

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Doyle-Benton House

other names/site number 5DV9200

2. Location

street & number 1301 Lafayette Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80218

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [ ] entered in the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] other, explain [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Horizontal lines for signature and date input.

Doyle-Benton House  
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: single dwelling
- Domestic: multiple dwelling
- Domestic: secondary structure

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Domestic: single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late nineteenth and early twentieth century American movements
- Other: American Foursquare

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: Brick
- walls: Brick, Sandstone
- roof: Asphalt
- other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Doyle-Benton House  
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado  
County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Agriculture

Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1896

1898-1904

1907-1921

### Significant Dates

1896

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Doyle, James

Benton, Frank

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Houck, Frank

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Doyle-Benton House  
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- |    |      |         |          |   |
|----|------|---------|----------|---|
| 1. | 13   | 502535  | 4398362  | (NAD27)   |
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| 3. |      |         |          |   |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing |   |
| 4. |      |         |          |   |
|    | Zone | Easting | Northing | <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet |

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Randle C.W. Swan and Tamar Judith Gerber-Owner  
organization Independent Preservation Consultant date 5/10/2005  
street & number 2828 Vrain Street telephone 720-220-3666  
city or town Denver state CO zip code 80212

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Tamar Judith Gerber  
street & number 1301 Lafayette Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Denver state CO zip code 80218

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

Doyle-Benton House

Denver County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The Doyle-Benton house, whose construction was completed in 1896, is an early example of a two-and-a-half-story red brick Foursquare with rock-faced sandstone foundation trim, pediment window lintels, sills, and trim. The house sits at the northwestern corner of the intersection of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lafayette Street and it fronts east onto Lafayette Street, behind a slightly sloping front yard. The house occupies two and a half city lots and also contains a 1,400 square foot two-story carriage house in the same red brick motif as the main house, as well as a detached single-story garage dating from the early twentieth century. The house was built when Lafayette Street was known as Eyster Street and it functioned as a main trolley line into downtown Denver. Cheesman Park, one of the city's oldest public parks, is located only one-and-a-half blocks to the southeast and the State Capitol and arts districts are approximately ten blocks directly west.

The entire brick house is laid in triple-wythe running bond with thin mortar joints. The exterior is banded at the bottom by a three-foot-tall section of rock-faced stone sitting on top of the brick foundation. None of the foundation is exposed above grade. The rock-faced courses are topped by a dressed course forming a water table. A two-brick high sill course encircles the building at the first and second stories. A single-brick belt course also wraps the house level with the second-story lintels. The majority of windows throughout the building are one-over-over double-hung wood frame sash with rock-faced sandstone sills and lintels. The hipped roof has wide eaves with shaped faux rafter tails. The roof contains dormers on the south, east and west elevations and massive brick chimneys with corbelled caps on the south, west, and north elevations. A small chimney pierces the roof near its southwest corner.

Front (east) Elevation: The main entry is sheltered by a half-width porch with tapered columns and Ionic capitals rising from short brick piers with rock-faced sandstone caps. The porch roof is of gently sloped shed design. The entry is a half-glazed wood door flanked by a large leaded glass window. A Palladian window fills the southern half of the first story. Brick piers frame the window and support the rock-faced lintel with a central semicircular arch of stone voussoirs. Three basement windows line up beneath the Palladian window.

The second story is divided into halves by a set of Queen Anne style wood bay windows with leaded glass upper sash. These bay windows have simple but delicate carved floral relief on the friezes above the window glass. The half story above the roofline contains a double sash in a wood shingle sided dormer with a truncated hip roof forming a swan neck pediment. The dormer has grooved pilaster and Greek Revival trim.

North Elevation: The elevation steps back at its western-most section. Several two-light basement windows fill the area below the water table. On the first story, a pair of narrow windows flanks the projecting chimney. A mid-level stained glass window illuminates the interior stair. Two additional windows occupy the western-most area of the main section. The second story contains two windows near the western-most edge of the building. The stepped-back portion of the elevation contains a single one-over-one window on the first story and a narrow one-over-one and a small fixed window on the second story. The top of the house contains a hipped-roof dormer with wood shingle siding and a pair of one-over-one sash.

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Rear (west) Elevation: This portion of the home is dominated by the attached wood shingle sided and enclosed porch with a half-hipped roof and by the massive chimney. The rear elevation steps out to contain the first-floor kitchen and a second-floor bedroom. A narrow window occupies the wall just north of the porch. Entry is made through a door on the north side of the porch accessed by a short flight of wood steps. A cellar door provides access to the basement. The second story contains a single centered window with a multi-light leaded glass upper sash.

South Elevation: The 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue facing elevation matches the north elevation only in its chimney and dormer. Six irregularly spaced two-light windows illuminate the basement. From west to east, the first story contains three one-over-one windows, a large bay three-window bay with half-hipped roof, and a small fixed stained glass parlor window flanking the west side of the chimney. The second story contains three one-over-one windows with leaded glass upper sash.

The Doyle-Benton house interior contains many examples of unusual architectural decoration, including the ornately carved woodwork fabricated from bird's eye or tiger's eye maple, cherry, and oak. The house retains all of its original leaded glass windows, a rarity in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The windows were undoubtedly retained partially through the aid of modern storm windows which were installed during the twentieth century. Delicately carved tiger's eye maple fireplace surround with light colored tiles, pocket doors and moldings in the front parlor all exhibit Art Nouveau styling. The house contains five extant fireplaces with period ceramic tile surrounds and elaborate hand-carved mantles. The hand-carved Art Nouveau motif continues in the main stair newel post, matching window lintels and doorframes, and the built-in glass fronted hutch in the dining room. The wood parquet floor is all hand nailed. Other interior features include a Carnegie Steel floor joist and an intact coal chute for delivery of heating fuels.

**Alterations**

The exterior of the house is in good condition and, while it did suffer from some alteration during the mid-late twentieth century on the upper floors, over the past year it has been restored to its original use as a single-family home with the carriage house slated to become a historically sympathetic rental and office space.

The only major alterations to the house occurred during the late twentieth century during the decline of the Capitol Hill neighborhood in Denver, when new entries were added to facilitate the change to a multi-dwelling unit. As the property owner, I will discuss the changes as they pertain to structure and cosmetic alterations throughout the twentieth century. The building had previously been converted into a four-unit apartment house prior to my ownership. Upon purchasing the home in late June 2004, I endeavored to reverse the damage. In late December 2004, a structural engineer assessed the building integrity. The main structural joist was found to be a five foot length of 82 lb. steel rail from the Colorado & Southern Railway. This item was added contemporaneous to a forced air central heating unit in the home, probably during the 1940s or 1950s. The owners at that time punched through the foundation bricks to add ductwork for heat and thereby compromised support for the house. I have remedied this through use of a microlam Glulam beam appropriate for the weight and girth of the house as recommended by a licensed structural engineer. The home had multiple kitchens from its apartment house conversion which were removed in December 2004-January 2005. Linoleum was removed and the floors were re-polished.

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Denver County, Colorado

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Two other unsound joist areas in the kitchen and second-story original bath had suffered water damage. In January 2004 the structural engineer assessed the work to restore integrity to the structure. I repaired and replaced joists and sub-floors in the kitchen and second-story bath as per the engineer's instructions. Finally, I recreated the butler's pantry, removed in the 1970s but whose footprint was evident once I removed the dry wall covering the plaster/lathe walls. To mimic the original space, I ordered historic reproduction quarter-sawn oak cabinetry from New Hampshire. Fortunately, enough period elements of the kitchen were intact, including wainscoting and lower cabinetry. The original elements were incorporated into the design of the kitchen.

In February 2005, a mason used historically accurate period brick to close the third-story landing entry door that was added during the 1970s to provide access to an apartment. In conjunction with that project, a Swiss-trained carpenter restored the roofline once I removed the 1970's exterior access door. He hand carved matching corbels to restore the decorative eave pattern. I found the historic soffit bead board lining an interior attic closet and used that to maintain the continuity of the bead board and corbel pattern work under the roofline. February 2005 also saw the removal of the unsightly and unsafe outside wooden staircase and metal balcony rail which formerly provided access to the second- and third-story apartments as well as the removal of a secondary basement access door in the front of the house. The last remaining outside restoration effort will be the addition of balusters above the main entrance as they appear in vintage photographs of the house.

**Carriage House**

In addition to the main house, the property contains a rare surviving turn of the twentieth century carriage house/barn complete with an upper hayloft and bead board first-floor ceiling. The carriage house dates from the earliest Sanborn Fire Atlas maps of the property in 1887. The building is located on the northwest portion of the lot adjacent to the alley. The L-shaped plan building is two-stories in height, constructed of red brick laid in double-wythe running bond pattern. The hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles and a square brick chimney rises thorough it near its southwest corner. The eaves are broken on the east, south and west elevations by hip-roofed wall dormers.

The west elevation contains a segmental arch vehicular entry with a wood door. The dormer above provided access to the loft behind a paneled wood door. The south elevation contains a pedestrian entry and two three-light windows with rowlock segmental arches and sandstone lintels. The dormer window is a two-over-two wood frame sash. Fenestration on the east elevation consists only of the wall dormer with its two-over-two wood frame sash. The north elevation is without fenestration. The building has eight small barred windows (to keep the horses from pushing out the glass) on the lower level.

The east wing is an addition that seems to have been added around the beginning of the twentieth century, based on evidence in the Sanborn Atlas maps. According to the Benton family, a brougham carriage, carriage driver and a horse team were brought from England and the eastern U.S. specifically to serve this house. (The carriage is currently on display at the Colorado History Museum in Denver.) The addition to the carriage house was probably added to accommodate this new vehicle and its team of horses.

The interior is still quite intact and has never been renovated, although most of the stalls and fixtures / partitions have been removed. One can still see the ghost marks where the tack hooks were affixed to a

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beadboard lined wall and where the rough milled posts once stood dividing the stalls. The hay-drops, feed-bins, and stable quarters remain on the second story. Most of the plaster lathe in the small stock keeper's quarters is in poor condition. The hole where the coal heating stove connected with the chimney and the remnants of the east window that was enclosed by the addition are all that really remain. There is good natural light in the second floor and it has been said by members of the Benton family that Frank Benton held meetings in that space. The building has no finished wall coverings except where the tack was hung and the ceiling of the lower level, which have beadboard covering, and the plastered keeper's quarters. Otherwise the building has exposed rafters and brick. The interior brick coursing has common wide mortar joints while the exterior courses display a narrow "butter mortar" style that matches the main house. The carriage house has several brick repairs that are visually evident but the building is in stable and sound condition.

**Garage**

The property also contains a detached two-car garage. The building does not appear on the 1905 Sanborn map but does appear on the 1925 map. Because the building's construction may have occurred after the close of the property's period of significance in 1921, the garage is considered to be noncontributing for the purposes of this nomination. The flat-roofed garage has a vehicular door on its west elevation which is accessed off the alley. Two segmental arch window openings on the east elevation each contain a six-light sash. The north elevation contains a pedestrian door at its eastern-most edge. The south elevation is without fenestration. The garage occupies the extreme southwest portion of the lot. This sitting along with its modest size minimizes its impact on the historic integrity of the overall property.

**Historic Integrity**

Currently the property is in good condition. The house exterior has been returned to its early twentieth-century appearance, thanks to period photographs, and the interior mechanical systems are working well. I have replanted trees, cleared the landscape surround to more closely match the early twentieth century photographs and have also replanted trees in the public rights of way. The house has returned to its more familiar appearance as a graceful single-family home.

The Doyle-Benton House and its associated carriage house retain a high degree of integrity in the aspects of location, design, materials, and workmanship related to their construction. The immediate setting is largely unchanged from the period of significance, thus allowing the providing to evoke a feeling of authenticity in a modern viewer. The house is also directly associated with the individuals who achieved their historical significance while owning and occupying the house.



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Doyle-Benton House circa 1930

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Doyle-Benton House

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1896 Doyle-Benton House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion B in the area of *industry* for its association with James Doyle, one of the pivotal mining figures in early twentieth-century Colorado. Doyle was a prospector and an original partner in the Portland Mining Company in Cripple Creek. The Portland Mine was the state's most prolific and longest producing gold mine. Doyle owned and lived in this house during the period in which he held a major stake in the Portland Mine. The period of significance relating to Doyle extends from his purchase of the house in 1898 until its sale in 1904.

The Doyle-Benton House is also eligible under Criterion B in the area of *agriculture* for its association with Frank Benton. Benton was the founder of a prominent Colorado cattle ranch that remained in business until the 1990s. Benton established the Frank Benton Land and Livestock firm that owned 60,000 acres of cattle land around Burns, Colorado, in Eagle County. He was active in the rancher movement opposed to fencing and he favored the leasing of public domain lands to cattle ranchers. Benton was a founder of both Denver's National Western Stock Show and the Cheyenne Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Both events are, to this day, major celebrations and trading venues demonstrating the significance of agriculture in the West. The Bentons maintained this city residence due to its proximity to the seat of government in Denver. Though at a considerable distance from his ranch lands, Benton managed his cattle empire from his Denver home beginning in 1907 and continuing until his death in 1921. The period of significance related to Frank Benton therefore is 1907-1921.

Finally, the Doyle-Benton House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its significance in the area of *architecture*. The house is a good example of an early American Foursquare (sometimes referred to locally as a Denver Square). The house is a blend of elements: the American Foursquare being the most prominent form with Classical Revival touches, Queen Anne influences, and Edwardian features. The building possesses the two-story height, hipped roof and facade dormer typical of period Foursquares, along with the wide eaves, exposed rafter tails, and a balanced facade. As a home built after the 1893 Financial Panic, it reflects the prevailing sobriety of the time with its simpler form and ornamentation than typical of the earlier Victorian-era. Its interior, in contrast to the more straightforward exterior, surprises with light-toned woodwork, light, delicate fireplace tile surrounds, and whimsical carved floral patterns that repeat throughout the first-floor door lintels and mantels. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1896, the year the house construction concluded.

**Transitional Foursquare Architecture**

The Doyle-Benton house is located near the crest of a hill approximately two-thirds of a mile behind the Colorado State Capitol building and downtown Denver. This area boomed in the 1890s due to the construction of Smith's Ditch that solved the issue of water access for the neighborhood. Public transit also engendered the development of Capitol Hill with the advent of cable cars in the mid 1880s. Thirteenth Avenue was an ancillary street car line. The electric streetcar, developed in the early 1890s, expanded Capitol Hill from a mansion neighborhood into more of an upper middle class neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> The new neighborhoods like Cheesman Park were built in brick due to the discovery of good clay underlying the

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<sup>1</sup> Phil Goodstein. *The Ghosts of Capitol Hill*. Denver; New Social Publications. 1996. p.26

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city and the need to maintain compliance with city ordinances for fire-resistant construction.<sup>2</sup> The Doyle-Benton house and outbuildings typify that trend in their masonry construction.

The house is situated in Browne's Addition, which was platted in the 1890s. The salient vacant lots were sold for \$3,000 on December 28, 1895, to the first speculative owner, Mrs. William H.S. Newcomb.<sup>3</sup> The building permit for the erection of a structure costing \$5,000 was issued in February 1896.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Newcomb had the house built and resold the property for \$14,000 on April 9, 1898, to James and Daphne Doyle.<sup>5</sup> It is notable that a widow was the owner of the property. Women were not generally participants in the mercantile trades and one of the few means for a widow to maintain and grow investments at that time was through real estate speculation. Indeed, records indicated that many women were the sole owners of building. However, it was not unusual for married couples to place real estate in the wife's name to separate and protect it from the husband's business investments.

This house is architecturally significant as an early example of the American Foursquare form of residential architecture incorporating elements that would not become popular for another decade. The house is a cross between a Foursquare and the more classically inspired Edwardian house. The Foursquare is an indigenous American design with style details ranging from Neoclassical to proto-Prairie.<sup>6</sup>

Builder Frank Houck, who also designed the house, was likely influenced by the latest styles in professional journals such as *Architectural Record* and mass circulation magazines like the *Ladies Homes Journal*. Both helped to popularize the styles of the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and may have influenced the design of the fireplace.<sup>7</sup> The home is a precursor of post-1900 building techniques in its simple unfluted Ionic porch columns.

The house deviates from a typical Foursquare through its use of largely symmetrical front rooms with symmetrical bay windows thereby eliminating the "empty space" sometimes seen in the center section of the second-story. The Doyle-Benton House is also more transitional than most Foursquares in its use of the earlier Victorian floor plan of the formal front parlor, back parlor and rear kitchen.<sup>8</sup> It is one of the earliest examples of this transitional architecture as later Denver homes migrated away from the extremely ornate and heavily embellished designs that had been popular in the city's most fashionable precincts during the 1880s and 1890s.

The building interior depicts a trend in Art Nouveau style that would not become popular for another decade. Interesting features include the delicately carved fireplace surround of tiger's eye maple in the Art Nouveau style with light colored tiles, and the similarly crafted pocket doors and moldings in the front parlor. Atypically, the fireplace is more of a 1920's type of ornamentation despite its being original to the room as evidenced by the symmetry of woodwork throughout the space, and, stylistically,

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren. *Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941*. Denver; Historic Denver, Inc. 1987. p.29

<sup>3</sup> City and County of Denver Lot Assessor Indexes (microfilm), Book 1079 City & County Building, Book 5, Browne's Addition p. 468, line 7. I am grateful to Jim Kroll, research librarian at the Denver Public Library, Genealogy and Western History Department, June 12, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Charles O Brantigan. *Denver Building Permits File*, Vol VI, February 1896. Canzona Publications, Denver, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. *A Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering*, Second Edition. Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren. *Denver: The City Beautiful*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc. 1987 p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 45 on the stylistic differences between Foursquares and Victorians.

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is nearly twenty years ahead of its period.<sup>9</sup> The house contains five extant fireplaces with period ceramic tile surrounds and elaborate hand-carved mantles. The pocket doors are crafted of two woods matching that of the rooms which they separate, much like the doors in the William Lang-designed Molly Brown House Museum at 1340 Pennsylvania Street in Denver (National Register-listed). The Doyle-Benton home has a hand carved Art Nouveau newel post and matching hand carved window lintels and doorframes as well as a hand nailed parquet floor and a built-in hand carved Art Nouveau glass fronted hutch in the dining room.

**James Doyle**

James Doyle was a prospector and an original partner in the Portland Mining Company in Cripple Creek. The Portland Mine was Colorado's biggest gold producer.<sup>10</sup> Until the 1890s much of Colorado's mining wealth came from the extraction of silver. Indeed, the nation was dependant on its silver for coinage and Colorado produced over 50 percent of the total silver mined in the U.S. each year. The suspension of silver purchasing by the federal government and the general financial panic of 1893 dealt a crippling blow to Colorado's silver mining industry and devastated the state's economy. Denver's building permits dropped from 2,338 issued in 1890 to a mere 124 permits issued in 1894.<sup>11</sup> However, with the discovery of gold at Cripple Creek in 1893, the mining industry in Teller County rebounded and boomed. The U.S. government had moved onto the gold standard and the find at Cripple Creek positively impacted the Colorado economy. New capital from the East and around the world flowed into Cripple Creek. Some credited Cripple Creek with helping to pull the entire nation out of the panic of 1893. The mining activity and enormous gold production gained Cripple Creek the name of "The Greatest Gold Camp on Earth."<sup>12</sup>

In the fall of 1891, James Doyle, in partnership with an old friend from his hometown of Portland, Maine, purchased one-tenth of an acre in Cripple Creek on Battle Mountain and began prospecting. Neither man knew much about gold prospecting and they brought in a third partner, John Harnan, who recognized that the site contained an enormous vein of gold. Due to the legal vagaries of site ownership at that time, the men realized that they needed to bring in a powerful ally to "apex" or protect their legal rights to the site. They recruited a fourth and final partner, Winfield Scott Stratton of the Independence Mine, as their new business champion.

Stratton, already a millionaire and a power broker in Cripple Creek, helped the enterprise retain ownership of the Portland Mine. Forty-seven lawsuits were filed as various corporations vied for the lucrative mining rights. Doyle's mine came under pressure from Eben Smith of the Battle Mountain Consolidated Gold Mining Company. Smith was a major force in both Colorado business and politics at the time.<sup>13</sup> Doyle and the other partners recruited the brilliant legal scholar of the day, Verner Reed, to represent the Portland. Instead of being gobbling its target, Battle Mountain agreed to be apexed by the Portland for \$265,000. Slowly the litigation ceased as Portland's owners managed to buy out many of its antagonists. By January 1896 the Portland had grown from a one-tenth claim to a 135-acre behemoth

<sup>9</sup> Randle Swan, formerly of Summit County Historical Museum and the Colorado State Historical Society, noted this unusual feature for a Denver home of this vintage on August 13, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Levine and Joe Vanderwalker. *The Portland: Colorado's Richest Mine*. Syxgy Gold mining Company, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Noel and Norgren, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> Paraphrased from Mike Hurtt, Cripplecreekhistory.com. [http://www.ripplecreekhistory.com/portland\\_history\\_2.htm](http://www.ripplecreekhistory.com/portland_history_2.htm), February 10, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Information from Mike Hurtt, Cripplecreekhistory.com, February 10, 2005.

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with 75 miles of underground shafts. It was the largest and most profitable mine in Cripple Creek. The Portland Gold Mine was formally dissolved in 1935 but open strip mining resumed in the 1980s.

As the Portland prospered, a major antagonism grew between James Doyle and his erstwhile close friend, James Burns. The friction heated into open strife. Doyle, a board member, appeared to chafe under Burns's leadership as company president. Doyle developed outside interests, such as serving for three terms as Victor's mayor. During this period, several railroads linked Cripple Creek to Denver through twelve daily passenger trains. Mayor Doyle could easily commute from his Denver home.<sup>14</sup> He was generally well regarded as mayor and was praised for his leadership in Victor following the devastating 1899 fire.<sup>15</sup> The rivalry between the two men festered until Doyle went to court in Iowa, where the Portland was incorporated, and filed a lawsuit alleging that Burns mismanaged the firm and withheld \$700,000 from shareholders.<sup>16</sup> Burns countersued in Colorado, claiming that Doyle was using improper jurisdiction. Upon his return to Colorado, Doyle was thrown into jail for contempt of court and he remained incarcerated for seven months.<sup>17</sup> His confinement began a mere half year after his purchase of the Lafayette Street house, leaving his wife alone in the new Denver mansion. Doyle was well liked enough that he was re-elected mayor of Victor while in jail.<sup>18</sup> The legal proceedings dragged on for four years. Doyle scored an initial victory in the lower court ruling but then lost to Burns on appeal to the Supreme Court of Iowa. The drama engendered by the dispute in the Denver business and social community is underscored by the five times the Doyle-Burns lawsuit appeared on the front page of the *Denver Times*.<sup>19</sup>

While the lawsuit generated controversy in Denver's social circles, it is clear that the Portland Mine itself was a major financial and industrial success. A total of 6,179,316 tons of gold were extracted, the firm paid dividends of \$11,992,080, and the mine had a production value of \$62,712,818 or in today's dollar terms, well over \$1 billion.<sup>20</sup> The "Burns Shaft" plunged over 1,000 feet and "a crosscut at the 1,000 foot Level of the No. 3 Shaft had been developed both east and west and opened up new ore bodies known to exist in the...area. Additional hoist, boilers, air compressors, and other machinery had been installed, making the Portland the best equipped mining operation in the state.... The major contributor to the Portland's wealth at this time was its Capital Vein system. This system alone produced more gold in a single year than some Colorado mining districts throughout their entire lifespan."<sup>21</sup>

Following Doyle's ultimate loss of the Portland lawsuits, his wife Daphne filed for divorce and one may presume that Doyle lost his financial assets.<sup>22</sup> He put the Lafayette Street house on the market in 1904.

<sup>14</sup> [www.cripplecreekhistory.com](http://www.cripplecreekhistory.com)

<sup>15</sup> *Denver Times*, August 24, 1899, p.7, column 1; *Denver Times*, August 25, 1899, p.3, column 1.

<sup>16</sup> Cripple Creek Gold Rush. "History of the Famous James Doyle v James Burns Cripple Creek Portland Case", April 16, 1954 retrospective, p. 1, column 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Denver Times*, November 29, 1898 p. 5, column 1. Mike Hurtt, "The Magnificent Portland Mine", Cripplecreekhistory.com, February 10, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> *Denver Times*, March 13, 1899, p. 5, column 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Denver Times*, July 30, 1899, "Portland Company Defeats Doyle in Federal Court", p. 1 column 4; *Denver Times*, Court Dismissed Writ of Habeas Corpus and Doyle Must go Back to Jail, February 8, 1899, p.1, column 4; *Denver Times*, "Burns Makes Bad Showing under cross Examination", December 8, 1901, p. 1, column 5; *Denver Times*, "Doyle case nearly Ended", December 13, 1901, p. 1, column 7; *Denver Times*, "Doyle gets verdict for \$446,992; history of litigation", December 22, 1901, p.1, column 5.

<sup>20</sup> Mike Hurtt, "The Magnificent Portland Mine", CrippleCreekHistory.com, February 10, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Levine and Vanderwalker. p. 23

<sup>22</sup> It is possible that the Doyle divorce was a significant social scandal as the divorce noted in the property records indicates that Daphne's name was now Daphne Whitin. See also divorce notice in *Denver Times*, March 5, 1902, p8, column 1.

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**Frank Benton**

The Doyle-Benton home was owned briefly by a dentist named George Schumacker who sold it in April 1907 to Frank Benton. The Benton family held the house for several generations until selling it in 1971. Frank Benton founded the Frank Benton Land and Livestock company that eventually owned 60,000 acres of cattle land in Burns, Colorado. His son, Thomas Harry Benton, also resided in the Doyle-Benton House and inherited ownership of the Benton family ranch.<sup>23</sup>

The Bentons were rugged individualist of a Western type and some considered Frank Benton to be a bit of a dandy and an eccentric character. Indeed he was referred to as the “Beau Brummel of the Range” and the “Philosophical Cowman” by the *Rocky Mountain News*.<sup>24</sup> This was due to his penchant for writing opinion pieces in local newspapers throughout Colorado and Wyoming on the subject of cattle grazing and land leasing. He often penned his columns as “Reflections of a Philosophical Cowman.”<sup>25</sup> His divided his writings between humorous vignettes of ranching life and serious pieces on raising cattle. Frank Benton also wrote a book in 1903 entitled *Cowboy Life on the Sidetrack* that was a wry commentary on treatment of cattle on the Union Pacific rail lines. He was active in the rancher movement opposed to fencing and he favored the leasing of public domain lands to cattle ranchers.<sup>26</sup> He counted former rancher and U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt among his many friends.

The Bentons managed the ranch from the Lafayette Street house. Frank Benton controlled operations from 1907 until his death in 1921.<sup>27</sup> Frank’s son Thomas Harry then ran the Hereford cattle outfit until the 1960s followed by John Benton who oversaw the business until his death in 1991. At that juncture the era of Benton ranching in the West came to an end with the sale of the ranch.<sup>28</sup> To its credit, the Benton family owned the Doyle-Benton house for most of the twentieth century and scrupulously maintained its historic character.

**Later Ownership of the Home**

For a home of its age, the Doyle-Benton house has had relatively few owners. The Benton descendants owned the property until its sale in 1971 to Lt. Col. Eugene and Rosemary Tehee. The Tehees turned the house into a four-unit apartment house which it remained until its sale on June 23, 2004, to its current owner, Tamar Judith Gerber.

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<sup>23</sup> *Who’s Who in Colorado*, Thomas Henry Benton listing, p. 326.

<sup>24</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, September 1, 1902.

<sup>25</sup> “Enterprise Unlimited: Stories of our American Heritage,” KLZ Denver Transcript, Sunday, April 10, 1949, p.6.

<sup>26</sup> *The Times*, July 31, 1901, p. 3 column 1.

<sup>27</sup> Corroborated via emails from John Benton, grandson of Frank Benton, April 21, 2005, and April 27, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Email exchange with John Benton, great grandson of Frank Benton, April 21, 2005.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated land consists of Lots 21 and 22 and the southern half of Lot 23, Block 5, Browne's Addition, City and County of Denver, Colorado.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nomination includes all the land historically associated with the property.



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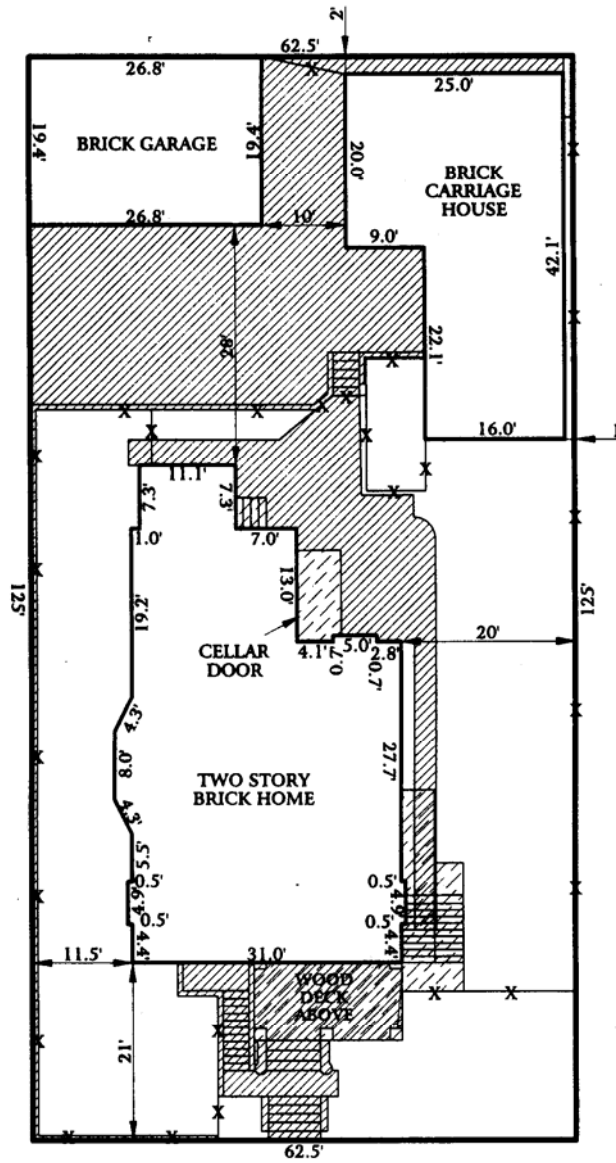
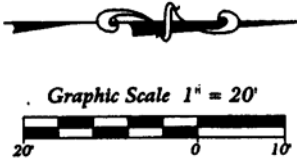
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## SITE PLAN



1301 LAFAYETTE STREET

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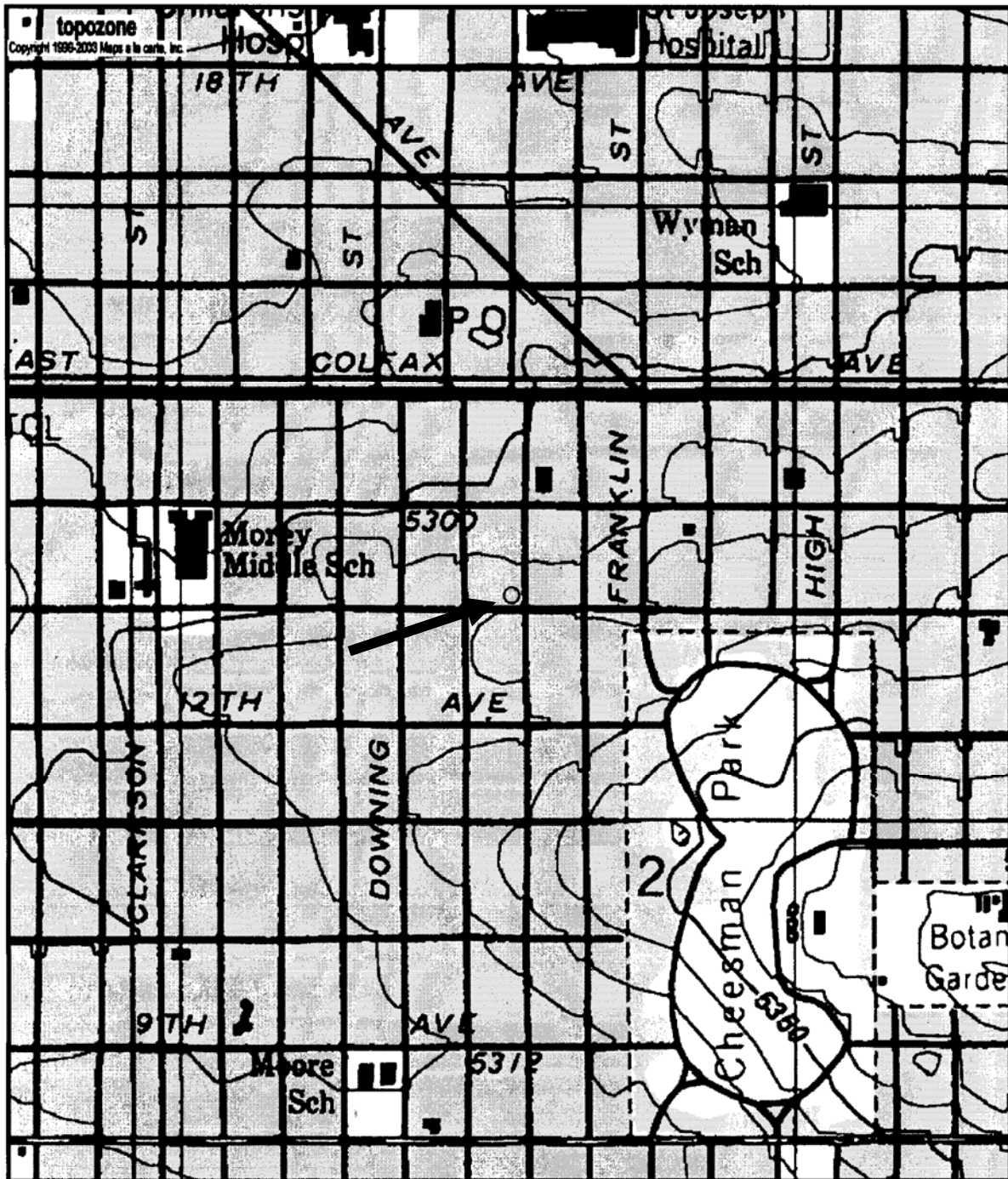
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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Englewood Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series, 1997

UTM: Zone 13 / 502535E / 4398362N (NAD27)  
PLSS: 6<sup>th</sup> PM, T4S, R68W, Sec. 2 SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NE <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>  
Elevation: 5,318 feet Site Number: 5DV9200



0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 km  
 0 0.09 0.18 0.27 0.36 0.45 mi  
 Map center is UTM 13 502534E 4398365N (NAD27)  
**Englewood** quadrangle  
 Projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD83 Datum

\* M  
 G  
 M=9.991  
 G=0.019

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-9:

Photographer: Randy Swan  
Date of photographs: May 25, 2005  
Location of negatives: Property owner

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	East and east elevations; view to the northwest.
2	North elevation; view to the southeast.
3	West elevation of house; partial view of south elevation of carriage house and north elevation of garage; view to the east.
4	South and east elevations; view to northwest.
5	South and east elevations of house; east elevation of garage behind tree; view to northwest.
6	Carriage House, south and east elevations; view to the northwest.
7	Front parlor carved fireplace surround.
8	Dining room hutch.
9	Art Nouveau newel post.