the principal vehicle for theme. However, they differ from the standard Child ballads in that they celebrate actual occurrences, real people, and topical concerns native to a particular, American historical context. By far the best known of these is "Jesse James," that romantic saga of the ruthlessness and daring of the most famous outlaw of the West, and of his ultimate betrayal by "dirty Robert Ford." That such songs occur in many variations indicates that they were in fact a part of a living and metamorphosing folk culture.⁶ The existence of many "Cole Younger" and "Joe Bowers" variants, to name only two, indicates the same thing. However, the structural similarities that remain in all but two clearly derived versions (Belden's second and third "Jesse James" listings) effectively preclude the possibility of anything other than a single origin.⁷

Not more than perhaps a dozen of the 153 ballads in *Cowboy Songs* could possibly be the result of spontaneous, communal composition.

⁶ For example, Randolph lists seven distinct versions of "Jesse James," each of which is printed with its own subvariations in his *Ozark Folksongs*; yet he does not list an eighth version appearing in Belden's *Ballads and Songs*, and both collectors worked exclusively in Missouri and Arkansas.

⁷ Belden, ed., *Ballads and Songs*, p. 403.

Most of the remaining 140-odd selections can be traced either to predecessors or to single authorship. The ratio is not markedly different in any of the other major collections, with the exception of Botkin's *A Treasury of American Folklore*, whose selection of cowboy songs is admittedly sketchy. Even the widely diffused "Jesse James" often concludes, at least in its printed versions, with a stanza that begins

This song was made by Billy Gashade
As soon as the news did arrive . . .

Thus while the true composer's name is undoubtedly unrecoverable, the stanza insists that *someone* composed the song; and the singer acknowledges this fact even if the collector does not.

The fourth category into which certain popular range songs fall is the smallest but in some ways the most interesting. It suggests a tendency toward cultural myth transference—and perhaps the rude beginnings of conscious mythmaking—in songs of the American West toward the end of the nineteenth century. This category includes poems that are westernized, versified retellings of northern European folktales. These are characterized by a relatively complex stanzaic pattern and story line, a lack of actual historical moment or of close relatives in the Child collection, and a clear motif and thematic parallel with particular European legends. They are poems whose variants indicate great popularity in spite of their relative rarity. Finally, they are poems that must be seen as the works of single poets working consciously toward mythopoeic composition.

One example of this genre, more easily accessible than most because of its curious printing history, is Badger Clark's poem, "The Glory Trail," popularly known as "High-Chin Bob." This is the tale of a cowboy who ropes a mountain lion and takes a boastful vow to "drag the bugger dead." Apparently as punishment for his pride, Bob is condemned to gallop his horse among the Arizona mountains eternally, neither alive nor dead, the lion, "belly-roped, but healthy," in tow. In spite of the curse, however, the rider maintains his indomitability and even now sings

Glory be to me,
And to my mighty noose.

Further, upon his return to more civilized parts, he exhorts an awestruck passing stranger to

Tell the folks below
I've took a raging dream in tow,
And though I never laid it low,
I never turned it loose!

The motif at work here is easily recognizable as that of the "Flying

Dutchman" legends, well known since the fifteenth century. Although the tale itself occurs in many distinct European versions, in at least one San Francisco version, and, of course, in Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," its basic sense remains this: a sea captain vows to sail his ship into a particular port in spite of rocks, tide, and hurricane-force winds. His pride will not allow him to give up; the elements will not allow him to enter the harbor. He is condemned, therefore, to try those elements for as long as the earth survives, never making appreciable headway or losing appreciable ground. Badger Clark has taken a seafaring legend and translated it into the cattleman's terms.⁸

This is not to imply, however, that Clark has done nothing more than to substitute the language of the cowboy for the language of the sailor and to otherwise leave a model intact. There is much more involved here than the changing of "O Bury Me Not on the Deep Blue Sea" to "O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." Clark has translated the myth itself, not merely the vehicle of the myth. In his own explanation of how the poem came about, Clark says that "one night when I was washing my pots and kettles I heard the boys around the fire discussing a cow-puncher over in the mountains who, the week before, had roped a bobcat and 'drug' it to death. The boys spent some time swapping expert opinions on the incident, so it stuck in my mind, incubated, and eventually hatched out 'The Glory Trail.'" ⁹ The immediate source of the poem, then, is individual experience; the method is the re-creation of an existing legend; the purpose of the poem is art.

"The Glory Trail" was written in Arizona, probably in 1910; it was first published in Clark's collected poems, *Sun and Saddle Leather*, in 1915. Two years later, however, *Poetry* magazine printed a version of "High-Chin Bob," collected by H.H. Knibbs, that it attributed to an "unknown cow-boy poet."¹⁰ The magazine congratulated itself for having discovered a western folk song Lomax had missed, and Lomax included the *Poetry* version in subsequent editions of *Cowboy Songs*. In fact, Clark's poem (and avowedly without his knowledge) had been varied, honed, set to music, and assimilated into a living cowboy tradition in only seven years. Several versions are now known, including one that has gone so far as to rewrite virtually an entire stanza.¹¹ By the time

⁸ European legends are classified here according to Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, rev. ed., 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-58). For the "Flying Dutchman" motif, see Thompson's E511, especially E511.1.3. For the San Francisco version, see Henry Splitter, "New Tales of American Phantom Ships," *Western Folklore* 9 (1950): 209.

⁹ Badger Clark, *Sun and Saddle Leather*, 6th ed. (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1922), p. xvi.

¹⁰ *Poetry* 9 (1917): 207.

¹¹ See, for example, the variant printed here. This version combines features of the third and fourth stanzas of Clark's copyrighted version into a single stanza (three). The first half of the final stanza is a virtual rewrite of the original.

Louis Untermeyer had compiled the third edition of his *Modern American Poetry* in 1925, he could observe that "Clark is one of the few men who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore, many of his songs having been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own."¹²

There are twenty-four poems in the first edition of *Sun and Saddle Leather*, all of which were written at about the same time and place; yet only "The Glory Trail" can be found in any major collection of western folk songs—significant because of those twenty-four so universal and so old a legend.

The form of "The Glory Trail," as preserved in all of the versions I have seen, is interestingly complex. It is a highly stylized amalgamation of ballad and old-hymn measures, consisting of thirteen- and fourteen-line stanzas, its normally iambic lines alternating tetrameter and trimeter and stressing an *a b a b* rhyme scheme with masculine endings. The twelfth line of each stanza is a schematic repetition of the eleventh; so also is the thirteenth in the original version throughout, and in the final stanza of most variants. The final line of each stanza returns to the three-beat norm expected in the twelfth. The result is a stanzaic pattern more apparently reminiscent, for example, of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" than of "The Old Chisholm Trail."

This version of "The Glory Trail" was taught to me by my grandfather, George Brooke McReynolds, who learned it as a young man in Montana. I can find no record of its ever having been printed.

Way high up in the Mogollons
 Upon the mountain top
 A lion cleaned a yearling's bones
 And licked his thankful chops.
 When who upon the scene should come
 A-sauntering down the slope
 But High Chin Bob of sinful pride
 And maverick hungry rope.
 "Oh, glory be to me," said he,
 "And fame's unfading flowers
 That I'm top rope of the Lazy J
 And rode my good top horse today
 And kitty-cat, you're ours!"
 The lion licked his paws of brown
 And dreamed sweet dreams of veal
 When High Chin's rope came circling down
 And looped him 'round his meal.
 He yowled quick fury to the world
 And all the world yowled back,

¹² Louis Untermeyer, ed., *Modern American Poetry: A Critical Anthology*, 3d, rev. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), p. 318.

As High Chin's top horse gave a jump
 And Bob took up the slack.
 "Oh, glory be to me," said he,
 "We'll hit the glory trail.
 No man has roped a lion's head
 And lived to drag the bugger dead
 Till I shall tell the tale!"

Way high up in the Mogollons
 That top horse did his best,
 Mid tearing brush and rolling stones
 From canyon floor to crest.
 And up and down, and 'round and cross
 Bob pounded, weak and wan,
 But pride still glued him to his seat
 And glory lured him on.
 "Oh, glory be to me," said he,
 "This glory trail is tough.
 But I'll keep my dally 'round the horn
 Until the toot of judgment morn,
 And never holler 'Nough!'"

Way high up in the Mogollons
 If you're ever there at night
 You'll see a sight among the stones
 Will raise your hair with fright.
 You'll see a top horse gallop by
 And a lion trail along
 While rider, proud, with chin on high
 Sings out his glory song.
 "Oh, glory be to me," sings he,
 "And to my mighty noose;
 And, stranger, tell the folks below
 I've took a raging dream in tow
 And though I never laid it low,
 I never turned it loose!"

Several of the songs collected by Lomax seem to fit well into such a genre as "The Glory Trail" typifies. Two of them, "Araphoe" and "The Zebra Dun," are concerned with apparently innocuous strangers who perform significantly manly deeds when challenged by toughs, and as a result of their actions gain the respect of onlookers who had originally gathered to taunt them. Both of these songs are extended, unified narratives, of eleven and thirteen verses respectively; both employ four-line stanzas of predominantly anapestic movement with four beats to the line and an *a b b* rhyme scheme.

"Araphoe" recounts the adventure of a physically unimposing, one-lunged stranger who is in Arizona "for his health." As a result of card game luck, he unintentionally runs afoul of Hankey Dean, a large and evil-tempered cowboy. The ruffian Dean boasts, among other-things, that

The lions in the mountains, I've drove them
 to their lairs;
 The wildcats are my playmates, and I've
 wrestled grizzly bears.

When threatened by Dean, the stranger calmly picks up the five of spades, pins it to the gambling house door, shoots out four of its five black figures from a distance of twenty paces, and offhandedly remarks to his antagonist,

I have one more left, kind sir, if you wish
 to call the play."

The bully is, of course, completely cowed and the mild-mannered convalescent wins the day.

The characters and situation retold in "The Zebra Dun" are different, but the motif is clearly related. This time the stranger is an "educated feller" in a continental suit who antagonizes a group of cowboys with "jaw breaking words" and a range of knowledge apparently encompassing the world. When he asks to borrow a "nice fat saddle hoss," he is given instead the zebra dun,

A rocky outlaw that had grown so awful wild
 That he could pan the white out of the moon
 every jump for a mile.

Not only does the bookish stranger tame the horse, he does it one-handed; for as "old Dunny" does his worst,

The stranger sat upon him, and curled
 his black mustache
 Just like a summer boarder
 waiting for his hash.

The cowboys are finally forced to admit that they are in the presence of "a thoroughbred, and not a gent from town." The boss hires the stranger on the spot.

What is particularly striking about both of these verse narratives is their marked resemblance to that large group of Germanic folktales with similar kinds of characters. This group of stories is well represented in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, though the best known of all is the story appearing in Grimm's *Märchen* ("Fairy or Household Tales") as "The Valiant Little Tailor."¹³ The protagonist in this version, a small but self-assured tailor, subdues a series of giant

¹³ See Thompson's L310 for a parallel to the "Araphoe" story; see Thompson's K1825, especially K1825.1.3, for parallels to "The Zebra Dun."



"The stranger sat upon him, and curled his black mustache . . ."

adversaries by besting each at its own test. As a result, he eventually wins not only respect but also a princess and a kingdom. The specifics vary considerably in other versions, but the essentials of the tale are constant. As with the two cowboy songs, the principals are always an apparently weak intruder and one or more ill-tempered villains. The intruder never fails to best his adversary in a physical test of manliness and finally either wins his fear and respect or slays him.

Like "The Glory Trail," then, "Araphoe" and "The Zebra Dun" are versified re-creations of European legends. That they are ultimately the works of conscious poets seems also undeniable: the range of diction in each does not vary from stanza to stanza nor does the level of diction. The story lines are unbroken, and the figures of speech are consistent both in kind and in frequency. Foreshadowing occurs extensively. Both songs appear in several versions, but narrative essentials remain constant in all of them.¹⁴

¹⁴ In the revised version of *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 78, Lomax suggests that "The Zebra Dun" was composed by a Negro camp cook from a ranch along the Pecos River. If this were so, it would be difficult to account for the song's obvious northern European flavor. Lomax

There are several other examples of this kind of poem in *Cowboy Songs* and still others in Randolph's *Ozark Folksongs* and Belden's *Ballads and Songs*. "A Man Named Hods" differs little from the "Thumbling" or "Tom Thumb" story familiar in Scandinavian lore.¹⁵ Both narratives are concerned with the troubles that beset unprepared and uninitiated innocents abroad in a hostile world. Hods is scalped by Indians while Thumbling is nearly butchered as he hides in a cow's ear; Hods runs afoul of Billy the Kid while Thumbling falls prey to a robber band. Eventually Hods is returned to his native New York, and Thumbling to his father's house; both thrive once they are back in the safety of a familiar environment. Likewise, "Pattonia," a horse that covers eighty miles at a dead run with an arrow in its side and so earns the sobriquet "Pride of the Plains," is clearly related not only to the magical horse of Thompson's study but also to those wonderful boots that enable Jack the Giant Killer to cover seven leagues with each step he takes.¹⁶



Although few of the legend-derived songs in the West can be traced definitely to a single author, the technical and thematic complexities that characterize them preclude any possibility of communal composition. More importantly, they preclude any but fully controlled individual composition; there is no room in them for repetitious or accidental or bardic, organic accumulation of lines and stanzas, and Hods's

is known for his inaccuracies, however, and George Malcolm Laws in *Native American Balladry* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1950) maintains that the song is of white origin.

¹⁵ See Thompson's F535.1.1.

¹⁶ See Thompson's B181.1, and especially B181.1.1.2, for comparison with the "Horse with Magic Speed" motif; see Thompson's D1521.1 for comparison with the "Seven League Boots" motif.

denouement is as consistently foreshadowed as High-Chin Bob's. These poems must be the result of the attempts of various poets to create regional poetry out of existing myths or folk motifs, not to stave off cattle stampedes or merely to pass time entertainingly.

That these ballads exist, were popular, and are almost as numerous as those that could have been truly spontaneously composed leads to two significant conclusions. Most importantly, these two groupings together account for fewer than two dozen of Lomax's 153 collected songs and ballads—or about fifteen percent. This ratio is not appreciably different in other collections. The greater proportion of songs by far, then, is made up of those derived specifically or generically from already existing English, Irish, or Scots ballads and adapted or penned, as was "Jesse James," by individual ballad makers. But in the creation of truly original range verse—that is, mythopoeic verse from within the actual, self-generative folk song tradition of the American West—the conscious, individual poet was apparently as significant as the more celebrated communal ballad-making experience of cowboy life.

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Rodeo: The Cowboy Sport Abroad

BY CLIFFORD P. WESTERMEIER

Although the popularity of the American cowboy has reached far beyond the confines of the United States, the rodeo has not achieved phenomenal success or recognition abroad. Like its predecessor, the Wild West show, the rodeo has brought aspects of range and ranch life and the heritage of the Old West to other countries. But at no time have the rugged contests of the rodeo been able to compete in size, personnel, and equipment with the lavish spectacles of the Wild West shows or meet the expectations of foreign spectators accustomed to, and appreciative of, historic and opulent pageantry.

Europeans, in particular, exhibited an intense interest in the West and the cattle industry long before they were attracted by its entertainment features. They had sent men and money to help build the far-flung American empire in the Trans-Mississippian region, and many a scion of their best families rode shoulder to shoulder with the early empire builders.¹ Even before the Buffalo Bill tours abroad, western spectacles had invaded the foreign entertainment world. None of these was a rodeo in the true sense of the word, but like Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, they prepared the way for a presentation of the cowboy sport in varied forms—from combinations of Wild West and exhibitions of riding and roping to a mixture of Wild West and cowboy competition, and finally to the genuine rodeo as a typical American contest. In particular, the Buffalo Bill show tours of England and the Continent in the late nineteenth century set the tone for the modern interest in the West abroad. According to Maurice Derumaux, a contemporary French expert on the American Indian, Buffalo Bill "was enormously popular when he came to the Paris Exposition of 1889, and ever since the French people have been fascinated with the West."²

¹ Hans Plischke, *Von Cooper Bis Karl May* (Düsseldorf, Ger., 1951), pp. 5-8; "Cowboys Abroad," *Time*, 3 August 1962, p. 51.

² Interview with Maurice Derumaux, Paris, 28 September 1967; "Cowboy Craze in France," *Newsweek*, 28 July 1968, p. 54.



Bill Pickett, also known as the "Black Demon," originated steer wrestling in about 1890. At the New York Stampede in 1916, the easterners were awed by Pickett's performance.



European spectators have also been fascinated with the most notable folk hero of the West—the cowboy. Conditioned at first by the Wild West extravaganzas and later by novels, motion pictures, and radio or television portrayals, they have sometimes received an exaggerated, heroic picture of the rodeo cowboy that has been quickly diminished by the rodeo performances abroad. At the same time, the cowboy and the cowboy's sport have more easily revealed their limitations when removed from their traditional environment. As long as the cowboy remained within his environment, riding and roping for fun and "loot" were recreation and great sport. In the United States the Fourth of July holiday, a harvest celebration, or a local cattlemen's roundup offered the cowboy an opportunity to exhibit his skills in competition. But the "professional" cowboy or cowboy contestant who was a part-time entertainer as well as a ranch hand soon discovered the precariousness of this dual position. Not only did rodeo contestants sometimes suffer at the hands of closed-fisted or unscrupulous promoters, they and their sport also became objects of attack or misunderstanding by such groups as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or by those who failed to distinguish rodeo competition from a Wild West spectacle.³

In 1924 both the rodeo and its cowboy-contestants gained an international reputation when John Van ("Tex") Austin introduced the sport to Great Britain. As a promoter of rodeos in Madison Square Garden in New York City, the Boston Gardens, Soldier's Field in Chicago, and in Hollywood, California, Austin "was capable of producing for the English people a rodeo composed of outstanding contestants, livestock, and equipment."⁴ According to a reporter for the *Era* (London), "until Tex Austin introduced Rodeo to New York . . . thousands of Americans were accustomed to visit Calgary, Cheyenne or Pendleton in order to witness the contests."⁵

The rodeo or International Cowboy Championships were organized by Charles B. Cochran and directed by Austin.⁶ Referring to the London event, Cochran said, "It was not a 'Buffalo Bill' show, as some people persisted in calling it, but a genuine contest, a series of cowboy tests, with entrance fees, such as took place in the West."⁷ Advanced publicity announced the rodeo as "the greatest ever staged anywhere,"

³ Winifred Johnston, "Passing of the 'Wild West,'" *Southwest Review* 21 (Autumn 1935): 41, 43, 48-50; Clifford P. Westermeier, *Man, Beast, Dust: The Story of Rodeo* (Denver: World Press, 1947), p. 96; Westermeier, "Cowboy Sports and the Humane Society," *The Colorado Magazine* 26 (October 1949): 241-52.

⁴ Westermeier, *Man, Beast, Dust*, pp. 332-33.

⁵ *Era* (London), 4 June 1924.

⁶ *Ibid.*; *Daily Telegraph* (London), 13 June 1924.

⁷ "Thrills from the West," *Era*, 21 May 1924. An accurate date for the earliest use of the term *rodeo* to describe cowboy roping and riding contests is not known. The years 1911 and 1916 have supporters; however, the first appearances of the word in print were probably the Arapahoe County and Colorado Springs contests of 1921, and the latter promoted "rodeo" extensively. (Mary S. Robertson, *Rodeo: Standard Guide to the*



John Van "Tex" Austin introduced the rodeo to Great Britain in 1924.

featuring "top hands" from the ranches of North America, Australia, and Argentina and Mexico."⁸

The rodeo opened at the Empire Stadium in Wembley on 14 June 1924. Twice daily the cowboys and cowgirls participated in saddle- and bareback-bronc riding and wild-horse races—all for cash prizes totaling between £15,000 and £20,000, as well as international championship titles. "It is impossible to visualize a Rodeo in a few words," wrote one reporter. "The cowboy champions not only pit their skill against each other, but against 'outlaw' horses and wild cattle as well . . . Fairplay is guaranteed because one cannot 'fix' a bucking bronc or a

wild steer. Moreover, the cowboy . . . is a square shooter . . . a clean sportsman."⁹

However, a regrettable incident occurred at once that began a long controversy involving the promoters, the cowboys, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), and the British Home Secretary. A steer that had been roped, thrown, and tied rose up with a broken foreleg and hobbled out of the arena, where it had to be shot. This incurred an immediate protest from the spectators as well as prolonged booing whenever other steers were jerked to the ground.¹⁰

On the following night an announcement was made that Austin, the cowboys, and Cochran had agreed to exclude the steer roping contest from the public program. However, because of the injustice to the many cowboys who had traveled such a great distance to enter this first international contest in steer roping, it would now be held privately until the championship was decided.¹¹ Although a suggestion was made that the police attend to guard against cruelty, the RSPCA demanded that the contest be banned entirely; furthermore, the society sent a wire to the prime minister requesting "in the name of humanity" that he forbid the contest. He was told that "the leg of the steer which was thrown on Saturday night and afterwards shot is now in the possession of the society for anatomical examination."¹²

A series of injuries sustained by cowboys and cowgirls in the next twenty-four hours and some fifteen hundred letters received by Home Secretary Arthur Henderson protesting the exclusion of steer roping kept the issue burning. Bishop Willdon of Durham did not ease the situation when he referred to it as a cruel business "tolerable perhaps of necessity in the wild, uncultivated parts of the earth, but inexcusable as an exhibition or amusement offered to citizens in the heart of the British Empire."¹³ When another steer was killed during one of the private contests—the sudden tightening of a cowboy's rope caused it to fall and break its neck—emotions mounted again. In the House of Commons, Henderson admitted that he had no power to stop the contest but instructed the police who had witnessed the accident "to apply for summonses in respect to cases of alleged cruelty." A recommendation that steer roping be suspended was accepted by Cochran, Austin, and their legal advisers.¹⁴

Capt. E.G. Fairholme, chief secretary of the RSPCA, complained in

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 16 June 1924.

¹⁰ Ibid., *Morning Post* (London), 17 June 1924.

¹¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 17 June 1924; *Morning Post*, 17 June 1924.

¹² *Daily Telegraph*, 17, 18 June 1924.

¹³ Ibid., 20 June 1924; *Morning Post*, 20, 21 June 1924.

Cowboy Sport [Berkeley, Calif.: Howell-North, 1961], p. 104; see also "Cornish, Wild Cow Camp to Hold Its Second Rodeo," *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 15 July 1916; "10,000 See Rodeo at Springs," *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 23 August 1921; "Springs Rodeo Huge Success," *Denver Times*, 23 August 1921; "Late Jack Devidts Linked to Early Use of Rodeo for Cowboy Contests," *Boulder Daily Camera*, 25 July 1970).

In 1958 Pierre Noel (Jack) DeVids, a rodeo promoter and performer, recalled that his father first suggested the word to him in the early 1920s as Jack struggled to find a new name for a contest in Littleton, Colorado. "We finally ended up heading all of our hand-bills, posters, and programs 'wild west rodeo and bucking horse contest,'" he said ("Jack DeVids Recalls Wild West Show at Brussels in 1910 and His Colorful Career as Rodeo Promoter and Performer," *Boulder Daily Camera*, 12 June 1958. See also "Arrangements Are Complete for Rodeo of Wildwest at Middlefield," *Littleton Independent*, 2 September 1921; "Thousands Get Thrill at Littleton Rodeo," *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 5 September 1921).

¹⁴ *Era*, 4 June 1924.

a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (London) that Cochran had refused admittance of the society's inspectors to watch the contests "except, of course, by payment for seats." In the meantime, Cochran evidently had second thoughts about the entire situation and protested that "he took the stadium on a contract, and he submitted to the exhibition authorities the programme of events. . . . Among these was the steer roping contest which was passed." Furthermore, he denied he had not given RSPCA authorities the facilities they had requested.¹⁵

As a result, charges of cruelty were brought against Cochran, Austin, and cowboys James Hunton, Charles Irwin, Powder River Thompson, Guy Schulz, and Ad Eddens. A report stated that "outside the court cowboys in colored shirts and enormous hats were kept busy by members of the crowd signing autograph books." Sir Henry Curtis Bennett grimly announced that "the prosecution came under the Animal Act of 1911, under which any person guilty of cruelly beating, overriding, infuriating or terrifying any animal, or causing or procuring any animal to be so ill-treated, was liable to a fine of £25, or alternately or additionally be imprisoned for three months." The hearings went on for a week. On 8 July, two weeks after the charges were pressed, the summons was dismissed amid a demonstration of applause. "When the court rose, the cowboys, with loud whoops, rushed into the corridor, threw their wide-brimmed hats into a circle, and danced around them until the policemen cleared them off the premises."¹⁶

There is little doubt that the rodeo upset the English sense of sportsmanship. A prominent English painter, Henry W. Nevinson, expressed himself in no uncertain terms when he said rodeo is "not a show for a sportsmanlike people."¹⁷ In the same vein, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote that "the expression of the public's disgust at its first sight of steer-roping has put an end to the public exposition of this feature of the cowboys' performances." He added that "America and American ideas of sports come in for considerable criticism in this connection." However, a writer for *Punch* decided that "young England can never be worse for seeing it."¹⁸

In spite of the steer roping controversy, the Wembley rodeo was well received by the English spectators. One reporter, particularly impressed by the steer wrestling contest, commented that "it certainly gives the spectator his greatest thrill, for there is ever-present the possibility of disaster, not to the beast but to the man." He was equally



Charles Simpson depicted steer wrestling in this sketch made during the 1924 international contest in London.

impressed by steer riding and amused by the sight of "cowboys deposited on the greensward in a trice" or "scrambling to safety up the wire netting [before] the approaching horns of a massive charging beast." Another admirer of this cowboy sport wrote: "Leaving aside all criticism there is little doubt that the Rodeo . . . is a very wonderful show. . . . The well-nigh incredible dash and fearless courage of cowboy and cowgirl alike . . . will furnish unforgettable memories. Not to see the Rodeo is to miss the most remarkable demonstration of splendid horsemanship ever witnessed in this country."¹⁹

Apparently undaunted by the troubles that beset the International Cowboy Championships in 1924, Tex Austin returned in 1934 to produce the World Championship Rodeo at White City Stadium in Shepherd's Bush, London. "Neither a 'circus' nor a 'show' says the programme of the Rodeo," rhymed a reporter for the *Times*. He recalled the thrilling exhibitions of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show but distinguished sharply between a sporting contest and a spectacle. Also, he concluded, the unhappy accidents and resulting incidents of the 1924 contests were not likely to recur, since "the steer-roping competition [is] carried out on the 'breakway' method, whereby the rope is snapped on a thread the moment the beast is noosed."²⁰

Nevertheless, it was not long before the RSPCA again objected to rodeo activities, and again it involved steer roping. In this case, a cowboy had failed to rope a steer on the first try; then, on the second try, the

¹⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 20, 24 June 1924; *Morning Post*, 19 June 1924.

¹⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 24, 25, 28 June, 8 July 1924.

¹⁷ "London All Worked Up over American Rodeo," *Literary Digest*, 26 July 1924, p. 42; "Pioneers of Empire," *Punch*, 25 June 1924, pp. 686-87.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 16 June 1924; *Era*, 25 June 1924. See also Charles Simpson, *El Rodeo* (London: John Lane, Bradley Head, Limited, 1925).

²⁰ *Times* (London), 11 June 1934.

animal crashed through a wire fence and was knocked out. A summons, resulting from information leveled by the RSPCA, was issued for "permitting a steer to be frightened."²¹ The charges, specifically drawn up for "causing a steer to be cruelly terrified" and "to be cruelly ill-treated," were directed against Austin and cowboy J. Richards. During the annual meeting of the RSPCA on 28 June, Sir Robert Gower expressed intense pleasure in the action of the organization. "It must be a gratification to everyone present when they read in the Press that the rodeo in this country was an eminent failure," he said, "and that the promoters are likely to lose between £20,000 and £40,000."

The hearing, set for 30 June, continued for two days. Austin produced a copy of the rules, "one of which was that any contestant who was in any way cruel was automatically disqualified." When Richards, the steer roper, was asked what happened after the steer went through the fence, he replied, "I rode back to get my hat and cursed a little at my luck." After additional questioning, Magistrate W.J.H. Broderick concluded: "I think the summons must fail. The real objection of the society is to the competition. I cannot express any opinion on that except that this competition is not unlawful and I cannot stop it. If you are going to have competition you must have accidents. This is an accident. I do not think there was any absence of precautions either before or after the accident, and I am impressed further by the fact that no member of the public protested at the time or has come here to protest."²²

The World Championship Rodeo ran from 9 June to 6 July. During this time, it was kept constantly before the public because of troubles that plagued it almost daily. Besides the animal cruelty controversy, the Bishop of London protested that a Sunday benefit performance for the British Hospital Charity endangered "cherished English tradition as regards the observance of Sunday" and was "an outrage on public opinion."²³ The Lord's Day Observance Society threatened legal action against Austin and the National Sporting Club, sponsors of the contest. The society viewed Sunday rodeos as "an affront to Christian public opinion."²⁴

Despite the threat of legal proceedings, the rodeo performance for charity took place, but the attendance was meager—4,000 spectators in a stadium for 75,000. Commander E.W.B. Leake, chairman of the National Sporting Club, distressed over this action "by high persons," said: "I am going to see that the 150 cowboys who have given their

²¹ *Times*, 15 June 1934.

²² *Daily Telegraph*, 26, 29 June, 2 July 1934.

²³ Letter to the editor, *Times*, 15 June 1934.

²⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, 16 June 1934.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 18, 21 June 1934; letter to the editor, *Times*, 23 June 1934.

Sunday for the Hospitals are paid first. They received no wages, they are terribly 'fed up,' and many of them are anxious to get back home. I shudder to think what the reaction in America [will be] when they hear of this attitude of the so-called British sporting public." Writs were issued by H.H. Marten, secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, suing Tex Austin for £100 and the National Sporting Club for £200. The Sunday performances were abandoned, for which the prelate of London expressed his sincere gratitude, although he admitted that he did not mean to condemn the rodeo since he had not seen it and had no time to do so.²⁵ Evidently the public did not support the rodeo, either,

"Comic" books in Europe featured the rodeo, cowboys, and the "Wild West."



but promoter Austin was determined that the contest would continue. He declared to a reporter: "The cowboys and cowgirls taking part in the championships had come from many parts of the world, and £10,000 in prize money had been deposited with a New York bank as a guarantee that it would be paid out to them. . . . The contestants would complete their programme, even before empty seats."²⁶

Although it failed to attract a great number of spectators, the rodeo did receive widespread publicity in England and the United States. Regardless of the efforts made to deprecate the sport of rodeo, an observing *Times* reporter caught the spirit of both the competition and the contestants: "The breath-taking events, . . . the loose limbed ease of the [cowboys] lying or standing round the chutes, . . . the superb indifference in the face of danger. Such physical suppleness and control gives the impression to us over here of watching a new and superior race. . . . Mr. Tex Austin and his fellow-promoters of Rodeo, have, in fact, given us at once the best 'showmanship' and the most thrilling reality. Above all they lift us for a glorious couple of hours clean out of the world of pedestrianism and petrol."²⁷

Although the image of the cowboy was not enhanced by charges of cruelty and unsportsmanlike conduct, by the mid-1930s the recreation and competition of the range cowboy had demonstrated its worth as a spectator entertainment and a true western American sport both at home and abroad.²⁸ Quite another matter, however, was the image of the cowboy abroad as typically wild, devil-may-care, and irresponsible. This image was not particularly improved—at least in Venezuela—by a rodeo held in that country in 1940, six years after the near debacle in England. Nevertheless, it must be said in defense of the contestants involved that they were as much the victims of poor planning and unscrupulous promotion as they were the *enfants terribles* that the Venezuelan press and radio made them out to be.

Early in 1940, C.B. Paul, Jr., and R. Martinez with several Venezuelan backers arranged for a rodeo to be held in Caracas. Thirty-two American contestants signed up to participate. But what was anticipated as a happy frolic away from home became a disaster. Upon arrival in New York for embarkation on the steamship *Santa Rosa*, the troupe

²⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 21 June 1934.

²⁷ *Times*, 1 June 1934.

²⁸ The cowboy skills of riding and roping also appeared as contests in Australia and Canada, countries with cattle industries similar in scale to those found in the United States. Such contests were indigenous and could not be considered imported; however, an American, Guy Weadick, was prominent in the success of the Calgary Stampede in 1912 and thereafter "established himself as one of the outstanding producers of cowboy sports in the Canadian Southwest" (Westemeier, *Man, Beast, Dust*, pp. 321-22). Similarly, a number of American cowboys and cowgirls attended the 1935 stampede during the Melbourne Centenary celebration in Australia. During this visit the American cowboys schooled the Australian contestants in the skill of bulldogging.



Allen Woods riding "The Squirrel," Barossa Valley Festival Rodeo, Australia, about 1950.



Kevin McTaggart was a contestant in "bullock" wrestling at the Barossa Valley Festival Rodeo in Australia about 1950. Jim Eskew, Jr., one-time "World Champion Trick Roper," performs the roping feat that he originated.



received round-trip tickets and one week's salary. Their accommodations, however, were steerage class, which immediately created ill-feeling. After a hectic voyage—including parties, fights, and libationary ports of call—they arrived at Maiquetía, Venezuela. To reach their destination they were driven by bus for what seemed endless miles over a 10,000-foot mountain road to the valley of Caracas. Once there, several members of the troupe were jailed for various offenses, and the United States authorities were obliged to answer their pleas for aid. By the time the rodeo opened, the reputation of the *Norte Americanos* was infamous.

On the first night, the Nuevo Circo was packed. However, not all the stock for the rodeo had arrived, and local animals had been rounded up for the event. Of the American stock that was present, the saddle horses and those of the contract acts were superior, but the local bucking animals that had been scrounged for in Venezuela were somewhat lacking in spirit. At \$7.50 a seat, the first-nighters were disappointed, although George Yardley, a bulldogger, downed a steer in about five minutes amid screams, shouts, and applause.

Following a relatively successful first week—despite the discontentment of the patrons, injuries among the cowboys, and inferior local stock—spectator interest began to wane. Meanwhile, the South American promoters absconded with the gate receipts for the first night. All this led to more indiscretions, misunderstandings, and altercations. For some cowboys, it also led to forty-eight hours in jail, with a promise of release on the condition that they leave the country on the next ship back to the United States.

New problems arose when the captain of the *Santa Rosa* refused to take the entire company together. The group was then divided (married couples were given first priority for the bus ride and the earlier passage) and the remainder, led by a guide, rode horseback out of Caracas over a shorter, more hazardous route to the port city. They sailed home a week later on the *Santa Paula*.²⁹

As war clouds gathered, the invitation contests came to an end. In 1937 plans had been made to take a Wild West show and rodeo to Germany, but the expansion program of the Third Reich made such a venture too risky. However, during the war cowboy GIs were scattered throughout the world, and their enthusiasm for the sport stimulated rodeos in France, Italy, China, England, India, and the South Pacific islands.³⁰

After peace was restored in Europe, the Texas Cow-boys Rodeo, a three-day event, was held at the Palais Des Expositions in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 1948. The rodeo company, which was on a European tour, had already had difficulties in Belgium. According to the promoter, Larry Sunbrock (who had long been on the Rodeo Cowboys' Association blacklist), the Belgians did not understand the American contest: they had booed the cowboys who were bucked off the broncs and expected ten-minute rides instead of the official ten seconds.³¹

The Saturday night opening in Geneva on 23 October was uneventful, but the Sunday evening performance more than made up for any lack of excitement. On this night the American cowboys offered 1,000 francs to anyone who could ride Income Tax, a sorrel bronc, for at least ten seconds—a challenge that was accepted by a Swiss man named Michaud. However, when Michaud succeeded in accomplishing the feat, the cowboys refused to make good on the bet, claiming that he had ridden another horse named Fifty instead of Income Tax. This challenge led to an argument that blossomed into a fist fight and finally into a typical western-style free-for-all with the Swiss police. During the melee, a trick rider was knocked unconscious, and her husband went so far as to demand settlement by a duel with pistols. Nothing came of this challenge, but twenty-seven of a troupe of forty were sent to jail and the final performance was cancelled. Sunbrock, whom the Swiss designated "chief of the tribe," was ordered to pay \$250 for alleged infractions, torn uniforms, lost buttons, and other police property damage. In addition, the animals of the rodeo were sequestered. Finally, in spite of having to pay a settlement, the troupe faced expulsion from the country without delay.³²

The horses and donkeys that had been seized along with the cowboys' gear were held at the station while the troupe, in small groups, was conducted to the border. In Annemasse, a French border post, the party searched for a hotel and finally located one near the railroad station. They did not reveal their future plans to the police, but authorization for their stay was granted provided that they did not seek work.³³

The Communist newspaper *Voix Ouvrière* had a field day with the incident and referred to the cowboys as a "group of savages" and a "band of Apaches" who had come to Switzerland "in application of the Marshal Plan"; Harry L. Troutman, the United States consul, was also

²⁹ Westermeyer, *Man, Beast, Dust*, pp. 335-37. See also Bobby Estes, "Dodge City, Venezuela," *Old West* 5 (Winter 1948): 2-7, 68; Herbert S. Maddy, "Eastern Rodeo Chat," *Hoofs and Horns* 9 (May 1940): 12.

³⁰ Westermeyer, *Man, Beast, Dust*, pp. 330-31, 334. See also *Hoofs and Horns*, September 1942, p. 10; May 1944, p. 10; September 1944, p. 12; May 1945, p. 13; July 1945, p. 15; October 1945, pp. 13, 14; November

1945, p. 12; *Western Horseman Magazine*, September-October 1944, pp. 16, 141; March-April 1945, pp. 4-5.

³¹ *Denver Post*, 26 October 1948.

³² *Voix Ouvrière* (Geneva), 25 October 1948; *La Suisse* (Geneva), 26 October 1948.

³³ *La Suisse*, 27 October 1948.

subjected to severe criticism. Furthermore, the Italian consulate-general refused to deliver visas to the "desperadoes" and suggested that they be sent to France.³⁴ Three days later *La Suisse* happily reported that "l'affaire du Rodeo est liquidée." But the saga of the Sunbrook rodeo did not end with the Swiss adventure and, in truth, the company was headed for more trouble.

Despite the Italian consulate-general's threat, Geordano Sacchi, "an angel from Milan," bailed out the troupe in France and brought them to the neighboring country. The impounded animals were to be shipped directly to Milan for an opening performance. But before a performance could be given, the hotel owner put a lien on the stock and the equipment for nonpayment of room and board. Other claims were made against the promoter and the troupe, all of whom ended up in jail, and the projected European travel plan collapsed.³⁵

While the Caracas and Geneva episodes may have damaged the image of the cowboy and the rodeo abroad, unrealistic expectations based on cultural differences of the various countries sometimes prevented foreign spectators from fully appreciating this western sport. In 1956 Bob Estes of Texas promoted another European rodeo that had engagements in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Denmark. His Lone Star Ranch Rodeo included forty rodeo performers and forty bucking horses, thirty-six saddle horses, sixteen bulldogging steers, six Longhorn steers, fifteen Brahma bulls, and one mule, and more than one thousand bales of hay and ten tons of grain.³⁶

Paris newspapers advertised the event and covered it extensively. With true Parisian enthusiasm Philippe Bouvard, columnist for *Le Figaro*, reported the opening in great detail, although he was greatly disturbed by a know-it-all five-year-old who was unimpressed by the Indians. "Leurs haches sont en caoutchouc comme des miennes" ("Their hatchets are rubber like mine"), the youngster had said.³⁷ Yet there was nothing like this in other accounts to temper the excitement of the French at the sight of the rodeo. André Lafargue began his article for *Le Parisien* with an exuberant "Youpee!" and Claude Sarraute, correspondent for *Le Monde*, noted that the spectacle reminded him of what Buffalo Bill's Wild West had started—the riding of wild horses, thrilling performances of roping, typical Indian dances, and "the inevitable hold-up of the Deadwood coach."³⁸

³⁴ *Voix Ouvrière*, 27 October 1948; *La Suisse*, 27 October 1948.

³⁵ "Hash Bowl" for Larry," *The Buckboard* 4 (January 1949): 16.

³⁶ "Rodeo Goes to Europe," *Rodeo Sports News* 4 (15 April 1956): 1. In *Hoofs and Horns* "Rodeo to Europe," 25 (April 1956): 15; "Rodeo to Europe," 25 (May 1956): 6.

³⁷ Philippe Bouvard, "Western Au Palais Des Sports," *Le Figaro*, 21-22 April 1956.

³⁸ André Lafargue, "Peux Rouges et Visages Pales," *Le Parisien*, 23 April 1956; Claude Sarraute, "Le Rodeo A Paris," *Le Monde*, 24 April 1956.

LES 9,16,23 AOUT A 16H.



1 MILLION D'A.F. DE PRIMES

BUCKING HORSE RIDING monte de chevaux sauvages

SAUT DE CHEVAL A TAUREAU **BULL DOGGING**

steer riding
MONTE DE TAUREAUX SAUVAGES

BRONCHOS * LONGHORNS
* BRAHMAS * BŒUFS MEXICAINS *

PISTE RODEO ORION PLOCH BADET
* SAINTES MARIES DE LA MER *
GENERALE 5^e TRIBUNE 10^e

A handbill advertising the 1956 rodeo in the Camargue area of France.

Following their success in Paris, the Lone Star Ranch Rodeo troupe appeared in several French cities, including Arles, Marseille, Nîmes, and Saintes Maries de la Mer. By this time the Americans had begun to discover that while the French were enthusiastic about rodeo, they did not completely understand the strong emphasis placed on competition and the significance of the purse—that is, the financial guarantee of the host cities or the entry fees paid by the contestants. The Lone Star Ranch Rodeo was conducted on the basis of an approved rodeo in the United States, with purses of \$2,500 per week in addition to guaranteed weekly salaries. The plans for the European tour had been completed after a year of negotiations that included careful financial arrangements. Now, however, misunderstandings developed. The French were sensitive to the pro-American attitude of the visitors and believed that profit was the outstanding motive of the organization.

Gilbert Colomb de Daunant, former French liaison officer with the United States Army in World War II and a resident of Nîmes, tried to explain the impasse. As an admirer of the United States, Americans, and ranch-oriented men in particular, he was distressed by the seeming chasm of misunderstanding that had arisen between the two groups of people.³⁹ In an interview he commented on the longstanding French admiration for the American West and the cowboys, as well as the intense French interest in Indian lore.⁴⁰ According to Daunant, this rich frontier heritage was, for the French, something on which a price could not be placed. He sensed a mystical relationship between the *gardians* (cowboys) of the Camargue region of southern France and the American cowboy that included freedom, individuality, independence, and lore—all unique to horsemen. The work of the *gardians* was just that—work—and the folklore that grew up around it was treated as something freely offered to those not so fortunate as to be associated with the cult. Although Daunant and his compatriots were fully aware that the expenses of a large-scale rodeo tour had to be met, they shuddered at the financial wheeling and dealing of the Americans. Monetary tags were not to be placed on something as precious as heritage. Rodeo, they asserted, began as a cattle roundup, together with the social aspects of the fiesta, festival, and carnival; these had become commercialized and were now big business.

If the rodeo abroad had of necessity become big business, this often

meant that problems were more extreme than they would have been at home and the contestants or performers more vulnerable to the hazards of poor attendance, inadequate preparation by the host countries, or financial collapse. The Brussels World's Fair program in 1958, for example, featured entertainment from many countries, but none more colorful or exciting than the American Wild West Show of Los Angeles and Denver. The organization, designated sometimes by newspapers as a Wild West show and rodeo or a Wild West show, was not, in fact, a true rodeo.⁴¹ But the company included such notables as G. Robert Fleming, Edward C. Flynn, George Murphy, Bob Hope, Red Skelton, Amon Carter, Jr., and Gene Autry—coproducers and investors for the \$500,000 venture. Among its seventy-seven cowboys and cowgirls were also such stars as Casey Tibbs, the late Bill Linderman, and an array of rodeo folk that would be the envy of any contest held in the United States. Approximately fifty-seven Oglala Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, led by David William Beautiful Bald Eagle, lent additional authenticity to the show.

Their arrival in Belgium was without incident, but shortly thereafter a number of difficulties arose. A \$90,000 air-inflated building, constructed especially for the show, was destroyed in a high wind accompanied by torrential rains, and the performers were left at the mercy of frequent downpours. The location of the showgrounds was difficult to reach and little known, even to the people of Brussels, and no parking space had been provided. The show opened on 18 June, but after a month of bad weather worse luck loomed—the performers had not been paid and the organization was broke. The show closed in the red on 13 July. Coproducer Verne Elliot reported that the Belgian creditors moved to attach the livestock and equipment and that counter legal action was contemplated.⁴² Producer Fleming attempted to elicit an emergency loan from the Department of State since, although the show was “not officially part of the American exhibit, [it] aroused enthusiastic responses from customers and substantial good will for the United States.” But “neither state nor USIA [had] any funds on hand . . . to bail out a commercial venture.” Fleming then turned to private interests, again without success.⁴³

The fifty-seven Sioux, who had been promised seventy-five dollars a week and living quarters, sold their colorful feathered headdresses in order to eat, and some pitched their tepees on the fairgrounds because they could not afford hotel rooms. The American embassy finally came

³⁹ Interview with Gilbert Colomb de Daunant at Mas de Caclarel of Sir Denys Colomb de Daunant, near Saintes-Maries de la Mer, Camargue, France, 2 November 1967. See letter, 30 November 1967, Westermeyer Western History Collection, Boulder, Colorado.

⁴⁰ This admiration was also affirmed by Maurice Derumaux in an interview with the author, 28 September 1967. See Monique Holtz, “Dreams behind a Camera,” *Western Horseman Magazine* 38 (November 1968): 30, 32, 135-57; Charles J. Belden, “Home on the Seine,” *Honey Lover's Magazine*, December 1961 to January 1962, pp. 30-31.

⁴¹ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 21 July 1958.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11, 17 July 1958.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1958.

to their aid with cash advances and transportation by plane and bus back to the Pine Ridge Reservation. After some delay those remaining in the troupe were declared Americans in distress and were flown back; according to one account, "it took [them] two days and nights [for the return trip] on a very small plane." A few cowboys remained to care for the stock until the affairs of the company, both legal and financial, were settled. Later, however, two Belgian creditors filed charges against the organization for issuing bad checks.⁴⁴

In spite of the unfortunate precedent set by many rodeos and Wild West shows abroad, in 1970 the Rodeo Far West scheduled an impressive tour of thirty cities throughout Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Austria. Preparations for this \$1.5 million "full-scale, authentic" rodeo abroad took manager Raymond Ivory (better known as Buster, a former contestant and later secretary-manager of the Rodeo Cowboys' Association) most of the previous year to prepare. The troupe consisted of some fifty cowboys and cowgirls from the United States and Canada as well as sixteen Sioux. They were accompanied by three hundred head of stock (eighty of which were saddle horses) and covered wagons and stagecoaches.

The arrival of the animals and equipment in Livorno, Italy—where they were met by the contestants, contract performers, and Indians—seemed auspicious. The United States Army offered to keep the unloaded stock, gear, and other equipment on its base at Camp Darby, and in appreciation the troupe held a free rodeo for soldiers and townspeople. However, as soon as the tour began the rodeo ran into trouble. In Genoa, for instance, all preparations had been made—including the construction of pens and chutes, the hauling of dirt to cover the arena floor, and the posting of money for permission to contest—when a protest from a European circus union cancelled the event. In Rome the splendid Plazzo Dello Sports posed another problem. To reach it, the troupe and its equipment had to cross privately owned property, and a permit was absolutely necessary, as well as permits for all the posters. Regarding the Italian response to the rodeo, one American observer commented that "the locals don't appreciate the skills involved in rodeo events: they think the animals are trained and tame. Even worse, some of them can't tell cowboys from Indians."⁴⁵ However, a successful stand in Torino, which netted \$50,000 and many appreciative spectators, bolstered the morale of the troupe. In part this

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18, 19, 21, 25, 31 July 1958.

⁴⁵ *Denver Post*, 5 April 1970.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 10 May 1970; Jerry Armstrong, "Picked Up in the Rodeo Arena," *Western Horseman Magazine* 36 (March 1971): 148.

can be attributed to Bert Nelson, a bilingual announcer who replaced an Italian sportscaster unfamiliar with rodeo.

In Zurich, Switzerland, the next destination of Rodeo Far West, difficulties arose with customs and the local humane society because the horses were pictured with bits in their mouths. The authorities were satisfied after local breeders of quarter horses explained the purpose of the bits, and, on the whole, the Swiss adventure was memorable. The Hallenstadion was a fine arena, the weather remained ideal, the atmosphere refreshingly clear, and, most of all, the environment was "spic-and-span clean." The rodeo folk enjoyed the hotels, restaurants, and shops; many of them bought watches and other souvenirs, and those who could ski enjoyed the spectacular runs in the Swiss Alps.⁴⁶

Then the tour schedule took the troupe to Rouen, France, where the stock had to be transported by truck to an outlying farm. Here, the Rodeo Far West came to an end with its final performance in an outdoor arena where rain fell every day and attendance was negligible. At the same time the world financial crisis persuaded the rodeo managers to terminate the venture. Early in May the stock and equipment were put up for sale and the last of the company started for home.⁴⁷

"All around Cowboy, 1951-52" and six times saddle bronc riding champion, Casey Tibbs rides at the Calgary Stampede in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Tibbs was also a motion picture and television star.



Evidently, none of the heartbreaks, disappointments, or financial difficulties of previous promoters of Wild West shows or rodeos abroad was a deterrent to further ventures. Following a successful second annual Casey Tibbs Rodeo and Cowboy Reunion in June 1973 at the National Horseman's Arena in West Pueblo, Colorado, Tibbs and a troupe of cowboys went on a tour of Japan.⁴⁸ When asked about the tour, Tibbs succinctly expressed the problems that are inherent in taking the rodeo abroad. "Promotion of this kind can sure get a man down. You have to have a half-dozen interpreters and when you try to explain a bucking chute and a corral to [the] Japanese, your work is sure cut out for you." But, he added, "The Japanese really have a big interest in the old West and in cowboys and Indians. I think we're going to have a big season there."⁴⁹

The rugged competitions of the rodeo never achieved the level of success or acceptance abroad that the lavish, spectator-oriented Wild West shows received. The combination of a Wild West show and a rodeo on a brief tour met with meager success. In most instances, however, finances, transportation, weather, local customs, and quarantines presented insurmountable difficulties. A lack of communication with the host city as well as a local misunderstanding of cowboy skills contributed to the poor reception of rodeos abroad. Enamored with the heroic image of the folk hero of the American West, the spectators abroad were not as willing to accept the rodeo contestant as a part of their image of "the cowboy."

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⁴⁷ Armstrong, "Picked Up in the Rodeo Arena," pp. 148-49.

⁴⁸ In *Rodeo Sports News*, "Casey again Sets Reunion in Colorado," 15 May 1973, p. 8; "News from the Committee," 1 June 1973, p. 4; "Pueblo West again Hosts 'Old-Timers,'" 1 July 1973, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Denver Post*, 24 May 1973.