

The Ordeal of Colorado's Germans during World War 1*

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When the guns of August 1914 sounded the beginning of war in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson called upon the American people to be "impartial in thought as well as in action." This was a sensible posture for the United States to adopt. The American Republic, after all, had no direct stake in the European feud. Furthermore, this nation held important links with belligerents on both sides. We were closely tied to Great Britain economically and through language, culture, and political traditions. At the same time the United States had been markedly influenced by Germany. Over eight million people resided here who were born or had one or both parents who were born in Germany. Beyond this consideration, countless intellectual, religious, and political leaders had been educated in German universities or in the scores of American institutions of higher learning that bore an indelible stamp of German academic tradition. Likewise, the Progressive movement, which was popular at every level of American politics on the eve of the war, had received an important impetus from German reform movements.

Despite Wilson's efforts to preserve neutrality, events conspired to bring the United States into the conflict. War was declared on Germany in April 1917 to be followed by a declaration against Austria-Hungary in December. Ironically, as the young men of America marched off to Europe to "save the world for democracy," the rights of man suffered a major setback on the home front.

Little research has been done on the way German-Americans and aliens were treated in the United States during World War I.¹ While we are quite aware of the immoral way people of

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¹ A new, comprehensive treatment of many facets of German-Americans during the war is Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans during World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois

Japanese ancestry were treated in America during World War II, we know less of the indignities poured upon Germans a generation earlier. Significantly, our formal and informal policies toward people of German origins foreshadowed the barbaric policies toward the Japanese after Pearl Harbor. Although it will take other case studies to show if the suffering of the Germans in Colorado was typical, the Colorado newspapers during 1917-18 are replete with stories of indignities suffered by Germans from states in every corner of the nation, which suggest that Colorado was in the mainstream of national activity.²

The census of 1910 shows that out of a total Colorado population of nearly eight hundred thousand, approximately fifty-six thousand residents were born in Germany or had one or both parents who were German born. Over twenty-one thousand residents claimed Austria as their birth place or the birth place of at least one parent. Combined, nearly ten percent of Colorado's population was German and Austrian.³ Over ninety percent of these residents were citizens of the United States, and the vast majority of all of these people, both citizens and aliens, conducted themselves as loyal Americans.

As soon as America's declaration of war against Germany was imminent, the Germans were legion who went on record as loyal to the Stars and Stripes. In late 1916 Colorado's only German-

language newspaper, the *Denver Colorado Herald*, ran an editorial that proclaimed "Für Amerika Zunächst" ("for America first") in the event that America went to war against Germany.⁴ *Herald* editor E. C. Steinmann continually spoke out on the loyalty of German-Americans. He argued that most of his fellow countrymen came to America to escape German militarism and that they unequivocally supported President Wilson. Steinmann published a booklet on the contributions Germans had made to the United States. The booklet contained entries on German-American patriots in the American Revolution and the Civil War as well as sections on outstanding statesmen and inventors. Appropriately, the cover was adorned with an American flag.⁵

A German-born banker, Godfrey Schirmer, joined Steinmann in pointing to German loyalty. President of the German-American Trust Company in Denver, Schirmer purchased a full-page advertisement in the *Denver Post* that made it clear that the bank had no investments in foreign countries and was no agent of alien governments. According to Schirmer, the German-American Trust Company was "founded twelve years ago by American citizens—its officers, directors, stockholders and a major portion of its depositors are American citizens, with unswerving loyalty to American policies, American institutions and American patriotism, practically everything they own or have was derived from American industries. They and their children have been educated in American schools, and each heart throbs and every fiber of their body vibrates with the true spirit of Americanism."⁶ In hopes of reaching still more people who might question the loyalty of German-Americans, Schirmer persuaded Colorado's Senator John Shafroth to read a statement into the *Congressional Record* on the patriotism of German-Americans in the West.⁷ Schirmer also went to Governor Julius Gunter and pledged all the resources of the state's German community to the war effort.⁸

In the same vein, a noted minister, the Reverend G. A. Schmidt, contacted Governor Gunter and offered his services.

University Press, 1974). Two works, Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1968), and Carl Wittke, *The Germans in America: A Student's Guide to Localized History* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967), generalize conditions faced by Germans. Few documented case studies exist. Those that are helpful in placing Colorado into the national perspective are: Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War: With Special Emphasis on Ohio's German-Language Press* (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936); Neil M. Johnson, "The Patriotism and Anti-Prussianism of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1914-1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 39 (October 1966):99-118; Frederick C. Luebke, "The German-American Alliance in Nebraska, 1910-1917," *Nebraska History* 49 (Summer 1968): 165-86; Robert N. Manley, "Language, Loyalty, and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (April 1964):1-16; Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Reacts to United States Anti-Germanism during World War I," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 25 (July 1962):48-66; Clifford L. Nelson, *German-American Political Behavior in Nebraska and Wisconsin, 1916-1920*, Publication no. 217 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1972). [Ed. Because of a lack of diverse primary source material on this topic, this study is largely based on newspaper accounts. The University of Denver is assembling a German-American collection and is seeking German language newspapers published in Colorado as well as diaries, letters, and other manuscript materials pertaining to German-Americans in the state. For further information, contact Dr. Lyle Dorsett, Department of History, University of Denver, 80210.]

² For example, news items on anti-German activities, some of which were outright atrocities, were reported in the *Denver Post* from Missouri (16 July 1917), New York (20 November 1917), Nebraska (19 August 1917), Oregon (21 October 1917), West Virginia (20 January 1918), Illinois (15 June 1917), and in the *Boulder Daily Camera* from the South (4 April 1917).

³ U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstract of the Census, "Supplement for Colorado,"* Chap. 2, p. 589. Only rarely did Coloradans, or American public opinion in general, differentiate between Germans and Austrians. Both national groups, because of their common language and wartime alliance, were given the blanket designation of German.

⁴ *Denver Colorado Herald*, 31 December 1916. Over thirty German-language newspapers were published in Colorado at various times. During World War I only the *Denver Colorado Herald* was in business. The *Herald* published a daily and a weekly from Denver, and there was a special edition for Greeley, which came out of Denver as well.

⁵ *Denver Post*, 30 August 1917; *Denver Colorado Herald*, special magazine section, 26 January 1918.

⁶ *Denver Post*, 3 April 1917.

⁷ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, Special Session of the Senate, 65th Cong., 1st sess., 6 April 1917, 65, pt. 1: 440-1.

⁸ *Denver Post*, 4 April 1917.



Julius Gunter, governor of Colorado from 1917 through 1919.

Being fluent in English and German, he believed that he could help organize programs to hasten Americanization of Germans in Colorado.⁹ Jacob V. Schaetzel, a respected attorney, addressed a throng of more than six hundred German Alliance members.¹⁰ He received a standing ovation for a speech, which concluded that "this is our country, our flag, and we will defend it until the last drop of blood. It is an unhappy struggle, but we appreciate the circumstances."¹¹

More than well known business and professional people spoke out to persuade non-German-Americans of their abiding patriotism. A young lady from Munich who was doing domestic work in Mack, Colorado, advertised her desire to be of service to her adopted country in any capacity, even if it required moving to Denver. A totally blind German alien, Otto Max Deutrich, attracted attention when he registered for the draft in downtown

Denver. A Sterling youth, the son of German parents, proudly enlisted in the United States Navy, as did scores of other young men of German ancestry.¹²

The testimonies of German-American loyalty were numerous; they came early in the war and for its duration. Nevertheless, they offered little comfort to many Coloradans. Hysteria swept the state. Having the sons and daughters of an enemy nation in their midst was too much for some people to cope with rationally. Countless citizens, including those in positions of responsibility, were convinced that Colorado's power plants and water systems were prime targets of the German kaiser. Armed guards were placed around the plants of the Denver Union Water Company and the Colorado National Guard patrolled the reservoir. One night an unidentified man was seen near the reservoir. Guards shot at him but missed. Because he fled, the conclusion of the guards and the press was that he was a German saboteur. The governor evidently believed the Colorado Power Company to be in danger too, because he kept it surrounded by members of the National Guard.¹³

"The plots of pro-German conspirators," as the *Denver Post* described what the state feared, appeared in other places, if only in the public imagination.¹⁴ Certainly German agents were after the food supply as well as the utilities. Denver police claimed to have decoded a letter that outlined a "Hun plot" to attack a creamery. And the entire state was warned that sausages (frequently German made) might contain ground glass.¹⁵ Still other enemy schemes were envisioned. A Boulder newspaper editor cautioned that "there are mines laid and the power of one individual to touch off a terrible explosion is terrible." It was rumored that Mexican agents were on their way to Weld County to enlist Mexican migrant workers to return to their home country to join the Germans in attacking the United States. And there was the frightful disclosure that Germany had a powerful wireless station atop one of Colorado's highest peaks. Although it had not been located, authorities were confident that the station was being used to send messages to enemy submarines in the Pacific.¹⁶

⁹ The Reverend G. A. Schmidt to Julius C. Gunter, 25 May 1917. Correspondence, 1917, Julius C. Gunter Papers, Colorado Division of State Archives and Public Records, Denver.

¹⁰ The German Alliance, a social and cultural society of German-Americans, was a national organization with chapters in various states and cities. Their purpose was to meet regularly so that Germans could socialize and promote the preservation of German culture (see fn. 1).

¹¹ *Denver Post*, 8 October 1917.

¹² See examples in *Denver Post*, 26 August, 5 June, 7 May 1917.

¹³ *Denver Post*, 12 April, 29 June, 23 November 1917.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23 November 1917.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1918, 24 September 1917.

¹⁶ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 3 February 1917; *Denver Post*, 24 April, 6 July 1917.

Evidenced from reading the newspapers, the growing hysteria caused harm to innocent citizens. Three men were harassed and taken for investigation at Glenwood Springs for photographing a railroad tunnel. Another man, because he had a German accent, was arrested on suspicion of being a spy. Two Germans were found loitering near the State Capitol and it was assumed they intended to assassinate the governor. A woman alerted federal agents of the Secret Service, under the United States Attorney General's office, to a meeting of several suspicious-looking, bearded men. When armed guards crashed the clandestine meeting, it was discovered that they were members of the Grand Army of the Republic who were making plans for remembering United States soldiers at Christmas.¹⁷

Thoughtful Coloradoans realized that Kaiser Wilhelm had more pressing priorities than assassinating Governor Gunter, organizing migrant, Mexican farm laborers, and contaminating Denver's water system. Opportunists, though, recognized that the widespread fear of German plots could be useful. "Hun conspirators" quickly became scapegoats for a variety of economic ills. Labor agitation for safer working conditions and higher wages in Colorado's mine fields was conveniently rationalized as treason. The *Denver Post* printed a front-page cartoon depicting Uncle Sam "canning" a man in a jar labeled "German Paid Strike Agitator."¹⁸ One of Colorado's senators read "evidence" into the *Congressional Record* that showed the Industrial Workers of the World to be in alliance with Germany.¹⁹ Because so many Germans and Austrians worked in the mines, such an argument was appealing. When Governor Gunter was called upon by an influential banker in Trinidad to send in troops when a strike threatened, he candidly replied that "if the people could all understand that the guards which I should send were to protect the properties against alien enemies and not to reach any strike situation, it might accomplish my purpose without causing any friction."²⁰

Labor unrest was not the only problem blamed on the German-Americans. When the stock market dropped, Germans,



UNCLE SAM: "I'LL REFORM WHAT I CAN AND WHAT I CAN'T REFORM—I'LL CAN!"

Denver Post, 12 August 1917.

naturally, were out to destroy confidence in America's free enterprise system.²¹ Discovery of harmful substances in packaged cereals and patent medicines was never the fault of careless processors and manufacturers—the long arm of the Fatherland was reaching across the ocean once more.²² When American Indians in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Nevada opposed the draft law, their opposition could not have been based on an understandable disdain for a government that had confiscated their lands. On the contrary, German agents had infiltrated the tribes.²³ German vandals, likewise, were said to be responsible for nearly every case of arson, cattle rustling, and unauthorized livestock slaughter that took place during the war.²⁴

The German issue was used in Colorado politics too. When Julius Gunter decided to seek reelection, one of his campaign

¹⁷ *Denver Post*, 2 June, 8, 7 April, 26 November 1917. During World War I, the Secret Service was directed by A. Mitchell Palmer. "As Alien Property Custodian, 1917-19, he was widely criticized for his handling of some \$600,000,000 worth of enemy property; as U.S. attorney-general, 1919-21, he was denounced in liberal circles for his onslaught on domestic radicalism, particularly his raids on private homes and deportation of aliens" (*Concise Dictionary of American Biography* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964], p. 762).

¹⁸ *Denver Post*, 12 August 1917.

¹⁹ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Cong. Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess., 28 June 1917, 65, pt. 5: 4395-96.

²⁰ Gunter to J. C. Hudelson, 11 July 1917, Correspondence, 1917, Gunter Papers.

²¹ *Denver Post*, 2 November 1917.

²² *Ibid.*, 16 September, 11 August 1917.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23 February, 17 August 1918.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 June, 16 July, 10 August, 18, 20, 21 November 1917.

posters read: "Pro-Germans don't want an efficient leadership in Colorado. They will welcome a change in administration." Conversely, both Gunter and Denver's Mayor Robert Speer were attacked by political opponents for appointing German-born, naturalized citizens to government posts.²⁵

Gunter was charged with being pro-German, and the *Denver Post* frequently attached the label "Kaiser Bob" to Mayor Speer. But these labels and accusations were mild in contrast to the image of the German nation and its people that was placed before the public eye. President Wilson had asked the American people to remain "impartial" on the war, but the editor of the *Boulder Daily Camera* on 10 August 1914 charged that "had it not been for the Kaiser's craze for war untold misery would have been averted." By 1915 the same editor confidently concluded that the kaiser and his henchmen "and no one else, are responsible for the war."²⁶ The influential *Denver Post* refused to take sides until the United States had declared war. From then on, though, a flood of hate poured from its pages. Raping and pillaging Germans took every woman between the ages of fourteen and thirty with them as they marched through France, the *Post* reported. "Huns Sterilize French Youths" to eradicate French manpower, the *Post* continued, and French babies were speared with bayonets and then delivered to "frantic mothers."²⁷ German women were not overlooked as Colorado's newspaper editors fabricated images of Germany. German women were allegedly ordered to make love on the command of any man. This kaiser-directed policy was aimed at producing more babies who would ultimately support the war effort. And the "Infidelity of German War Brides" was driving soldiers on the front to suicide.²⁸

This barrage of anti-German stories appealed to the baser instincts of many citizens. Believing that Germany was in truth "The Beast," and that the United States was "fighting the forces of hell," numerous citizens saw Colorado as Armageddon.²⁹ In fighting the forces of the devil, the crusaders turned the state into a virtual hell for countless local Germans. A superintendent of schools near Grand Junction was tarred and feathered for us-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 August 1918, 6 July 1917, 14 January, 11 September 1918.

²⁶ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 12 July 1915.

²⁷ *Denver Post*, 3 June, 22 October 1917, 27 January 1918.

²⁸ *Central City Weekly-Register-Pall*, 1 March 1918; *Denver Post*, 10 June 1917; *Boulder Daily Camera*, 1 June 1917.

²⁹ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 1 March 1917; *Denver Post*, 28 October 1917.

ing a book that said favorable things about Germany. He was told to leave the region or face hanging.³⁰ A German-American farm hand near Hygiene was stripped to the waist and a yellow stripe was painted down the middle of his back.³¹ A registered alien was attacked by a mob of men in Denver. He was taken from his place of employment, a rope was put around his neck, and he was walked through the downtown streets. After being forced to bow down publicly and kiss the American flag, he collapsed and was taken to a hospital in serious condition.³² A gang of soldiers beat a man who allegedly made a pro-German statement, and the Delta County 100% American Club threatened to paint yellow crosses on the homes of all unpatriotic residents.³³ When a naturalized American citizen from Austria made a business trip to Hugo to sell lighting fixtures, he was taken to a railroad bridge, a rope was placed around his neck, and he was forced to kiss the American flag. Law enforcement agents saved his life by putting him in jail.³⁴

ANGRY CITIZENS OF HUGO, COLO. FORCE DENVERITE TO KISS FLAG

HENRY W. DEUTSCH, A NATIVE OF AUSTRIA, WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A DEMONSTRATION OF PATRIOTISM AT HUGO, COLO., LAST NIGHT, AND THE COMMITTEE OF CITIZENS WHO SPIRITED HIM AWAY FROM HUGO AND BROUGHT HIM TO DENVER.

Denver Post, 5 December 1917.

Scores of Germans who escaped brutality were subjected to more subtle forms of degradation. It is impossible to say how many people lost their sources of income, but newspapers warned citizens to boycott German salespeople. "German Peddlers Sell Poisoned Soap" and court plasters sold by German merchants contain typhus and tetanus germs were among the warnings posted in newspapers.³⁵ Some German-Americans were personally singled out for attack. The *Denver Post* discovered that one of Gunter's appointees to the State Council of Defense,

³⁰ *Denver Post*, 13 April 1918.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 9 May 1918.

³² *Ibid.*, 4 March 1918.

³³ *Ibid.*, 8 February, 10 January 1918. The 100% American Club was a state organization with county branches, organized by citizens (not the federal government) as a self-appointed watchdog over "un-American" activities. Another watchdog agency was the Colorado Protective League, sanctioned by the Colorado Council of Defense (*Colorado Council of Defense Weekly Newsletter*, no. 25, March 1918, no. 33, May 1918, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver [hereinafter SHSC]).

³⁴ *Denver Post*, 5 December 1917.

³⁵ See examples in *Denver Post*, 25 July, 1, 3, 5 August, 24 November 1917.



Denver Post, 11 September 1918.

Ernest Morris, was born in Prussia. "The Prussian Rat," as the *Post* labeled the well known Denver attorney, was depicted in a front-page cartoon complete with Prussian uniform, helmet, and Iron Cross. The editor acknowledged that Morris was a naturalized citizen but emphasized that Germans were allowed to retain the citizenship of their fatherland even after becoming United States citizens.³⁶ When Weld County residents learned that their deputy county clerk was German born, they demanded his resignation.³⁷ And as soon as it was discovered that the city and county clerk of Denver, Charles Lammers, was a naturalized citizen of German birth, public pressure, guided by the *Post*, forced him to surrender his function of issuing permits for purchasing and handling explosives.³⁸

German-Americans and registered aliens suffered more than physical abuse, character assassination, and loss of jobs. Civil liberties were abridged as well. An editorial in the *Boulder Daily Camera*, reflecting the sentiments of many public officials and

private citizens, stated that "today no American citizen has the moral or legal right to stand up for Germany. The president and the congress have defined our status; we are at war with Germany. He who is not for prosecution of that war is a traitor to his country and may be treated as such. Neither by printed word nor by speech shall any citizen now speak for Germany until peace shall have been proclaimed. One can't be an American and be pro-German. The two are incompatible."³⁹

That free expression was discouraged, if not openly denied, can also be documented from the newspapers. Employees of the city of Denver were instructed not to utter a word that was pro-German if they wanted to keep their jobs. A teacher was suspended from North Denver High School for "unpatriotic" utterances. When Alma Glück, a nationally renowned opera soprano, sang some German folk songs during a Red Cross fundraising dinner, she was ridiculed. Her performance led a bill posters' union to stop posting all signs that advertised German music, drama, or opera.⁴⁰

By early 1918 the German language was dropped from the curriculum of the Denver high schools. Prior to that time, however, students boycotted the course of instruction and those who did enroll had to apologize for doing so.⁴¹ Lutheran schools in Colorado stopped teaching German, and all books in German were taken out of the libraries. In Boulder the preparatory school of the University of Colorado sponsored a "book burning" rally. The public was invited to throw in books written in German as well as those in English that made favorable comments about Germans or Germany.⁴²

It was alleged that three-fourths of the University of Colorado's faculty was pro-German due to the fact that so many of the professors were educated in German universities. Reporters claimed that the only way some were quieted was when federal Secret Service agents threatened them with dismissal. The University of Denver's academic freedom was threatened as pressure was brought to bear on Chancellor Henry A. Buchtel to ban instruction in German. To Buchtel's credit, he resisted those pressures.⁴³ Some of the students at the University

³⁶ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 6 April 1917.

³⁷ *Denver Post*, 29 November, 2, 3 December 1917, 20 April 1918.

³⁸ *Fifteenth Annual Report of School District Number 1 in the City and County of Denver, Colorado, 1917-1918* (Denver: Denver Public Schools, 1918); *Denver Post*, 22 September 1917.

³⁹ *Denver Post*, 20 December 1917, 22 June, 6 July 1918.

⁴⁰ *Denver Post*, 31 December 1917, 19 April 1918. Michael McGiffert, *The Higher Learning in Colorado: An Historical Study, 1860-1940* (Denver: Sage Books, 1964) contains evidence that two

³⁶ *Denver Post*, 11 September 1918.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1918.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-18 January 1918.

of Denver, on the other hand, had less appreciation for a free trade of ideas. *Die Lustigen Deutschen* ("the Merry Germans"), one of the university's German clubs, was dissolved by the students. In a patriotic ceremony, twenty-five women students, all former members of the club, "gathered on the campus . . . and with solemn last rites destroyed the tiny silver dachshunds with pins attached that had been the emblem of their club."⁴⁴

Thus, free speech and free press were continually assaulted. German-language newspapers were discontinued all over the nation. In Colorado the western district manager for a New York-based paper was jailed for the duration of the war. The *Denver Colorado Herald* survived, but it was forced to drop its editorials and merely report the news. Konrad Nies, the journalist who wrote the editorials, was an internationally known poet, author, and lecturer. He left the state a few months after Wilson's proclamation of war.⁴⁵ Colorado's jails were full of people who allegedly made pro-German statements or were suspected of spying for the German or Austrian governments. In several reported instances people were held in jail for days, and even weeks, without due process of law, until federal Secret Service agents investigated their cases and cleared them of any wrong doing.⁴⁶

Mesa County citizens, in the name of preserving liberty, generously offered to convert the Teller Indian School into an internment camp for Germans. The citizens' committee claimed to have accommodations for five thousand German-Americans and promised to use them as laborers to cultivate the land.⁴⁷ Innocent, naturalized citizens were never herded off to camps, but Fort Douglas, Utah, was used to intern many aliens who allegedly were "threats" to national security. The *Denver Post* disliked the idea of interning aliens at Fort Douglas. The *Post* editor bemoaned the fact that the prisoners there were adequately fed, clothed, and housed, while justice demanded the "execution" of spies.⁴⁸

professors at the University of Colorado and one at the University of Denver were dismissed for being pro-German sympathizers (pp. 121-22).

⁴⁴ *Denver Post*, 22 April 1917. According to the *Kynewsbok*, the yearbook for the university's class of 1918, *Der Deutsche Klub der Universitaet Denver*, another German Club, remained intact.

⁴⁵ See files of the *Denver Colorado Herald* in late 1916 and early 1918. See also *Denver Post*, 16 August, 6 October 1917.

⁴⁶ Some cases demonstrated due process of law. For example, "The United States of America v. Johann Diermeyer," 29 December 1917, U.S. District Court, District of Colorado, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver. Other cases show a total disregard for due process. See *Denver Post*, 7, 8, 17, 28 April, 2, 3 June, 25 September, 23, 25, 28 November, 5 December 1917.

⁴⁷ *Denver Post*, 20 April 1917, 29 January 1918.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 27 January, 16 February 1918.

Colorado was primed for a witch hunt, which could have ended in many arrests and convictions. Newspaper editors and militant citizens were quick to find aliens guilty of breaking the law until proven innocent. A favorite charge lodged against German-Americans was that they encouraged aliens not to register for the draft. Although many such charges were made, federal judges did not automatically find the defendants guilty. On the contrary, some judges of integrity blocked the wholesale arrest and conviction syndrome by throwing out cases for lack of evidence.⁴⁹

Scattered data suggests that German-Americans and aliens had difficulty finding attorneys to defend them. Greeley newspapers reported in April 1917 that a German-American, Frank R. Hesse, was jailed for instructing his children not to salute the American flag. When a young Boulder attorney agreed to represent Hesse, the *Boulder Daily Camera* attacked the lawyer unmercifully. Attorney W. P. Collins, the *Camera* charged, was a socialist. The editor further pointed out that if Collins was cognizant of his own self-interest, he would refuse to represent the client.⁵⁰

Harassment and intimidation also took the form of invasion of privacy. It is difficult to see anything chivalrous in the *Denver Post's* printing of the names and the addresses of every woman in the city who registered as an enemy alien, especially in view of the women's organizations that were at work in the city and state. The Colorado 100% American Club formed women's branches in November 1917. Their task was to locate pro-German women and turn in their names to the federal authorities. One way of uncovering traitors and patriots, they believed, was through a house-to-house canvass. Callers sought out the woman of the house and asked her to sign a card pledging that she would recognize one meatless and one wheatless day in her home each week. Another group had canvassers call on women to register in the service of the United States government; this was a promise to be available if Uncle Sam should call.⁵¹

Colorado gallantly joined other western states in establishing a branch of a "secret patrol" named the Nathan Hale Volunteers. Both men and women civilians were encouraged to

⁴⁹ Evidence on such cases being thrown out exists in the Criminal Action Proceedings, December 1917, U.S. District Court, District of Colorado, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver.

⁵⁰ *Boulder Daily Camera*, 14 April 1917.

⁵¹ *Denver Post*, 28 June 1918, 10, 15 November 1917, 16 January 1918.

join, and there was the promise of identification cards and special assignments. Colorado National Guard General E. G. Hunt announced that "the object of the organization will be to aid the government in connection with anti-spy, pro-German and anti-American activities." Such organizations brought the state closer to the pledge that "every German citizen in the United States is under surveillance." The *Denver Post* helped fulfill that promise by harassing some of the state's best known German-Americans, such as Adolph Coors, Godfrey Schirmer, Charles Hamburg, and Otto Schatt, and asking for their reactions to wartime developments.⁵²

Law enforcement agents in communities throughout the state tormented aliens and German-Americans. In Sterling a junk shop owner had his place of business raided to see if there was any stolen property among his wares. Boulder County officers hustled a man off to jail for "investigation" because he took a photograph of Boulder dam. Denver authorities harassed a German-American on suspicion of violating the prohibition law, and another man was jailed because he owned a German-made rifle.⁵³

In light of these cases it is not surprising that the state embarked upon an all-out campaign of Americanization. From the governor's mansion to the man on the farm, intensive efforts were made to demonstrate American patriotism and purge the state of every vestige of Germanism. Governor Gunter called upon the president of the Sons of Colorado to organize a campaign "to suggest to our citizens, both in the city and throughout the state, the great importance of the flying of our national and state colors from every residence and place of business."⁵⁴ In the name of patriotism farmers in Delta county, near the town of Paonia, changed the name of a local landmark from German Mesa to Lamborn Mesa.⁵⁵

People changed their names from Mueller to Miller and from Schmidt to Smith. Likewise, the German-American Bank and Trust Company became the American Bank and Trust Com-

⁵² *Denver Post*, 7 April, 5 July, 29 August 1917. The Nathan Hale Volunteers was a national organization with local branches designed to promote American patriotism, spy on aliens, and report disloyal subjects to the federal government. It was a self-styled group, similar to today's John Birch Society, and was not sponsored by the federal government (see fn. 1).

⁵³ *Denver Post*, 13 January, 14 June 1918, 25 November 1917.

⁵⁴ Gunter to Frank E. Wheeler and H. Ruffner, 4 May 1917. Correspondence, 1917, Gunter Papers. The Sons of Colorado was a social and patriotic organization of Colorado pioneers and was typical of a variety of native sons organizations that were extremely popular in the early twentieth century. The organization lasted into the 1920s and published its own journal, *The Trail* (1908-1928), copies of which are on deposit at the SHSC.

⁵⁵ Interview with Anthony Greg Roeber, 10 July 1973, a former resident of Delta County.

pany, and the Kaiserhof in Denver was Anglicized, becoming the Kenmark Hotel. For the duration of the war, German measles were rediagnosed as liberty measles, and sauerkraut became liberty cabbage.⁵⁶ Miners at Leadville took a loyalty oath, and as part of a strike settlement promised that all aliens in their local union would take out naturalization papers. Teachers in Denver's public schools, like the Leadville miners, were forced to sign loyalty oaths too.⁵⁷

The most extensive of all campaigns to Americanize Colorado was instituted by the governor as part of a nation-wide program. Ironically, the governor promised to protect the loyal German-Americans from abuse (a promise that he did virtually nothing to fulfill), yet he did all in his power to destroy their identity. Gunter created a State Council of Defense, similar to state councils throughout the nation, to direct Colorado's contribution to the war effort. As part of this council he established a special committee on Americanization. Named the America First Society, this committee was chaired by Professor George Norlin, who was at that time acting president of the University of Colorado and also a member of the University of Colorado's Patriotic League. Norlin's charge, one which he pursued

Members of the council of the University of Colorado's Patriotic League, including George Norlin (second row, fourth from the right).

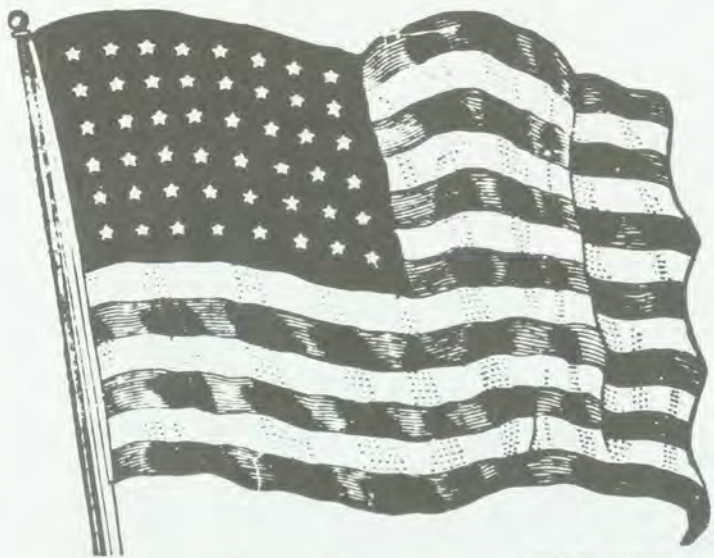


⁵⁶ On the bank, compare advertisements in the *Denver Colorado Herald* in 1916 and 1918; *Denver Post*, 12 May 1917, 1 February 1918.

⁵⁷ *Denver Post*, 15 July 1917, 16 January 1918.

vigorously and effectively along with James C. Stephens, whom Norlin appointed director of the Americanization work, was to Americanize every alien and hyphenated American in the state. Americanization, to Norlin's committee, meant that everyone in Colorado should speak English, have a basic knowledge of American history and government, and be an active supporter of the war effort.

To achieve these goals, patriotic meetings and classes were held in all the foreign population centers of the state. Aliens, naturalized citizens, and children of foreign-born parents were required to attend these classes and meetings and to sign oaths of loyalty to the United States government. Residents of foreign parentage or birth were coerced into joining the America First Society, putting to memory its motto: "He that is not for America is against America." All members signed a pledge that read: "I pledge myself to be, first of all, an American; to promote with all my power a knowledge of the language, the history, the government and the ideals of this country, and to support her by every word and act in her struggle for the freedom of mankind."⁵⁸



Boulder Daily Camera, 4 April 1917.

FLAGS UP!

YOUR FLAG MY FLAG OUR FLAG

OLD GLORY SHOULD NOW BE FLYING FROM EVERY HOME IN BOULDER; FROM EVERY HOME IN GOOD OLD AMERICA. THE HOUR HAS COME WHEN YOU SHOULD DISPLAY YOUR PATRIOTISM. WAR IS IMMINENT.

The plight of the Germanic people in Colorado and elsewhere during World War I should be remembered. It has a direct bearing on contemporary American life. It has become fashionable in recent times to reexamine America's treatment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. This generation of Americans is rightfully appalled at the way United States citizens of Japanese ancestry were driven from their homes, interned in concentration camps, and subjected to various kinds of discrimination and exploitation. Historians, journalists, and television producers have confronted us with the evidence of our barbarism in the 1940s. They have forced us to raise such questions as, why did this happen? can it happen again?

Before these questions can be answered, it must be remembered that our wretched treatment of Japanese-Americans was not an accidental aberration that grew out of wartime hysteria. Furthermore, it was not simply an extreme case of white America's degradation of a non-white minority. Our treatment of Germans and Austrians during the First World War foreshadowed the Japanese policy of one-quarter century later. The propensity to bury the Bill of Rights and the abstract political theory of the Declaration of Independence was clearly established a generation before Pearl Harbor.

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⁵⁸ For material on the America First Society, see Larry Smith, "The Gubernatorial Career of Governor Julius C. Guntter," (Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1973); Guntter Papers, 1917-1918; and *Denver Post*, 25 March, 5 May 1918. Material on the Colorado Council of Defense and its sub-agencies is contained in the *Colorado Council of Defense Weekly Newsletter*, October 1917-February 1919, SHSC.



Gothic in 1880, the year Gothic "boomed."

Gothic, Colorado: City of Silver Wires

BY CARL L. HAASE

Mineral madness had already come to the Colorado Front Range by the mid-nineteenth century, but, except for the San Juan region, it was not until the 1870s and 1880s that the search for gold and silver really reached the Western Slope. The Gunnison Country attracted some miners, government "surveyors," and a handful of would-be settlers in the 1870s, but news of other strikes nearby drew the early opportunists away. It was not until 1879 that the rush to this area really got underway.

Gothic was but one of many camps that sprang up almost overnight in the Gunnison Country as all description of humanity churned up Mother Earth, seeking to collect a quick fortune in gold and silver ore and retreat to more comfortable climes "back East" before winter set in. The town was located at the confluence of East River and Copper Creek, a few miles north of the present town of Crested Butte. It was named for Gothic Mountain, a majestic piece of natural architecture, which, like nearby Crested Butte and White Rock mountains, is a mass of intrusive, igneous rock pushed skyward in some by-

gone geologic era when the Rocky Mountains were built. Gothic Mountain seems to have been named by Ferdinand V. Hayden, a United States geologist who led a geological and geographical expedition through the Elk Mountains in 1872.¹ The mountain has been aptly titled, since on its north face numerous formations resembling the pointed arches, ribbed vaulting, and flying buttresses of medieval architecture have been carved by nature.

It is difficult to determine which one of the important mines in the Gunnison Country was discovered first, triggering the rush of 1879. The *Denver Republican* reported that the Sylvania on Copper Creek above Gothic, discovered by John and David Jennings in May 1879, was responsible for all the excitement,² but Hubert Howe Bancroft reported that "the first important discovery of silver was of the Forest Queen, in the summer of 1879. . . . The village of Ruby a few miles west of Crested Butte became a dependency of the [Forest Queen]."³ It makes little difference, really, since numerous mining camps came suddenly to life in the Elk Range north, east, and west of present-day Crested Butte, with nearly all of them claiming to be the most significant camp in the Gunnison Country.

Gothic's main advantage was its location, which enabled it to function as a kind of trade stop for travelers going over Schofield Pass to Crystal, Schofield, and Elko; over East Maroon, Conundrum, and Pearl passes to Aspen and Ashcroft; and for travelers coming from the north on their way to Crested Butte and Gunnison. It was never considered important enough, however, to become a spur stop for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, although a line over Schofield Pass by way of Gothic, extending down to the Roaring Fork Valley, was considered.

The one discovery that brought large numbers of miners to the Gothic Mountain area and was primarily responsible for the founding of the town was the Sylvania Mine on Copper Creek. John and David Jennings were two old hunter-prospectors who spent the winter of 1878-79 in Canon City while, coincidentally, a man named Obediah B. Sands from Chicago was doing the same. Sands, a wealthy and well-known proprietor of the Sands House Hotel in Chicago, was stricken with nervous disorders from overwork and came to Canon City in 1879 expecting to die.

¹ Ferdinand V. Hayden, *Seventh Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey, Colorado 1873* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1874), pp. 61, 64.

² *Denver Republican*, 29 September 1879.

³ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888* (San Francisco: History Co., Publishers, 1890), p. 523.

While he was recuperating, Sands's business managers in Chicago ruined him financially. Meanwhile, Sands met the Jennings brothers and learned that they needed a stake to return to the Gunnison Country and prospect. Sands provided them with the money that they needed. He gave the brothers most of his ready cash and agreed to provide \$80 more per month in return for one-half interest in everything that they found.

The two men soon hit paydirt. "A chunk of arsenical iron lying among the 'drift' or loose rock, nearly 1,000 feet below the present site [of the Sylvanite Mine] first attracted the attention of the Jennings Brothers to the locality, and when put under a blow-pipe, beautiful globules of silver came to the surface. A few hours later [on 28 May 1879] the discovery was made by their simply following the enticing trails of detached masses of 'blossom rock' up the hill."⁴

News of the discovery spread rapidly, and prospectors who hoped to be able to locate claims on a part of the rich Sylvanite vein flocked to Copper Creek and Sylvanite Basin. The area was quickly surrounded with claims as the news of its initial richness spread. These included the Aurilla, Gray Copper, Buck, Catapult, Great Western, Moss Rose, Native Silver, and Spirit of the Times. The last two claims were owned by Elisha A. Buck, a high-spirited Eastern investor in Gunnison County mines and real estate.⁵ The Jennings brothers "were compelled to cover up their rich streak, as over a thousand dollars worth of specimens were carried away, owing to the generosity of the owners. Some of the specimens taken, that were full of wire silver, were worth several dollars each."⁶

The Sylvanite Mine was especially noted for a kind of ore known as wire silver, that is, a very high grade silver occurring in the form of strands or "wires."⁷ Newsmen continually acclaimed this characteristic of the mine, and the Gothic area became rather well known for its production of this form of silver ore. This characteristic of the Sylvanite caused one editor to describe Gothic as "the City of Silver Wires."⁸ A writer for the *Gunnison News* in June 1880 described one deposit of wire silver in the Sylvanite: "A blast was made and these pieces of precious wires were scattered all over the shaft. Nail kegs were utilized to gather them in. We have never seen anything that would excel it,

saving some specimens from the R. E. Lee, and they were solid silver. At the rate the Sylvanite is developing the Lee must soon surrender the championship."⁸

The discovery of the Sylvanite was a success story in the tradition of H. A. W. Tabor and his Leadville strikes. One newspaper correspondent, Robert Strahorn of the *New York World*, claimed to know Obediah Sands personally and swore that the account he gave of the Sylvanite discovery was true. Sands, not one to stall around, had already made arrangements by mid-summer of 1879 to sell his interest in the Sylvanite for around one hundred thousand dollars in cash and a small number of shares in the company. The buyers were David H. Sherman, Ira D. Warren, a Dr. Linderman, and John B. Dutcher, reputedly one of Cornelius Vanderbilt's right-hand men. All were Eastern capitalists. This was Sands's "net result of a seemingly hopeless Colorado trip four months before and an investment of \$80."⁹

Strahorn continued: "As you may suppose, this financial aspect cuts a small figure when compared with his recovery in this glorious atmosphere of the priceless boon, health. When I left him a few hours ago with his eyes glistening with tears of gratitude as he dwelt upon this point, I was satisfied that at least one man in Gunnison had indeed 'struck it rich.'"⁹

Sands invested part of his new found wealth in the Gothic bank; part in a one-half interest in the general store of Sands, Holmes, and Company; and part in real estate around Gothic and other Gunnison Country camps. The Jennings brothers held out longer against a seige of offers for their interest in the mine. Strahorn noted that they eventually sold out in the fall of 1879, "realizing enough to enable them to live handsomely anywhere the balance of their lives."¹⁰

The new owners of the mine formed a business organization known as the Ruby Silver Mining and Smelting Company to develop the mine. Strahorn spoke of the directors of the company as men of wealth, who could well afford to make those improvements upon a much poorer guarantee than the Sylvanite offered. The directors included Captain James M. Ballentine, managing director, for twenty years prominently identified with steamboating enterprises in Chicago; Samuel W. Allerton, a millionaire livestock dealer of Chicago, Buffalo, and other

⁴ Robert E. Strahorn, *Gunnison and San Juan* (Omaha: New West Publishing Co., 1883), pp. 21-22.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 20 August 1879.

⁷ *Gunnison Democrat*, 29 December 1880.

⁸ *Gunnison News*, 26 June 1880.

⁹ Strahorn, *Gunnison and San Juan*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24; *Denver Weekly Times*, 15 October 1879.

points; and Thomas M. Avery, president of the Elgin Watch Company.¹¹

The company was capitalized at \$4,000,000, which was divided into 80,000 shares of stock worth \$50 each. Other holdings of the Ruby Silver Mining and Smelting Company included one-half dozen or more claims adjoining the Sylvanite, among which were the Buckeye and East Wing lodes. Jack Haverly, a prominent New York investor in the Gunnison Country, owned the Sylvanite Extension just over the top of the mountain.¹²

From the beginning experienced miners predicted that the Sylvanite was but a flashy show on the surface, which would soon fizzle out. The erratic nature of the veins would come to light in time, but in the early days the mine appeared to be a bonanza strike, the equal of any in the state or country. The *Denver Weekly Times* reported that "the vein has now been opened enough to set at rest the doubts at first raised by old miners, that the deposit would prove superficial and limited as ores of like kind proved in other districts."¹³ And, Strahorn observed that

everything shows that this is a true fissure vein. I have paid several visits to the lode and made careful examinations of it, from where it is first traceable at the top of the slide to a point 700 feet up the mountain. Five hundred feet of this shows surface silver. The two openings, 150 feet apart, which at my first visit showed native silver in the form of wire silver, sulphurets and decomposed ores, chiefly, at my latest visit, when the main opening was in ten feet, showed solid ores in the larger proportions, the ore bearing ruby silver being particularly rich. I can see nothing about the vein to show that it is not the richest and one of the largest deposits in the State, and possibly in the country. . . . Various assays of the ore have given from 8,000 to 18,000 ounces of silver, and some of the selected tests as high as 80 per cent of silver.¹⁴

According to Strahorn, the most energetic reporter of the Sylvanite strike, "ore worth from \$100 to \$20,000 per ton is found



Miners at the mouth of the Sylvanite tunnel in 1906.

in several veins, from 6 inches to 2 feet thick. . . . The pay material consists of native silver, sulphurets of silver, ruby silver and traces of horn silver, and the ore thus far shipped has yielded from four to seven-tenths of an ounce of gold per ton. A very little arsenic and sulphur is present, but not a trace of galena, and the ore is practically a 'free smelting' product, yielding readily to the more simple formulas." Continuing, Strahorn stated that "the Sylvanite shows . . . the richest silver ore I have ever seen in large masses, not even excepting the famous Silver Islet vein in the Lake Superior country. While I was at the mine a blast broke down about a ton of ore . . . and four quartz nuggets were brought out . . . a small fortune in themselves. No. 1 weighs 600 pounds, and by scientific tests shows a valuation of \$4,000 in silver; No. 2 weighs 120 pounds, and contains \$950; No. 3 weighs 60 pounds, value \$537, and the other, a forty-pounder, is as rich

¹¹ Reports vary on exactly who comprised the owners of the Ruby Silver Mining and Smelting Company. James Ballentine served as manager of the company for a time, while Samuel W. Allerton was president, William L. White, secretary-treasurer, and C. W. Watson, superintendent. J. E. Phillips, *Elk Mountain Pilot* publisher, who claimed that he knew the owners personally, also listed Robert Law, an anthracite coal operator and railroad capitalist, and Seymour Coleman, a Michigan lumberman, as members of the board (Robert E. Corregan and David F. Lingane, comps., *Colorado Mining Directory* [Denver: Colorado Mining Directory Co., 1883], p. 354; J. E. Phillips, article in "Remembrances of Pioneer Days in the Gunnison Country," n.p., in possession of Dr. Duane Vandenbusche, Gunnison, Colorado).

¹² Strahorn, *Gunnison and San Juan*, p. 24.

¹³ *Denver Weekly Times*, 23 July 1879.

¹⁴ Strahorn, *Gunnison and San Juan*, pp. 22-23.

as any. These, with 1,000 pounds of other specimens from the Sylvanite . . . are to go to Chicago . . . and thence to New York for the special benefit of some of the Leadville operators who have been crying 'Gunnison gone.'"¹⁵

Strahorn went on to describe an ingot of nearly pure silver weighing a pound and a half, which he kept before him "to regale me in this prosy matter of jotting down hard facts." There were also two sacks of ore weighing eighty-five pounds each and containing \$800 silver per sack. "One shipment of 400 sacks of ore—about twelve tons—that has been carefully sampled will average \$3,500 to the ton." One carload of ore had been sent to the Balback works at Newark, New Jersey; it was expected to be worth \$40,000. Up to the fall of 1880, most of the Sylvanite ore had been sent to the Pueblo Smelting Works in Colorado for processing. The cost of freighting the ore there was \$35 per ton, and smelting charges amounted to \$75 to \$100 per ton.¹⁶

Indeed, the Sylvanite did appear to be a very rich property in the early 1880s, but it was not long before the rich deposits, easy to mine and process, would be gone, with the remaining ore appearing most often in small, knife-blade veins, scattered here and there, making mining of the precious metals both expensive and difficult. For several decades the Sylvanite would experience its ups and downs, lawsuits and litigations, attempts at revival, and periods of idleness. Its complete history is complex and interesting—and unfortunately too lengthy to relate in full here.¹⁷

During Gothic's early period of growth, a Hillerton editor, whose town was rapidly losing its residents to the new Sylvanite

boom, reported that a "strike of wire silver in the Elk Mountains two weeks ago created a new excitement—and a new town, called Gothic City. We'll bet by Goth-(hic) there isn't silver enough in the lode to make a thimble, and yet the tender-feet fortune-hunters of this camp and elsewhere 'rushed' as usual. A flock of sheep following a bell wether is a fitting comparison to the way our tender-feet follow a new excitement."¹⁸

Gothic's first "town" meeting was held on 9 June 1879, less than two weeks after the discovery of the Sylvanite. Its purpose was the "taking of steps for the organization of a town to be located at or near the junction of Copper Creek and East River." Chairman of the meeting was Al Townsend, and secretary was Clarence P. Hoyt. The two men were co-owners of a general store in the camp. A five-member committee drew up a plan of organization, which set forth street widths, lot sizes, and other town rules. Lot owners on Main Street had to leave six feet of frontage for sidewalks. No person could own more than one lot on Main and Smelter streets, and "all lots not built upon within sixty days from date of location will be forfeited."¹⁹

Notice was given on 27 June of the first town election to be held on 17 July at the house of J. M. Cross on Smelter Street for the purpose of deciding whether or not to incorporate the town. As required by law, a petition signed by seventy residents of the camp along with a plat of the proposed town had earlier been filed with County Judge David Smith, who in turn had appointed a five-member election commission. On 17 July twenty-six votes were cast; all were in favor of incorporation.²⁰

On 14 August sixty-seven voters elected Gothic's first town officials: J. P. Fenlon, mayor; W. J. Atwood, clerk and recorder; Lewis Wait, S. M. Burwill, W. M. Healey, J. H. Lowe, town trustees. Clarence P. Hoyt became the town's first treasurer, and W. B. Scott the first marshal. Judging from the priority with which affairs were handled, licensing saloons and keeping peace were foremost in the minds of the city fathers, probably logical when the main source of revenue was from saloon licenses with the protection of life, limb, and property always being of high priority.²¹

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ There were several other important discoveries in the area in addition to the Sylvanite. The major mining "areas" close to Gothic include: Queen Basin, located east of the Sylvanite across Copper Creek Basin, which encompassed the Copper Extension, Copper Glance, Copper Queen, Iron Duke, Maine, Silver Bill, Silver Duke, Silver Queen, Silver King, and Concert mines. The mines of Queen Basin quickly filled with water, and in 1889-90, John and Jake Goodwin began work on the Usona (or New York) Tunnel, an ambitious project that was to cut deep into the mountain to drain the mines (*Gunnison Review-Press*, 30 November 1889).

Virginia Basin hangs high above Gothic just below Avery and Yank's peaks, its lower end located about one and one-quarter miles northwest of the town. Only a few claims were located in this basin, but one of them, the Virginia (or Virginus), was one of the most important mines of the Gothic area. It was apparently located by Truman Blancett and then sold to C. P. Hoyt and Al Townsend. In August 1880 the Virginia Gold and Silver Mining Company acquired the Virginia lode. The company had been incorporated in July 1879 with a capital stock of \$2,000,000. Its president was Thomas M. Avery; vice-president, T. S. Harvey; treasurer, Samuel W. Allerton; secretary, J. M. Cutter; general manager, C. O. Avery—all prominent businessmen of Chicago. The company also owned the West Virginia, the Virginia Tunnel in Virginia Basin, and had holdings elsewhere. Another important mine in this area was the Jenny Lind, Rustlers Gulch, Wolverine, and Bunn basins, and Bellevue Mountain were also sites of significant mining activity near Gothic (*Gunnison News*, 10 July, 7 August, 16 October 1880; Corregan and Lingane, comps., *Colorado Mining Directory*, p. 361; *Gunnison Democrat*, 4 August 1880).

¹⁸ *Hillerton Occident*, 5 July 1879.

¹⁹ "Gothic City Minutes of Town Meetings, June 1879 to May 1888," pp. 4-5, Western State College Library, Gunnison, Colorado.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*

One aspect of the early Western mining boom, which must forever be regarded with awe, is the industry and alacrity that characterized human activity once the people were convinced that mineral wealth was present. A Denver newsman wrote in July 1879 that

the infantile city of "Gothic" is like Spencer's lion, "ramping." Only a month from its germ it fairly bristles with pin feathers. . . . There are over 100 buildings complete or nearly complete, and several hundred lots staked, with foundation logs upon them. They are quoted from \$50 to \$500 each. Rival stores have run the average price of goods twenty-five per cent lower than the older trading points of Crested Butte and Gunnison, and miners are trading there from the different gulches and camps. . . . Gothic has two saw-mills running. . . . The Colorado Springs Smelting company, in addition to the ten-ton smelter already up, have a water back smelter en route and now within fourteen miles of the town.²²

The reports of growth vary for Gothic, as for most of the mining camps, and it is likely that many of them were exaggerated. Obviously, the large number of prospectors living in tents and shacks outside the town were not bonafide residents, even though they made use of its services: supply stores, saloons, bawdy houses, and the blacksmith shop. Were their numbers to be added to that of the real Gothic residents, quite an impressive figure could be established.

Gothic's population in 1879 and 1880 was reported in the thousands. The *Denver Rocky Mountain News* gave a more realistic number of four to five hundred for the population by the fall of 1879, and this estimate is supported by the figure given in the Gothic town minutes for 23 June 1879, which stated that "the number of inhabitants within the territory embraced in said limits is about three hundred."²³

By the fall of 1879 at least some of the residents had begun to take pride in their town. Identified only as "E," one resident wrote in a letter to the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*:

Our little town scarcely four months in existence, has grown to be quite a place. We have some 150 frame and log houses all built since the 9th of June last, when the first log house was started. At present we have one hotel, three stores, a butcher shop, two stables, all of them doing a good business, a good barber shop and shoemaker. We have no gambling dens here and only one saloon, which facts certainly speak well for the morals of our town, and the society here can be compared favorably with that of much older towns in the eastern states. Several families are residing here now, intending to make this their permanent home.²⁴

Not quite so tame a picture of life at Gothic in the summer of 1879 was presented by W. W. McKee, who came to the Gunnison Country as a young boy and stayed to become president of the Gunnison Bank and Trust Company. McKee's father and two uncles started a store in Gothic in April 1879. The family had made the trip from Canon City to Gothic in a wagon laden with goods for the store. According to McKee, the road into Gothic followed the East River around Crested Butte instead of cutting across it as the road does now. The traveler had lots of company, for there were freighters and pack trains, horseback riders, pedestrians carrying rolls of blankets on their backs, and prospectors leading burros loaded with blankets, food, and mining tools.²⁵

Describing Gothic, McKee recalled that "the town consisted of many log cabins, and there were tents in the street and all over the surrounding hills and gulches. I can't remember how many saloons there were, but there were plenty! There were numerous gambling places and two dance halls. In one dance hall the girls wore skirts about to the knee, and that was considered very shocking in Gothic. Every evening a big bonfire was lighted on Main Street, and a crowd would gather, smoking and telling stories."

"Sometimes there would be a footrace, with much money changing hands," McKee continued. "Sunday there were horse races on the road at the edge of town with much money at stake. Half the population carried guns, usually a big revolver on a belt of cartridges. There were two-gun men, too, but very little killing. I don't suppose there were a half-dozen locks in town. They were a tough lot, but they didn't steal."²⁶

By the spring of 1880 word had traveled far and wide of the rich strike in the Sylvania Basin as well as at other locations in the Elk Mountains. In April people began to trickle into the Gunnison Country. By mid-May the trickle was well on the way to becoming a flood, as was attested to by a Western Slope newspaper, the *Saguache Chronicle*, reporting that "travel is still on the increase. To-day there came in a large pack train from Arizona with an entire prospecting and mining outfit. They are

²² *Denver Weekly Times*, 23 July 1879.

²³ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 17 September 1879; "Gothic City Minutes of Town Meetings," p. 8.

²⁴ *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 18 October 1879.

²⁵ W. W. McKee, article in "Remembrances of Pioneer Days in the Gunnison Country."

²⁶ *Ibid.*

bound for Gothic and Rock creek. . . . At present there are 1,000 people in Ruby camp and a like number in Gothic. The greatest excitement prevails now at Ruby, Gothic, Rock creek and Hillerton over the rich discoveries which have been made."²⁷

One party, traveling from Gothic to Gunnison, counted 56 people on foot, 23 wagons, 11 persons on horseback, 5 pack animals, and 8 camps along the road—all between Gothic and Cement Creek, a distance of 18 miles.²⁸ Again, it is impossible to arrive at the exact number of people who came to Gothic in 1880. The official census of 1880, as reported in the *Gunnison Democrat*, gave the town 950 residents, and all of Gunnison County between 8,000 and 9,000 persons.²⁹ In contrast to this figure, J. E. Phillips, a prominent newspaperman at Irwin and Crested Butte, estimated that over 30,000 people roamed the hills of the Gunnison Country that year, and in 1881, 1882, and 1883.³⁰ Whatever the true figure, it becomes obvious that 1880 was Gothic's year.

The number and the types of businesses in Gothic in 1880 can be taken as an index of the extent of the mining activity in the Gothic area. While the *Colorado Business Directory* lists only a few businesses for the town, in reality, Gothic probably had a business boom in 1880 of no small proportions. A rough estimate of the Gothic businesses that advertised in the newspapers in 1879 and 1880 include: seven survey-assay firms; five real estate agencies and/or mining exchanges; five law firms; four grocery stores and/or butcher shops; three restaurants; three drug stores; three doctors; two hotels; two general merchandise stores; two

blacksmith shops; two boot and shoe stores; one bank; one livery stable; one stationery store; one jeweler-watchmaker; one contracting and building firm; one dry goods store; one furniture store; one town improvement company; one lumber yard; and a hardware store. Only four saloons advertised in the newspapers, but it is likely that there were several more than this.³¹

The first edition of Gothic's first newspaper, the *Elk Mountain Bonanza*, hit the streets on 12 June 1880, making it the fourth newspaper in the Gunnison Country, beating out J. E. Phillips's *Elk Mountain Pilot* at Irwin by four days. The *Bonanza* was first published by D. D. and Willis Sweet, two Colorado Springs men who supposedly were backed by H. A. W. Tabor of Leadville.

In telling of how difficult it had been to set up his *Elk Mountain Pilot* at Irwin, Phillips complained that "the citizens of Gothic built a house and gave it, together with the lot, to the gentlemen who were to start a paper there. They even did more than this—they freighted the office from Alamosa to Gothic free of charge and gave them 600 cash subscribers before their first issue was out."³² The Sweets did not stay long in Gothic, however, selling out after watching the town dwindle to nothing in the winter.³³

The biggest single social event to occur at Gothic in 1880 was a visit by former President Ulysses S. Grant. After Grant had arrived in San Francisco that summer, back from his trip around the world, he wired Colorado Governor John L. Routt of his intention to visit Colorado, expressing a desire to travel through the mountains by team and wagon. Governor Routt arranged the details and after their arrival in Denver, the former president and his party started from Salida "in a spring wagon drawn by a team of mountain ponies."³⁴

The Gothic Hotel in the 1880s.



²⁷ *Saguache Chronicle*, 12 June 1880.

²⁸ *Gunnison News*, 12 June 1880.

²⁹ *Gunnison Democrat*, 4 August 1880.

³⁰ J. E. Phillips, article in "Remembrances of Pioneer Days in the Gunnison Country."

³¹ Since this information was taken from newspaper advertisements, it is likely that several of the Gothic businesses were not included, since not all businesses advertised in newspapers.

³² All manner of up-to-date goods and merchandise were available at these stores in a very short time after settlement of the town, which further supports Dr. Duane Smith's thesis that the mining frontier in Colorado was merely a transplanted urban frontier (Duane A. Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967]).

³³ *Irwin Elk Mountain Pilot*, 12 August 1880.

³⁴ Willis Sweet went to Moscow, Idaho, where he practiced law, was elected to Congress, and was appointed governor-general of Puerto Rico by President William McKinley. J. E. Phillips, article in "Remembrances of Pioneer Days in the Gunnison Country."

³⁵ Albert B. Sanford, "John L. Routt, First State Governor of Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 3 (August 1926): 84-85.

In the party with Grant were his son Colonel Fred Grant, Governor Routt, a Major Smith, J. W. Watson, and Grant's Japanese servant. At Gunnison the party was met by a group of Gothic citizens who acted as an escort. The party was "greeted with the customary salute—which was a blast from the town's supply of giant powder. [Grant] then made a speech from the balcony of the Gothic House hotel. A reception and ball was tendered [him], and the citizens extended an enthusiastic welcome." While at Gothic, Grant visited the Sylvanite, the Virginia, and other mines as well as some of the surrounding camps: Schofield, Elko, Galena, and others. He was highly pleased with his visit.³⁵

Grant reportedly had asked to visit one of Colorado's wildest mining camps, and he was told that Gothic filled the bill; hence, his reason for visiting Gothic in the summer of 1880. It is doubtful if Gothic really was as wild as many of the other camps, but one episode that occurred shortly before the time of Grant's visit may have given the camp a reputation for wildness. The *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza* reported that "on Thursday, the 8th of July, the special election for choosing officers of this city . . . [manifested] considerable excitement for two or three days prior to the election, and on Thursday morning, this excitement had reached a fever heat. Had it not been for the marshal and deputy, it is altogether probable that the tragedy which was witnessed toward evening would have been enacted in the morning. Had it been in the morning, politics would have been at the bottom of it. As it was, it was the burst of passion which the last few days had engendered."

The report in the *Bonanza* went on to state that "it was the crowning tragedy of several days of quarrel, and threats, and every conceivable art known to inflame people and make them turbulent. Each one may place the responsibility for this where he pleases; but that it existed and was a disgrace to the camp is beyond question. . . . Tricks had been played, and many people were disgusted. The police interfered several times before ten o'clock, or we really believe blood would have been shed. This was all over the election."³⁶

Sometime during that day, the *Bonanza* write-up continued, Joseph Tomson came into Gothic and demanded that James J.

Jennings give up possession of the property on Main Street where Jennings, Dr. Snyder, and B. G. Wilson were quartered. Tomson said that his brother had given him the quit claim deed to the property for a stipulated price, but Jennings refused to give up the lot because Tomson's brother was still in debt to him and had transferred the property to avoid payment of the debt.

What happened after this is difficult to determine from the sources examined, since each citizen who witnessed the event had a slightly different story to tell. Tomson was apparently advised by a judge that if he was in possession of the property, he would be on the defensive and Jennings would have to do the acting. Accordingly, Tomson was in the act of locking the door to the building when Jennings, standing at the polls, saw him and "started across the street, walked up to Tomson, and shot him, one ball passing through the heart, and one passing through the fleshy portion of both legs, between the hip and knee. Tomson died in about three minutes." Jennings was arrested while the revolver was still smoking in his hand, and on 9 July he was taken to Gunnison, where he waived preliminary hearing, and was put in the county jail to await trial in August. Tomson was buried on 10 July.³⁷

Had Jennings merely been taken to Gunnison, given a fair trial, and dealt with accordingly, affairs probably would have returned to normal and little more would have been said. As it was, however, the Jennings episode had far-reaching repercussions. At the special term of the district court the judge allowed Jennings to go free on bail until the time of his trial. Many people predicted that the accused would not return for the trial, and they were correct. Jennings was finally captured in Leadville and held there until he could be brought back to Gunnison. This was in June 1881. Jennings promptly escaped from the Gunnison jail and, as far as is known, he was never brought to trial for the killing of Tomson.³⁸

The Tomson murder was regarded by many around the state as one of the more atrocious crimes of the time, but this was not the only result of the mishap. In the summer and fall of 1880 rumors had begun to circulate about the division of Gunnison County into two parts.³⁹ One argument in favor of creating a new county in the "north end" with either Gothic or Crested Butte as

³⁵ *Gunnison News*, 7 August 1880; *Gunnison News Champion*, 21 October 1943; *New York Times*, 16 August 1880, p. 3.

³⁶ *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza*, 10 July 1880.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Gothic Miner*, 11 June, 9 July 1881; *Gunnison News and Democrat*, 4 June 1881.

³⁹ The area on the north slope of the Elk Mountains and the Roaring Fork Valley would become Pitkin County in 1881.

the county seat went this way: "Some of the Gothic citizens give as a reason for their desire to divide the county that they do not wish to allow their murderers out of their hands, and run the risk of their being released on bail as has been the case in a late notorious instance."⁴⁰ In spite of the attempts by a prominent Gothic citizen and a member of the state legislature, Ezra D. Baker, a bill to make Gothic the seat of a new county in the north end was defeated and Crested Butte was made the county seat.⁴¹

Gothic's reputation was further smudged in 1881 when its citizens allegedly "hanged" a Chinese who came to the town to set up a laundry. The *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza* reported that "the mining towns of Colorado, as a general thing, are averse to John Chinaman and never allow him in the wealth producing districts when they can possibly avoid it. They look upon him as an enemy to the laborer and a bane upon society." The paper's harsh commentary continued in a vein of anti-Orientalism:

Not until a short time ago has the Elk Mountains been the recipient of a visit from the almond-eyed celestial. He came to Gothic under the protest of the citizens and opened a "washee" house. As is usual, his cheap rates proved a serious detriment to the old time washer women of the town and caused them to become very indignant. An anti-Chinese organization was formed and the pig-tailed man ordered to leave town instantly. This the Chinaman refused to do, and defied the organization to drive him out.

Saturday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, this organization appeared at John's house and once more requested him to "git." But John was imperturbable and informed the committee that he was there for the season. Seeing that the argument was useless the organization took the Chinaman out and hung him to the nearest tree.⁴²

The story in the *Bonanza* was obviously meant to keep other Chinese away from the town, and apparently no murder had really been committed at all. Somewhere in finer print below the story it was reported that the Chinaman had only been hanged in effigy; however, newspapers as far away as Boston picked up the story, and Gothic was again depicted as a savage, frontier mining town. The *Bonanza* editor later defended his community, stating that Gothic was as law-abiding as any other town, and that it had a right to express its dislike for the Chinese.

In 1881 Gothic progressed from being merely a mining camp to the status of a mining town—this in spite of the fact that the prospecting boom took a sharp decline this same year after it became evident that the Gunnison Country, as a mineral producer, was not another Leadville. Town status can be seen in the movement toward stability—in the business activity as reflected in newspaper advertisements and articles; in the number of social functions engaged in by the townspeople; in the building of the Methodist-Episcopal church; and in the much greater concern over the need for an adequate school for Gothic's children.

Early in the spring of 1881, the *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza* exhibited much optimism for another boom year.

A year ago last June land could be bought for \$1.25 per acre; in July, town lots on Main Street were worth from \$25 to \$100 and today we find them quoted at prices varying from \$250 to \$1500. Our business locations are few and our limits for a town contracted. Lots in the four blocks from Copper Creek bridge north are bringing good prices. No lot in these blocks can be purchased for less than six hundred dollars, and corner lots are held at from one thousand to fifteen hundred. As soon as spring opens an advance of 25 per cent will be made on these lots.⁴³

One writer estimated Gothic's worth in 1881 as: real estate \$128,000, buildings \$80,000, stock \$120,000, smelters, saw-mills, furniture \$50,000, for a total of \$378,000, "strides which would astonish some of our eastern friends."⁴⁴

By 1 October 1881 Gothic was again closing down for the long Elk Mountain winter, and the evidence reveals that the summer of 1881 was not all that it had been predicted to be. Several factors probably contributed to this. First, the Avery Smelter, which was scheduled to begin production, did not go into operation until 30 July, when it advertised that after a great many difficulties and delays, it was ready to purchase ores.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza*, 19 March 1881.

⁴¹ *Gothic Miner*, 16 April 1881. Deputy County Assessor W. T. Clark assessed Gothic's value for tax purposes at about \$90,000 (*Irwin Elk Mountain Pilot*, 16 June 1881).

⁴² Other evidence of the great optimism for Gothic's future in 1881 was given by George Crofutt: "Gothic is the supply depot or outfitting point for many small mining camps in the vicinity, and hundreds of prospectors who are packing into the mountains in every direction. She has many large general merchandise stores, hotels, restaurants, saloons and shops of all kinds, and one weekly newspaper, the *Elk Mountain Bonanza*; also one smelting works, three saw-mills, and a public school" (George Crofutt, *Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado* [Omaha: Overland Publishing Co., 1885], p. 104). In addition to the *Bonanza*, which became the *Gothic Miner* on 2 April 1881, the town's other newspaper was the *Gothic Silver Record* (Donald E. Oehlerts, comp., *Guide to Colorado Newspapers, 1859-1963* [Denver: Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region, 1964], p. 74).

⁴³ *Gothic Miner*, 30 July 1881.

⁴⁰ *Gunnison News*, 15 January 1881.

⁴¹ *Gunnison Democrat*, 9 February 1881.

⁴² *Gothic Elk Mountain Bonanza* quoted in *Irwin Elk Mountain Pilot*, 19 March 1881.

Second, an editorial in the *Gothic Miner*, formerly the *Bonanza*, again raised the problem of processing ores when it stated that the one great requirement of the Gothic and Rock Creek areas was a smelting technique that would be much cheaper than the ones being used by smelters at that time. Even though there were mines around Gothic that produced high grade ore, in order to make the town and the mines successful, cheaper smelting rates would be necessary so that the lower grade ores could be processed too.⁴⁶

Further evidence of the decline of the town and the surrounding area was the *Gothic Miner's* front-page advertisement on 1 October announcing that the large merchandising store of Sands, Holmes, and Company was closing out its entire stock at cost.⁴⁷ A subsequent story reported that the company had moved its stock down to Crested Butte to do business there during the winter.

On 1 October, too, Baker and Slosson advertised their merchandise at cost, and by the end of the year, another store full of goods was on its way out of town when "Dock" C. W. Shores . . . purchased the immense stock of hardware which formerly belonged to D. H. Bidwell and was, a year ago, moved to Gothic. He will, we learn, move the same back to Gunnison in a short time."⁴⁸

In January 1882 the story of Shores's purchase was further elaborated upon in the *Gunnison Daily Review*. In the summer of 1880 D. H. Bidwell had brought in ninety tons of hardware, by far the largest and best stock of goods that ever crossed the range; however, the bulk of it remained on the shelves. Bidwell took eighteen or twenty wagon loads of the stock to Gothic "to be opened for the great boom that was to begin there in the spring of 1881. Time rolled on. The boom anticipated for Gothic never came."⁴⁹

The hardware was left in the Bidwell store at Gothic for a year, until it was purchased by Shores. Whether or not Shores got the goods at a bargain price was not stated. If he did, he paid for them again in removing them from Gothic, for he "at once commenced moving them back to Gunnison. [And] . . . he was



Gothic in 1885.

three days in making the trip of eight miles from Gothic to the train at Crested Butte, being obliged to shovel through snow drifts five to ten feet deep. One day he made only two miles and . . . the hardships he endured were among the most severe he ever encountered."⁵⁰ Thus, when W. W. McKee stated that "the boom in Gothic lasted from 1879 to 1881, then faded, although many lived there for several years," he undoubtedly knew what he was talking about.⁵¹

The town records show that Gothic's city council met pretty much as usual from 1882 to 1886.⁵² The usual items of business—control of dogs and retail licenses; repair of streets and sidewalks; control of livestock; and payment of town expenses—were dealt with. In 1887 the whole structure of town government apparently fell apart, since no minutes for that year were recorded in the ledger.⁵³ In 1888, a half-hearted attempt to reestablish the town government was made. Trustees were elected for two- and three-year terms instead of for their usual one-year tenure. But only four town meetings were held in 1888.⁵⁴

The main cause for Gothic's decline was, of course, the absence of precious minerals in large and rich quantities. By

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3 October 1881.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 October 1881.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; *Gunnison Daily Review*, 28 December 1881. Shores later became a famous Western Slope lawyer, and his highly interesting life story as sheriff of Gunnison County has been recounted by Wilson Rockwell, ed., *Memoirs of a Lawyer* (Denver: Sage Books, 1962).

⁴⁹ *Gunnison Daily Review*, 17 January 1882.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ W. W. McKee, article in "Remembrances of Pioneer Days in the Gunnison Country."

⁵² "Gothic City Minutes of Town Meetings," pp. 187-91. The number of issues of Gothic newspapers existing today for the years following 1881 is small, which is a major deterrent to the reconstruction of the history of the town after 1881.

⁵³ It is possible, however, that the town minutes for 1887 were recorded elsewhere.

⁵⁴ "Gothic City Minutes of Town Meetings," pp. 187-91.

1881 mining men had come to realize that the ores found around Gothic were of limited quantity and were difficult to extract from the "country rock." The Sylvanite and a handful of other mines did continue to produce silver into the twentieth century. It is probable, though, that long before 1893, the date most often given for the demise of the Colorado silver mining camps, Gothic had already become a "ghost town."

Every Western mining camp had its most interesting character, and for Gothic that man was Garwood Hall Judd, who became affectionately known as "The Man Who Stayed." Judd came to Gothic in 1880 with one thing in mind—to seek his fortune. The excitement of life in a Rocky Mountain mining camp was an added bonus that he, along with hundreds of others, no doubt counted as a side benefit. That he would someday be the town's most famous citizen probably never crossed his mind.

Garwood Judd was born on 14 March 1852 at Norwalk, Ohio; he spent some time at Oberlin College learning geology; thus, he was better educated than many for his time. He arrived on the Gunnison Country scene on 25 April 1880, after a lengthy train ride on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad from Kansas, and a switch to the Denver and Rio Grande for the ride to Canon City. From there it was shank's mare and wagon over Cochetopa Pass to Gunnison.⁵⁵

After spending a short time camped near the Gunnison River at Gunnison, Judd and some companions that he had met on the train migrated to Gothic, where he would spend most of the remainder of his life. On 26 May 1880 the man who would one day be the longest remaining resident of the town, arrived in a hustling, bustling Gothic City: "Scenery all right. I paid Three Hundred for a lot of 25 feet, on Main St. [and] a small building 25 by 14. Don't know if it will pay out, but I knew if I bought something, would stop running round." After several weeks of being on the road and living in a tent in the frigid, high country, spring weather, Judd joyfully added to his diary the next morning: "Whoopie! Slept in my own house last night and thanks to the noble 'three hundred [dollars]' I slept warm."⁵⁶

Judd and a man named R. M. Patterson soon went into partnership in a saloon. Purchasing five lots on Copper Creek for \$975, the two put up a 20 x 30 glass-front building, and the cost



Garwood Hall Judd and his dog Jim in the early 1900s.

of construction was as follows: contractor \$590, batwing floor \$23, shingling \$25, bar \$36, plaster/platform \$5.60, total \$679.60. The cost of the initial liquor stock was about \$600. On 26 June 1880 Judd wrote: "Sold my first drink for 25 cents to Mike McGee. Settled with Wagner for the building and fixtures."⁵⁷

In later years Garwood Judd would justify his running a saloon and gambling parlor by the fact that a friend who was killed in an avalanche had left him, as executor of the estate, with a saloon on his hands. In an article for the *Empire Magazine of the Denver Post*, Judd pointed out that

the Single Jack Saloon was owned and run by John McAvoy. Not long after I arrived at Gothic, McAvoy, on his way home from Marble, was caught by a snowslide in Crystal river canyon. The coroner found his body the next July. I was picked to take charge of and settle the affairs of the Single Jack. And that is how I got myself into the saloon business and got to know a beer-drinking sheep.⁵⁸

Whatever the reason for his becoming a saloon operator, Judd was soon to realize the result of operating "a Tiger Club Room,

⁵⁵ An account of Judd's trip is contained in a personal diary that he kept for the first year or so that he lived in the Gunnison Country. "Diary of Garwood H. Judd, January 1-November 5, 1880," n.p., in possession of Mrs. Ben H. Jorgensen, Gunnison, Colorado.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 169-70.

⁵⁸ Garwood Judd as told to George Hetherington in "The Sheep That Liked Beer," *Empire Magazine of the Denver Post*, p. 8, date unknown.

Billiard Hall and Assignment room," for his fiancée, Miss Ada Clark of Kansas, wrote to him on 11 July 1880 that she had married someone else.⁵⁹

Far from being the most influential man in town, Judd was, however, active in town government in the early years and up until the municipal body folded around 1888. Along with running his saloon, which ceased to be a lucrative business when Gothic's "boom" came to an end, Judd also dabbled in mining. When nearly all of the other prospectors and capitalists had left Gothic, Judd had almost free reign to take over abandoned claims, pay the back taxes, do a little development work, and sell them to some outsider interested in investing in a piece of Western mining property.

Around the turn of the century, when Gothic was almost deserted, Judd became the caretaker of properties held by absentee owners as well as the go-between for them in buying and selling mining and real properties around Gothic. He was paid \$120 per year for several years by the representatives of the Samuel W. Allerton estate for looking after their properties around Gothic.⁶⁰ Seymour Coleman paid him \$25 per month.⁶¹ Judd's acquaintance with these Chicago capitalists extended over many years, and they trusted his judgment implicitly, usually taking his advice when they leased mining property around Gothic or tried to sell it.

In 1928 L. E. Orr, a Denver cameraman for the Fox Film Company, found Judd interesting enough to make him the subject of a documentary short.

"The Man Who Stayed" is the title of a two-reel movie filmed last Sunday at Gothic. . . . Garwood H. Judd, early day resident of Gothic and now the last of its once populous community, was the central figure in the picture, which follows out some of the details of his nearly fifty years of residence at this one-time thriving mining town. . . . Mr. Judd arrived about 1880, and has stayed on after all the mines shut down and every last soul except himself moved away. He spends the summer seasons in his old cabin at Gothic and generally winters at Gunnison.⁶²

While many of the Colorado mining towns have sunk into

oblivion, Gothic suffered much the same fate until April 1928 when Judd was instrumental in getting property donated for Dr. John C. Johnson's Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory. Dr. Johnson, a professor of biology and vice-president of Western State College at Gunnison, conceived the idea of a biological laboratory at Gothic around 1927 or 1928. He traveled extensively through Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas during the summer of 1928, attempting to interest other scientists in his idea. Receiving a favorable reception from many with whom he talked, he proceeded with his plans.

With Judd's assistance, one of the old hotels, a ten-horse stable, and some lots were purchased for the grand sum of \$3. Later the laboratory would acquire the entire town site, excluding some privately owned lots, for back taxes of \$200. The Dissette family of Cleveland, Ohio, investors in Gothic mining property, allowed the laboratory to make use of their buildings, lots, and other property. Thus, while few of Gothic's buildings and smelters have been restored, the once dead town has served a new and useful purpose with many eminent men of science from several colleges and universities researching as well as teaching classes there.⁶³

Finally leaving Gothic, Judd remained in Crested Butte during the last months of his life. On Thursday, 15 May 1930, he died at the home of Mrs. Kate Sigman. The *Gunnison News Champion* wrote:

Garwood H. Judd is dead—"The Man Who Stayed" when all others deserted Gothic, has also gone hence, answering the summons to which there can be no refusal, leaving forever, too, the solitude of his cabin in the lovely Elk Mountains, where he spent the best part of the last fifty years. Mr. Judd died with his faith undimmed in the future mineral wealth of the Gothic region in the heart of the Elk Mountains. He owned considerable property there and was connected with mining men in Ohio and Illinois. He was interested in the Sylvanite and was the personal friend of owners of other famous claims.⁶⁴

True to his nature, Judd told Dr. Johnson that he wanted no "P's" at his funeral—that is, no Parsons, Prayers, and Posies. But, of course, he got all three, Johnson said.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ "Diary of Garwood H. Judd," p. 189.

⁶⁰ Allerton died 22 February 1914. See Edward F. Dunne, *Illinois, the Heart of the Nation* (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), p. 481, for a biographical sketch of an "Easterner" who invested in Gothic mining.

⁶¹ William H. White to Judd, 21 January 1899; Helen Classen to Judd, 30 June 1925; Seymour Coleman to Judd, 22 May 1919; correspondence in possession of Mrs. Ben H. Jorgensen, Gunnison.

⁶² *Gunnison News Champion*, 11 October 1928.

⁶³ For a history of the biological laboratory, see John C. Johnson, "A Brief History of the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory," *The Colorado Magazine* 38 (April 1961): 81-103.

For additional biographical data on Dr. Johnson, who was also a member of the Board of Directors of the State Historical Society of Colorado from 1964 until his death in January 1973, see the following issues of *The Colorado Magazine*: 38 (April 1961): 81; 43 (Spring 1966): 151-52; 50 (Winter 1973): 90-91.

⁶⁴ *Gunnison News Champion*, 11 October 1928.

⁶⁵ Interview with Dr. John C. Johnson, 22 September 1970, Denver.

Dr. Johnson and Ben H. Jorgensen, perhaps Judd's closest friends in later years, followed the wishes of the "Man Who Stayed" by having his body cremated and the ashes scattered about the town of Gothic and near Judd Falls, a mile or so above the town on Copper Creek.

Today, the traveler up Copper Creek comes to a wide spot in the jeep road overlooking Judd Falls. A monument in the form of a rock-and-concrete bench has been erected at the place where Judd often sat viewing Copper Creek and the surrounding mountains. The inscription on the bench reads simply:

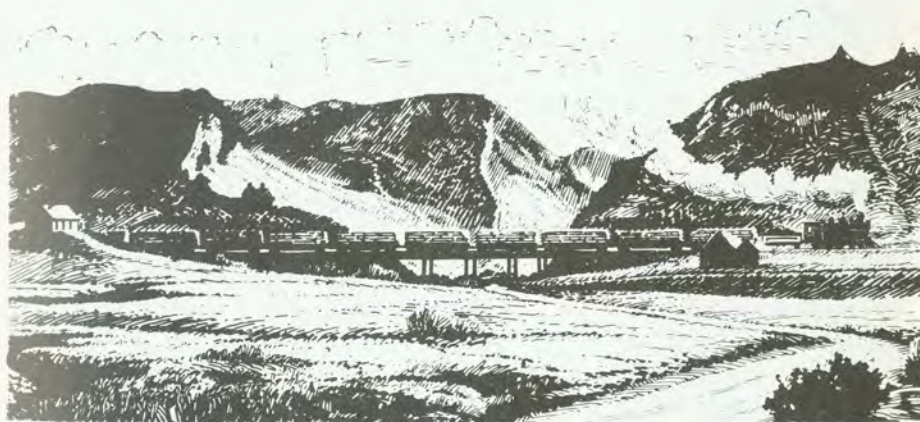
To the Wayfarer, Friend or Stranger,
This Seat is Offered in the Name of
"The Man Who Stayed"
Garwood Hall Judd
March 14, 1852 - May 15, 1930.

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Founded on Rock: Colorado's Stout Stone Industry

BY EDITH E. BUCCO

Skimming over Larimer County's six-mile-long Horsetooth Reservoir, today's boaters and skiers might not realize that they are cutting patterns along the route of a nineteenth-century railroad one hundred feet below. Although the railroad trestle that once bridged Spring Canyon is gone, vestiges of the valley's



An 1885 sketch of the Spring Canyon railroad trestle and Highland School (on left).

colorful past can still be detected: quarry scars in the slopes, a hoist-house ruin on a cliff, and the railroad grading thrusting out of low water. Old-timers tell of the days when pupils trudged up the hill (now under water) to the Highland School. Although the curious find scattered items in old newspaper files in the Fort Collins Public Library, no overall early history of the Stout area, now an underwater ghost town, has been written. Each year lake residents see changes wrought by the Larimer County Recreation Board to accommodate growing numbers of fishermen,

boaters, and campers. Unlike today's boom that is based on water, the one of almost a century ago was founded on rock.

In gentle slopes within hogbacks west of Fort Collins lies ancient sandstone, easily split and removed. Builders of the newly platted Fort Collins hauled this valley sandstone by wagon in the early 1870s.¹ The town's banker, A. K. Yount, used white sandstone for doorways and windows in the Yount Block in 1873. In 1879 the surveyor for the Fort Collins Agricultural Colony's town planners, Franklin C. Avery, trimmed with red sandstone his Mountain Avenue showplace home. This valley's sandstone was used not only for the early sidewalks of Fort Collins but even for the kitchen floor of Denver's elegant Windsor Hotel. After Capitol architect E. E. Myers pronounced the stone "the best he ever saw," demands for it increased with Denver's expansion in the 1880s. In April 1880 Hedderman Bond and Company had fifty men loading Denver-bound stone at a sidetrack of the Colorado Central, four miles east of the Spring Canyon quarries. By July 1880 twenty railroad carloads of white sandstone were leaving the valley weekly, largely for construction of the Union Depot in Denver.²

Railroad expansion in the Fort Collins area caused great excitement again in 1881. The town's first rail connection on a line between Cheyenne and Denver had been the business sensation of 1877, and again in 1880 rumors had indicated that more railroad men saw reasons for building along the Cache la Poudre River. Several railroad lines competed for the Poudre valley, and by December 1880 the Burlington and Missouri Railroad was surveying in the area. Suddenly, in January 1881, a newly incorporated Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific Railway Company announced its intention to build from Greeley to the Pacific—by way of Fort Collins.³

This grandiose company scheme, with the Pacific Ocean as a goal, alerted the Fort Collins businessmen to action. When they saw seventy-five workers in the Poudre valley, they bolstered the

¹ Following the abandonment of Fort Collins as a military fort in 1872, a town company acquired the land and planned a city. Organized with General Robert A. Cameron (of the Greeley colony) as president and superintendent, the Fort Collins Agricultural Colony invited persons of good moral character to join by purchasing membership certificates. These certificates could be purchased for \$50, \$150, and \$250 and entitled the holder to city lots, to farm land, or both (LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State*, 4 vols. [New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948], 1:333; see also Ansel Watrous, *History of Larimer County, Colorado* [Fort Collins, Colo.: Courier Printing & Publishing Co., 1911], pp. 214-39).

² "Columbian Industrial Edition," *Fort Collins Express*, 1894, p. 10, *Fort Collins Courier*, 8 April 1880; *Fort Collins Express*, 2 April, 8 July 1880.

³ *Fort Collins Courier*, 9 December 1880, 20 January 1881.

railroad company to insure that its rails would pass through their town. The merchant Jacob Welch, who in 1873 had moved from Greeley Colony to Fort Collins, was chairman of the citizens' committee to guarantee a right-of-way. Estimating a cost of \$6,300, the committee then drafted a petition for the town board to condemn property and to lay out a street based on the railroad survey. The board passed the recommendation, the guarantors pledged \$5,000, and by August contractors dispatched men and teams all along the line from Greeley to the Poudre Canyon and "in the glade leading from Pleasant Valley to the stone quarries."⁴

This quarry line surprised some people. Although the original plans suggested branches to Erie and to the Marshall coal banks at Boulder, there was no mention of a connection to the quarries.⁵ Even so, no one suspected that a branch to the south would deter the push westward. Dreams of North Park with its scenic wonders, its silver, and its coal inspired flowery paragraphs. Though the Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific Railway Company's "present purpose" was only to gain an outlet for the quarries, the dreamers envisioned further building "up the canyon." Despite the delays of difficult stone cuts and the short supply of spikes and timber, work continued.⁶ By December 1881 the bridges built between Fort Collins and the quarries numbered thirty-two; the largest, a wooden Spring Canyon trestle, 262 feet long and 45 feet high, was "as good as on any main line."⁷

The more realistic looked southward rather than westward and secured quarry land in the "glade." The Fort Collins Flagstone Company, formed in February 1881, installed a five-hundred foot, double track tramway reaching to their quarry site on a hilltop nearly a mile inside Spring Canyon. Two cars, operated by windlass and wire rope, transferred stone from the quarry to the bottom of the hill.⁸ The new Eclipse Stone Quarry was rushed for orders, among them contracts from Fort Collins for sidewalks in front of Bolivar S. Tedmon's hotel, the Tedmon House, and for the Jefferson Street block. And the Highland Stone Quarry paid three-dollar-a-day wages to four quarrymen

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3 February, 28 July, 11 August 1881; Watrous, *History of Larimer County, Colorado*, p. 244.

⁵ *Fort Collins Courier*, 20 January 1881.

⁶ *Fort Collins Express*, 22 October, 17, 23, 26 November 1881.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 29 December 1881.

⁸ *Fort Collins Courier*, 24 February 1881.



and one blacksmith and boarded them for five dollars weekly.⁹ By the year's end nearly one dozen quarries were established in the area, although two were not then operating: one, owned by Mrs. A. K. Yount and the other, the railroad's 160 acres. The southern quarry of the Bradley brothers, J. J. and Robert W., was shipping three-by-nine-foot blocks, three inches thick, from Loveland for Denver's new Horace Tabor Grand Opera House.¹⁰

Soon after its incorporation, the Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific Railway revealed itself as a branch of the Union Pacific. For the most part, the original incorporators and board of directors were men connected to the Union Pacific either directly or through the Colorado Central, which the Union Pacific controlled.¹¹ By February stone trains began to leave the quarry over rails completed to Fort Collins. But the railroad did not extend to Greeley, and that town's citizens began to regard the entire operation as simply a Union Pacific ploy to obtain building stone for new depots, roundhouses, and towns along its line. And, they viewed the Fort Collins-Greeley section as merely a bluff to keep the Burlington and Missouri out.¹² But, intent upon reaping the benefits of their new railroad, the Fort Collins citizens proclaimed the advantages of a rail outlet from the quarries. Incoming railroad cars, formerly empty-on-return, could now be loaded with stone and delivered to Omaha as cheaply as to

⁹ *Fort Collins Express*, 26, 11 November 1881.

¹⁰ *Fort Collins Courier*, 29 December 1881.

¹¹ Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1971), p. 224.

¹² *Fort Collins Courier*, 16 February 1882; *Fort Collins Express*, 5 January 1882. The first excursion train from Greeley to Fort Collins was reported in the *Courier*, 14 October 1882.

Denver! And once the rails could be extended into North Park, the only problem connected with shipping coal down to Fort Collins would be "a question of brakes." Then manufacturing would start—or as one newspaperman biblically stated: "Verily the man who says Fort Collins will not become a city readeth not the times aright."¹³

Indeed, Fort Collins was not alone in anticipating growth. William N. Bachelder, the most prominent local quarryman, had moved to Spring Canyon in 1871 and was grazing 3,000 sheep on part of his 1,300 acres. Chairman of the Greenback County Committee, a local chapter of the national movement for inflated paper currency, Bachelder had a flair for both political and business publicity. It came as no great surprise, then, that this active businessman's Fort Collins Flagstone Company had installed tramway equipment in 1881; had opened ten of his twenty quarries, shipping \$8,000 worth of rock each month by June 1882; and had established a large store and post office named Petra, that had so many tents at its headquarters that it resembled an "army encampment." Clearly, Petra would soon be a city, too, and Bachelder as postmaster would be its leader.¹⁴

But a more permanent sign of settlement than the store-and-post office was the school. The Bachelders were not the only

The stone Highland School with its students and their parents.



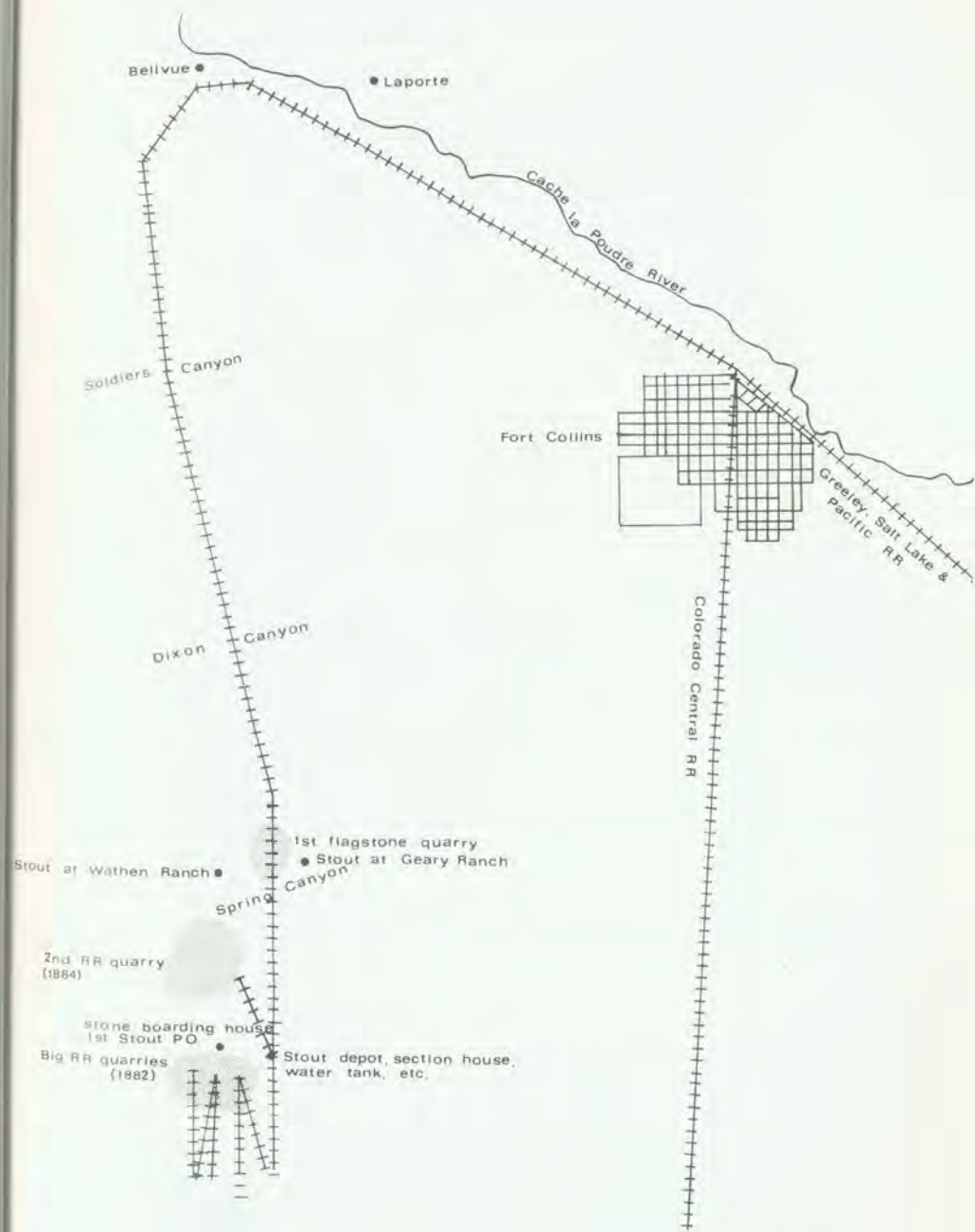
¹³ *Fort Collins Courier*, 6 April 1882.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 February 1880, 25 September 1879, 24 February 1881; Watrous, *History of Larimer County, Colorado*, pp. 338-39; *Fort Collins Express*, 1 June 1882. Scattered references to Bachelder's activities are contained in the *Fort Collins Standard*, 15 July, 14 October 1874; *Fort Collins Courier*, 29 May, 24 July 1879. An additional reference to a community named Petra is in the *Fort Collins Courier*, 29 December 1881.

family in the valley. John T. Cliff, one of the owners of the Eclipse Stone Quarry, had also moved his family to their newly built valley home.¹⁵ One of the married railroad builders, Thomas Geary, stayed on to work in the quarry.¹⁶ In the summer of 1882 Charles C. Smith, owner of the Highland Stone Quarry, erected a frame schoolhouse, furnished it, supplied books, and employed a teacher for three months—"all out of his own pocket." As secretary of the first school board of the Highland School, he requested that the school district boundaries be surveyed to include the scattered families of the quarry industry. School District Number 27, formed on 3 May 1882, became legal on 30 November 1882.¹⁷ In 1883 a stone building replaced the earlier frame Highland School. Although the builder, M. Thomas, had no children, he liked the idea of education and proudly left his name in stone.¹⁸ For more than six decades this small stone school was the heart of the Petra, and later the Stout, community.

The incoming families witnessed rapid construction at the railroad terminus. If the depot, section house, and water tank resembled other railroad stations, the boarding house to the west looked like a prison. Indeed, its builder, William H. B. Stout, earlier had erected the Nebraska State Penitentiary.¹⁹ Forseeing markets for sandstone, he had in January 1882 leased the Union Pacific quarries, and in April his quarry superintendent A. Constable and twelve men had opened them. At the expiration of the quarry lease, Stout's boarding house would revert to the railroad company upon the company's payment of the actual building costs. By September the Stout post office in the boarding house, with cousin R. M. Stout as postmaster, had replaced the Petra post office.²⁰

Stout's wide experience combined with the railroad's power helped him gain large contracts. The superintendent of the stone cutting at the Nebraska State Penitentiary inspected Stout's Colorado quarries, especially since Stout had also won the contract for erecting the Nebraska State Capitol. By June 1882 Stout's fifty-four men were shipping stone to Cheyenne and



¹⁵ *Fort Collins Express*, 6 October 1881.

¹⁶ Harold Marion Dunning, *Over Hill and Vale*, 2 vols. (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1962), 2:135.

¹⁷ *Fort Collins Courier*, 18 January 1883; File, Larimer County Superintendent of Schools, Fort Collins (office now dissolved and notes on file in author's possession).

¹⁸ Dunning, *Over Hill and Vale*, 2:160.

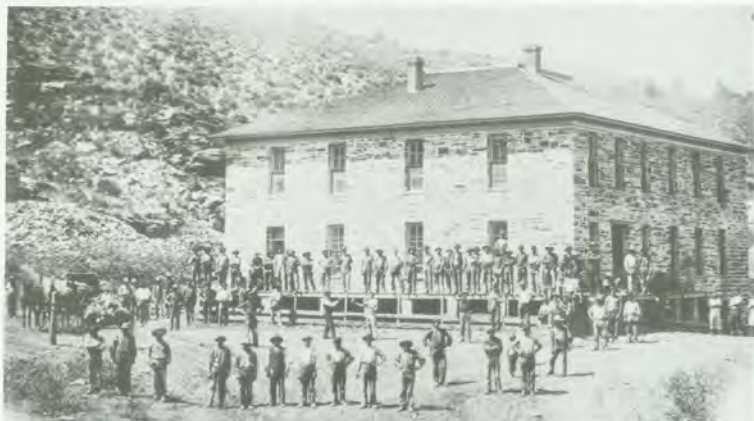
¹⁹ Alfred T. Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1882), 2:1080.

²⁰ *Fort Collins Express*, 5 January, 27 April, 11 December 1882.

Denver, and ten carloads went to Fort Collins for Frank P. Stover's new building.²¹ But another Fort Collins businessman, Franklin C. Avery, found it cheaper to contract for his Mountain Avenue sidewalk with a man who hauled his own stone.²²

In December 1882 the Arapahoe County Commissioners inspected the valley quarries before awarding a \$9,000 contract for 16,000 feet of flagging for the Arapahoe courthouse walk. Although Charles C. Smith's Highland Stone Quarry Company had offered the lowest bid, the commissioners came by train to the quarries for an inspection tour. Accompanied by Union Pacific officials and Stout employees, they halted their train at Laporte to inspect five carloads of Stout stone destined for bridge abutments there. Past the Stout depot ingenious switchbacks carried the train 100 feet above the main line to the crest of the Stout quarry. Here seventy-six men, using five-hand derricks, hoisted rock directly onto flatcars and shipped sixteen to twenty carloads a day.

After inspecting the quarry, the party proceeded to Stout's stone boarding house, some fifty rods away. The house was fifty-



The stone Stout boarding house and quarry workers then—and now.



three by sixty feet, with two stories and a basement, twenty-one rooms, including general storeroom, office, dining room, kitchen, and pantry. Pipes carried water to the house from the spring farther up the hillside. In the basement one room held bunks for the quarrymen, another stored meat, and a third served as a bakery. On the second floor were sleeping apartments. The entire inspection party, including the conductor and brakeman, dined on roast elk and mince pie. Later the party looked briefly at the Smith quarry and decided that it needed more "opening up." Stout won the contract.²³

Earlier that year Smith and other small quarry owners had felt the squeeze of their organized rival. Although they entreated the Colorado Central superintendent to build sidetracks to their quarries and to furnish them with flatcars, the quarry owners received little satisfaction. So twenty-one quarry owners organized, elected Louis de Boeuf president and Charles C. Smith secretary, and sent Smith to Denver with a petition to the Union Pacific Assistant General Manager Thomas L. Kimball, who promised one switch immediately and two others as soon as men could be spared.²⁴ Meanwhile, because his quarries supplied mainly building stone and he needed flagging, Stout offered to buy stone "no less than two and a half inches nor more than four inches thick." But Stout did more than buy flagging; he secured Bachelder's entire flagstone quarry with the agreement that Bachelder not quarry rock for five years.²⁵

No longer quarryman or postmaster, Bachelder turned to different occupations in the area. Several other men kept their quarries, and Charles C. Smith, still operating the Highland Stone Quarry, said in January 1883 that he intended to stay. With a blacksmith shop, stockades, and stone houses for fifty workmen, Smith advertised his product by constructing a model stone dwelling.²⁶ For some, the chance of obtaining the grand contract for the Colorado State Capitol kept hope alive. An advertisement dated 1 March 1883 instructed those who wished to furnish stone for the Capitol to supply three samples for tests—a block no less than three cubic feet, a six-inch cube, and

²¹ Andreas, *History of Nebraska*, 2:1080; *Fort Collins Courier*, 22 June 1882; *Fort Collins Express*, 1 June 1882.

²² *Fort Collins Express*, 19 July 1882.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11 December 1882, 19 April 1883.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 July, 16, 30 August 1882.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12 July, 15 August 1882.

²⁶ *Fort Collins Courier*, 18 January 1883.

fragments. These would be used for display later at Denver's Mining and Industrial Exposition. Once again in April the State Capitol Commissioners planned a visit to the Stout quarries on a Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific train.²⁷

By adding workers and improving equipment, Stout's family institution produced fine stone and continued to win new contracts. During 1883 this quarry supplied footing stone to J. K. Williams's steam flour mill in West Denver, building stone to Kansas City and Omaha, and foundation stone for the Mechanics Hall at the state college in Fort Collins.²⁸ Although in June 1883 the largest stone train sent a record twenty-five cars bound for Denver, Omaha, Cheyenne, and Laramie City, that month also witnessed problems at the boarding house.²⁹

The quarry operation was managed by the Nebraska Stout family, with cousin R. M. Stout as the first postmaster, half-brother Homer D. Stout, his successor, and cousin E. L. Stout, paymaster. Stout hired mostly Swedish quarrymen through a Denver employment agency, and nearly all of the quarrymen



lived and ate in the boarding house-hotel.³⁰ But, in April they had gone on strike because of some disagreement with the management. Finally, the death of Homer D. Stout in August prompted William H. B. Stout to transfer his entire holdings to the Union Pacific and to declare that the arrangement, requiring him first to fill railroad orders, had prevented him from supplying his cash customers and was unprofitable.³¹ The name of the

post office, depot, and quarry remained "Stout," but the Stout family returned to Nebraska. However, three important Stout employees stayed on to work for the Union Pacific's Stone Department—Constable as manager, John Gray as foreman, and Henry C. Lett as superintendent.³²

Lett was aggressive in public relations and popular with the quarrymen. He maintained his headquarters in Denver, but his son Will as assistant superintendent had a Stout address. When Lett took over the quarries, around two hundred men were busy shipping stone for the Oregon Short Line, mostly to Soda Springs, Idaho, for immense roundhouses. An unsuccessful candidate for Nebraska governor in 1872, Lett maintained contacts in that state, and within a few months had established agencies in the East to boost Fort Collins stone. He also opened a new quarry of flagging to supply some of the twelve thousand square yards of paving for Omaha. The Omaha contract had been hard to obtain, according to Lett, because of opposition from the *Omaha Bee*. Because Lett felt that the word "sand" in the name "Fort Collins sandstone" suggested nondurability, he announced that he would change its name.³³

In the mid-1880s a spirit of community developed in Stout, and school enrollment increased along with debates, court hearings, church services, and lectures. Although "young people" organized the Lyceum of Highland School in January 1884, they elected forty-six-year-old William N. Bachelder president. Like others, this lyceum presented debates, readings, and songs. For example, Charles Smith and T. Kane argued: "Resolved, that the Indian has suffered more than the Negro at the hands of the white man in America." The negative side won the debate.³⁴ By July, a rival literary society had been formed in Stout, with forty present at the first meeting. And in December a reading club meeting at the Kane's home discussed William Cullen Bryant, with Frank Lord reciting "Thanatopsis."³⁵ As justice of the peace, Bachelder held court in the schoolhouse, and sometimes Pastor Clayton of Loveland officiated at the four o'clock Sunday services, while on other occasions Father G. F. Emblem of Fort Collins held Mass there. During this same

²⁷ *Fort Collins Express*, 2, 25 April 1883.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 February, 3, 19, 30 April, 2 August 1883.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 June 1883.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 December 1882, 23 May, 17 August 1883; *Fort Collins Courier*, 4, 18 January 1883.

³¹ That April another long-time Stout employee, John Gray, arrived from Illinois to become quarry foreman. *Fort Collins Express*, 23, 27 April, 17 August, 13 September 1883; *Fort Collins Courier*, 20 September 1883.

³² *Fort Collins Courier*, 20 September 1883, 27 March 1884; *Fort Collins Express*, 30 April 1884.

³³ *Fort Collins Express*, 6 February, 15 April 1884. In May the railroad constructed a Spring Canyon sidetrack long enough to hold ten cars, and then it offered high prices for stone loaded there by local quarries. The newspaper reported that "about five private quarries will thus be kept in operation" (*ibid.*, 28 May 1884).

³⁴ *Fort Collins Express*, 9 January 1884; *Fort Collins Courier*, 7 February 1884.

³⁵ *Fort Collins Courier*, 31 July, 18 December 1884.

period, the community was concerned with temperance, for the valley was plagued with illegal saloons.³⁶

The big event of 1884 at Stout was a Fourth of July celebration to which "all Collins" was invited. Charles N. Olsen, chairman of the celebration, announced that \$200 had been raised. A crowded, three-car excursion train left Fort Collins for Stout at nine in the morning. The Fort Collins cornet band greeted the excursionists at Stout and led them one-quarter mile to the dance hall, erected for this day and decorated with evergreens, flags, and Chinese lanterns. The Fort Collins string band played dance music, with Thomas Manly as "prompter." Dancing continued all day. However, through some misunderstanding, the expected speaker, the noted Fort Collins orator Joseph Murray, did not appear. The stone hotel fed about three hundred celebrants and the new boarding house, another fifty to seventy-five. The excursion train departed at four-thirty, and most of those traveling in carriages and on horseback left about dark. A small group remained to enjoy the fireworks. Altogether about eight hundred people attended the affair in Stout.³⁷

The following year a strange set of circumstances brought statewide notoriety to the town. In January 1885 state Senator Herbert E. Tedmon of Fort Collins introduced into the Fifth General Assembly Senate Bill No. 117, a bill proposing, among other things, that Colorado convict labor be leased. Supporters viewed the proposal as a method of building the State Capitol cheaply. After review by committees, the bill came up for senate approval in March, but the workingmen's organizations protested convict labor as unfair competition. The senate amended the bill beyond recognition, and the house in April postponed it "indefinitely." As a result of Joseph Murray's lobbying against the "infamous bill for replacing honest working men with convict labor," the Stout quarrymen honored Murray in March by naming their Knights of Labor Assembly 3667 after him.³⁸

With Henry C. Lett as superintendent, the Union Pacific Stone Department continued to flourish, opening new quarries to supply foundation stone for the State Capitol. The State

Capitol Commissioners visited the Stout quarries in March 1886, nearly a year after the state legislature had approved a budget of \$1 million for constructing the Capitol of stone. The commissioners decided on Stout stone for the foundation and for the interior walls but still sought stone for the superstructure. When the signed contract of April did not specify the stone to be used, the Stout people speculated that W. D. Richardson, the Illinois contractor hired for the job, would open his own quarries rather than buy from existing ones.³⁹ Nevertheless, in July the Union Pacific added a new switch and an 800-yard sidetrack at Stout, and the company announced an order for 300 cars of foundation stone for the Capitol. After nearly a year's delay, work began on the Buckhorn Branch from Loveland to the new quarries in the Buckhorn valley. Originally surveyed as a "Buckhorn extension" from Stout in May 1885, that plan was quashed, even after the grading stakes had been set and Thomas W. Valentine had built a boarding house at the new quarry.⁴⁰ Instead, the Union Pacific accepted the Loveland-to-Buckhorn line in April 1887; the new quarries, known as Arkins, came under Lett's supervision; and some of the first stone quarried at the Arkins site became the foundation for the State Capitol.⁴¹

When the Union Pacific Railway Commission met in Fort Collins in July 1887, quarry owners and businessmen voiced complaints of the injustices against them and the town. As a result, changes occurred in August. The Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific's suit against the guarantors of the right-of-way, which had been instituted in September 1884, was dropped in August 1887. The Union Pacific agreed to build a sidetrack to the Bradley brothers' quarry. But, the most significant outcome was the Union Pacific's end-of-the-year announcement that it would give up all coal and stone interests to become in the fullest sense a "common carrier."⁴²

The independent quarry owners' grievances against the Union Pacific were not put completely to rest with the announcement of the railroad's abandonment of stone and coal interests. More a consolidation than an abandonment, the railroad's new plan brought A. C. Beckwith from the Union

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 February, 17 April 1884, 5 February, 8 January, 21 May 1885. In January 1885 there were twenty-six students enrolled at the Highland School, and in March an addition was built on to the school (*ibid.*, 15 January, 12 March 1885).

³⁷ *Fort Collins Express*, 18 June, 9 July 1884.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14 March, 4 April 1885; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 12 March, 2 April 1885; *Fort Collins Courier*, 12 March 1885, 9 September 1886, 14 July 1887; *Senate Journal of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, Fifth Session*, 1886, pp. v, 1086-92, 511-12.

³⁹ *Fort Collins Express*, 27 March, 3 April 1886; Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver, with Outlines of the Earlier History of the Rocky Mountain Country* (Denver: Times-Sun Publishing Co., 1901), p. 509.

⁴⁰ *Fort Collins Express*, 24 July 1886, 16 May, 18 July 1885.

⁴¹ *Denver Weekly Times*, 20 April 1887; "Columbian Industrial Edition," *Fort Collins Express*, 1884, p. 36.

⁴² *Fort Collins Courier*, 21 July, 4 August 1887; *Fort Collins Express*, 13 August, 31 December 1887.

Pacific coal mines in Wyoming to oversee the stone quarries, as Lett resigned his position with the Union Pacific's change in policy. In March 1888 a delegation of disgruntled businessmen visited the Union Pacific's lawyer to explain the discrimination against Fort Collins. In September they cried continued neglect, for the Union Pacific had not reopened the Colorado Central to Cheyenne as promised. Finally, J. K. Choate, superintendent of the Colorado division of the Union Pacific, came to Fort Collins to hear the complaints against his company. His reply, a few weeks later, promised to open the road to Cheyenne and to begin work soon on the line to North Park and Salt Lake City.⁴³

The new year brought word that the Union Pacific had contracted for 3,000 new freight cars and that 600 would be sent to the Colorado division. Because the Union Pacific had not opened the Colorado Central line to Cheyenne, a Fort Collins lawyer sued the railroad in 1889, and Union Pacific Superintendent Choate then promised that by May 1890 the line to Cheyenne would be opened. However, by April the Colorado Central had merged into an aggregation of roads forming the Union Pacific, Denver, and Gulf Railway Company. Larimer County stonemen delighted in the prospect of no longer having to compete with the railroad, and for a time private quarry owners contented themselves with seeking contracts previously filled by the railroad.⁴⁴

Two developments during this unsettled period again brought attention to Larimer County stone: one was the formation of the Colorado Stone Association and the other was the reputation of the red sandstone quarries near Bellvue. The first of these had its beginnings in August 1889 when the Denver paving committee met to discuss possible materials. At that time members favored sandstone, but later they turned to imported asphalt paving. A resolution from Longmont in April 1890 to form a stone association led to the State Stone Convention.⁴⁵ That convention, held in Denver, elected a committee on credentials, with Thomas W. Valentine of Fort Collins as a member. More than seventy-five men representing Larimer County declared that quarrying there was not dominated by the Union Pacific and that many private quarries were being worked. After

the stonemen signed their constitution and bylaws, they drafted a protest to Denver businessmen objecting to their use of West Indian asphalt for streets. Not only was it dangerous to horses, they warned, but it needed constant repair. Ansel Watrous, author of *History of Larimer County, Colorado* (1911), was a member of the stone association's committee to cooperate with the Colorado Industrial Development Association. In June the stone association's secretary George E. Trowbridge asked the stonemen to send him descriptions of their stone, and in August of the following year Trowbridge presented a petition to Denver officials offering to pave a street with Colorado sandstone.⁴⁶

The other important development in Larimer County stone began in 1886 when the Fort Collins Red Stone Company was organized across the Poudre River from Bellvue. The company first hauled its stone by wagon to the Union Pacific tracks, but eventually the men loaded on a seven-tenths-mile spur to the quarries.⁴⁷ When the company opened brown sandstone quarries near Rist Canyon, its machinery was moved there. In October 1887 one of the quarry owners bought eighty acres near Bellvue to divide into lots for employees' cottages, a plan that the Union Pacific had never tried at Stout. But since \$6,000 had been adjudged against the company to Charles Nix of Denver's Albany Hotel, a sheriff's sale in July 1889 disposed of the Red Stone Company's machinery, and the following month the Union Pacific began operating these quarries.⁴⁸ Early the next year, the quarries were sold to Hugh Butler, a prominent Denver lawyer; in March Charles Nix leased them; and by May orders from New York for blocks weighing seven tons necessitated new machinery.⁴⁹ A new corporation named the American Red Stone Company purchased quarries for \$16,000 and brought Chicago men into the red stone business. By March 1892, 1,000 cubic feet of stone were shipped to Chicago each day, and by July diamond saws had arrived—the first in the West.⁵⁰ Red sandstone north from Soldier Canyon to Bellvue continued to be sought for early

⁴³ *Fort Collins Express*, 11 February 1888, 28 May, 23 July 1887, 10 March, 8 September, 1, 22 December 1888.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12 January, 6 April, 21 December 1889; *Fort Collins Courier*, 26 June 1890; *Fort Collins Express*, 2 May 1891.

⁴⁵ *Fort Collins Express*, 3 August 1889; *Fort Collins Courier*, 3 April 1890.

⁴⁶ *The Western Architect and Building News* 2, no. 3 (May 1890): 34-39; *Fort Collins Express*, 14 June 1890; *Fort Collins Courier*, 13 August 1891. A bulletin on the sandstone industry stated that in 1890 Colorado had produced over \$1 million in sandstone, with only Ohio and Pennsylvania exceeding that amount. The 71 quarries in the state produced 6,570,521 cubic feet of sandstone, employing 1,485 laborers and office workers (*Fort Collins Courier*, 4 June 1891).

⁴⁷ *Fort Collins Express*, 20 March 1886; *Fort Collins Courier*, 29 April 1886; Robert M. Ormes, *Railroads and the Rockies* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), p. 268.

⁴⁸ *Fort Collins Express*, 23 April, 8 October 1887, 17 August 1889; *Fort Collins Courier*, 27 June 1889.

⁴⁹ *Fort Collins Courier*, 16 January 1890; *Fort Collins Express*, 1 March, 17 May 1890.

⁵⁰ *Fort Collins Courier*, 15 October 1891; *Fort Collins Express*, 5 March, 2 July 1892.

twentieth-century buildings in Fort Collins and other Colorado cities.

During the Panic of 1893, mines were shut down and men were laid off; newspapers were filled with notices of railroads hauling men back East free. The Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific freight service between Greeley and Stout halted their operations "pending better times," for the poor business at Stout did not warrant continued rail service. The morning passenger train handled the work of the canceled Fort Collins-Greeley freight, and when railway mail service from Fort Collins to Stout was discontinued, special arrangements sent the Stout mail from Laporte.⁵¹

The "Columbian Industrial Edition" of the *Fort Collins Express*, planned for 1893, was not published until 1894. By that time work had begun again at the quarries in a small way, preparing for the time "when building [would be] resumed in Denver."⁵² William H. Harvey had secured the quarry on which Bachelder had erected a tramway, and by use of a power plant at the bottom of the hill and a hoist house at the top, was able to run the tram by electricity. Naming the area Braidwood, the owner hoped to "share the prosperity of the hills," but the quarry did not produce much rock.⁵³

By the autumn of 1896 the depression had eased, business had resumed, and Stout's population had increased to around seventy-five. The young people had organized another literary club, named the XL Society, and by January 1897 enrollment at the Highland School was up to twenty-one. A section gang had brought new ties to repair the line, and by April the increasing demand for building, curbing, and flagging stone had prompted bridge repair all along the Stout branch, which was shortened by one-half of a mile in 1894.⁵⁴

But the Stout quarries and the stone industry did not regain their former prominence. For a while the main export was "rip-

rap" or rubble. Stout's postmaster P. F. Kane even urged Windsor citizens to pave their walks with Stout flagging. Manager Joseph L. Gray had a shipment of curbing stone rejected by Denver Mayor T. S. McMurray, who declared it "of inferior quality." Denver had begun to pave with asphalt in 1892.⁵⁵ Concrete gradually replaced stone not only for sidewalks but also for foundations and curbing. Occasional orders for buildings created a bustle in the quarries, but most small quarry owners relied on other occupations, quarrying rock only on demand, and once again they hauled their stone by wagon when the rails receded.

Retaining the name of Stout during a long succession of reorganizations, the railroad quarries came under the management of Joseph L. Gray. In July 1898 his work force of forty-five men shipped rock to Kansas City and Omaha. When the Stout branch became part of the Colorado and Southern Railway Company in December 1898, Gray leased the quarries from the Colorado and Southern. With "perfect railroad facilities to each quarry," he began to furnish rock for that company's roundhouses and machine shops in Denver. Thus, in their last years, the Stout quarries passed to this son of one of William H. B. Stout's earliest employees, John Gray.⁵⁶

But the demise of the stone industry did not mean the disappearance of Stout. School enrollment rose to 30 in 1898 when Nellie Taylor was the teacher. And the 1900 *Colorado State Business Directory* listed Stout's population at 250.⁵⁷ Old maps, however, locate Stout at three different places; from the stone hotel the post office moved to the Wathen ranch near Spring



The Stout post office at the Wathen ranch near Spring Canyon in the valley west of the railroad.

⁵¹ *Fort Collins Courier*, 3, 31 August 1893, 19 April 1894; *Fort Collins Express*, 5 August 1893. The population of Stout dropped from 200 in the 1893 *Colorado State Business Directory* to 30 in the 1894 edition (pp. 659 and 663, respectively).

⁵² "Columbian Industrial Edition," *Fort Collins Express*, 1894, p. 36.

⁵³ *Fort Collins Courier*, 17 May 1894; "Columbian Industrial Edition," *Fort Collins Express*, 1894, p. 10.

⁵⁴ *Colorado State Business Directory* (1896), p. 655; *Fort Collins Courier*, 29 October 1896, 14 January, 25 March, 1 April 1897; Ormes, *Railroads and the Rockies*, p. 116.

⁵⁵ *Fort Collins Courier*, 26 September 1895, 24 June 1897; Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 648.

⁵⁶ "Special July Edition," *Fort Collins Courier*, 1898, p. 14. *Three Gems of Colorado: The Industrial Center of Western America, Boulder, Greeley and Fort Collins* (Denver: Colorado Journal of Industry, [1900]), p. 64.

⁵⁷ *Fort Collins Courier*, 15 September 1898; *Colorado State Business Directory* (1900), p. 661.



The Stout post office at the Geary ranch.

Canyon in the valley west of the railroad, and later back to the railroad valley at the Geary ranch. Even though the post office was discontinued in 1908 and the railroad receded by three miles in 1905, by another four miles in 1909, and all the way to Bellvue in 1918, the Highland School stood firm.⁵⁸ Except for a two-year interval during World War II, it held classes until its sale in 1946. Even then it served as the office for the Bureau of Reclamation during the building of four, large, rock dams, known as the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. With the completion of this project the valley, which first had furnished millions of dollars in stone and later pasture and farmland, became the storage basin for 150,000 acre-feet of water piped from the Western Slope.⁵⁹ The ruins of the stone hotel south of the reservoir still stand, but a full tour of the ghost town of Stout today requires a boat. Launching from the new cement ramps, a boater can cruise out between the Spring Canyon Inlet and the Spring Canyon Dam.



The same view of the foothills today as the 1885 sketch (p. 317).

On a clear day, when the sunlight and viewing angle are just right, the boater can look down and see on an underwater hill the foundation of the Highland School, the heart of the village founded on rock.

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⁵⁸ Ormes, *Railroads and the Rockies*, p. 116.

⁵⁹ See John Mar Dille, *A Brief History of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Colorado-Big Thompson Project* (N.p.: Board of Directors of Northern Water Conservancy District, 1958).