



DENVER, AUGUST 1, 1879.

DEAR SIR:

I beg to call your attention to the enclosed constitution, by-laws and list of officers of the above society. It is exclusively a State institution, constituted by a special act of the late legislature, and the incorporators of the society have no more interest in the enterprise than any and every other citizen of the State. Not one dollar of the legislative appropriation in aid of the society can be diverted to the use of any individual, and all donations made to the society become immediately and must forever remain the property of the State of Colorado.

It is particularly desired that all citizens of the State, of either sex, who are interested in the grand object had in view, in establishing this State Institution, shall become active members and represent the society in their several localities, no matter how remote from the capital. Indeed the museum is more likely to be enriched by contributions from distant points than by the personal efforts of residents of Denver and its vicinity, but the latter may do good service by receiving and caring for the contributions of other communities.

In a State so rich in natural curiosities, the cabinet of such a society is likely to prove its greatest attraction, but the history of the State itself is rich in interesting facts and incidents, and the purely historical collections of the society, may in the end, prove not less attractive than its museum. To this end contributions of papers and sketches of historical value and interest are requested; particularly from pioneer settlers of the country.

A moderate initiation fee has been established, to provide for the printing and other incidental expenses of the society, in order that the legislative appropriation may be entirely devoted to the collection and preservation of material for the library and museum. It is hoped and confidently believed that a large number of the scientific men and women of the State will not only become members of the society, but will do all in their power to promote its interests.

Applications for membership and all correspondence should be directed to the undersigned at Denver. Specimens forwarded by mail should be similarly addressed, but larger specimens or natural curiosities, sent as freight or by express, should be directed "Natural History Society, Denver," as it is hoped that railway and express companies in the State will make liberal terms with the society for the transportation of such articles. Before making such shipments, however, it would be well to enquire whether the society can and will receive them, and in view of the limited funds in the hands of the curators, no unnecessary expense should be imposed upon the society.

All specimens, manuscripts, etc., belonging to the society, will be stored in the State building, and under certain wise restrictions will be open to the inspection of the public.

W. B. VICKERS,
Recording and Corresponding Secretary.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOCIETY

A Centennial Legacy: Bancroft to Smiley

BY MAXINE BENSON

The year was 1879. Edison invented the incandescent lamp, the United States Geological Survey was established, and agent Nathan Meeker lost his life in an uprising at the White River Indian Agency. Photographer William Henry Jackson, late of the Hayden Survey, opened his own "photographic art rooms" in Denver, while H.A.W. Tabor, who had struck pay dirt at the Little Pittsburg Mine, spent some of his new-found wealth erecting the Tabor Opera House in silver-booming Leadville. The telephone came to Colorado, Nathaniel P. Hill was elected United States senator, and Frederick W. Pitkin was inaugurated as the second governor of the state.

On the afternoon of 10 February, a group of prominent Denver citizens gathered in the office of the state superintendent of public instruction, Joseph C. Shattuck, to discuss the organization of a state historical society. Four days earlier the general assembly, concerned that if steps were not taken to preserve the historical heritage of Colorado, "both the men who have been the actors, and the material for collections, will be quite beyond our reach," had approved the passage of House Bill 134 to encourage the formation of a state historical and natural history society, and the measure was awaiting the signature of Governor Pitkin. To assist with the necessary expenses, five hundred dollars was appropriated from state funds, with the provision that it could not be used to compensate the officers or members.

Additional organizational meetings were held the following July, at which time the articles of incorporation, constitution, and bylaws were adopted. The objectives of the new society were to collect and preserve items relating both to the history and the natural history of the state, hold regular meetings, establish a historical library, and "maintain a cabinet of objects illustrative of the several departments of natural history." In order to be successful, the founders realized that the fledgling society would need the support of citizens throughout the state. Therefore, they urged all who were interested to "become active members

and represent the society in their several localities, no matter how remote from the capital." Members, "of either sex," would be admitted by a vote of three-fourths of the members present and the payment of a three-dollar initiation fee.

Chosen to serve the Society as its first president was Dr. Frederick J. Bancroft, a forty-five-year-old physician who had arrived in Denver following a distinguished career in the Civil War. A native of Connecticut and graduate of the University of Buffalo, he quickly became active in Denver civic and political circles, helping to organize the Denver and Colorado medical societies, the medical college of the University of Denver, and Saint Luke's Hospital. For many years he was the chief surgeon for several railroads, including the Denver and Rio Grande. A bearded, larger-than-life figure who weighed nearly three hundred pounds, he was noted as much for his legendary appetite and his penchant for practical jokes as for his professional and public contributions.

Under Bancroft's leadership the first regular meeting of the Society was held on 15 September 1879, followed by another in November and by the first annual meeting in January 1880. Little progress was made during the remainder of that year, largely due to the fact that no permanent quarters were available for the meetings or collections of the Society. In his 1881 annual report, Bancroft expressed his concern that



Dr. Frederick J. Bancroft and his constant companion—one of a series of Irish setters named Jack.

because of the lack of proper facilities, "mineral and geological curiosities" were being appropriated by eastern museums and private collectors, and that the "furred, feathered and finned game native to our State" were disappearing before representative specimens could be gathered.

The problem of space was alleviated, at least temporarily, in late 1881, when the Society was given a room in the Glenarm Hotel, located at Fifteenth and Glenarm streets, which was then serving as the state capitol. By 1882 the Society was making plans to exhibit several cases of material, including birds, mammals, and prehistoric artifacts, in the National Mining and Industrial Exposition building, which opened on 1 August 1882.



Although it served as a state office building, the bar and billiard rooms of the Glenarm Hotel remained open to all, according to an 1881 news account.

By 1885 the Society had moved from the Glenarm Hotel to the new Arapahoe County Courthouse, and Bancroft noted in his annual report of that year that the "large and commodious apartments heated with steam" should provide ample space for both present and future collections. In the meantime, however, the Denver Chamber of Commerce building was being erected at Lawrence and Fourteenth streets, and in the fall of 1886 the Society moved again, sharing the fourth floor of the new structure with the Mercantile Library.

A forerunner of the Denver Public Library, the Mercantile Library was presided over by librarian Charles R. Dudley, who also served as the secretary of the Society for many years. Dudley was not overly



The Arapahoe County Courthouse (above), now the site of the May D&F department store. Below, the Chamber of Commerce building.



impressed with the combined library-museum quarters, noting that the lack of an elevator necessitated a climb of eighty steps from the sidewalk to reach them. He also cast a jaundiced eye on the eclectic exhibits of the Society. Although admitting that they “afforded much entertainment to the young,” he felt that they soon “became a nuisance, as the generously inclined gave liberally of the things for which they had no use, and . . . you could find almost anything from a New England meetinghouse foot stove to a Fiji Islander’s head rest.”

Therefore, Dudley was undoubtedly glad to see the construction of the new state capitol, which would at last provide a real home for the Society. The cornerstone was laid on 4 July 1890, and by mid-1895 the capitol had been completed sufficiently so that the Society could move its collections into the basement.

Those collections were, as Dudley indicated, the result of the wide-ranging policies of the early years, which encompassed not only the history and the natural history of Colorado but occasionally spilled over into other areas as well. However, if the collections did contain a “New England meetinghouse foot stove” or a “Fiji Islander’s head rest,” they also included fine pottery, implements, baskets, and ornaments from the cliff dwellings of southwestern Colorado.





These views show the rooms of the Society in the basement of the State Capitol. They were taken by the Denver photographic firm of Balsiger and Tishler, proprietors of the I X L Studio at 1646 Glenarm Place, probably in 1911.



A quiet corner in the library (above). Note the reading lamp cord suspended from the overhead fixture. Below, cabinets of papers and a work table.





More photographs, paintings, and prehistoric artifacts. "Colorado Schools, 1876" (above, right) probably was displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.



In May 1889 some twelve hundred items gathered by the Wetherill brothers had been exhibited in Denver. Concerned that these treasures might be taken out of the state, the Society purchased them for \$3,000. As the entire legislative appropriation for that year was only \$1,500, three Society members signed a personal note for the balance. Thus, the foundation was laid for what would become one of the finest assemblages of artifacts from the Mesa Verde in the world.

By 1896, having seen the Society through the first sixteen years of its existence and through the succession of moves culminating in the final trek to the capitol, Bancroft decided to resign the presidency in order to devote more time to his other responsibilities. His successor was William N. Byers, the noted Fifty-Niner who had published the first newspaper in the region, the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, in 1859 and who had been one of the leading promoters of Colorado during the ensuing thirty-five years.

An even more significant change in the leadership of the Society also occurred in 1896 with the appointment of the first paid official, Curator Will C. Ferril, on 14 August. Born in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1855, he had received a B.A. degree from Lewis College in Glasgow, Missouri, before coming to Colorado in 1879. Locating first in Silver Cliff, he moved to Denver in 1883, becoming city editor for several newspapers.

Ferril immediately plunged into his duties with vigor and enthusiasm, accomplishing prodigious amounts of work seemingly in an effort to make up for time lost during the preceding sixteen years. He launched an educational program so that school children could study the collections of the Society, and the first year over four thousand students came to hear his two-hour lectures on birds, mammals, or the cliff dwellers. He wrote to various Washington, D.C., agencies to obtain copies of their publications for the library. He canvassed all of the newspaper editors in Colorado (and many out of state), asking that the Society be placed on their mailing lists to receive copies. Most complied, and thus began what is today the most extensive collection of Colorado newspapers held by any institution. Concerned, too, with the natural history collections, he often made collecting trips throughout the state. Ferril's days were, in short, a veritable whirlwind of activity—rising at dawn for a bird-collecting trip along Cherry Creek, lecturing to one or more school groups, checking in hundreds of newspapers and writing for missing issues, keeping track of what was happening in the legislature. Small wonder that he was often ill, at one point recording in his daily journal that he was "keeping up today on quinine, rye whiskey, and two plasters on my chest and side. I am worn out and should be at home."



*Curator Will C. Ferril,
father of Colorado poet
laureate Thomas
Hornsby Ferril.*

Nonetheless, Ferril kept going, and the Society continued to expand its collections and exhibits in its new quarters. The new century dawned, and with it the pioneer generation began to pass from the scene. Both Bancroft and Byers died in 1903; chosen to lead the Society as president was lawyer Edward B. Morgan who, although not a Fifty-Niner, had come with his family to Black Hawk in 1864 at the age of

*In addition to
donating his
library, Edward B.
Morgan also
procured Zebulon
Pike's sword and
the Clark and
Gruber minting
machinery for the
Society.*



two. Moving to Denver in 1873, he attended East Denver High School and then went East to Yale and the Harvard Law School before returning to Denver to practice law. Keenly interested in Colorado history, he began to collect books, pamphlets, and documents published since territorial days, many of which are exceedingly rare today and all of which he gave to the library of the Society over a period of years.

With Morgan and Ferril at the helm, the Society made steady progress. In his report covering the biennial period 1906-8 Ferril summarized his accomplishments since his appointment as curator in 1896. The additions to the library, historical, and scientific collections totaled 79,185 items; 1,490,084 persons had visited the exhibits; and lectures had been presented to 12,221 students. Given such achievements, Ferril contemplated continuing his work with the Society for many years to come.

He might have had some doubts, however, when he was reappointed as curator in 1909 for only one year, instead of the customary two-year term. Nonetheless, he continued to perform his duties, and when Morgan informed him early in 1910 that the board had chosen Jerome C. Smiley as his successor, he refused to budge. "Not on your life!" he told Morgan when he was asked to surrender the keys to his office.



*Jerome C. Smiley,
as shown in his
massive History of
Denver.*

Standing firm in his belief that the board had had no legal right to appoint him to only a one-year term, he continued to occupy his desk, sitting across the room from Smiley, who had arrived to take up his new position. Obviously, the dissension that culminated in the Smiley-Ferril standoff had been brewing for some time; when asked by a reporter why Ferril was dismissed, Morgan told him that "Ferril was a good man at collecting material, but he apparently does not know how to file it away."

True or not (and Ferril claimed that "everything is in such shape that I can instantly lay my hand on it"), Smiley eventually outlasted Ferril and began his ten-year career as curator of history. Born in 1849, Smiley had edited a newspaper in Piqua, Ohio, before coming West to Denver. As with many events in his life, it is not known exactly when he arrived in the city; in later years, when the Society tried to find out more about him, his few friends reported that he had never told them anything about himself. Though enigmatic and reticent, his name has become a household word to students as the author of the almost one-thousand-page *History of Denver*, published in 1901 and still the foundation for the study of the history of the city.

If Smiley's tenure began with controversy, he soon found himself embroiled in another debate, this time between the "history" and the "natural history" factions of the Society. Members who were particularly interested in natural history belonged to the Colorado Academy of Science, a branch that had been organized as the Department of Natural History in 1897. As the Society grew, arguments intensified as to whether historical collecting or natural history research was being unduly favored—indeed, Ferril saw the dissension as a factor that had contributed to his own downfall. In 1915 the controversy culminated in a political donnybrook that resulted in the ouster of two long-time board members, Secretary Dudley and Treasurer William D. Todd, who had drafted the act in 1879 that provided for the establishment of the Society. Although the debate concerning the priorities of the Society continued, a reorganization, which served to put the natural history department on an equal footing with the history division, and the allotment of some funds, helped to mollify the scientists. The influence of the natural history members seems to have steadily declined, however, and when the directors decided in 1927 to discontinue natural history work and disperse the collections to other institutions, no outcry blocked their plans.

It would be wrong to remember Smiley's term of office as marked only by controversy, however, for the accomplishments of the Society during this period were many. Chief among these was the design and construction of the State Museum building located directly across the



The Colorado State Museum under construction.
The photograph above is dated 6 October 1912.



Note the size of the trees planted on the grounds
of the new museum building.

Late in 1920 Smiley resigned his position due to ill health and returned to Ohio, where he died in 1924. His successor as curator of history was Thomas F. Dawson, a veteran newspaperman who had served for many years as secretary to Senator Henry M. Teller. A writer whose historical works included a biography of Senator Edward O. Wolcott and an account of the Ute uprising at White River, he had earlier served as secretary of the Society from 1881 to 1887. Just as Smiley is remembered today for his *History of Denver*, so today Dawson is memorialized in the library of the Society by the "Dawson scrap-books," eighty volumes of newspaper and magazine clippings on every conceivable western subject, which provide testimony to his diligence as a collector.

As the decade of the twenties began, it was not history or natural history but archaeology that came to the forefront. Almost from the beginning the Society had called for the preservation of the dwellings and the artifacts of the earliest inhabitants of the state. Two years after the establishment of the Mesa Verde National Park in 1906, the Society and the University of Colorado cooperated in an expedition in the western part of Montezuma County. In 1920 the increasing emphasis on archaeology was demonstrated when the Society established a "section on Archaeology and Ethnology," and the following year Jean A. Jeancon left the Smithsonian Institution to become curator of the new department. In cooperation with the University of Denver he led an expedition in the summer of 1921 to Chimney Rock Mesa in the San Juan



When Jean A. Jeancon joined the staff, the Society reported that he was no "armchair" archaeologist and ethnologist but "has had years of active and actual field service . . . and has lived on most intimate terms with his Indian friends in their villages, tepees, and hogans."



The photographs here and on page 18 are from Jeancon's album of the 1924 archaeological season, during which excavations were conducted in the region of the Piedra and Dolores rivers and in Moffat County.





Basin, continuing this work during the 1922 season. Jeancon's 1923 tree-ring study was sponsored by the National Geographic Society, while another 1923 project involved mapping the region from Pagosa Springs to the Utah line and south to the New Mexico border. Jeancon resigned from the staff in 1927; although some work was continued by his successor, the position of curator was left vacant beginning in 1933. Archaeological work resumed during the late 1930s and early 1940s, but the activities of the Society in this area did not approach the level established in the 1920s. In 1973, however, the Society's historic involvement in Colorado archaeology was recognized when the legislature established the new position of State Archaeologist within the organization.

Hafen and McMechen

As the archaeological work continued throughout the twenties, significant changes were under way in the historical department. After serving only two years as curator of history, Thomas F. Dawson was killed in an automobile accident. To succeed him the board chose Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen, a young historian who had just earned his Ph.D. degree in western history at the University of California in Berkeley. On 1 July





Taken prior to 1927, the view above shows the first-floor lobby of the State Museum. Below, a view looking in the opposite direction, toward the front door. Note the silver loving cup (center) presented by Denver citizens to David Moffat in 1904.



The first-floor west gallery, above, known then as the "Pioneer Relic Room." A portion of the library can be seen through the doorway. Below, the east gallery or "Cliff Dweller Room."



1924 Hafen drove into Denver in a Model T, accompanied by his wife Ann and two children, little suspecting that he was destined to spend the next thirty years directing the historical activities of the Society.

In January 1925 Hafen took over the editorship of *The Colorado Magazine*, the historical journal that had been established by the Society in 1923. Its pages soon carried the fruits of his own research and writing, for as one of the first professionally trained historians working in the field of Colorado history, he found that opportunities for study were virtually unlimited. Hafen also completed the editing of the Society-sponsored *History of Colorado*, published in 1927, which had been started by Dr. James R. Baker.

As the twenties drew to a close and the national economy worsened, it hardly seemed possible that the Society would continue to grow and expand. Indeed, there were times when its very existence seemed threatened. Yet, the decade of the thirties was to prove, in the words of LeRoy Hafen, to be a "golden age of achievement" for the organization. In fact, the historical society was the first in the nation to undertake historical projects funded through the New Deal federal programs. Hafen had always placed a premium on traveling throughout the state to contact pioneers before their stories were lost, and he devised a project to employ interviewers in twenty-four counties to assist with this work. Selected on the recommendation of local relief agencies, the twenty-eight field workers began work on 1 December 1933 under the auspices of the Civil Works Administration. In addition to his regular duties Hafen sent a weekly letter to each one, commending their accomplishments and offering suggestions and an occasional word of warning (one writer was cautioned not "to make the story a little better than historical facts warrant"). When the project ended four months later, more than a thousand interviews and other documentation had been collected; today, the CWA Interviews, bound in sturdy red volumes, are a familiar and well-used source in the library.

Following the completion of the CWA project in the spring of 1934, Hafen drafted plans to provide employment in the State Museum through a variety of historical projects. Funded through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), work began in the fall of 1934. To assist in supervising the FERA work, Hafen called on Edgar Carlisle McMechen. Born in Brooklyn in 1884, McMechen had come to Colorado as a small child and was educated in Denver schools. A writer and reporter, he spent ten years with such papers as the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, the *Denver Republican*, and the *Denver Times* before becoming director of publicity of Denver and editor of *Municipal Facts* during the years 1916-25. For the next four years he was associated with the Denver Art Museum.



A prolific author, McMechen wrote a two-volume history of the Moffat Tunnel, as well as biographies of Governor John Evans, Robert Speer, and Walter S. Cheesman. By his own count he was the author of some two hundred magazine articles in such journals as *Scientific American*, *Travel*, *Popular Science*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Argosy*, and many more.

Joining the Society in 1934, McMechen remained a member of the staff until his death almost twenty years later. Under his direction and that of Hafen, the Society entered a period of accomplishment during the latter part of the 1930s, which in many respects has remained unmatched to this day. Utilizing funds first from the FERA and then from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which succeeded it in 1935, the Society employed a small army of historians, architects, sculptors, artists, and draftsmen (an average of thirty-five persons was regularly on the payroll) whose contributions are still visible today to any visitor to the Colorado Heritage Center.

Of all the projects completed under the WPA, certainly the most colorful and dramatic are the nationally renowned dioramas. Providing what McMechen termed "visual education through the medium of life



WPA artists at work on figures for the dioramas. Julius Ambrusch (below) concentrates on populating the buffalo hunt scene.

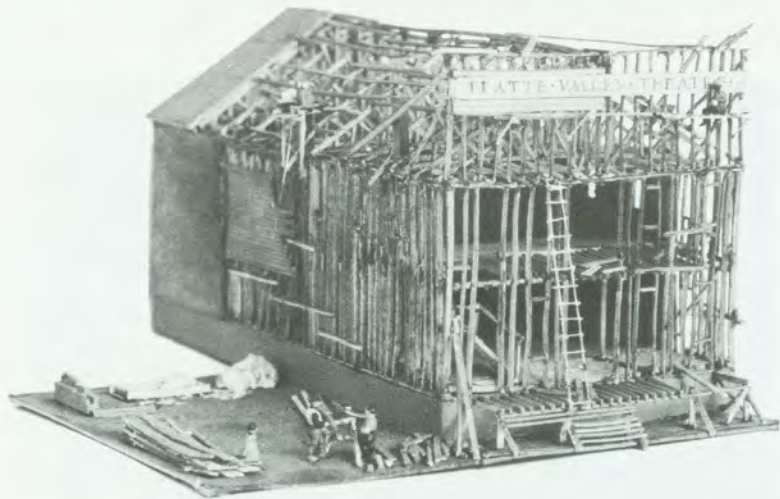


Society staff admire two completed dioramas. The view above shows the interior of Bent's Old Fort.



models on small scale of early Colorado life," the dioramas depict the history of transportation, from the Indian travois to the airplane, the bus, and the Zephyr; various early mining methods; the story of water use; Indian life; and the fur trade.

Foremost among the fifty-one dioramas, however, is the eleven-by-twelve-foot model of Denver and Auraria in 1860. Built to a scale of one-sixteenth inch to one foot, the tiny figures and miniature dwellings never fail to intrigue staff and visitors alike, for there is always some new detail to be seen. Before work on the Denver model could begin, some six months of research was undertaken in the newspapers of 1860, early guidebooks, directories, manuscripts, land titles, and photographs, and in this way some three hundred fifty buildings were identified. An average of seven architects worked on the construction of the model, which took another year to complete. In addition to homes, hotels, saloons, and theaters, the model depicts wagon trains circled near Wazee Street and "Indian Row" across Cherry Creek in Auraria. The small, costumed figures that throng the streets are only five-sixteenths of an inch high, cast in lead from plaster moulds modeled on figures sculpted from wood. Even the dogs—one-sixteenth of an inch high—are included.



Buildings under construction in late 1860 were so depicted in the diorama. The Platte Valley Theatre (later the Denver Theatre) on the northeast corner of Sixteenth and Lawrence streets "for its time, was a pretentious place of amusement," according to Jerome Smiley.



The streets "of the Lilliputian town," wrote McMechen, "will be thronged by figures of men, women and children in the costumes of the period, covered wagons, horses, mules, oxen, dogs, Indian warriors and their families."



Shown left to right, above, are an unidentified brick building, D.C. Oakes's lumber yard, Bell's boardinghouse, and the law offices of Hiram P. Bennet and Moses Hallett. Below, LeRoy R. Hafen and Edgar C. McMechen oversee the construction of the Early Denver diorama.



Chairs were set up in the first-floor lobby of the museum for the annual meeting on 13 December 1938. Robert L. Stearns, then dean of the University of Colorado law school, gave an address entitled "Who Have the Power?"

and manuscripts were duplicated for reference. A block-by-block photographic survey of downtown Denver was completed in 1937. Ranging farther afield, one researcher spent an entire year traveling in the South and Midwest to track down Colorado historical material not available in the state, visiting thirty-nine cities and logging eight thousand miles in the process.

With the end of the depression and the beginning of World War II, the WPA projects at the Society and throughout the country came to an

end. Approximately \$250,000 in federal funds had been expended during the nearly eight-year life span of the Colorado projects, resulting in an incomparable legacy for future generations.

Concurrent with his supervision of the WPA projects, McMechen became deeply involved with the estate of Elizabeth McCourt ("Baby Doe") Tabor, the widow of H.A.W. Tabor. Following her death at the Matchless Mine in 1935, the Society, through President Ernest Morris, succeeded in having McMechen named administrator of the estate,



**Priceless Lace
in a Tabor Gown**
This is the christening dress of Elizabeth Lilly Tabor. It was taken Monday from one of Mrs. Baby Doe Tabor's trunks in a Denver warehouse.

Lillie Tabor's christening dress, examined here by LeRoy R. Hafen (right) and Edgar C. McMechen, was made of lily-patterned lace and brocade and lined with heavy satin.



Society president Ernest Morris (center) joined Hafen and McMechen in uncovering the Tabor treasures. "Relics of the days when Tabor was the richest and one of the most powerful men in the west were found in an abundance which made the historians gasp," reported the Denver Post.

while a group of prominent citizens formed the Tabor Association, which purchased the collection for the Society in order to satisfy the monetary claims against the estate. Carefully preserved by Baby Doe in trunks and boxes at various sites in both Denver and Leadville, the Tabor manuscripts, costumes, jewelry, and other memorabilia enable visitors to glimpse both the opulence of the era of the Silver Kings and the despair of the many years following Tabor's death, when Baby Doe found comfort in her "dreams and visions" as she heeded her husband's advice to "hold on to the Matchless." The story of the Tabors was recounted by McMechen in *The Tabor Story*, first published by the Society in 1951, and he was working on a more extensive treatment of the family when he died.

Following the end of the WPA projects in 1941, McMechen became successively curator of archaeology and ethnology and, in 1945, curator of the state museum. In this capacity he oversaw the renovation of the museum and the establishment of several regional properties or branch museums, as the Society embarked on an ambitious modernization and expansion program after World War II.



Evans and Rogers

During 1945-46 the renovation of the State Museum began with improvements on the main floor, including the installation of better lighting and the rearrangement of the exhibits in order to present the history of Colorado in chronological order. "This is the class-room type of display in vogue in all leading museums of America," McMechen explained, "and is so called because it greatly enhances the educational value of exhibits and is adapted to intelligent study by school students." Although further work was proposed by the Society for major structural changes of the exterior (including a new entrance on Sherman Street), the necessary funds were not voted by the legislature.

Compare this 1955 photograph of the main floor lobby of the museum with the view shown on page 20.





Looking toward the elevator and the library entrance (above) from the main floor lobby in 1955. Below, the east gallery looking north.



The east gallery on the main floor looking south toward the double-doored freight elevator. The view on page 21 was taken about thirty years earlier.

More far-reaching were the long-term plans to establish regional properties, which would result in the acquisition of fourteen sites and structures over the next thirty years. Such branch or regional museums would preserve important historic structures or sites, would serve as focal points for the collection and preservation of local and regional history, and would accommodate artifacts that could not be stored in the State Museum.

The initial sites proposed for development were Pikes Stockade and Fort Garland in the San Luis Valley, Chief Ouray's farm near Montrose, and the Healy House in Leadville. The site where Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his men had erected a small cottonwood stockade in 1807 had been administered by the Society since its acquisition by the state in 1925. Now McMechen proposed, as part of a plan linking the two San Luis Valley sites to provide a "circle tour" for visitors, to reconstruct the stockade based on the explorer's own description. Additional acreage was purchased and landscaped and the reconstruction was completed in 1952.

Fort Garland, built in 1858 as the successor to the nearby but less well situated Fort Massachusetts, was deeded to the Society in 1945 by the Fort Garland Historical Fair Association. Commanded by Kit Carson in 1866-67, the adobe buildings had fallen into considerable disrepair in the years following the abandonment of the fort in 1883.



Demonstrating the height of the log walls, Mrs. Edgar C. McMechen stands in the corner of the reconstructed Pikes Stockade. Below, tangled weeds and grasses had virtually taken over Fort Garland prior to the restoration of the site.



Today, the restored company quarters, barracks, and officers' quarters surrounding the parade ground feature dioramas and other exhibits depicting military life on the frontier.

In 1945 the Society also acquired title to the site of Ute Chief Ouray and his wife Chipeta's farm near Montrose from the Uncompahgre Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. McMechen greatly admired Ouray and dreamed of erecting a museum that would relate the history of the Ute and that would pay tribute to the chief's efforts as peacemaker and mediator. Dedicated in 1956, the Ute Indian Museum depicts the history of the tribe through dioramas, objects, photographs, and maps.



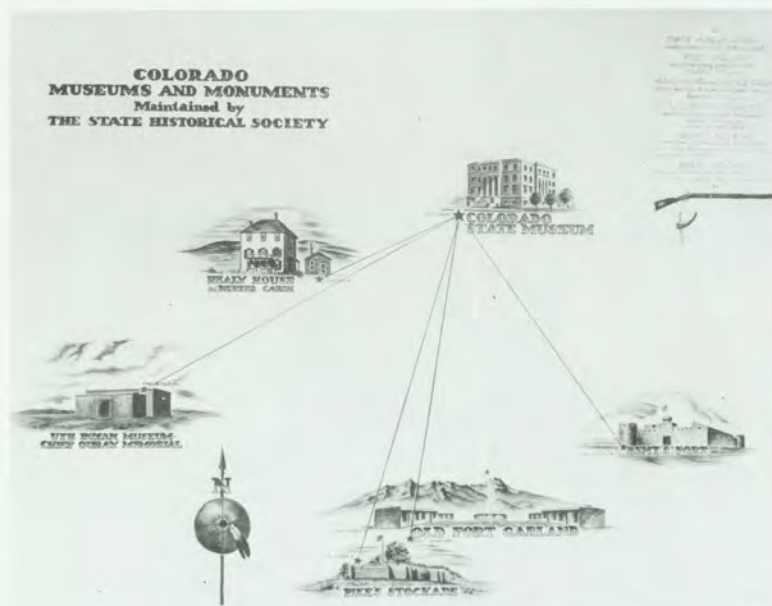
Celebrating the opening of the Ute Indian Museum on 15 July 1956.

Healy House and Dexter Cabin in Leadville were acquired by the Society in 1947 from the Leadville Historical Association. Built in 1878 by a Leadville mining engineer, Healy House also served as the Methodist Episcopal Church parsonage and as a boardinghouse for Cloud City schoolteachers. Dexter Cabin, a rough-hewn cabin with an elegant interior, was moved to the Healy House site in 1949.

Throughout the last years of his life McMechen worked tirelessly on plans for developing the regional properties. After his death in 1953 the Society continued with its policy of acquiring significant historic sites or structures. Fort Vasquez, a replica of a fur trading post of the 1830s built by the WPA near Platteville, was acquired in 1958, the year after the Society obtained the old airport hangar at Pueblo. Converted into the El Pueblo Museum, it was opened in 1959, featuring a full-size reconstruction of Fort Pueblo. The next year Baca House and the Pioneer Museum in Trinidad were accepted, sparking a fund-raising drive by



Healy House and Dexter Cabin on a blustery day in Leadville.



Acquired in 1954, the site of Bent's Old Fort was maintained by the Society until the early 1960s. Now a National Historic Site, the fort was reconstructed by the National Park Service as a bicentennial project. Articles on the architecture and furnishings of the reconstruction were included in the special Bent's Old Fort issue of The Colorado Magazine (Fall 1977).



Shown above are Fort Vasquez (top) in 1963 and the El Pueblo Museum. At right is the Baca House courtyard.





Topped with a cupola, the towering Victorian Rococo Bloom House was built in 1882 by Frank G. Bloom, a Trinidad pioneer who was a merchant, banker, and head of the Bloom Cattle Company. Built of red brick and trimmed with native sandstone, the Bloom House has been restored and furnished in the fashion of the Victorian 1880s. The Baca House next door, built by merchant John S. Hough in 1869 and sold in 1870 to Don Felipe Baca, a successful sheep rancher, has been restored to reflect the life style of a prosperous Hispano family during the 1870s.

former Trinidad residents that resulted in the acquisition of the neighboring Bloom House for the Society in 1961. Rounding out the historic properties are the Pearce-McAllister Cottage (1970) and the Grant-Humphreys Mansion (1976) in Denver and the McFarlane House in Central City (1976).



Located at 1880 Gaylord Street in Denver, the Pearce-McAllister Cottage was built near the turn of the century as a wedding gift for Harold Pearce, son of metallurgist Richard Pearce, and his bride. It was later bought by Henry McAllister, general counsel for the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, and came to the Society in 1970 after the death of his son, T. Sherman McAllister.



These views of the drawing room (above) and the billiard room are from an album of the family of James B. Grant, governor of Colorado from 1883 to 1885, who built the Grant-Humphreys Mansion in 1902.



Overlooking Eureka Street, the McFarlane House is located within the Central City Historic District. It is currently being maintained and utilized by the Central City Opera House Association.

Although the development of the regional properties was perhaps the most visible accomplishment of the 1940s, other programs also flourished under the guidance of John Evans, who served as president from 1941 to 1949. The grandson and namesake of John Evans, the second territorial governor of Colorado and a founder of the Society, Evans's term of office included the establishment of the state archives, the beginning of the Western Range Cattle Industry Study (WRCIS), and the acquisition of the William Henry Jackson collection of western glass-plate negatives. Evans was, as well, a staunch supporter of the plans to modernize the State Museum and to acquire regional properties, at one point supporting the necessary design work for the museum with his own funds.

Taking office at the beginning of World War II, Evans called for renewed vigor in preserving the historical heritage of the state and the nation, noting that "the record of the past is a great inspiration and is often a guide to the future." Two years later, in February 1943, the Colorado General Assembly passed a law covering the preservation, destruction, or microfilming of all public records and delegating the responsibility for this work to the Society. Accordingly, the Division of



John Evans, a grandson of the second territorial governor, served as president of the First National Bank of Denver, 1928-59.

State Archives was created, headed first by Herbert Brayer and subsequently by Dolores Renze, and work began analyzing the mountain of government records at the state, county, and municipal level that had been collected since the creation of Colorado Territory. For the next fifteen years the work of the state archives continued within the structure of the Society; however, in 1959, the Division of State Archives became a separate agency largely in recognition of the fact that many of its duties were of a "housekeeping" nature and could more properly and efficiently be discharged elsewhere.

Although the Society no longer had the responsibility for caring for the official records of the state, it continued actively to collect and preserve private manuscript materials. In fact, one of the largest and most complex projects of this nature ever undertaken by the Society began in



Looking over the 1880 census sent by the National Archives to the State Archives in 1955 are, from left, George Warren, Martin Wenger, and State Archivist Dolores Renze.

1944, one year after the creation of the state archives, when the Rockefeller Foundation funded the Western Range Cattle Industry Study. Due largely to the efforts of Society Vice-president Henry Swan, the foundation allocated \$64,500 for a study of the development of the range cattle industry in Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Montana from 1850 to 1900. Researchers located diaries, letters, and business records of individuals and companies not only in the western states but overseas as well, securing microfilm copies in England and Scotland. Although the project was initially scheduled to be completed in five years, it was not finished until 1955, the work financed by a second grant of \$12,350. Today the Western Range Cattle Industry Study, comprising over two hundred rolls of microfilm as well as indexes and newspaper references, is available in the library of the Society.

Another nationally significant collection of historical material was acquired during the last year of John Evans's tenure as president. Primarily through the efforts of Henry Swan, Clarence S. Jackson (son of William Henry Jackson), the Ford Foundation, and the Jackson Camera Club of Denver, the Society received the seven thousand Jackson glass-plate negatives of photographs taken west of the Mississippi River (eastern and foreign views are housed in the Library of Congress).

Ranging in size from 5x7 to 20x24 inches, the Jackson negatives include spectacular views of Mesa Verde, the Yellowstone geysers, and the Mount of the Holy Cross. As a special centennial project in 1979, the Society, in cooperation with the Chicago Albumen Works, issued a limited edition of twenty-five albumen prints made directly from the original glass negatives.

After serving as president for eight years, Evans resigned in December 1949 to devote more time to his other civic and business responsibilities. As his successor the board elected James Grafton Rogers, truly a "renaissance man" whose imprint and impact on the Society can still be felt today. A lawyer, historian, and diplomat, Rogers had served as dean of both the University of Colorado and University of Denver law schools, master of Timothy Dwight College of Yale University, and assistant secretary of state before "retiring" to his Victorian home in Georgetown. As president of the Society from 1949 to 1959 and chairman thereafter until his death in 1971, Rogers devoted his considerable talents to writing and to history, even, during the early 1950s, taking an active role in the day-to-day administration of the Society.

In 1955 Rogers suggested that it would be appropriate to commemorate the great gold rush of 1859, which marked the real beginning



"There are people who love the mountains. There are others who love the sea, although I think not so many," wrote James Grafton Rogers in his classic journal, My Rocky Mountain Valley, published in 1968.

of the settlement of Colorado. Both the state and the city of Denver formed commissions to plan a celebration to be held in 1959, and an official emblem was designed by Trinidad artist Arthur Roy Mitchell, who later served as curator of Baca House, Bloom House, and the Pioneer Museum. During 1959 numerous pageants, parades, and other events took place; histories, brochures, and other publications, including a gold-covered special number of *The Colorado Magazine*, were



During the Rush to the Rockies in 1959, costumed guides offered "Gold Rush Gallery Tours" of the State Museum.

issued; and the *Denver Post* awarded a \$10,000 prize "for the best romantic play based on the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858" (won by Thomas Hornsby Ferril for "... And Perhaps Happiness"). Despite criticism from those who felt that the "Rush to the Rockies" was a somewhat artificial celebration, from all accounts most Coloradans entered into the proceedings with gusto and good humor, perhaps more so than during the "official" centennial seventeen years later.

A second achievement of Rogers's tenure was the establishment of the Volunteers of the State Historical Society in 1957. As one of their first projects the Volunteers supervised a monthly lecture series, and within a few years they were deeply involved in almost every aspect of



In preparation for their work as guides, Society Volunteers learn about the Governor's Mansion in June 1960.

the operations of the Society. Today the almost four hundred members of the Volunteers (both men and women) give tours to school groups, guide visitors through the Colorado Governor's Mansion, staff the museum store in the Colorado Heritage Center, provide slide-illustrated talks through the Speakers' Bureau, tape oral history interviews, and give hours of much-needed behind-the-scenes assistance to all departments.

Although Rogers resigned as president in 1959, he remained on the board as chairman until his death in 1971, a period that saw the Society move forward with the development of the Georgetown Loop Historic Mining Area (GLHMA). This project owes much to Rogers's conviction that the valley between Georgetown and Silver Plume provided the perfect setting for interpreting early Colorado mining and railroad history. Including the Georgetown Loop with its famed Devils Gate Viaduct, now being reconstructed, the GLHMA today offers the summer-time visitor an opportunity to board steam-powered, narrow-gauge trains for a trip along Clear Creek to tour the Lebanon Mine and Mill complex.

Rogers was still serving as president in 1954 when a milestone in the history of the Society was reached with the retirement of LeRoy R. Hafen as state historian. During his thirty years with the Society, Hafen



The Georgetown, Breckenridge, and Leadville Railroad chugs along the reconstructed track of the Georgetown Loop, once advertised as the "Scenic Wonder of the World."



LeRoy R. Hafen in his office shortly before his retirement.

had laid the foundation for the serious study of Colorado history, contributing numerous articles to *The Colorado Magazine*, which he edited, establishing new and innovative programs, and traveling throughout the state in his quest for artifacts and manuscripts. Seldom did his vacation trips fail to include a stop at a historical library to search out pertinent documents. Such dedication and enthusiasm produced a literary legacy that students of Colorado still consult frequently, confident that they can find the facts, insofar as they are known, presented clearly and carefully. Happily, Hafen continued his research and writing for many years after leaving the Society, and as this issue is published he is still active in western history circles, dividing his time between homes in Provo, Utah, and Palm Desert, California.

The Transitional Years

Succeeding Hafen as state historian and editor of *The Colorado Magazine* was Agnes Wright Spring, certainly no stranger to the staff of the Society. Born in Delta in 1894, Mrs. Spring was the author of such western history books as *Caspar Collins: Indian Fighter* and the *Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Routes*, and had been state librarian and state historian, ex-officio, of Wyoming. During 1950-51 she had served as acting state historian while Hafen spent a year at the Huntington Library in California and upon his return had been named executive assistant to President Rogers. For the next three years she was deeply involved in administrative work, which she happily relinquished to return to editing in 1954.



"Acting Historian Puts Pep into Step of Colorado Museum," headlined the Denver Rocky Mountain News in the early 1950s. Mrs. Spring (right) is shown here with her sister, Alice Wright Wallace, in 1962.

In addition to her administrative and editorial duties, Mrs. Spring launched an expanded public relations effort to spread the word about the Society. She supplied regular press releases to the Denver radio stations and to newspapers throughout the state, wrote magazine articles, and prepared a condensed history of Colorado that with periodic updating is still being used today. As state historian she responded to frantic calls for information from television stations and answered numerous reference questions, all the while maintaining "open house" in her office for old-timers who wanted to drop by and talk to her about their experiences. In addition, she and her staff gave innumerable talks to church and civic groups.

In 1957 Mrs. Spring took the lead in establishing the Junior Historians of Colorado for young scholars. Five students, with a faculty sponsor, could form a group; the first was the Black Diamond Club of Lafayette Junior High School in Lafayette. *The Gold Nugget*, a publication containing articles and news of the various chapters, was issued especially for the clubs. The junior historian movement flourished into the 1960s but is no longer active today due to a number of factors, one being the difficulty of recruiting active, interested faculty sponsors. However, the educational work of the Society, founded by Will Ferril in the 1890s, has continued and expanded, with classes, tours, and outreach programs, which include films, kits containing artifacts, and

Assistant Historian James Rose Harvey lectures on the cliff dwellers to a group of students in the late 1940s.



During the late 1960s students learned about Indian, Spanish, Black, and Oriental cultures through a program funded under Title III of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Below, the 1890s Broadway School Classroom provides an educational environment for the 1980s.



“grandmothers’ trunks.” Today, some 600,000 persons each year learn about Colorado history through such educational activities.

During her years with the Society, Mrs. Spring was a tireless worker in the cause of Colorado history, and upon her retirement in 1963 she was, like Hafen, given the title of state historian emeritus. And, like Hafen, she has continued her research and writing unabated.

After Hafen retired in 1954 the board initiated several administrative changes to improve the coordination and functioning of the several departments and brought in Maurice Frink to oversee the general operations of the Society as executive director. A native of Indiana, Frink had spent thirty-five years as a newspaper editor in Elkhart before moving to Colorado in 1951. In Boulder he lectured on journalism at the University of Colorado and completed a book for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, a project that led to his concurrent appointment as director of the Western Range Cattle Industry Study. During 1954 and 1955 he devoted much of his time to the completion of the range cattle study and edited *When Grass Was King*, a volume on the range cattle industry, featuring contributions by W. Turrentine Jackson and Mrs. Spring (who had worked briefly on the WRCIS staff), as well as Frink.

In addition to his research and writing on the cattle industry, Frink focused much of his attention on the completion of the Ute Indian Museum, in the process working closely with the Ute in Ignacio. His interest in the history and culture of the Native Americans, stemming

Maurice Frink and Willena D. Cartwright, curator of state museums, 1955-62.



from a summer he spent among the Sioux at the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota following his high school graduation, also led to the acquisition of an important collection of manuscript material for the Society and the beginning of a research project to which he would devote much of the remainder of his life.

During his stay at Pine Ridge in 1913, Frink became acquainted with Dr. James R. Walker, the agency physician and an amateur anthropologist, who had promised Frink's father that he would look after him. Forty-five years later Frink received a letter from an anthropologist in Vienna inquiring about the location of Dr. Walker's papers. Frink found that Walker's granddaughter, Emeline Wensley Hughes, was living in Denver, and she presented her grandfather's literary legacy, including unfinished manuscripts, notes, interviews, photographs, and recordings of Oglala Sun Dance songs, to the Society.

After he retired as executive director in 1963, Frink proceeded to work in earnest on his biography of Dr. Walker, a long-cherished dream, and at his death in 1972 the manuscript entitled "Pine Ridge Medicine Man" was being edited for publication by the Society. Escalating production costs and other factors, however, combined to delay publication for most of the 1970s, until the project was resurrected by Elaine Jahner of the University of Nebraska and Raymond DeMallie of Indiana University. Utilizing the best of Frink's research with texts of Walker's notes and essays, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, the first volume of a projected five-volume set, was copublished in 1980 by the University of Nebraska Press and the Society.

With the retirements of Maurice Frink and Agnes Wright Spring in 1963 the stage was set for new leadership to guide the Society through the 1960s and 1970s, years that would see an increasing emphasis on the preservation of the natural and the built environments. One of those who would play an important role in historic preservation in Colorado was board member Stephen H. Hart, hardly a newcomer to the Society or to Colorado.

Born in Denver in 1908, Hart earned degrees from Yale, Oxford, and the University of Denver. His interest in and love for history was manifested early, when his prize-winning Yale essay on explorer Zebulon Pike led to the publication of *Zebulon Pike's Arkansaw Journal* in 1932 in collaboration with Archer B. Hulbert. In fact, had he not gone on to a career as a prominent lawyer and politician, he might well have devoted his life to writing and teaching history.

Hart began his more than four decades of service to the Society in 1938, when he was named to the Board of Directors. The previous year he had been elected to the Colorado House of Representatives, where he served two years before beginning a four-year term in the Senate in



Stephen H. Hart (left), long-time board member L.R. Kendrick, and James Grafton Rogers (right) examine an issue of The Colorado Magazine.

1939. Hart's combined interests in history and in the legislative process worked to the Society's advantage on many occasions, as, for example, when he took the lead in drafting the bill that created the State Archives in 1943.

Hart succeeded his father-in-law, James Grafton Rogers, as president of the Society in 1959, a post he held for ten years, subsequently becoming chairman of the board in 1971. The climax to his career with the Society, however, came in 1967, when Governor John A. Love appointed him State Historic Preservation Officer under the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. For the next eleven years, Hart directed the historic preservation program in Colorado on a voluntary basis until the appointment of Arthur Townsend in 1978 as the first paid State Historic Preservation Officer. In 1980 the Board of Directors voted to rename the Documentary Resources Department the Stephen H. Hart Library in recognition of his many years of dedicated and devoted service to the Society.

The Building Years

In addition to historic preservation, historic archaeology also was emphasized by the Society during the 1960s. Although excavations had been conducted at the site of Bent's Old Fort (then owned by the Society) in 1954, the archaeological endeavors of the Society had previously focused primarily on the prehistoric, rather than the historic, period. Beginning in 1963 with an excavation at Fort Vasquez, however, the Society took a more active role in historic archaeology. In



Digging at Fort Vasquez in 1968.

cooperation with area schools, including Trinidad State and Otero junior colleges and Colorado State University, additional digs were sponsored from 1966 to 1970 at Fort Vasquez, including the site of its fur-trading neighbor Fort Saint Vrain, and at the site of Fort Massachusetts during the summers of 1964, 1965, and 1966.

Led by William E. Marshall, who assumed the post of executive director following the retirement of Maurice Frink in 1963, the Society also launched an expanded publishing program. A reprint edition of *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War* by William Clarke Whitford, first published by the Society in 1906, was issued in cooperation with the Pruett Press of Boulder in 1963. Six years later *Frontier Capitalist: The Life of John Evans*, by Harry Kelsey (who had served three years as state historian after the retirement of Agnes Wright Spring) was published under the joint Society-Pruett imprint, followed in 1973 by *Bent's Old Fort: An Archeological Study* by Jackson W. Moore, Jr., a National Park Service report. In order to better inform the membership of the Society's activities, *Mountain & Plain History Notes*, a monthly newsletter, was launched in 1964. Assorted leaflets, pamphlets, and guides to manuscript collections rounded out the publishing program.



Shown here in 1973 on his favorite form of transportation, W.E. Marshall came to the Society in 1960 as deputy curator of state museums in charge of exhibits. A Marine Corps veteran of World War II, he held a B.A. degree from the University of Montana and had been associated previously with the Ohio Historical Society as a designer.



'Zebulon Pike' adjusts his hat before being filmed in a scene on location for The Indians.

In addition to disseminating information on Colorado history through its publications, the Society also produced five new motion pictures to convey the story of the state to a wider audience. A pioneer in the field, the Society was the first historical organization in the country to make such documentary films, beginning with *The Story of Colorado* in 1946. Produced in cooperation with Barbre Productions of Denver, *The Trailblazers*, a twenty-five-minute full-color motion picture on exploration, premiered in 1964. *The Miners* was completed in 1965, followed by *Prehistoric Man* (1967), *The Cattlemen* (1968), and *The Indians* (1969). Geared to all age groups, the films won several major national awards and today are distributed world-wide by Xerox Education Publications.

Just as schoolchildren gained a better idea of their heritage by viewing the films of the Society, so too did scholars learn about the significant manuscript resources of the library through the calendars, inventories, and indexes published by the Western Business History Research Center (WBHRC). Founded in 1967 as a privately funded adjunct to the Society, the WBHRC, directed by University of Colorado history professor H. Lee Scamehorn, collects papers and records from individuals,

families, and business enterprises and organizes them for scholarly research.

New programs and new publications were not the only focus of the activities of the Society during the 1960s, however. From the beginning of his tenure as executive director in 1963, Marshall dreamed of moving one day into a new building that would provide adequate space for the collections and exhibits, as the Society had long outgrown the State Museum. The subject was hardly a new one, for as early as 1923 the Society had been lamenting the lack of space in the museum, conceding that not enough room had been planned for future expansion and development. In the ensuing years the question of erecting a new building was brought up from time to time, and, in fact, shortly before Marshall assumed the directorship, the state had almost decided to proceed with plans for a new museum on the corner of Lincoln Street and East Colfax Avenue, and the venerable Tours Hotel had been torn down to make way for it.

Those plans were scrapped, however, and the Society began again in its attempts to convince the legislature that a new building was essential in order to continue to carry out its responsibilities to the people of the state. Building programs were drawn up and site studies conducted, but as the sixties ended a new Society headquarters was still far on the horizon.

In 1973, however, the legislature voted funds to plan new buildings for both the Society and the Colorado Supreme Court, and a competition

An early view of the site of the future Colorado Heritage Center, taken from the intersection of Thirteenth and Broadway.



Governor Richard D. Lamm (left), Society President E. Warren Willard, Chief Justice Edward E. Pringle, and W.E. Marshall wield their shovels in the traditional groundbreaking ceremony.





Designed by the Denver architectural firm of Rogers-Nagel-Langhart, the Heritage Center was built by the Hensel Phelps Construction Company of Greeley.



Stephen H. Hart addressed the crowd at the topping out ceremony on 9 June 1976. Below, the staircase leading to the main exhibition area is a dramatic interior feature.



was held in 1974 to choose the architectural firm that would design the Judicial-Heritage Complex. Ground-breaking ceremonies on 7 May 1975 signaled the beginning of construction at the site bounded by Broadway and Lincoln streets and Thirteenth and Fourteenth avenues. A year later, on 9 June 1976, the Colorado Heritage Center was "topped out," and by mid-1977 the staff began to move almost a century's-worth of artifacts, documentary resources, and exhibits into the new building.

Culminating years of planning, hoping, and dreaming, the Colorado Heritage Center opened to the public on 5 November 1977 with a



parade, dedication ceremonies, tours, and presentations by local historical societies from throughout the state. Two major exhibits, "The Coloradans," a multi-media introduction to the peoples of Colorado, and "From the Hands of the Ancient Ones," featuring examples of the prehistoric pottery collection, were installed.

Although the move had been completed and the offices were open for business, much work remained before more exhibits would be ready for viewing. In the meantime, the Society sponsored a five-month-long series of programs from 3 January to 5 May 1978 entitled "Meeting at the Center" (MATC), highlighting the contributions of the various cultures and ethnic groups to the state. Partially funded by a grant from the

National Endowment for the Humanities, MATC provided Sunday afternoon festivals, films, and daily "Box Talks" featuring discussions of cultural inheritances and ethnic group artifacts.

Although the new building represented the most important and visible accomplishment of the 1970s, the work of the Society continued in other areas as well during the decade. For example, a far-reaching program of financial aid and technical assistance to local historical societies and museums began in 1974 with special funding from the legislature. By the end of 1980, 144 grants had been awarded in 41 counties in the amount of \$176,738 for projects ranging from emergency roof repairs to copying historic photographs.

In 1976, of course, the Society took an active part in celebrating the centennial of Colorado statehood. Special tours of the State Museum were given by costumed, centennial guides, and a centennial lecture

The centennial guides, photographed in the Victorian ambience of the 1976 Christmas display in the Colorado State Museum.



series featured programs by many of the leading historians of the state. A ramada commemorating the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of 1776 through western Colorado was erected at the Ute Indian Museum as a Centennial-Bicentennial project.

Significant changes in the leadership of the Society also occurred during the 1970s. Denver lawyer Walter A. Steele succeeded Stephen Hart as president in 1969 and served until mid-1973, when Hart again took the reins for a six-month period. Businessman and civic leader E. Warren Willard then served as president from 1973 to 1978, a period which coincided not only with the move from the old building to the new, but one which saw the Society come increasingly to rely on private funding to support its programs and staff.

Fund raising on a large scale had begun as soon as the construction of the Colorado Heritage Center was assured, for the board had promised the legislature to raise the money to plan and build the permanent exhibits in the new building. Corporation and foundation gifts, including a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment from the



Elected to the board in 1963, Walter A. Steele held a B.A. degree from Princeton and a law degree from the University of Colorado.



The long-time managing partner of Boettcher and Company, E. Warren Willard was a member of the board for sixteen years prior to his death in 1979. The third floor terrace of the Heritage Center is named in his honor.

Humanities; individual donations; and the Colorado Family Heritage Book Program all contributed to achieving the goal of \$2.2 million by the end of 1980. In addition to raising private funds for the exhibits, the Society also was becoming more dependent on nonstate revenues in other areas, following the removal in 1979 of part or all of the general fund (state tax monies) support for the Publications Department and the regional properties. A membership drive and the institution of admission fees at the properties were two measures taken to help produce the needed funds.

As the 1970s drew to a close, the Society prepared to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of its founding. Led by a new president, *Denver Post* editor William H. Hornby, the members, board, and staff embarked on a round of gala celebrations throughout 1979. Beginning in January, monthly programs were held focusing on various aspects of the work of the Society. The first program honored the Volunteers of the

Society while the February lecture described the material culture collections. March focused on the photography collections, featuring the premiere of *Time Exposure*, a new motion picture on William Henry Jackson, and an exhibit of the contemporary albumen prints from the original Jackson glass negatives. The April program was conducted by the archaeology department, while in May historic preservation was spotlighted. During the summer the focus shifted to the regional properties, with each museum or site hosting an event for the people of the surrounding community. The centennial celebrations came to a grand conclusion with a two-day annual meeting in October. Beginning with a festive reception for keynote speaker David Lavender at the Grant-Humphreys Mansion on 12 October, the annual meeting continued the next day with a Westerners Breakfast, a series of papers, and the centennial dinner. Throughout the year a special exhibit, "One Hundred Years of Collecting," gave visitors a taste of the objects and documents amassed during the past century.



Governor Richard D. Lamm and friends cut the cake at the one-hundredth birthday party of the Society on 1 August 1979.

The centennial year brought changes as well as celebrations to the Society. Beginning 1 June, Marshall relinquished his administrative duties in order to devote all of his time to designing the permanent exhibits in the Heritage Center. A year later, with much of the preliminary work completed, he elected to take early retirement in order to work as a private consultant in the museum and design fields. "Bill was the key planner to move the Society from the old State Museum into the new Heritage Center," commented Society President Hornby. "His guidance and wisdom have been invaluable."

Succeeding Marshall as executive director on 1 December 1979 was Barbara Welch Sudler, who had served for the preceding five years as the executive administrator of Historic Denver, the nation's largest locally based historic preservation organization. With new leadership and renewed vision the Society entered the 1980s and the second century of its existence. In fact, 1980 proved to be a year of transition, a time not only to look back over the first hundred years but also to look forward to meeting the challenges of the last decades of the twentieth century. Nowhere was the commingling of past, present, and future more evident than at the 101st Annual Meeting of the Society in November. Programs on that quintessential nineteenth-century frontier figure, the cowboy,

Louis L'Amour, the world's bestselling western frontier novelist (second from right), joins Society Executive Director Barbara Sudler, radio and television star Pete Smythe (far left), and newspaperman Red Fenwick in the Heritage Center during the 1980 annual meeting.



including an analysis of the cowboy in fiction by world-famous author Louis L'Amour, preceded the "State of the Society" address presented by President Hornby. Issuing a call to Society members, board, and staff, he urged them to "learn how to illuminate the history of the issues which are seizing Coloradoans today, for it is our fundamental purpose as an educational institution to put history to work helping to solve the problems of living today. . . . The broader target must be *our* target for the 1980s."*

* The full text of Hornby's address is printed elsewhere in this issue.

MAXINE BENSON first joined the staff of the Colorado Historical Society as deputy state historian in 1964. She holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Colorado at Boulder and is currently serving as state historian and curator of documentary resources.