

THE

HISTORY COLORADO | SPRING 2022

COLORADO

MAGAZINE



DEBBIE FAIRLEIGH

**JUNIOR MISS
MAJORETTE
OF AMERICA**



REMAINS of the DAY

Reflections on
the Marshall Fire

Also:
Electric Cars
Space Cat
Prohibition



ON VIEW NOW

RAINBOWS & REVOLUTIONS

**HISTORY COLORADO CENTER
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PRESERVING CHICANO MURALS

On May 4, I was honored to stand with the Chicano/a/x Murals of Colorado Project, community partners, artists, and the National Trust for Preservation as we took a giant step forward in the preservation of Chicano community murals across Colorado. The National Trust listed Colorado Chicano Community Murals on their list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list, which is a catalyst for urgent tactics to ensure that national treasures are not lost forever.



Within the robust mural movement of this moment, oftentimes Chicano murals can get bound up in our minds with the kind of mural making that is sometimes more of a harbinger of gentrification than the preservation of neighborhoods. Colorado's Chicano murals are significant tools of the historic Chicano civil rights movement. These murals illuminate histories that have been excluded from official narratives, museums, and archives. Their presence in our public landscapes is integral to the artwork, as they serve as accessible and beautiful methods for transferring knowledge across generations, expressions of cultural pride, and illustrations of belonging.

We are worried about the erasure of Chicano murals across Colorado. We have seen a rapid loss from gentrification and the literal and figurative whitewashing over murals. These community murals are threatened by a lack of awareness of their importance to Chicano cultural identity and to Colorado history. We have had some, even within the preservation community, dismiss Chicano murals as simply an issue of paint color. As the original muralists age and pass away, we lose the opportunity to have them restore their work. Many murals lack legal protection in the face of gentrification. While a recent study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition found that Denver is the second fastest gentrifying city in the US, our rural communities are also facing different forms of gentrification as increasing portions of potential housing are removed from the local market to become short-term rentals.

The erasure of Chicano murals is about more than saving art. Preservation of Chicano murals is the preservation of Chicano culture and heritage and the preservation of Colorado history. This designation from the National Trust is not a culmination; it is a spark for action. History Colorado, including the State Historic Preservation Office, is eager to work alongside the Chicano/a/x Murals of Colorado Project and other preservation and community partners to explore policy, educational, and even technological solutions that preserve these murals where they exist in our Colorado landscapes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn DiPrince".

Dawn DiPrince
Executive Director

We acknowledge that the land currently known as Colorado has been the traditional homelands of Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. We are grateful to work in partnership with the forty-eight sovereign nations who continue to call this land home. Together, we plan exhibits; collect, preserve, and interpret artifacts; do archaeological work; and create educational programs to share the history of Colorado.

THE COLORADO MAGAZINE

HISTORY COLORADO

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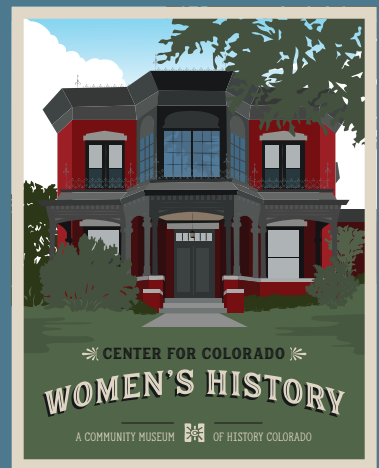
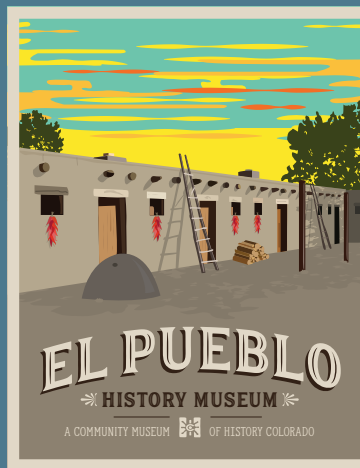
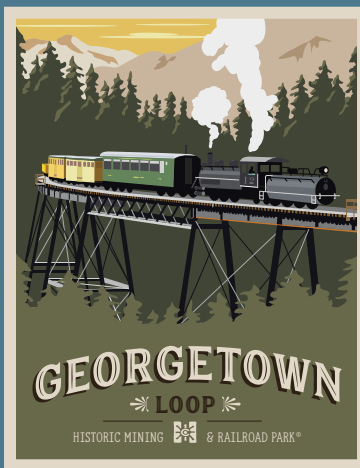
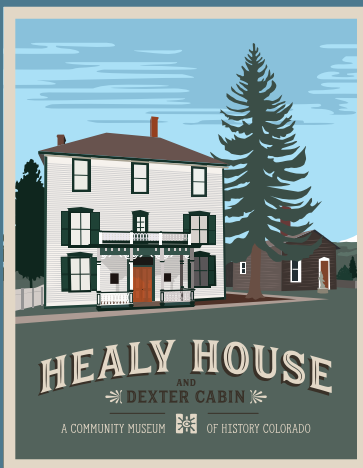
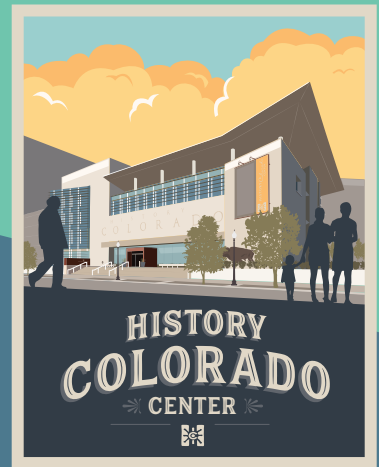
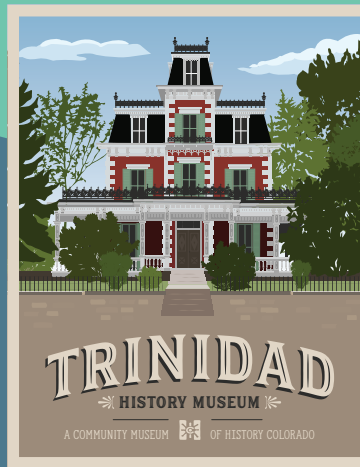
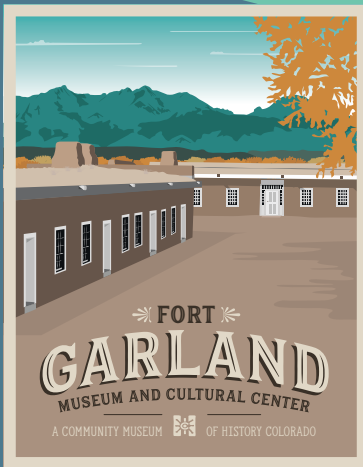


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THE COLORADO MAGAZINE

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This image of climbers above the clouds on Pikes Peak is part of the Fred M. Mazzulla Collection, a trove of items gathered by Mazzulla (1903–1981). Thanks to a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, History Colorado is cataloging and digitizing images, like this one, that cover diverse Colorado communities across an expansive period of time. *Photo by History Colorado. 99.270.2321.*

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ON THE COVER / In the wake of the Marshall Fire, Colorado-based photographer Benjamin Rasmussen went to the burn area and discovered several charred scraps from books. You can view the whole series on his Instagram account (@benjaminras). *Photo by Benjamin Rasmussen.*

THE FORUM

We love hearing from you.



Travel Plans

For the winter issue, Jason Hanson took a trip to the picturesque mountain village of Redstone to investigate the origins of the modern American workplace. What he found was a surprisingly resonant story of Gilded Age opulence, Progressive ideals, and how one of America's richest men tried to prevent unionization by providing for workers' every need—except the one thing they really wanted.

I thoroughly enjoyed “Lion in Winter” in the Winter issue of *The Colorado Magazine*. The history content and the photos are outstanding. I have made a couple summer treks to Redstone over the years, but I have never thought of going in the winter. Your article has invited me to think of doing so.

—Mark McGoff, via Facebook

Let's Hear It for Lost Highways!

The award-winning *Lost Highways* podcast wrapped up Season Three this spring with episodes on Mother Jones, Alfred Packer, and more. We've gotten lots

of feedback from listeners. Please send us more at publications@state.co.us!

I really look forward to the [*Lost Highways*'s episodes]! After the ones about the bonsai club, Dearfield, and the disability rights activists, I was hooked! The presentation is quite personal since it seems the podcasts prioritizes people telling their own stories (sometimes through past recordings or writing), while the hosts and experts provide context for the history and how the conflict/injustice is relevant to now. Thank you for exposing “hidden history” to Coloradans!

—Lauren Garofalo, via Instagram

History Colorado replies:

We've got good news! In April, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the podcast another major grant, which means the team is already at work on Season Four, which will be released in January 2023.

Get Out and Explore

In a recent edition of the *Weekly Digest*, our weekly newsletter, managing editor Natasha Gardner asked for travel recommendations around the state. She got several suggestions, including this one.

Our Gunnison Pioneer Museum has been called the “Smithsonian of the West” by recent visitors, and for an all-volunteer organization with no sustainable revenue source, it is truly something. We have developed approximately half of our sixteen acres and currently have over three dozen buildings and structures housing some of the most amazing artifacts in our state's history. Beyond our extensive campus, historic sites can be found in all directions from Gunnison. My brief

search of historic newspapers on the Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection site shows our region had more towns publish papers than any other county in the state during the late 1800s.

A few highlights of our collections: One building houses our Andy Mallet Car Museum and the average age of our approximately eighty vehicles is 1933. Another building covers one of the most famous train engines in Colorado history, Baldwin Engine 268 C-16 2-8-0, nicknamed “Cinder Ella” by her Hollywood co-stars during the filming of the 1952 western classic *Denver & Rio Grande*. She turns 140 years old this year, and the starring role in the movie is just one of the many celebrity appearances she made between 1945 and 1959. Three other buildings house our display of early transportation along with a Cattlemen's Days and local rancher exhibit, original historic newspapers dating back to 1880, and the Qwest Telephone Pioneers Museum, along with a print and blacksmith shops.

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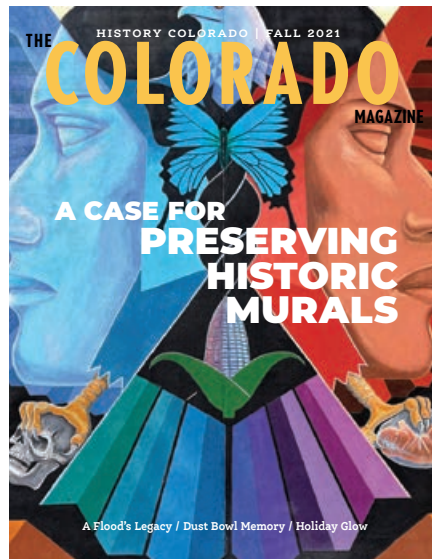
This is just a tiny fraction of the incredible collections we have on display, you just have to come and see the rest for yourself! Thanks for all you and the rest of the staff at History Colorado do to preserve our state's history.

—Larry McDonald (Outreach Coordinator, Gunnison Pioneer Museum), via email

History That Resonates

In the Fall 2021 issue, we published "The Dirt Was Everywhere," in which author J. Joseph Marr interviewed Joseph P. Weibel about his experiences growing up on the Eastern Plains during the Great Depression. Weibel's story inspired several people to chime in.

Mom was born in '25 and Dad in '26. She told stories of heaping wet sheets and towels and newspapers to place at the doors and windows to try to stop the



dust. She said there was no stopping it. This was hard to read but such a great article.

—Jo Ann Scotten, via Facebook

I was born in 1935 in Idalia, which is north and east of Stratton. I don't

remember anything about the dust storms, but my brother (who was two years older than me) would be shaking and wanted to be held before a storm hit (according to my Mom). And my Mom could not stand the wind and I can see why after reading this story.

—Jeanette Schiel, via Facebook

What a powerful story, thanks for sharing it.

—Derek Everett, via Facebook

Your Turn

Winter and summer get lots of attention, but spring—also known as mud season and false spring—is a delightful time to be in Colorado. From biking to planting, the season has plenty of rituals and traditions that make it a special time of year. What are your springtime traditions? Write to us at publications@state.co.us or tag us on social media with your favorites.



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A Gift That Keeps on Giving

William Jackson Palmer donated Monument Valley Park to Colorado Springs 115 years ago and—thanks to restoration efforts—it is going to be around for a lot longer.

Anyone who has tried to maintain a century-old building knows how damaging Colorado's climate can be. While we might love our bluebird-sky days, the sun, wind, and dry climate wreak havoc on built things. And when those structures are exposed to the elements 365 days a year, the impacts can be serious—which is exactly what was happening at Monument Valley Park in Colorado Springs.

The park was a gift to the city from its founder: William Jackson Palmer. After serving as a brigadier general in the Union Army during the Civil War, Palmer made his way west. In 1870, with Dr. William Abraham Bell, he started the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, which used narrow-gauge track to navigate the twists and turns of Colorado's mountainous landscapes and connect the area's burgeoning towns and mining camps.

With the gift of Monument Valley Park in 1907, Palmer sought to create a landscape similar to New York City's Central Park for residents. Over the years, several engineers, planners, and architects would work on the project, including Charles W. Leavitt, Jr.,

(who followed City Beautiful principles and also designed the racetracks at Saratoga and Belmont in New York). The design relied on stone bridges, walls (including the Geologic Column, which represents layers of rock and sediment in the Pikes Peak region), and seating areas in the two-mile-long park.

A major flood in 1935 devastated areas of Monument Valley and the New Deal's Works Progress Administration was pivotal in repairing and creating additional features, including the serpentine wall and Columbia Street entrance (pictured here). In the ensuing decades, the park has remained a recreational destination for residents, just as Palmer intended, and many parts of it remain true to his original vision. So much so, that the park, which includes examples of Rustic design, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. Three years ago, funds from the State Historical Fund helped repair and stabilize the Geologic Column, drainage, and masonry on the wall and entrance. The results ensure Palmer's vision for the park will be able to continue to stand the tests of time.

—*Natasha Gardner*

Monument Valley Park, 2020.
Friends of the Monument Valley Park, Inc.





WHAT'S THE DEAL?

From 1935 to 1942, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) labored on more than 9,400 miles of roads, 580 public buildings, and more than 115 parks in Colorado. Here are five WPA projects that are now in the National Register of Historic Places.

Alamosa County Courthouse
Alamosa

Holly City Hall
Holly

Saddlehorn Comfort Station
Colorado National Monument
(near Grand Junction)

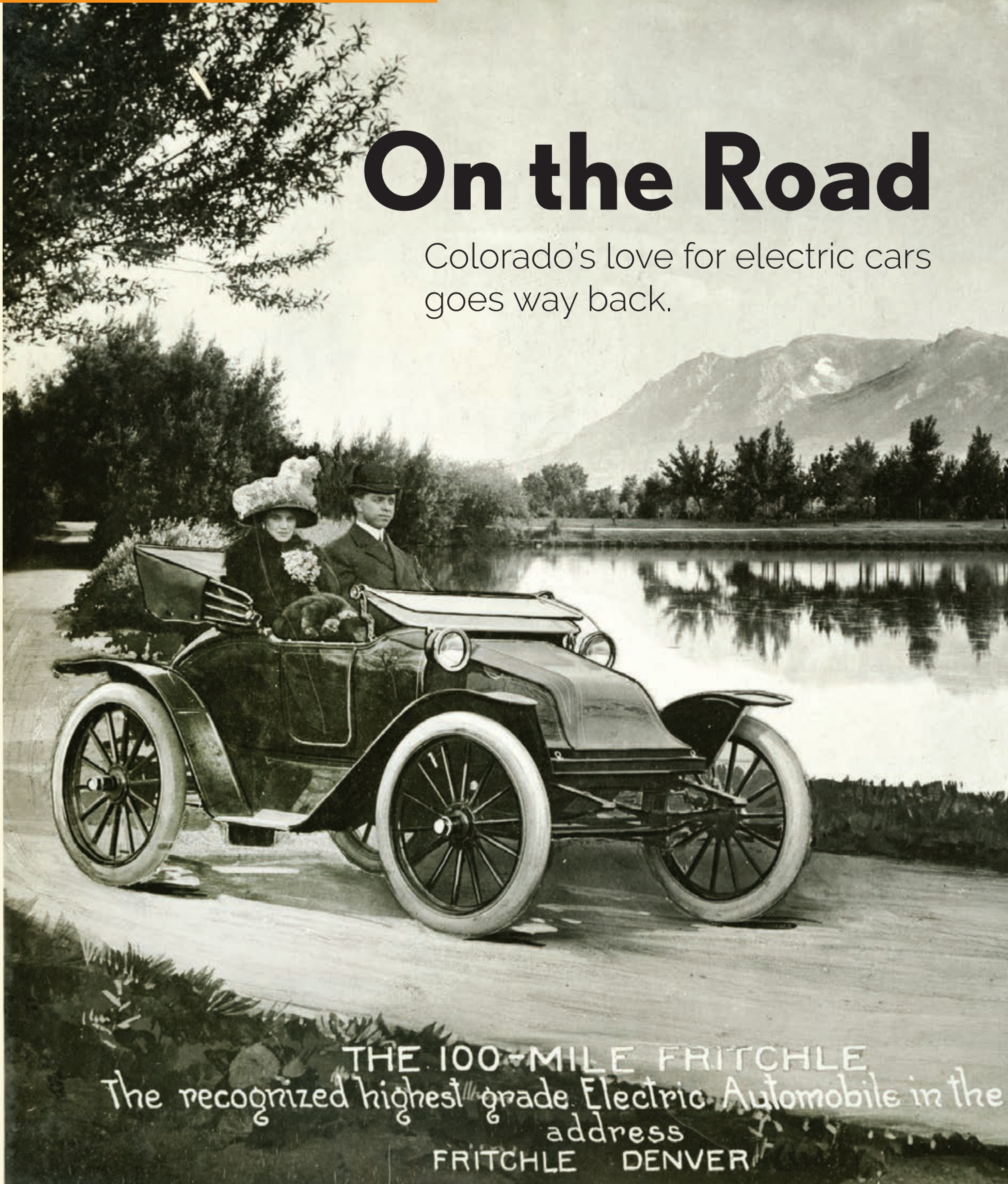
Rito Seco Creek Culvert
San Luis

Willow Creek Park
Lamar

FROM THE COLLECTION

On the Road

Colorado's love for electric cars goes way back.



THE 100-MILE FRITCHLE
The recognized highest grade Electric Automobile in the
address
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If you've cruised down Colfax Avenue in Denver lately, you've likely noticed the growing number of electric cars rolling along the thoroughfare. And while some people may still associate electric cars with *The Jetsons* or Elon Musk, historians will note that this mode of transportation is firmly rooted in Colorado's past.

More than a century ago, you could often spot electric cars making the same trek on Colfax Avenue thanks to inventor Oliver Parker Fritchle. The forward-thinking businessman was born in Ohio in 1874 and moved to Colorado in 1899. Four years later, he started a company that made electric storage batteries. In 1905, Fritchle began cranking out models of an electric car and, eventually, made cars that he promised could run for 100 miles without charging.

He was right. Plus, the battery even recharged itself when the car was coasting. The Fritchle Automobile and Battery Company set up shop on Colfax Avenue and Fritchle's cars were driven by Denverites eager for the next-new-thing, including Margaret "Molly" Brown. The company business model relied on manufacturing the batteries and most of the parts for the vehicles. And he set up a charging station in Denver for customers eager to get back on the road.

The cars were also fast (in 1906, a Fritchle beat other cars in a local hill climb). With the popularization of the self-starter for gasoline-powered vehicles in 1916, Fritchle's car business faltered and stalled out. But Fritchle would continue inventing and spent many years working on wind electricity plants. Now, you can view one of Fritchle's cars at the *Denver A to Z* exhibition at the History Colorado Center in Denver. And you can see the influence of his work, and other historic electric car makers, on roads and in driveways all across Colorado today.

—Natasha Gardner

Hit the Road

If you're inspired to tour Colorado in an electric car, like the people in this photograph, it is becoming increasingly easier to do so thanks to charging stations around the state. Might we suggest coordinating your next trip along one of Colorado's twenty-six Scenic and Historic Byways? These roadways connect Colorado's past and present—and some just so happen to take travelers near several of our community museums, including the Ute Indian Museum via the West Elk Loop and the Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center via the Los Caminos Antiguos. Happy trails!

The "100-Mile Fritchle" helped fuel Coloradans interest in electric cars more than a century ago. *History Colorado. 88.41.166.*

Space Cat

In this oral history interview with Dr. Harry Gorman, the veterinarian reflects on the animals that helped Americans go to space.

BY RACHAEL A. STORM

When my six-year-old nephew asked me if History Colorado's collection had anything related to bananas, I knew exactly what I wanted to share with him: the oral history recorded by Harry Gorman, which is full of stories of dogs, and cats, and mice, and chimpanzees, and bananas—all told in the dramatic context of America's race to space.

Colorado has been an aerospace leader since the 1950s when our state became a strategic site for the Department of Defense due to its secluded inland location, far away from America's Cold War foe, the Soviet Union. With the formation of the Air Force in 1947, Colorado presented itself as the perfect location for basing the operations and commands of the military's newest branch. Between 1948 and 1966, the Air Force established three new bases—Lowry, Ent, and Peterson—built the Air Force Academy, and installed the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) at Cheyenne Mountain.

But the state's aerospace activities didn't solely focus on weapons and defense. Colorado was a hotbed of Cold War research and development too, and that's where veterinarian Harry Gorman came in. After earning a degree in veterinary medicine at Colorado A&M (now Colorado State University), Gorman accepted a commission in the Army Air Forces during World War II. His first job was purchasing quality “foods of animal

origins”—that is, meat and seafood—for the troops. His next assignment was helping Dutch veterinarians combat foot and mouth disease in cattle, which was rampant in the Netherlands at the time.

After the war, Gorman moved into research assignments at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio as well as the Pentagon. But he missed Colorado so, to hear him tell it, he wrote his “own orders” to come home to Lowry, which by then had transitioned from an Army airfield to an Air Force base. After that, Gorman moved to Colorado Springs to serve as the Command Veterinarian for the Air Defense Command. He was particularly interested in orthopedics and hip disease.

“I have always been interested in orthopedics and diseases of the hip joint because as long as I can remember this has been a very bothersome disease. It affects both animals and man. So I attacked this. . . . I developed a joint that finally was ready to put in a dog and I implanted it. The next morning the dog was standing on all four legs. I let him out of the cage and he walked out and up a flight of stairs. I never had so many friends in all my life—everybody was so excited. This was the first time that a complete joint had been replaced in an animal or man.”

As news spread of his revolutionary invention, the Air Force sent Gorman to Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. There, doctors were studying the effects

of high-speed and high-altitude conditions on mammals. Of acute concern to the doctors were newly introduced jet-propelled aircraft which traveled at speeds that pushed the human body to its limits. They brought Gorman in to see how animals reacted in this environment.

“So we used cats because cats have a sense of balance that's pretty unique. You can take a cat and hold it upside down and drop it and it will land on its feet. So cats were put in these [fighter jet] cockpits to determine what would happen if they were dropped at the time of weightlessness. And of course, they did nothing. They had nothing to guide them as to which was down or up. And that's the very beginning of our studies in weightlessness.”

A kind of an interesting sidelight to this is that I hooked it with the joint surgery. We had a cat that had been a famous weightless cat. He had grown too big for the cockpit and was to be destroyed. Since it was a big cat I decided that I had never put a joint in a cat and I put one in and he later became our family pet. I kept him for ten years. He was twenty-two when he died. And he retained that joint.”

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union pushed ahead aerospace testing more quickly in the 1950s and 1960s than ever before (or since) in American history. In short order, cats floating in fighter jet cockpits were a thing of the past. With lessons of weightlessness learned and the space

race in high gear, it was time to move into upper orbits—and that required rockets, including the Colorado-designed Aerobee rocket.

“When the Aerobee rocket was brought here we sent two mice and two monkeys—small rhesus monkeys—in an Aerobee rocket in a capsule. They were not going into space, just five or six miles and then dropped by parachute back down.

These mice were turned upside down and they were quite confused. We finally put a little post in their cage. If they could get a hold of this post, they still felt all right. And there were no problems of injury or death. They could withstand the Aerobee thrust at least. And so that prompted [a transition from] aviation medicine into space medicine. By this time [in 1957] the Russians had flown that first animal—dog Laika—and we were way behind.

So I spent a good bit of time in working out the first animal capsule with the engineers and life support system. We had to choose mice. They were the smallest. I devised a little radio saddle that was put on each one of the mice with one lead to the heart and with receiver coils on the edge of his cage about six inches from the mouse. Devised his food so that he could get his water with the food and you could hear them. Their heart was going putt-putt-putt-putt-putt-putt-putt-putt-putt all the time.”

Testing with animals made subsequent testing with humans safer, but animals aren't humans and testing with them posed its own set of problems—and required creative solutions.

“When you are sending an animal, you have to figure out how do you feed him so that he doesn't eat it all the first day. We made a little feeder out of a nutty-putty toy that I saw in a Chicago window for kids. This dispensed a little cake to the monkey about every six hours and in that food was the water.”

As the United States neared sending their first human into space, the doctors knew that cats and mice and monkeys could no longer stand in for the Mercury

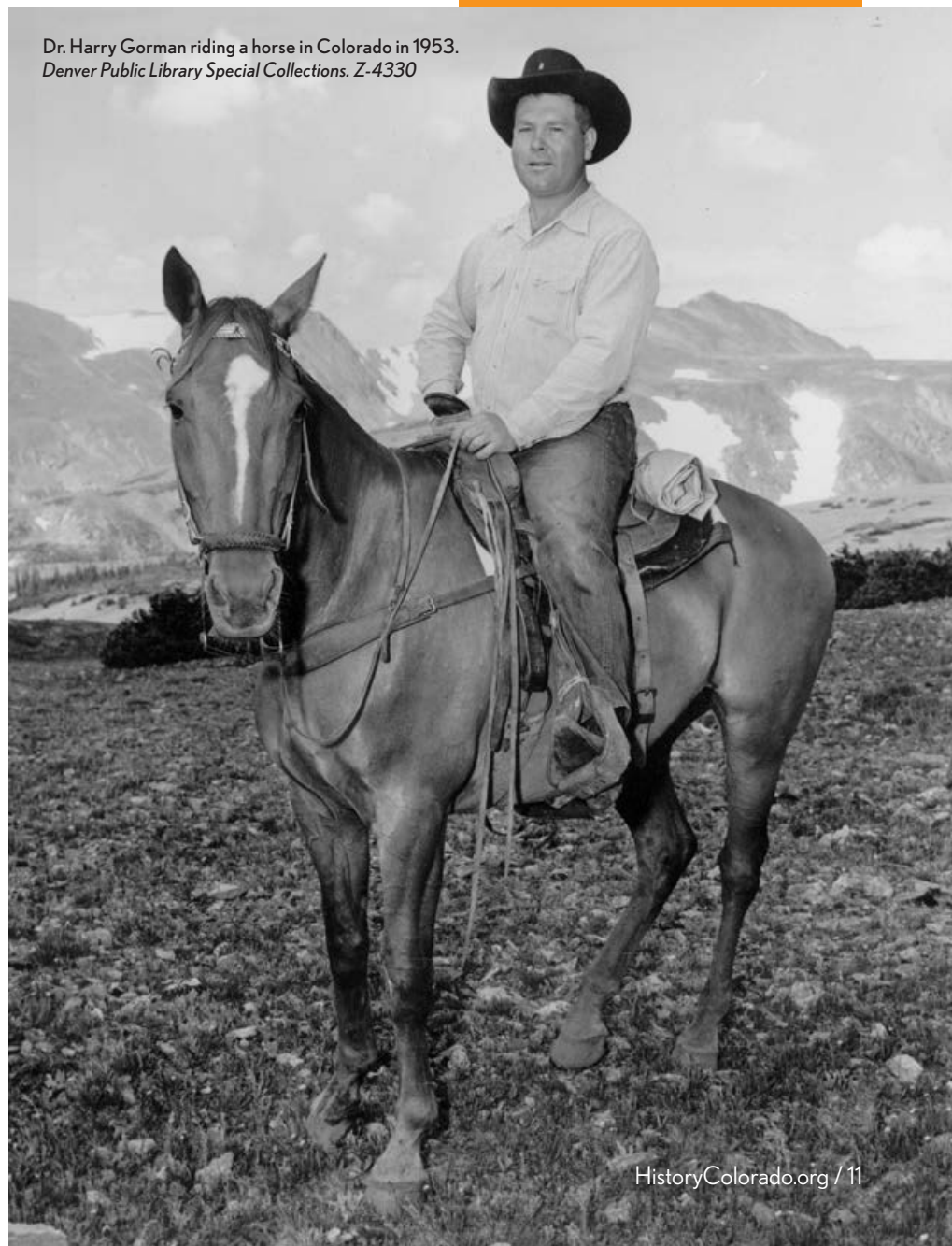
Seven—those first seven astronauts — and they began testing with chimpanzees.

“Enos was trained by bananas. We'd give him a banana and he'd run and jump in the capsule and we could put the lid on it and he was perfectly at home. Enos was programmed for three earth orbits. Well, he made two orbits and then there was a heating problem [so we brought him home]. He was recovered safely and [in] no harm, but later in the training program when his capsule was opened and he was given a banana, he would run and hide. He had had enough space flight.”

Gorman retired from the Air Force in 1960 after twenty-two years of service, and returned to Colorado. Once home,

Martin Marietta recruited him to do “essentially the same work.” In 1964, he took a position teaching veterinary surgery at Colorado State University. He was there almost a decade when he shared his story about dogs and cats and mice and chimpanzees and bananas and space exploration with Professor David McComb of Colorado State University in November, 1973.

You can listen to Dr. Harry Gorman's entire oral history and others at: soundcloud.com/historycolorado



Dr. Harry Gorman riding a horse in Colorado in 1953. Denver Public Library Special Collections. Z-4330



REMAINS

Grasso Park, Spring 2018.
Photo by Lindsey Flewelling.



of the Day

When the Marshall Fire destroyed parts of Superior, a local historian went back to her memories to reclaim some of the community's shared past.

BY LINDSEY FLEWELLING

The day after the fire, I watched the aerial footage taken from news helicopters over and over, trying to comprehend what happened to my hometown. On the northwest side of town, the camera panned over the flattened and black Sagamore neighborhood, the charred roof of Target, and Original Town, where only a sprinkling of structures survived. After 100-mile-per-hour winds wildly whipped flames indiscriminately through the dry grass and buildings, the landscape left behind was desolate, alien, and devastating. So many families had lost their homes, everything they owned, and a sense of safety in their community, and we didn't know at the time how many lives might be lost as well. As the camera moved southeast, the site of Asti Park came into view. On the corner, all that remained of Superior's Historical Museum was a gray smudge of rubble, as if the whole structure had been erased.

As the days passed following the fire and the challenges for the families who lost their homes compounded, many questions arose about the rebuilding of Superior, Louisville, and other impacted areas of Boulder County. What did it mean that residents were now dispersed around the Front Range and that many may not return, selling their land because the exorbitant costs of rebuilding outpaced insurance payouts, or simply

wanting to leave this devastation behind them? How would this impact the community's identity now that the historic objects, places, and repositories of their collective memory were gone? How do you begin to rebuild after that kind of destruction? And if our shared history was destroyed, what remained?

In 2015, armed with a PhD in History and many questions about future job prospects, I moved back to my hometown of Superior, where my family has lived since 1997. I wasn't sure what I would be getting into when I began to volunteer with the Superior Historical Commission, a town-appointed board charged with historic preservation, collection of artifacts and archival materials, and outreach. Growing up in Superior, I had a vague idea about the area's history as a coal mining region. We visited Marshall Mesa and saw the remains of the mining operations there on a sixth grade field trip, and my high school US History teacher, Ron Buffo, regaled us with tales of historic gun fights along the railroad tracks when miners in Louisville were on strike. But despite my love of history, I mostly thought of the town as a quintessential 1990s suburb with new-build houses.

With the Historical Commission, I found a gateway to a vibrant community

and a town identity built on historic foundations that I never really thought about before. It helped to spur a true affection for my hometown. The multi-generational commission members were welcoming, kind, and gentle, dedicated to sharing their love of the history of their adopted home.

Founded by community members in 1999 and later taken on by Superior as a town board, the Historical Commission's work focused on preserving what remained of the historic town. Working with the commission, I began to see my town in a different light. The way I understood the layout of the streets and the lines of the landscape changed. Knowing the town's coal mining history, I could suddenly see the evidence of tailings, waste piles, and railroad beds, and recognize the foundations of mining structures in what was now open space and cattle pastures. The built environment of the town and its relationship to its geography instantly made more sense when viewed through a lens of historic development. What's more, when community members came to the museum or joined us on a historic walk through the Industrial Mine site, which provided the town's central industry into the mid-twentieth century, I could see the light in their eyes as it dawned on them, too, how the modern life intersected with the historic.

Superior Historical Museum in Asti Park, September 2017. Photo by Lindsey Flewelling.





Industrial Mine Site during a Superior Historical Walk, May 2019. Photo by Lindsey Flewelling.

The histories of Superior, Louisville, and Marshall have been closely tied since the 1860s as part of the sprawling Northern Coal Field. Spanning 87,000 acres, the coal field runs from Broomfield and Marshall in the south to Frederick and Firestone in the north. As farmers began to settle the region in the 1850s and 1860s, they discovered coal outcroppings exposed on the surface in some areas, while in others, coal was uncovered through floods or unearthed by chance. Native Americans and early white explorers in the area may have used readily available coal on or near the surface.

William Kitchens claimed land around an outcropping he called the Washington Lode in 1859, operating a wagon mine and selling coal to his neighbors. He hauled wagon loads to Denver, where he sold coal by the bushel. In 1866, he sold his mine to Joseph Marshall, for whom the town would be named. Marshall eventually established the Marshall Coal Company and developed the Black Diamond and Marshall mines. While Marshall was the first place where coal was systematically mined in the region, Erie was the first town to develop around coal mining. Coal was discovered there in 1866 and a town quickly settled. At first, coal was brought down to Denver by horse and wagon. After the Denver, Utah & Pacific Railroad put in a spur from Brighton to Erie in 1871, shipping

of coal became easier and less costly. Several towns developed in the area, and over 195 mines were eventually opened. The mines in Boulder and Weld Counties produced an estimated 100,000,000 tons of coal from 1866 to 1975.

As Louisville historian Carolyn Conarroe points out, the coal mining communities of Louisville, Lafayette, Superior, Marshall, Erie, Frederick, Firestone, and Dacono “had undergone the same mining experiences and their histories are intertwined.” Waves of migrants came to Colorado to work in coal mining towns, often having previously mined in Europe, the eastern United States, or in Colorado’s larger Southern Coal Field. Early immigrants in the mining communities came from England, Wales, Scotland, and Germany. Later, immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe and Mexico, at times brought in as strikebreakers by the mining companies, causing resentment and tensions within local communities.

Like other towns in the region, the first white settlers in Louisville were farmers. After coal was discovered in the area, the first mine operation began in 1877, owned by David Kerr, financed by C.C. Welch, and overseen by Louis Nawatny. The Welch Mine attracted new miners to the Louisville area, with the first homes springing up close to the railroad track. Nawatny, a Polish immigrant, recognized the commercial

value of his land holdings in the area, and set out the first plots for the city. He named the city after himself.

Louisville was home to many mines with a variety of owners, growing rapidly to 1,288 residents by 1900. From 1884 to 1955, a total of 25,033,000 tons of coal were mined in the Louisville district. Due to its relatively high population, land area, and number of immigrants, Louisville developed ethnic enclaves, including “Frenchtown;” “Kimbertown,” which was populated by descendants of a Cornish miner; a Bulgarian neighborhood; and, most prominently, “Little Italy.” By 1930, first-generation Italians comprised 10 percent of Louisville’s population, and more than 16 percent of the population was second-generation Americans with Italian parents.

Despite their proximity and foundations as farming and coal mining districts, Superior and Louisville would develop differently, in ways that would underpin the patterns of growth and development of the two communities into the twenty-first century.

At the heart of the Superior Historical Commission’s work was a small miner’s house museum that held archival materials and artifacts donated by community members, and displays created by volunteers. You couldn’t help but slam the museum’s wood-frame screen doors, a noise which must have

reverberated through the decades. Once part of a tidy row of 24 x 24-foot hipped-roof residences in the mine camp, the museum house was moved to a Broomfield farm when the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company went bankrupt and the Industrial Mine closed in 1945. When the Town of Superior learned that the farm was up for redevelopment in the mid-2000s, the town approached the property owners and arranged to move the house to a park in Original Town, the local term for the portion of town platted by town founders. After extensive multi-year rehabilitation, guided by memories of people who had grown up in the mine camp, the museum opened in 2010.

On open days, volunteers came into the four-room house and opened all the blinds, pulling back the curtains so light shined on each of the displays. Entering the front door from Asti Park, displays and objects told the story of Superior's mining past: canary cages and cloth hats equipped with a tiny stub of white candle, battery packs for lamps on more modern hard hats, flame safety lamps, and lunch pails. A diorama of the Industrial Mine painstakingly created by Ron Keiser showed the tipple, boiler house, fan house, and parts of the mine camp, with the vertical mine shaft emphasizing the long, 185-foot drop from the surface to the horizontal mine shaft below. Tiny mine carts highlighted the processes of bringing coal up from the depths of the mine to be sorted and sized, then moved along the tipple and conveyed into freight cars for its onward journey to be used throughout the Denver region.

Other areas of the museum exhibited life in the mine camp. Chairs crowded around the coal-burning pot-bellied stove in the living room, with a tall Victrola record player cabinet nearby. A baseball uniform and elaborate baseball trophy highlighted social life in the mine camp, where baseball and softball games, picnics, dances, socials, and club meetings were diversions from the dangerous and difficult working conditions of the mine. The museum's kitchen

maintained its original wood floors and wainscoting, and was outfitted with cabinets made from old wooden powder boxes discarded from the mine. In the corner stood a coal-powered stove and a washing machine from the 1930s that would have been used on the porch. A small drop-leaf table flanked one wall, while another wall included one of the house's bragging points: a pantry. It was said to be the only mine camp house with a pantry, along with a closet in an adjacent bedroom. The faucet in the deep kitchen sink of the mine camp homes had cold running water, unlike the unplumbed houses in the platted Original Town. The interior doorways were covered with cloth sheets, the house too small to accommodate the swinging open of doors.

Some open days, people who had grown up in the time of mining would return with an artifact or two, or to share the museum with family members. Other members of the community would drop by after seeing the "Museum Open" sign along the road, having no idea the town was built on coal mining. The museum was a place for generations to come together, for the gathering of new transplants and long-time locals who had witnessed the drastic changes to the area over the years, for meeting in community with one another.

"Beautiful little village, 10 miles east of Boulder, and 20 miles from Denver, on the line of the Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf Railway. The village is four months old; population, 250; will be 600 inside of two years. The location is *elegant*, climate *delightful*, and water *pure*."

So William Hake described Superior in the Boulder County Directory of 1896. While Superior never reached 600 inhabitants during the town's mining heyday, in the early 1990s—almost five decades after the Industrial Mine closed in 1945—the community bloomed to eventually reach a population of more than 13,000 as Boulder's expansive growth rippled outward. The only remnants of its coal mining past were building foundations and tailings

piles on Boulder County open space, and, in Original Town, century-old homes that were often unrecognizable because they had been remodeled through the years.

William and Emeline Hake arrived in Coal Creek Valley in 1860, having migrated from Wisconsin. William Hake was a farmer who hoped to provide agricultural supplies to the mining settlements in the area. He established his farm, planting crops and raising livestock. During a spring flood in 1864, he discovered coal exposed on his property but he continued to farm rather than seek to exploit the land's fuel potential. Finally, in 1892, as coal mining operations grew in Boulder County, Hake contracted with James H. Hood, a newcomer from Kentucky, to sink a shaft. Hood engineered and managed the mine while Hake remained the landowner. The mine was originally known as the Hood Mine, but later took on the name of the Industrial. By 1895, a second mine, the Enterprise, opened nearby, located where US Highway 36 now passes north of the Superior Cemetery and Sport Stable.

Hake attempted to attract residents to the area, advertising in regional publications and describing the coal from his mine as "having no superior in the State." The two hundred people living in Superior in 1896 were mainly mine workers along with a handful of farmers. A mine camp developed around the Industrial, with frame houses, boarding house, bath house, and casino, which hosted roller skating, dances, and card games, as well as sold "near beer" throughout Prohibition. To the north, a separate town was platted by the Hakes where the school buildings, two churches, and other residences were located. The town's general store was a company store with a post office, and two saloons also operated in town. In addition, the town had a union hall, candy store, and service station.

The town's depot was north of the mine and connected passengers from Superior to Boulder, Denver, and Louisville through the Denver and Interurban Railroad, part of the Colorado and Southern Railway, until 1926. Superior

was incorporated in 1904 with Charles Hake, son of William and Emeline, as its first mayor. Charles Hake sold the Industrial Mine to the Northern Coal and Coke Company around 1900, which was taken over by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company (RMFC) in 1911. RMFC ran the mine until its closure in 1945. It produced a total of 3,994,741 tons of coal from 1895 onward. Other mines developed in the Superior area included the Crown, Pluto, Gorham, and Monarch No. 1 and No. 2.

Mining was dangerous, precarious, and physically demanding, with the ever-present threats of cave-ins, poisonous gasses, and combustible coal dust, and related respiratory problems. I often walked through Superior and Broomfield open space past the grave marker of Joe C. Jaramillo, who died along with seven other miners at the Monarch No. 2 Mine in the worst explosion in the history of Colorado's Northern Coal Field. Jaramillo, known as "Mexican Joe" even though he was born in the United States, was the mule driver at the Monarch No. 2 for more than twenty years and lived with his family at the Monarch mine

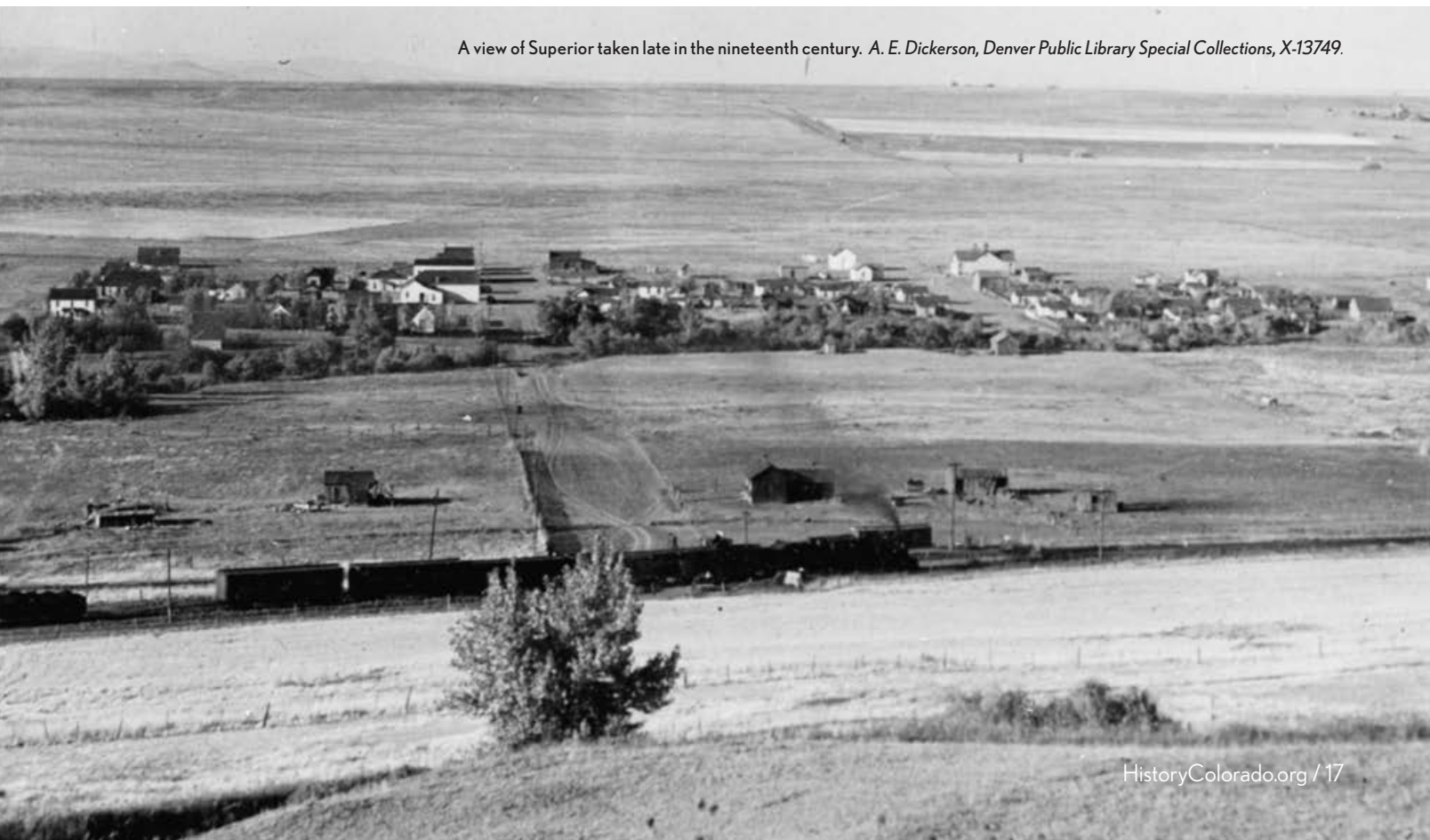
camp. On the morning of January 20, 1936, he and nine other men entered the mine to complete routine preparations before the start of the day shift. Right where two passageways came together, an explosion shook the mine, splintering timbers and triggering rockslides. Two men reached an air shaft and climbed 300 feet to safety. Eight others, including Fire Boss Steve Davis who had been inspecting accumulated coal dust on the mine floor and testing for the presence of methane gas, died in the explosion. Jaramillo was at the center of the rock fall and his body was never recovered. Several months after the explosion, Jaramillo's grave marker (now relocated) was placed by the National Fuel Company above the site of the mine collapse.

The marker and memorial site offered a glimpse into the often-forgotten coal mining history of the region and the people who gave their lives to mining, now hidden under shopping malls, business campuses, and suburban schools. I could envision the miles and miles of tunnels under my feet, where people and mules had led their working lives, invisible to the modern eye. I started to

grasp the interconnectedness of the vast Northern Coal Field, and the lasting ties that bound these historic communities together.

Every year, second graders from the three local elementary schools came to the museum on field trips. They walked over from Town Hall, where they met the mayor and sat in the trustees' chairs in the boardroom. When the second graders arrived, I often sat outside with Bob Morgan as he explained that, when he was in second grade, he attended school in one of the two classroom buildings on this very site. The kids were enchanted by the model school buildings fashioned by Herb Morrison, who had also attended Superior School. The model included miniature teeter-totters, basketball hoops, and outhouses. Bob carefully removed the roofs on the two school buildings and pointed out the tiny cloakrooms and the stage in one of the classrooms, where they held plays and community gatherings. Bob would tell the kids about how at the end of the school year, the entire town would celebrate with a picnic

A view of Superior taken late in the nineteenth century. A. E. Dickerson, *Denver Public Library Special Collections*, X-13749.



expedition to Lakeside Amusement Park or City Park in Denver.

The town's two school buildings were in what is now Asti Park, the first built in 1901 and housing the first through sixth grades, and the second built in 1921 where the seventh and eighth grades met. The latter school was known as the "Community Building" and was also home to dances, plays, and other town gatherings. The older school building was eventually torn down and the Community Building purchased by a local resident and moved three blocks west in 1975. (This school building was lost in the fire.) Older school children went to Louisville or Boulder for high school, or went to work on family farms or in the mine.

In the museum, one bedroom was dedicated to Superior School, with graduating eighth grade class photographs, a flour sack quilt created by schoolchildren during World War II, and memories of a beloved teacher, Miss Edith Oerman. Oerman taught at Superior School for twenty-nine years, from 1930 to 1959. She painted small landscapes for her graduating eighth graders gifted along with a handwritten letter, and these meant so much to her students that

a couple survived to be displayed on the museum wall seven decades later. Oerman was a fixture in the community, taking charge of fashioning the town Christmas tree out of tumbleweeds and displaying it at the Community Building each year, and directing summer plays. She was known for her kind deeds for her former students.

Though the second graders toured the museum and the small farmhouse and jail cell at Grasso Park, what seemed to stick with them the most was the lives of schoolchildren during the mining days. Sometimes on open days, second graders would come back to show their parents and siblings what they had seen on their field trips, and again pore over the details of the model school buildings. For a while, one kindergartner was so taken with the idea of the historic school that every month she came to sit in the museum's small old-fashioned wooden desk and imagine life at the turn of the twentieth century.

Each May, the Historical Commission led walks through the Industrial Mine area, narrated by Bob Morgan, Larry Dorsey, and Wally Waligorski. During that month, the tall grasses of the Boulder

County open space were maturing from their springtime green to their summer brown, concealing the remnants of the mine and mine camp. Larry pointed out the former location of the Colorado and Southern railroad depot on the east side of the mine, where coal had been transported throughout the Front Range and passengers were connected to Boulder and Denver through no less than sixteen daily trains along the Kite Route of the Denver and Interurban. The railroad tracks ran parallel to the ridge along which the Industrial Mine was situated.

The coal field underpinned every element of people's lives in Superior. It wasn't a particularly high grade of coal and would start to disintegrate if exposed to air, so miners only worked nine months of the year. During the summer, miners had to find alternative employment on farms or other businesses in the local area. Mules were brought up to the surface and spent two weeks regaining their sight before being put out to pasture until the fall.

Bob pointed out the locations of the mine shaft and tipple, rails, the blacksmith shop, and water tank, the boiler room, shower room, and battery house—the buildings that made up the elements



Farmhouse at Grasso Park, May 2019.
Photo by Lindsey Flewelling.

of a working mine. The largest remaining concrete structure was the ventilation fan house, where an 8-foot-diameter electric fan supplied the air down the shaft. Bob recalled that when they turned it on for the first time, it sounded like a jet engine. It was incredibly loud, but, living in the mine camp, he did eventually manage to get used to it.

Superior was a company town, with the majority of buildings owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. RMFC had five mines in the Northern Coal Field, and by the time that Bob's father, a Welsh immigrant, was working at the Industrial, it was owned by Josephine Roche. Roche's career spanned everything from working as Denver's first woman police officer, serving as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and running the United Mine Workers of America Health and Retirement Funds. She promoted workers' rights, aided immigrants, ran for Colorado governor, supported Progressive Party politics, and fought for social and civic reform.

Roche's parents died in early 1927 and she inherited her father's minority holdings of the RMFC. After a strike, violence, and six deaths at the RMFC-owned Columbine Mine in Lafayette, Roche gained majority control of the company. She announced that employee welfare would be a key component in the way the company was run. The first permanent mutual union agreement ever signed by a coal mining company in Colorado was between the RMFC and United Mine Workers in 1928 and was considered a groundbreaking agreement for coal miners' rights. Roche became known for her concern for her employees and their rights.

On the Industrial Mine site, Bob indicated where the line of mine camp houses sat, showing where the museum house had come from. "And this," he said proudly, gesturing to a just-visible outline of a former foundation, "was my house." This was the jumping off point for many adventures swimming in the local irrigation ditches and fishing in

Marshall Lake, enjoying treats made of locally grown chokecherries, wild plums, and apples, making homemade toboggans out of sheets of corrugated roofing material for sledding in the wintertime, and traversing Superior on his bike as he delivered *The Denver Post* to sixty-six homes.

Hearing Bob's words, combined with my rapidly increasing knowledge of the history of the town, connected history to the landscape. The ridgeline was transformed from dry, grassy, featureless open space to something more. I could envision the outlines of the mine camp houses, the shadowy tipple, the noise of the fan and rail cars, and the frenetic energy of the mine. It became a place where daily events played out, where people led whole lives, a place that people cared about and called home.

At the end of one historic walk, a mom had her teenage son pose with Bob for a photograph in front of the museum house. All I could think was, "Bob is honestly a rock star."

Nothing seemed to bring more pride to the Historical Commission members' voices than when they spoke of restoring the Town of Superior's historic fire truck. The 1942 military-issue fire truck had been acquired from Lafayette in the 1970s and used by the all-volunteer fire department until the 1990s. To me, the fire truck was a symbol of the survival of the town in the days after the mine closed.

By the 1940s, demand for coal diminished due to the use of diesel fuel for railroads and natural gas for homes. Josephine Roche had spearheaded efforts to mechanize the mine, replacing mules with loaders, investing in cutting machines—but went heavily into debt to do so. The RMFC declared bankruptcy in 1945, and the Industrial Mine closed. Because Superior was a company town, the buildings in the mine camp were sold, moved, and scattered throughout the region. This was why Superior and Louisville's development diverged so greatly in the second half of the twentieth

century. When mines closed in Louisville, the residences and commercial buildings had been built up separately and were owned by individuals, and so the built environment remained. When Superior's Industrial Mine closed, not only was the largest employer no longer there, but the mine camp houses and other company-owned structures were removed as well. According to a 2003 architectural survey, just thirty-two historic structures remained in the town from the mining days, all in the platted Original Town area.

Once the Industrial closed, many miners moved to other mining camps for job opportunities or went to work at Rocky Flats, the US government facility making nuclear weapons components nearby along the foothills. Suddenly half the town was gone. As all remaining local businesses, churches, schools, and community gathering spaces closed, life for the hundred or so remaining residents was quiet and set apart from urban hustle and bustle, but could also be isolated. One commission member told me about how excited they were when Louisville got a 7-11 convenience store so that they had somewhere nearby to get some basic supplies. A group of residents formed the Superior Volunteer Fire Department in 1971 with equipment consisting of two fire carts. The town clerk at the time, Gladys Forshee, helped to spearhead the effort to bring the fire truck from Lafayette to offer greater protection to the town. Women volunteer firefighters, known as the "Flamettes," were on call to fight fires during the day, while men volunteered on nights and weekends.

The town's reduced population depended on local wells for water and septic tanks for sewer. By the 1980s, the wells began to go bad and septic systems began to fail. At the same time, development pressures increased in Boulder County, and surrounding municipalities began to gobble up unincorporated land. In 1986, developers offered the residents of Original Town the construction of a town-wide water system in exchange for the construction of Rock Creek Ranch

to the south. Residents of Superior voted on and approved the annexation of Rock Creek Ranch in 1987, although this was not without its detractors. Boulder County managed to purchase thousands of acres surrounding the development for open space, and the Town of Superior itself eventually invested in acres of open space, reflecting its residents' values. Along with the thousands of new homes and residents, the new commercial shopping centers, schools, and continued development transformed the town into something not quite recognizable from the mining days.

The historic fire truck had a gleaming new paint job and gold lettering spelling out "Superior Fire Dept" on the side doors. Commission members rode it at the head of the town's Fourth of July Parade and in Louisville's Labor Day Parade. At town events, kids donned plastic firefighter hats and climbed up into the driver's seat for a photograph. They may have been attracted by the shiny red paint and unfamiliar old-fashioned form of the fire truck, but there was also a spark of curiosity about its history and all that it symbolized as a contrast to the modern day.

After the fire, when we knew that the museum house was no longer standing, I couldn't stop thinking about the farmhouse and barn in Grasso Park. Built on a corner of the Hake homestead near Coal Creek, the site had been home to Frank and Victoria Grasso, who lived there for almost seventy years after immigrating from Poland in 1907 with their infant son. Frank Grasso sought work in the Colorado Fuel & Iron steel mills in Pueblo before coming north to Superior, where he farmed alfalfa and wheat, and kept dairy cows. He mined coal in the winter and farmed in the summer when the mine was closed. Supported by a State Historical Fund grant, the buildings at Grasso Park were rehabilitated and preserved as a town park in 1995.

The tiny farmhouse had captured my imagination because it was a place that transported me back to a completely

different way of life. The two rooms were dark and cramped, and the house was surrounded by a ramshackle barn, two-seater privy, root cellar, woodshed, and donated historic farm equipment. The wood boards of the house looked so fragile that it seemed like the house could have been blown over by the Big Bad Wolf. And yet, when you entered the kitchen, a line high up on the wall indicated where the flood waters of 2013 had left their permanent mark by staining the wood slightly darker.

The torrential rainfall in September 2013 flooded Coal Creek and Rock Creek, usually little more than a dry creek bed, with more than eleven inches of rain. The base of the Second Avenue bridge, the only bridge crossing Coal Creek in Original Town, was damaged and under the threat of collapse, which would cut off residents from the rest of Superior. A portion of the town was placed under a mandatory evacuation order, and several houses sustained flood damage. But somehow the little farmhouse along the banks of Coal Creek withstood the flood waters, as it had weathered countless floods and snowstorms through the years.

There was still evidence of flood damage throughout the community when I joined the Historical Commission in 2015. Gradually the bridge was replaced and trails were repaired. The Grasso Park farmhouse underwent additional rehabilitation work to ensure that the wood siding wouldn't rot away. The park was an integral stop on the commission's walking tours and second grade field trips, highlighting the agricultural heritage of the town.

My time with the Superior Historical Commission helped me to understand the power of historic preservation at the local level. Not only are local preservation programs an essential way to offer protections for historic properties, but preservation of the built environment and community memories provides a sense of continuity and identity. Sharing stories about the past and understanding the layers of community history help create meaning, connection, empathy,

and understanding. Local communities are also places where the complexities of history can be explored in ways that are directly impactful to everyday lives.

Because of my time with the commission, I decided to turn toward historic preservation as a career field. Knowing how my outlook was changed by being part of Superior's Historical Commission, I love to work with other local government historic preservation commissions and get a sense of what is important to them about their own communities as they look toward the past, present, and future. These all-volunteer commission members are passionate about history, but also care deeply about the development of their towns, cities, and counties moving forward. They grapple with the issues of the future while maintaining a sense of identity.

When the fire happened, it was devastating to know that the communities of Superior, Louisville, and Boulder County could never be quite the same. The rebuilding of residential areas would be difficult, costly, and time consuming, and it was hard to grasp what those families would have to go through. Superior's museum house was lost forever, along with its irreplaceable collections that had acted as a conduit to the past. With the destruction of the built environment as well as of the objects that had once been held dear by those who lived in the mine camp, how would Superior's history continue to be preserved and told?

After the fire, when Historical Commission Chair Larry Dorsey emailed commission members and volunteers that the Grasso Park farmhouse and barn appeared to have made it through unscathed, I could hardly believe it. Somehow this symbol of endurance had made it through.

Museums are important centers for preserving and sharing a community's story and collective identity. But our stories are illustrated by artifacts, not bound in them. The stories of Superior's history will live on through the dedication of volunteers who are generously willing to share their time, skills, and



Barn and outhouse at Grasso Park, November 2021. Photo by Lindsey Flewelling.

memories. Care, commitment, and openness toward neighbors have been hallmarks of Superior's ability to be resilient through decades of change, from the early days of coal mining and farming to the sudden loss of population and businesses to times of booming growth, through floods and—now—fire. If the physical reminders of our shared history have been destroyed, what remains? I would say that the enduring building blocks of community connections, experiences, and memories will be a strong foundation as we create our future. ●

For Further Reading

For more information about the history of Superior, see *Superior: A Folk History* (N.P.: Private publication, 1983), *Lost Superior: Remembering the Architectural Heritage of a Colorado Coal Mining Town* (Boulder: White Sand Lake Press, 2004), and issues of the *Superior Historian*. Superior's history after the closure of the Industrial Mine is discussed in Kimberli Turner's *Colorado Hometown Weekly* article, "Historic 1942 fire truck back in Superior after stint in storage" (April 9, 2013), and Alan Prendergast's *Westword* article, "The Sprawful Truth" (January 14, 1999). Information on Miss Edith Oerman was based on research completed

by Allyn Jarrett. Additional information on the history of Superior and the Industrial Mine was taken from presentations by Robert "Bob" Morgan and Larry Dorsey during the 2016 Superior Historical Walk, filmed by the author (June 4, 2016).

You can learn more about the history of coal mining in Boulder County in Phyllis Smith's *Once a Coal Miner: The Story of Colorado's Northern Coal Field* (Pruett: Boulder, 1989), Carolyn Conarroe's *Coal Mining in Colorado's Northern Coal Field* (Louisville: Conarroe, 2001), and Joanna Simpson's "Walking Through History on Marshall Mesa" (Boulder: City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, 2008). The Boulder Public Library's Carnegie Branch Library for Local History has an excellent collection of oral histories related to the history of Boulder County and coal mining, including an interview with Robert "Bob" Morgan by Shirley Steele (June 26, 2002). On the history of Louisville, see Carolyn Conarroe, *The Louisville Story* (Louisville: Conarroe, 1978) and issues of the *Louisville Historian*. On the Monarch Mine explosion, see William M. Cohen, "Blast: The 1936 Monarch Mine Explosion" (Louisville: Louisville Historical Museum, 2006).

For more on the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company and Josephine Roche, see Elinor McGinn, *A Wide-Awake Woman: Josephine Roche in the Era of Reform* (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2002); Robyn Muncy, *Relentless Reformer: Josephine Roche and Progressivism in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Leigh Campbell-Hale, "Remembering Ludlow but Forgetting the Columbine: The 1927–1928 Colorado Coal Strike" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Colorado, 2013); and Colorado Women's Hall of Fame's entry on Roche. The papers of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company are held at the Denver Public Library's Western History and Genealogy Repository, and the papers of Josephine Roche are held by the University of Colorado Libraries Rare and Distinctive Collections.

LINDSEY FLEWELLING is a Preservation Planner and Certified Local Government Coordinator at History Colorado. She earned a PhD in history from the University of Edinburgh and a graduate certificate in historic preservation from the University of Colorado Denver. Lindsey lives in Denver with her partner Garrett and rescue dog Naya.

The Mystery of the Hat in the Trunk

A Ludlow Massacre footnote reveals details about a photojournalist time forgot.

BY F. DARRELL MUNSELL

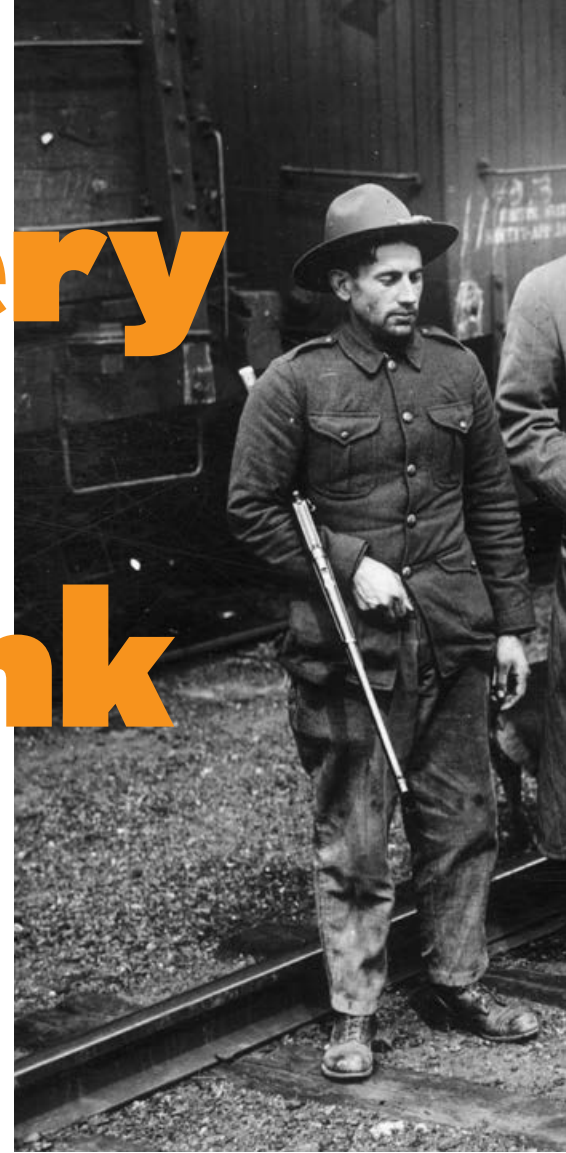
Stuart Aitkin Mace had long been mystified by a hat full of holes that he found in his father's trunk in the attic of the family home in Denver. Being only four and a half years old when his father, Stuart Garfield Mace, died in 1923—and having a mother who was “never much for telling the tough side of family history,” Stuart learned nothing about the hat until January 1951 when a “bouncing little guy” showed up at his Toklat Lodge residence in Ashcroft, a ghost town near Aspen where the younger Mace had established a sled dog business.

The man was Barron Beshoar, bureau chief for *Time-Life* and author of *Out of the Depths*, a biography of labor leader John R. Lawson who had been an organizer for the United Mine Workers of America in the Colorado coal fields. Beshoar spun a tale of working on his first scoop with Stuart's dad at the Ludlow Massacre, a violent episode in American labor history (at least nineteen people

were killed). Four decades later, Stuart recorded his memories of that vivid conversation. I sought out to discover if the tale was true and learn more about the man who may have worn that hat.

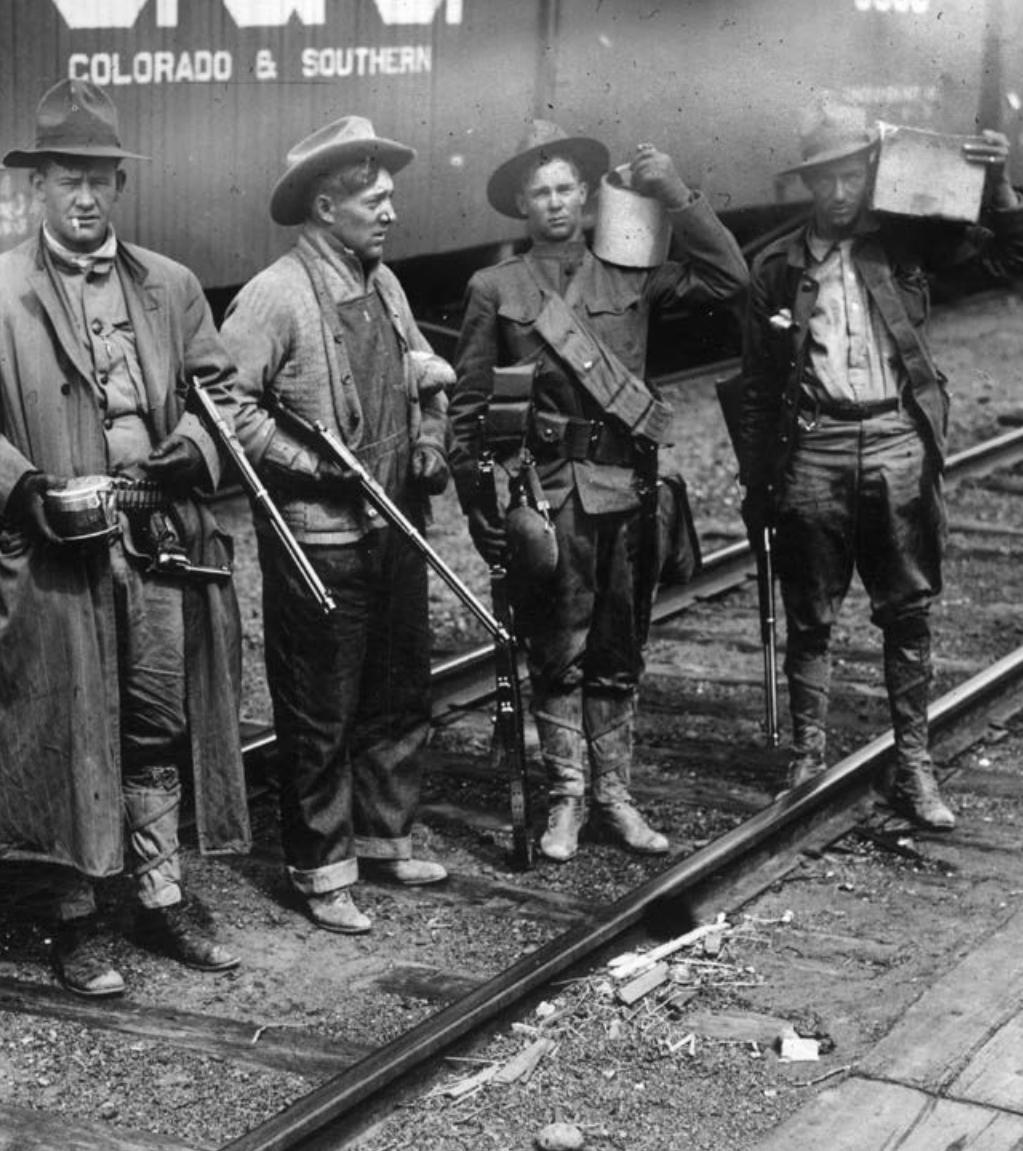
From the start, Beshoar's tale, retold by Stuart as part of an oral history in 1991, carries the hallmarks of a myth or a movie script. In 1914, so the story goes, *The Denver Post* sent photographer Stuart G. Mace and reporter Barron Beshoar to Ludlow to cover the events at the epicenter of the coal strike in southern Colorado shortly before fighting broke out between striking miners and militiamen. When the fighting began on April 20, Mace and Beshoar supposedly took shelter in a steel coal car from where they witnessed the militia attack on the strikers' tent colony.

Mace had his ever-present bulky sodium flash camera (the black box) with him and tried to photograph the



on-going battle. Realizing that he was a shooting duck target for the gunmen attacking the colony when he raised up to take a picture, Mace and Beshoar adopted a scheme reminiscent of scenes in many old western movies. They raised their hats above the side of the car to draw fire from the colony's attackers. Using single-shot rifles, the gunmen, while reloading their weapons, gave Mace an opportunity between salvos of gunfire to jump up to take a picture. The number of holes in Mace's hat indicated that the procedure was repeated several times.

When the rifle fire ceased and the militiamen stormed the camp to destroy the tents, Mace and Beshoar escaped and rushed to Denver with negatives in hand. Realizing there was incriminating photographic documentation of the attack on the tent colony, strikebreakers followed the two men to Denver. There



Members of the Colorado National Guard pose for a photo taken by Stuart Garfield Mace. Denver Public Library Special Collections, Z-216.

they bribed the police to assist or stand by while they broke into *The Denver Post* offices and destroyed the Ludlow negatives as well as, for good measure, all of Mace's lifetime work in the newspaper morgue (library). As a result of this action, there are no actual photographs of the militia attack on the colony.

In another taped interview with his daughter, Lynne, in February 1992, Stuart elaborated on this story. According to his account of his dad's experiences, the Rockefellers—officials of the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation (CF&I), the largest and most powerful coal operator fighting the miners—felt compelled to take strong action against Mace and Beshoar for witnessing and documenting the militia attack on the Ludlow tent colony. They

ordered the destruction of Mace's Ludlow photographs, which, as physical evidence, they considered far more damaging to them than any newspaper article they could refute. They told Mace and Beshoar never to engage in such activity again and ordered them to remain silent about the whole affair. They threatened Beshoar with physical harm if he refused or if he continued to write damaging articles about the mine operators.

Frederick H. Bonfils and Harry H. Tammen, owners and publishers of *The Denver Post*, seized this opportunity to demand money from CF&I to keep the story quiet. These notoriously scheming blackmailers, however, met their equals in the Rockefellers, who demanded that the *Post* fire Mace and Beshoar at once or suffer severe consequences. Out

blackmailed, Bonfils and Tammen conceded. To make things worse for Mace and Beshoar, CF&I instructed the *Rocky Mountain News* not to hire them and, believing pictures more threatening than words, stipulated that the same instruction not to hire him would follow Mace wherever he went.

But how much of this tale was true? The story, while compelling, was factually misleading in several important ways, with some details better suited for a movie script than a history book. For one thing, the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Times*, jointly owned by John C. Shaffer and operated from the same building, were the papers involved, rather than *The Denver Post*. Stuart G. Mace was the staff photographer for the *Times* and was not employed at the time by the *Post*. Additionally, Beshoar, a young boy of seven in 1914, could not have been the reporter sent to the strike zone to accompany Mace. Nor was he in the coal car with him during the battle of Ludlow.

Although obscured by discrepancies, the story of the hat does provide a major clue to what happened to the *Denver Times*'s staff photographer in the wake of the Ludlow Massacre. Beshoar established that something happened to Mace, but it had nothing to do with Bonfils or Tammen and *The Denver Post*. Instead, it was Mace trapped in CF&I's retaliatory action against the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Denver Times* for condemning the coal operators and the governor for the "Massacre of the Innocents" at Ludlow.

Stuart Garfield Mace was one of the most widely known and highly respected newspaper photographers in Denver and the West during the early twentieth century. With his charm and good nature, he obtained photographs of celebrities that no other newspaper could get, including the future Duke of Windsor. As staff photographer for the *Denver Times*, he helped make newspaper history not only by taking photographs of celebrities, but also by memorializing the

constantly changing social and political dynamics of the local world. He was one of the founding members of the Denver Press Club.

Mace was on assignment for the *Times* at Ludlow in April 1914. He had arrived there in time to photograph the militia activities in preparation for the attack on the strikers' tent colony. From the photographs he produced, it appears the militia gave him complete freedom to present to the public a photographic record of its presence in the field. It

Following the Ludlow Massacre, Mace remained in the strike zone until at least the end of April. Under the supervision of the militia, he joined other photographers, reporters, and philanthropic workers on April 22 to inspect the destroyed Ludlow camp. While there, he captured on film militiamen standing guard among the ruins and a militiaman raising his hand to measure the depth of the Black (Death) Hole where two women and eleven children died during the militia attack. He continued in the

John D. Rockefeller, "the richest man in the world." The Denver Chamber of Commerce's reaction to the editorial was immediate. A committee representing the leaders of the organization rushed to the *News* offices and threatened to impose an advertising boycott unless Chenery was silenced and Harvey Deuell, the *News* correspondent whose articles set up Chenery's editorial, was transferred to another assignment. CF&I's vendetta against Deuell suggests that he might have been the reporter who was with Mace at Ludlow during the attack on the tent colony.

Undaunted, Chenery stood his ground and vowed to continue to publish the truth about the governor's and coal operators' activities and policies. He specifically heaped scorn on the Rockefeller owned CF&I, declaring that the company's officials could never intimidate the *News* as they had the governor. CF&I answered by filing a \$500,000 libel suit against the *News* and *Denver Times*, but CF&I abandoned both the boycott effort and the libel suit when *The Denver Post* defended its newspaper competitors in the name of freedom of the press.

The *Post's* intervention was irrelevant, however. CF&I had already accomplished its objective. Deeply sensitive to the severe criticism Chenery's editorials had provoked, Gene Fowler of the *News* reported, John C. Shaffer ended his paper's "crusading spirit" on behalf of the "little people." The reversal demoralized the *News* staff. Chenery left to become editor of *Collier's Weekly*. Other editors and reporters departed as well, including Fowler. Deuell continued to write for the *News* and *Times*, but eventually moved on to become managing editor for the *New York Daily News*. For all practical purposes, the leadership of CF&I had intimidated Shaffer's papers back to a position more to their liking.

A closer analysis of the matter reveals that Chenery and Deuell were not the only CF&I targets. Stuart G. Mace was also caught in the corporation's retaliatory action against anyone involved in the *News* and *Times* coverage of the strike



Stuart Garfield Mace's photo of the "Death Pit," where eleven children and two women were killed during the Ludlow Massacre. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

seemed neither the militia nor the coal operators and their allies objected to these images. The militia, in fact, were all too happy to use them for propaganda purposes. Unlike Lou Dold, a freelance photographer sympathetic to the union, whose photographs told the story of the strikers and their families, Mace concentrated on the military side of the conflict. Combined, the complementary work of the two men produced some of the most important historical documentation of the deadliest labor war in American history.

days following to photograph scenes of the war zone during the Ten Days War. The April 25 issue of the *Denver Times* featured a full-page collection of his photos taken during this time.

Events in Denver, while Mace was still in the field, changed his life forever. On April 22, the *Rocky Mountain News* published editorial editor William Chenery's explosive screed entitled "Massacre of the Innocents." Governor Elias Ammons, Chenery boldly asserted, was a lackey of the coal barons who led a private war against miners at Ludlow financed by

activities. To make their point more forcibly after the *Times* ended its relationship with him, CF&I blacklisted him from gaining employment with any Denver newspaper in the future. Thus, CF&I's action altered the careers of Chenery and Mace: the former lost his job with the *News* and the latter not only lost his job, but was banished from the newspaper business as a photojournalist essentially for the rest of his life.

The tragedy of the last years of Stuart G. Mace's life was portrayed mostly by information found in a scrapbook and from family history. Following his forced exile as a photojournalist, Mace opened a commercial photography business. Although it was described in an obituary as a successful business, he remained on the edge of financial ruin. He had opportunities to become a cameraman for motion pictures, but, frail and in poor health, he chose to stay in Denver with his wife and young son. He suffered from severe depression. Emphysema from inhaling the poisonous vapors of the "closet"—the dark room—from which he had worked for the *Denver Times* contributed to his failing health, as did poor eyesight that left him totally blind shortly before his death.

In spite of his poor health, he finally gained employment in 1920 as a staff photographer for *The Denver Post*. A fortuitous opportunity for him occurred when he spotted John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and his three sons at the base of a statue at the State Capitol on the last day of their Colorado vacation. He snapped a picture of them that was published in the *Post* on June 22. It was the first photograph of the Rockefeller sons taken by a newspaper photographer with the permission of their father.

The photograph must have caught the attention of someone in the CF&I office, for the *Post* terminated Mace's contract on the same day the photograph was published. Mace appealed to Rockefeller immediately. He promised not to engage in any negative activity against CF&I. Rockefeller's response arrived a

few days later on June 29. "I am much disturbed at what you say in regard to your position with *The Denver Post*," he wrote. "It must be that the managing editor has not thoroughly understood the situation. I am taking steps to try to have this matter properly laid before your superiors and trust there may be a reversal of the notice given to you. You were so fair and honorable with me that I shall be only too glad to do anything I can to help you in this situation."

Evidently the ban was lifted. Mace took his camera to the streets of Denver again to snap pictures of burned-out trolley cars and federal troops during the trolley strike in August, 1920. But failing health was now his greatest enemy. His attempt to return to his profession was interrupted when he suffered a nervous breakdown in 1921 that confined him to his bed for eight months. Even though his health remained precarious, he recovered enough to resume some of his work before contracting pneumonia in July, 1923. Although he seemed to be gradually recovering, he died suddenly of a brain aneurysm five weeks later on September 21. He was forty-two.

His son, Stuart, never pressed his mother for information about his father. The subject was too painful for her to discuss. He did ask her about the hat full of holes that he found in his father's trunk, but even this was something that she would not address. It was also too painful for his uncles, Gordon and Charles Mace, although "Uncle Charlie" told his nephew he would never go into the newspaper business because of what "they" did to his father. For them, the affair was a tragedy of the first order that totally destroyed their brother.

The mysterious hat in the trunk symbolized the life of a man whose ingratiating personality and disregard of danger and hardship allowed him to produce photographs that represented the best in American newspaper photography. The story of the hat in the trunk is also a reminder of how CF&I officials and their coal operator and Chamber of Commerce allies tried to erase the Ludlow Massacre

from history. History, however, through the voices of recent scholars, refuses to remain silent. ●

Sources:

The primary sources for this article are two taped recordings made in 1991 and 1992 by the late Stuart A. Mace of Toklat, Ashcroft. In the recordings, Mace relates the story of what Barron Beshoar told him about the experience of his father, Stuart G. Mace, staff photographer for the *Denver Times*, during the Ludlow Massacre and its aftermath. Although Beshoar's account and Mace's interpretation of it are historically incorrect in many respects, both uncover an incident never before published. Two newspaper articles provide verification of the account: "John D. Jr. Surrenders to Camera, Admits He Is a Public News Item," *The Denver Post*, June 22, 1920, and "Toklat Husky Teams to Be in 'Life' Soon," *The Aspen Daily Times*, January 11, 1951. Additional sources consulted put the account in historical perspective: Gene Fowler, *A Solo in Tom-Toms* (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), and F. Darrell Munsell, *From Redstone to Ludlow: John Cleveland Osgood's Struggle against the United Mine Workers of America* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2009). The Mace family scrapbook included obituaries and other important family information about Stuart G. Mace. It also yielded John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s June 29, 1920, letter, which shed light on what happened to Mace.

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They Were

Ella Moffat McLaughlin, Mac McLaughlin, and Frances Moffat playing golf.
Photo courtesy of the author.



Sisters

Meet two of
Colorado's
greatest golfers.

BY PEGGY O'NEILL-JONES, ED.D.

As a young child, I looked forward to spending the night with my great-aunt Mary Cronin. Cooking cinnamon rolls was our thing. Using time and patience, we'd create a cinnamon-sugar-butter concoction that blanketed flat dough, which we rolled into a continuous loop of goopy, reddish-brown swirls. As we worked, Mer—that's what we called her—sometimes mentioned Aunt Ella and Aunt Frances in passing. The two sisters were ephemeral to me at the time. My life began about fifteen years after their lives finished. Without faces and memories, the names mostly vaporized from my head.

Even today, the aroma of baking cinnamon rolls sends me back to Aunt Mary's kitchen. Maybe the lovely smell and the affection I felt is why I recall the scene so often—and why I've spent a lot of time learning more about the women that Mer didn't want me to forget.

Ella Moffat McLaughlin and Frances Moffat were Colorado's top women golfers in the first decades of the twentieth century. They were a sister duo. They were also my great-great-aunts.

These Irish-Catholic, Victorian-era women chased little white balls around fields of green grass. But they drove more than golf balls. What they couldn't say or do because of social restraints met no such restraint on the golf course. Tee it up. Set a stance. See the ball. Let it sail.

Over the years, I have found plenty of evidence of their spirits and drives in newspaper clippings, photo albums, and family stories. Ella and Frances left a message to the future: Use whatever vehicle is available to mark your existence. Shout your life so loud that three generations later, a history sleuth like me is left to wonder: How did they do that? Why did they do that?

The old saying is that Ireland's greatest export was its people. During a tumultuous seven-year period from 1845 to 1852, the Great Irish Famine sent millions of starving emigrants out of Ireland. That included my maternal

great-great-grandparents, Thomas and Mary Moffat. Orphaned at four years old, my great-great-grandmother Mary lost her parents to the Irish famine. As a teenager, Thomas watched typhus wither his father to an unrecognizable sight before death extinguished the gruesome scene. Life was anywhere but Ireland, so they fled the seaside farming community of County Mayo and joined the flood of Irish immigrants bound for the United States.

Thomas and Mary's first child, Mariah (my great-grandmother), was born in England as they made their way to America aboard the ship *Bridgewater* in 1863. They docked in New York City as Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing enslaved people in Confederate states. As the Civil War raged around them, twenty-three-year-old Thomas Moffat took the first job he could find: He joined the Union Army.

Frederick, Maryland, was alternately occupied by both Union and Confederate soldiers in the days before the battles of Antietam (1862) and Gettysburg (1863). Thomas Moffat was part of the effort to transfer the wounded from the battlefields to Frederick, which became a major hospital center and is now home to the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Ella Moffat McLaughlin was born in Frederick, Maryland, in 1868 to a family finding its footing as newcomers in a chaotic and divided nation that was just beginning to reckon with the carnage of war. The end of the war meant that Ella's parents could finally take a breath and look around. Where did they want to live and how did they want to live?

Thomas came to the United States as a rural farmer with no education, but he had an important skill set: hard work and muscle. The ambitious Transcontinental Railroad project and the lure of the West moved the Moffats away from the east coast to Independence, Iowa, where Thomas took a job as a laborer with the D&I Railroad. The Moffat family would



Ella around 1890. Photo courtesy of the author.

grow to include eight children in Iowa. Eleven years apart, Ella was the third oldest; Frances was the youngest.

But the Moffat family's westward journey was not finished, especially as railroads continued to grow. With Ella, Frances, and their six other siblings in tow, the Moffats loaded onto a train and headed for Denver in 1880 (I still have one of the chairs they brought along). The McLaughlin family joined the 800-mile westward voyage. Ten-year-old Ella Moffat and eleven-year-old Mac McLaughlin traveled the dusty trail together, leading not only to their new home in Denver, but to a lifelong partnership.

By now a railroad man for life, Thomas Moffat went to work for the Denver & Rio Grande Railway and settled his family at 276 Eleventh Street in the original Auraria neighborhood. Mac's family lived nearby, at what is now the Denver Center for the Performing Arts parking lot. I have walked the path of their childhood steps endless times. I now work on the Auraria campus and

have taught several classes in the North Classroom building, which stands in the footprint of Ella and Frances's former home.

You don't need a large frame to carry a heavy load. Around five feet tall and never more than 110 pounds, Ella's dainty dignity belied the weighty responsibilities of a pioneer girl growing up in poverty on the Iowa plains with five younger siblings to help look after. Early photographs of Ella reveal underlying kernels of grit and determination. In one photo, Ella is walking with one of her nephews toward a car when her face turns toward the camera with an "oh yeah, watch me" glance. Ella holds eye contact revealing a dogged, determined look, a telling sign of her later approach to golf.

In contrast, Ella's caring nature was front and center in an 1889 *Rocky Mountain News* article that described Ella tending to her future brother-in-law Willie McLaughlin after Willie fell seventy-five feet down a mountain. According to the article, Ella "tenderly cared for the little fellow from the time he was hurt till he landed in Denver."

Ella married star Denver baseball player Michael (Mac) McLaughlin in 1892 at St. Leo's Catholic Church. The sponsor of Mac's baseball team, Sanden Electric, sold medical electric belts. Mac was an agent for the company for a few years but eventually started his own successful company, making enough money to gain access to a wealthy lifestyle. Ella and Mac were a team throughout their lives and they temporarily moved to San Francisco, California, around 1901 to promote the business.

In contrast to Ella's petite figure, Frances had a more muscular build. Her round-rimmed glasses rested on puffy cheeks, which gave Frances a bookish air. A few impish glances in old photos reveal a jovial nature, as if she were about to crack a joke. While Ella's hats were stylish and modern, Frances wore ones that shaded her eyes, kept the sun off her face, and

got the job done. Frances was a single woman operating in a married woman's world. Automobiles were barely on the scene in 1914 when several Colorado newspapers described Frances behind the wheel of a shiny new car. Unfortunately, her fame was the result of hitting a pedestrian, Captain George Thatcher of Aspen, who suffered minor injuries and recovered.

Mac and Ella shared their good fortune with their families, especially Frances. Many unmarried women during that time period could expect a dowdy life. Not Frances. She traveled the United States and Europe with the McLaughlins, attended fancy tea parties, and donned elegant gowns for dances. And Frances learned to play golf—really, really well.

It was during their time in San Francisco that the golf bug bit the trio. Mac

missed the thrill of hitting a baseball and watching it fly, so he adopted golf (you can read more about his career in the Spring 2021 issue of this magazine). He took lessons from Scottish golf pro James Melville at the famed Del Monte Hotel. Ella and Frances didn't rest in the shade, they learned to play, eventually participating in, and winning Del Monte women's golf tournaments.

Ella and Frances were cut from the same cloth of determination. A golf tournament at Lakewood Country Club in September 1921 describes Frances and her opponent Mrs. F.W. Maxwell ending their match with a tie. According to the *Rocky Mountain News*: "As they finished all square at the last hole and believing that they should play it out to conclusion, the two ladies played twenty-three holes in all before Miss

Ella and Frances Moffat on the Del Monte golf course in Monterey, California. Photo courtesy of the author.



Moffat won.” Although, according to the rules, the extra holes did not count. The match was recorded as a tie.

For many women, life in the early 1900s was preordained: Marry young and have enough children to field a baseball team. My family was not different. Thomas and Mary Moffat had eight children: two sons and six daughters. Three of the daughters, Mariah, Kate, and Bridget, married and had families of eleven, two, and three children, respectively. Although Ella would eventually adopt two of her nieces, the sisters remained childless. Ella and Frances broke the mold and left a small mark on golf history.

Through golf, Ella and Frances found a way to express who they were in a world that often saw women as vague figures in the shadow of men. Golf was the megaphone through which they shouted their lives. Ella and Frances were eleven years apart, but the age difference collapsed as they went head-to-head competing for championship golf titles.

The McLaughlins and Frances moved back to Denver around 1908, bringing their love of golf with them. Mac was one of the founders of Lakewood Country Club (LCC) in 1908 and the founding president of the Colorado Golf Association in 1915. Ella and Frances became part of LCC’s formidable women’s golf team. At the time, the highest level of play for women golfers was in formal tournament competitions, and Ella and Frances were at the forefront of a national movement to organize women’s golf. The sisters helped to establish the Colorado Women’s Golf Association (CWGA) in 1915. Frances was elected the first secretary for the CWGA and served for several years. Mac enabled Ella and Frances to play golf and was their biggest cheerleader. A 1917 *The Denver Post* news account describes Mac climbing the fence at Lakewood Country Club to get a better view of Ella’s playing.

The Mac-Ella-Frances trio became a golfing juggernaut. Mac quickly rose as one of Colorado’s top amateur golfers,

winning the first Colorado Golf Association Match Play Championship in 1915 and again in 1919. Mac was posthumously inducted into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame in 2003. The Colorado Golf Hall of Fame plans to permanently display Mac’s 1915 championship trophy and honor Ella and Frances when the new Hall of Fame opens at the Broadmoor Hotel in 2023.

Ella and Frances were right in there with him. Several years later, Ella imparted words of advice on the eve of her niece’s (my grandmother’s) marriage to another top Colorado golfer, my grandfather Louis O’Brien. “If you don’t want to be a golf widow,” Ella wrote in a letter, “learn to play.”

The first Colorado Women’s State Championship tournament was held in 1916 at the Colorado Springs Golf Club. Ella and Frances faced each other in the semifinal round of the 1916 match play tournament. The Rocky Mountain News reported that Ella played her usual

brilliant game and led Frances by three strokes. Ella went on to win the 1916 championship by beating Mrs. L.M. Van Meter on the last putt of the eighteenth hole. According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, “Their match was the closest and most exciting of the tournament.” Ella’s driving was almost perfect and her putting was of high caliber.

The rivaling sisters were back in 1917, each determined to win. Frances made it to the semifinals but lost the match by two strokes and quashed her hopes of advancing to the finals. Ella, however, was still in the game. Ella’s drives from the tee did not travel the furthest, but her strategic approach to the green, flawless putting, and steely-eyed concentration made Ella a champion. Ella won the 1917 final match and retained her state championship title for the second consecutive year.

The following year, the sisters battled through a slate of top Colorado women golfers. Ella won her semifinal match. Frances defeated her semifinal opponent

Ella and Mac around 1905.
Photo courtesy of the author.



after a “hard tussle” and went on to challenge the defending state champion: Ella. The *Denver Post* reported that this created a rather unusual affair. Two sisters would decide the 1918 Colorado Women’s State Championship.

As the sisters played golf, world events resonated at home. Two nephews were overseas serving in the Great War. One nephew, John Cronin, came back and was never quite the same. A beloved aunt and uncle, both of whom made the treacherous journey out of Ireland with Thomas Moffat decades earlier, died within three months of each other, both victims of the 1918 flu pandemic.

The two prior days of grueling matches took a toll on Ella and Frances. As they faced each other for the final match, neither was on top of her game. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported that Ella overran the hole on approaches and missed a few putts. Commenting on her lack of the usual command, particularly with her two wood, which golfers often referred to as a “brassie,” the *News* noted

that “Mrs. McLaughlin had a tendency to smother her brassie shots, showing she was not hitting with the same precision, which is her custom.” On the flip side, “Miss Moffatt allowed her opponent to win the ninth hole by messing things up in general after Mrs. McLaughlin had put her shot in the ditch.” Later, Frances “drove a splendid brassie to the green.” After a long day of battling back and forth, Frances won the 1918 championship.

There would be plenty more championships. Ella regained the Colorado Women’s State Championship title for a third time in 1921. And Mac was winning more trophies as well. Between 1915 and 1921, a Colorado State Championship title stayed within the McLaughlin/Moffat family for six of the seven years.

Ella’s and Frances’s quiet story had a loud impact on women’s golf in Colorado. The Colorado Women’s Golf Association (CWGA), now merged with

the Colorado Golf Association (CGA) is a multi-million-dollar enterprise. According to Nancy Wilson, co-chair of the *CWGA Centennial Celebration 1916-2016*, CWGA is recognized as one of the best women’s golf programs in the country. It organizes tournaments, encourages young golfers through clinics, and supports all types of golfers, not just the elite. Ella and Frances would be proud of the golf organization they started that has touched the lives of tens of thousands of women golfers over the last 100 years, including me.

Last year, I joined the Applewood Golf Course CWGA league as a first-time golfer. In doing so, I learned more deeply what Ella and Frances knew as they went head-to-head to set the bar for golf in Colorado: Golf is a game of character. The job is not to wish ill on your opponent. Applaud good shots—then hit better ones. Winning at golf is about digging deep to find out what you are made of and putting it all on the line. And so it was with the Moffat/McLaughlin sisters. Ella and Frances were fierce competitors who lived, traveled, and played golf together. They took care of each other until the end of their lives. Frances was fifty-seven when cancer ended her life in 1936. Mac died from heart disease in 1938 at sixty-nine, and Ella followed him the next year, also from cancer, at age sixty-nine.

I never knew these great-great-aunts, but I have come to know them through cinnamon rolls and golf. Their legacies weave in and around the edges of my life: Find your niche. Make a statement that sends a message to the future. You breathed. You dreamed. You existed. Keep the ball in play. Never give up on a hole. And take your shot. ●

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Frances Moffat drives a golf ball while Ella and Mac watch. *Photo courtesy of the author.*

Final Round

How Prohibition shaped
hop-happy Colorado.



Prohibition campaign button from
the early 1900s. *History Colorado*. 81.909.

BY SAM BOCK
AND JASON L. HANSON

John Hanson was greeted with cheers from his fellow detainees when the cops deposited him in the bullpen of the city jail on January 1, 1916. He'd been picked up downtown at Sixteenth and Market Streets for drunkenness. That wasn't so unusual for a Saturday in a city well known by then for its raucous saloons. What made Hanson's arrest noteworthy was that—as of midnight—Coloradans were supposed to be quite sober. He had earned the newsworthy honor of being the first person picked up in Denver after Prohibition became the law of the land in Colorado. And his hero's welcome reportedly included a prime spot in the cell where he could sleep it off.

Jailbirds were not the only ones applauding that day. Colorado's cadre of anti-alcohol reformers were surely celebrating (soberly) as well. Their victory was hard-won through force of conviction and grinding effort. Statewide prohibition was on the ballot a number of times prior to 1916, and each time, campaigners failed to expand the ban from dry cities like Fruita, Fort Collins, Greeley, and Boulder to the rest of the state. It was only through on-the-ground political organizing, zealous appeals to religious values, and determined campaigning that the "drys" (as prohibition advocates were known) finally got Colorado voters to ban booze in 1916, doing so four years before the rest of the country followed suit with the Eighteenth Amendment.

A century later, it seems incredible that a state boasting more than four-hundred breweries (and counting!) helped lead the way towards a booze ban. But looking backward in time through the lens of a pint glass reveals a misunderstood era that's often obscured by mental images like glitzy jazz-age flappers and speakeasy spirits.

In fact, those eighteen dry years were anything but carefree. They saw the rise of organized crime, the resurgence and fall of the Ku Klux Klan, the beginning of the Great Depression, and whip-lash-inducing swings in the social role

of alcohol. Even the flavor of American lagers today and the current craft beer boom can be explained by looking at the attitudes and habits forged during nearly two decades of Prohibition.

The dry times can seem hazy and distant, and we often overlook the historical forces that made imposing such drastic limits on personal liberty seem like a good idea. Few of us today think about Prohibition when we order our favorite pints at our local brewery or open a cold one at home.

But maybe we should. After all, results of banning alcohol can still be felt in Colorado—from the brewery to the voting booth, and everywhere in between.

Demon Saloons

America is a beer country. We drink an awful lot of beer here. Our rate of consumption alone proves that we love the stuff. And except for a brief period in the early twentieth century, we've always loved it. But never more than in the years leading up to Prohibition.

Industrialization and a massive wave of immigration turbocharged American beer drinking in the late 1800s. Historian and author Daniel Okrent estimated that, as a nation, we were drinking about thirty-six million gallons of beer a year in 1850. By 1890, he figured that number had increased to 855 million gallons per year.

Here's another way to think about it: In those forty years, America's population almost tripled while the nation increased its beer consumption rate by twenty-four times! By 1914, when beer consumption hit its pre-Prohibition peak, Americans were annually consuming an average of twenty gallons of beer per person. This staggering rise of beer's popularity in the middle of the nineteenth century wasn't a simple shift in consumer taste. It reflects the ways immigrants reshaped America.

Millions made their way to the United States around the turn of the century. Racially biased immigration policies meant that most were from European nations where beer culture was deeply ingrained in the fabric of society. The

arrival of so many who knew how to make beer—and others for whom beer was an expected part of everyday life—propelled it past cider, whiskey, wine, and rum to become America's adult beverage of choice. By the twentieth century, the country's love affair with suds had, in the view of temperance advocates, pushed the nation's tipplers past a tipping point and painted a target on the saloons where it was consumed.

Beer-pouring saloons were prominent symbols of overdrinking, and so easily became the subjects of political propaganda for pro-dry campaigners. Cities like Denver were nearly covered with saloons. It was almost possible to stumble from one to another clear across downtown in those days. For dry campaigners, their sheer numbers, along with the usual slate of problems associated with overdrinking, made saloons popular symbols of what was wrong with society. And they flogged the issue whenever they got a chance.

One sociologist studying "the liquor problem" in Chicago concisely summarized pro-dry opposition to the saloon in a speech to the city's ethics committee: "The popular conception of the saloon as a place where men and women revel in drunkenness and shame, or where the sotted beasts gather nightly at the bar, is due to exaggerated pictures, drawn by temperance lecturers and evangelists, intended to excite the imagination with a view to arousing public sentiment." And aroused public sentiment they did, especially among a new generation of economic and political elites who moved to Colorado in the late 1800s and early 1900s to live.

When the well-known New York newspaper publisher and utopian idealist Horace Greeley followed his own advice and headed west, he was shocked by what he found. Greeley envisioned the West as a wide-open landscape where Americans would be forged by liberty and opportunity into God-fearing, salt-of-the-Earth farmers. They were to be the patriotic and morally upstanding backbone of America.

home. In a place like that, laborers could feel free to express their daily frustrations to fellow countrymen in their native language. So when violent labor disputes broke out, saloons (and especially their foreign-born, beer-enjoying patrons) were often cast as the source of the poison in the well.

With saloons representing such a diverse mixture of threats to those controlling Colorado's levers of political and economic power, they were again obvious targets for divisive political campaigns, this time suggesting that beer causes labor unrest. This impulse to blame beer was callously on display in a 1914 article published across the state describing the context of the Ludlow Massacre.

In the article, tellingly entitled "Insurrection in Colorado during the years 1913–1914," the author and editor of Boulder's *Daily Camera* newspaper, L.C. Paddock, comes to the defense of the Colorado National Guard who had recently caused the deaths of at least nineteen people. For Paddock, the only "ruthless attack" at Ludlow was the one muckraking journalists made on the brave guardsmen who were simply standing up against anti-capitalist anarchists "declaring loudly against the rights of property." Paddock's article emphasized that miners had met in an Italian American owned saloon adorned with "the red flags of anarchy" to "drink beer and think of blood."

As the state approached the second decade of the twentieth century, the saloon was being blamed for nearly every social and political problem under the bright Colorado sun. Mistrust of immigrants, labor disputes, perceptions of drinkers' low moral character, and stark class divisions all manifested in ever-more strident calls to ban beer and the places where it was served.

In Colorado, as elsewhere in the country, these sentiments were mostly born out of anxiety over social changes wrought by immigration and the Industrial Revolution. The economic and ethnic divisions between saloon patrons and their critics hardened opinions on

both sides of the saloon doors, and discouraged any search for meaningful conversations or compromise.

But just as the miners were not necessarily drinking beer and thinking of blood, temperance reformers were not the anti-worker xenophobic zealots that pro-saloon factions sometimes made them out to be. For lots of temperance advocates, the dry crusade was an urgent response to the very real problem that alcoholism posed in America, as industrialization made beer and other alcoholic beverages cheaper and more widely available than ever before.

A Question of Moral and Physical Health

With saloons dotting what may have seemed like every street corner and the nation awash in beer, alcoholism was becoming an increasingly pernicious problem in American society. Beer's increasing popularity drove a growing sense of alarm. Temperance societies, whose popularity and membership roles had ridden the waves of American religious revivals during the 1800s, found memberships surging across the nation after 1900.

Initially beer was less of a concern. Drys saw it as a compromise—a less-intoxicating alternative to the harder stuff. But as awareness of the very real issues caused by excessive consumption increased, brewers dug in on counter-messaging, insisting that drys were overreacting. The public largely didn't see it that way, and so brewers found themselves out of step, missing the chance to distance their lower-alcohol products from stronger liquors. As a result, dry campaigners targeted beer along with spirits and wine.

Increasingly strident calls for total prohibition focused on the ways in which substance abuse destroyed individual lives, harmed innocent children and spouses, and frayed the very fabric of society. Seen in these terms, America's drinking problem was a social crisis that demanded a strong and far-reaching response.

This genuine and urgent sense of alarm spurred some drys to take drastic actions. Carrie Nation, Kentucky's dry campaigner famous nationwide for hacking apart beer kegs and smashing up saloons with a hatchet, did so, in part, because of her first marriage to an alcoholic. Nation, who was arrested for anti-saloon actions in both Trinidad and in Denver in 1906, was not the only woman who felt the ill effects of alcohol on her family. Throughout Colorado, newspaper articles were rife with troubling accounts of alcohol-fueled incidents of domestic violence.

For example, in April 1888, the *Fort Collins Courier* reported that James Henry Howe, known around town for increasingly abusive behavior, was lynched by an angry mob of vigilantes for murdering his wife while in "a state of beastly intoxication." Similarly bleak accounts of violence against women perpetrated by drunken men appear in newspapers from across the state. An account from Leadville tells of a laborer who was arrested in 1914 for threatening his family with an ax. When questioned by authorities, the local papers quoted the drunk man's paltry justification for his actions: "My wife, she make me mad. She try to take my hat."

Stories like these confirmed for many Coloradans the *Aspen Daily Chronicle's* conclusion that "overdrinking amongst saloons was a dangerous public nuisance that caused many fatal encounters." As anti-drinking sentiment grew, newspaper articles increasingly took aim at saloons and beer for being just as detrimental to public health as the viral diseases that made even non-drinkers sick. Asserting a connection between alcohol consumption and pneumonia that reveals an increasing tendency to think about alcoholism as a public health crisis, writers in the *Rifle Reveille* warned readers in 1913 that, "The United States Health Service brands strong drink as the most efficient ally of pneumonia. It declares that alcohol is the handmaiden of the disease which produces ten percent of the deaths in the United States."

Likewise, Anti-Saloon League (ASL) and Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) campaigners writing in the *Routt County Sentinel* in 1913 expressed their frustration that "Boards of health, armed with the police power of the state, eradicate the carriers of typhoid...but alcohol—a thousand times more destructive to public health than typhoid fever—continues to destroy."

As consumption rates climbed, temperance advocates preached to increasingly receptive audiences across Colorado. The town of Greeley, founded as a utopian agricultural community, was an early prohibition adopter. So were Fruita and Colorado Springs. Many of Denver's suburbs, including Highland, Park Hill, and Montclair, were planned as dry communities. Both Fort Collins and Boulder had saloon bans on the books ahead of the 1916 Prohibition vote. Grand Junction voted for prohibition in 1909 and changed its town charter in order to break the saloon owners' grip on political power. In each of these places, dries preached about the personal and patriotic virtues of temperance to eager crowds while Progressive candidates for political office championed a platform with prohibition at its heart.

The most strident advocates for reform came from Colorado's strong Woman's Christian Temperance Union chapter. Colorado's WCTU wielded considerable influence, and often flexed political muscle after women won the right to vote in Colorado elections in 1893. Colorado's WCTU, which was led by organizer and activist Adrianna Hungerford starting in 1904, put its weight behind reform-minded politicians like "Honest" John F. Shafroth and condemned the alcohol-fueled political machine of Denver Mayor Robert Speer. During Shafroth's tenure as Colorado's Governor from 1909 to 1913, Hungerford and her fellow reformers at the WCTU continued advocating for total prohibition, and even got a dry referendum on the ballot in 1912.

To help spread the gospel of temperance, the WCTU opened reading

rooms where former drinkers could find opportunities for sober self-improvement and a sociable alternative to the saloon. Dries also took to the streets to make known their displeasure with the soggy status quo. One "Patriotic Rally for the Home and the School" promised attendees an "Entertaining Hour" with "Good Singing!" to demonstrate against alcohol and show that drinking was not the only way to pass the time.

Colorado's movement to ban beer picked up considerable momentum in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I. The US was at war with Germany, and even the saloon-going residents of

Beer's buzz is an integral part of the experience, and brewers quickly found out that their non-alcoholic product was as disappointing to drink as it was to make.

suds-loving Denver began to look upon beer—and the predominantly German men who made it—with deep suspicion. Anti-German sentiment was on the rise, and brewers' belated efforts to market beer as a safer and more wholesome alternative to hard liquor fell on increasingly deaf ears. From immigration and labor disputes to domestic violence and the disease of alcoholism, Prohibition, it seemed, could be a panacea for the problems confronting Coloradans. Far from curing Colorado of its ills, however, banning beer created many more problems than it solved.

"Who Cares If We Make a Little Beer?"

Most of Colorado's breweries were as dry as its Rocky Mountain air on the first day of 1916, and generally speaking, folks filed out of saloons and stopped

imbibing. Law abiding citizens who had been accustomed to incorporating drinking into their regular routines reorganized their activities around new social outings, including trips to the movies.

Temperance reformers were initially buoyed as local churches and voluntary associations like the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks replaced saloons as the most important sites of social organization. For Adrianna Hungerford and her fellow dries at the WCTU, the statewide liquor ban was the ultimate victory. The state, now clean and sober, could face the world with optimism for its citizens' moral and physical health.

But what about the large minority of citizens who voted *against* Prohibition? After all, Colorado's vote on Prohibition was extremely close. Dries barely carried the day with their 129,589 votes (52 percent of the total) against the 118,017 votes (nearly 48 percent) from wets—a narrow victory of only about 11,500 votes. With all of Colorado's breweries prohibited from selling their product, thirsty beer fans had a choice: turn to non-alcoholic malt tonics and "near beer," or start making their own.

Before Prohibition, alcohol-free malt tonics colloquially called "near beer" were marketed and sold as a health drink by druggists in pharmacies. When full-strength beer was outlawed, several Colorado breweries ramped up their production of malt tonic due to initial demand and profitability. But beer's buzz is an integral part of the experience, and brewers quickly found out that their non-alcoholic product was as disappointing to drink as it was to make. Drinkers and brewers quickly decided that there was no substitute for the real deal.

The biggest Colorado breweries—Coors, Tivoli, and Ph. Zang among them—rode out the first few years of Prohibition making near beer, but it wasn't enough. Coors started making malted milk and high-quality porcelain to keep its workers employed. But despite brewers' best efforts to offer enticing legal alternatives, Coloradans who wanted a

real beer increasingly turned to making it at home.

Homebrewing was a viable option for thirsty and industrious Coloradans during Prohibition since, in perhaps the most effective encouragement of homebrewing ever codified, the legislators who wrote Colorado's Prohibition amendment initially declined to outlaw alcohol possession in private residences. Wealthy Coloradans such as Spencer Penrose—founder of the extravagant Broadmoor hotel in Colorado Springs—took advantage of this loophole by stockpiling cellars of booze that they hoped would carry them through Prohibition. But those with lesser means had to brew their own Prohibition potions.

Notable among them was a man named J.L. Williams of the Mount Harris coal camp west of Steamboat Springs who began homebrewing in 1917. When state enforcement officers came around to check out his operation, they did not dispute his right to brew, but Williams's production of a barrel a day struck them as suspicious. The agents arrested Williams on charges that, according to the *Steamboat Pilot*, he "was making more beer than he could possibly drink himself, even with his acknowledged abnormal capacity, and he had been selling to others of the coal camp." Williams protested his innocence and claimed that he drank all he brewed, but his case illustrates the brazenness with which Coloradans flouted the new laws when beer was on the line.

Speakeasies, the underground saloons that loom so large in our imaginations as glitzy secretive night clubs, popped up in nearly every town almost immediately following Prohibition. But few served beer in the same way as saloons of old since distilled liquor was more profitable per bottle and easier to transport—not to mention simpler to hide from the cops. In contrast to the way beer was consumed in saloons, Prohibition-era beer became a beverage that people mostly made and drank at home.

Denver held its fair share of homebrewers, and stories suggest that



A group in front of the Women's Christian Temperance Union Mission in Denver. Joseph Collier, *Denver Public Library Special Collections*. C-19.

homebrewing was a widespread hobby around the state. Even Denver's famed composer and jazz musician George Morrison, Sr., got in on the action. The Denver Public Library provides an account of the family's activities from his son. Recalling growing up during Prohibition in Denver's Five Points neighborhood, George Morrison, Jr., tells us "Dad made home brew. Once during the night when Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson was visiting us, beer started exploding in the cellar. It was a common occurrence, so it amused the family when Bojangles woke everyone up yelling, 'What's that, what's that?!'"

Aspiring homebrewers didn't need to be sophisticated in the brewer's arts to create drinkable beer. National beer retailers like Blatz, Schlitz, Budweiser, Miller, and Pabst all lent homebrewers a helping hand by selling some version of malt syrup—the glutenous product that contains all of the sugars needed for fermentation—in drug stores throughout the nation.

Marketed as a sweetener for baked goods, much of the malt syrup sold during Prohibition was hop-flavored, surely leading some honest-minded

shoppers and government officials to wonder who exactly was consuming all of this bittersweet bread. By 1926, Anheuser-Busch was doing a bang-up business selling more than six million pounds of malt extract every year, prompting brewery chairman August Busch, Jr., to tell an interviewer that his company "ended up as the biggest bootlegging supply house in the United States."

As any modern homebrewer will tell you, making beer with malt syrup or malt extract is a pretty simple process. Stirring the sticky sweet syrup into a pot of boiling water and adding some bittering agent like hops and some yeast is about all you need to do to create a brew that is reasonably close to what the professionals make.

And if the professionals aren't making anything, then homebrew made from malt extract tastes all that much better. During Prohibition, police tended to overlook small homebrewing operations, and courts were hesitant to penalize those who used malt syrup for something other than its supposedly intended purpose. A Chicago man voiced the operating premise of many of his fellow scofflaw homebrewers when he explained that

“Maybe the police wouldn’t like it so much if we had a still, but who cares if we make a little beer for our own use?”

For Denverites, that analysis proved sound even after homebrewing became illegal when the rest of the nation passed Prohibition in 1920. Denver’s District Attorney John Rush indicated at the outset of national Prohibition that he was uninterested in prosecuting thousands of homebrewers.

In *Ambitious Brew*, Maureen Ogle found that so much homebrew flowed beyond the capacity of law enforcement to do anything about it that in 1933 August Busch, Jr., declared, with a tinge of jealousy, “Home-brewing has been the great indoor sport in millions of American homes since 1920.” Coming from the head of arguably America’s most successful brewing family, his sentiment affirmed the age-old truism that when Americans can’t buy professionally made beer, they tend to figure out how to brew it on their own.

Moonshine and Mobsters

Despite the ease and popularity of making beer at home, the fact remains that most of the alcohol consumed during Prohibition was harder stuff: wine and liquor. Americans who could afford to pay bootleggers’ prices looked

to illegally imported bottles from Canada or Mexico and supported a clandestine web of moonshiners throughout the dry years. For those with more modest budgets but lacking the inclination to homebrew, spirits were the best choice as they were more widely available and much cheaper to obtain than illegally imported beer. Spirits were on hand in Colorado throughout the dry years, thanks in part to organized criminal outfits for whom Prohibition provided a lucrative source of revenue.

Italian American immigrants were some of the first to coordinate large-scale, organized moonshining and bootlegging in Colorado. Up until 1916, the shadowy criminal organization known as the *Mano Nera* or Black Hand had a small presence here. Criminals acting on their own, or Italian immigrants familiar with the very real threat of organized crime in the old country, would use drawings of black hands as scary graffiti or as a sort of bogeyman to back up threats.

Within Italian American immigrant communities, some who had endured personal slights invoked the mystique and fear-inspiring reputation of the Black Hand to underscore the seriousness of retaliatory threats (whether bogus or real). But organized crime was still rare in Colorado before Prohibition, and

those few real mobsters who operated here mostly concentrated their efforts on small-time gambling and extortion rackets.

As the state went dry, however, those would-be gangsters recognized that the public’s desire for alcohol hadn’t subsided. They also recognized that, because booze was illegal, thirsty people would be willing to pay more to get it. At first, most of the alcohol trafficked in Colorado was wine—a vital part of many cultural and religious lives, and not something that everyone wanted to give up in spite of the ban. But moonshine and illegally imported liquor quickly became the most popular of illegal spirits.

Enterprising bootleggers in Pueblo and Trinidad started making and secreting away their supplies, and tunnels dug underneath Smelter Hill in Pueblo were a particularly popular hiding spot. As Prohibition expanded to the rest of the nation, illegal distilling operations exploded throughout the state. Not all of these operations were run by the nascent mob, and Coloradans of all backgrounds eagerly engaged in the liquor trade. But Prohibition turbocharged the rise of mafia organizations across the country. And in Colorado, two families in particular—the Dannas and the Carlinos—vied to dominate the state’s bootlegging operations from their home bases in Pueblo.

With many thousands of dollars in ill-gotten revenue on the line, the fight over the southern Colorado liquor trade quickly turned violent. Deadly shootouts in the streets of Pueblo happened with frightening regularity and came with grotesque results. Several members of each family met grisly fates at the business ends of sawed-off shotguns. The bloodshed finally subsided after the Carlinos succeeded in wiping out the competition, driving the Dannas out of the liquor business. After establishing control over southern Colorado’s bootlegging trade, Pete Carlino turned his attention north towards the Denver area where Giuseppe “Joseph” P. Roma was building a bootlegging empire.

The officer on the far right was Eddie Bell—the only Colorado Ranger to be killed in the line of duty in 1922. Bell’s partner said the pair was beaten and robbed at a gas station in Limon in retaliation for their work against local bootleggers, resulting in Bell’s death. *Courtesy of John McFarlane.*



Roma thrived even amid the violence of Prohibition and built a large operation bringing illegal booze into Denver. But even the end of Prohibition couldn't save him from the violence that accompanied the illegal liquor trade: Roma himself was murdered in his North Denver home in 1933, making way for Clyde and Checkers Smaldone—two of Roma's associates—to become Denver's most infamous mobsters.

The Smaldones's influence endured through Prohibition and well into the post-war era, though today many Denverites know the family for Gaetano's—their Italian restaurant in the city's Highland neighborhood.

Running battles between bootleggers persisted throughout Prohibition, leading some to wonder whether the purported goals of banning alcohol—to cut down on the lawlessness and violence of the saloon days—were attainable at all. Clever criminals seemed to always be one step ahead of the law, and especially in the early days of Prohibition, took advantage of a woefully underprepared law enforcement system.

In the early twentieth century, Colorado didn't have a state-wide law enforcement agency. Though Colorado's 1916 Prohibition law provided for the commission of special officers known as Prohibition Executive Agents, they were too underfunded and too understaffed to cover Colorado's 104,185 square miles.

Thus, responsibility for pursuing and apprehending offenders often fell to municipal officers or county sheriffs whose authority to enforce the law ended at the town or county line. Colorado bootleggers took advantage of the jurisdictional boundaries and, if pursued by the local cops, would scoot across county lines, wait for the heat to die down, and then proceed with their deliveries.

Though many law enforcement officers did their best to stem the flow of illegal booze around the state, there was too much demand and too much money to be made from bootlegging and moonshining to stop the scofflaws. Bribes greased many palms, and cops



Men pry open cases of liquor from the Blue Valley Distillery Company with crowbars. *Denver Public Library Special Collections. Rh-1158.*

often looked the other way. Despite the high demand for booze, many Coloradans quickly became fed-up with the effects of going dry on crime and the economy. *The Denver Post* voiced the frustration many Denverites felt with their police by remarking that it would be great if Denver's Chief of Police Robert F. "Diamond Dick" Reed and his officers could "catch something besides a cold." Desperately seeking safety and security in their communities, many people were willing to support anyone who promised a solution to rising crime. In the first half of the 1920s, that solution for an alarming number of Coloradans came from the Ku Klux Klan.

Prohibition Fuels the Rise of the Ku Klux Klan

By the time the rest of the nation followed Colorado's lead by going dry in 1920, the Ku Klux Klan had already targeted Denver for expansion. The KKK found eager recruits, especially in communities still struggling to integrate immigrants and control the flow of illegal alcohol. In these places, respect for law and order became the Klan's rallying cry. Much of the virulent nativism and racism Colorado's Klan espoused in the early 1920s, writes Robert Allen Goldberg in *Hooded Empire*, was tied to the new immigrants one Las Animas County Judge called "foreigners, who by

education and training believe in the use of intoxicating liquors."

This anti-immigrant and anti-alcohol message found receptive audiences throughout the state. After enduring shocking violence over control of the liquor trade, many of Pueblo's Anglo-Protestant residents welcomed the Klan and its promise to clean up the city. The KKK's public debut in Pueblo came in 1923 with a series of induction rallies. In June of that year, an estimated 3,200 Klan members from across southern Colorado gathered in a field north of town to induct 200 new members into the Pueblo Klavern (the KKK's term for local Klan cells). The scene repeated itself again in September with several hundred more members swearing fealty to the KKK and joining together to burn crosses, eat barbecue, and sing hymns.

One of the Pueblo Klavern's first major actions was undertaken in February 1924 in response to a grand jury's finding that the police department was either inept or corrupt, and hadn't done enough to enforce Prohibition in Pueblo. With about fifty Klan members backing him up, Klansman and county Sheriff Samuel Thomas took the law into his own hands, leading a series of liquor raids in South Pueblo. Going from house to house, Klansmen searched the homes of Hispano residents and Italian immigrants

for illicit booze or the means to make it. Thomas only made seven arrests, and almost all of those searched and arrested were Catholic. The message the Klan sent was clear: white Anglo-Protestants blamed the community's Hispano and Italian-American residents for flouting Prohibition, and they were willing to take enforcement into their own hands if the police couldn't handle the job in the way these vigilantes preferred.

White supremacy, religious discrimination, and anti-immigrant xenophobia remained major platform planks for the Klan as Klaverns solidified their footholds in Southern Colorado throughout 1924. By continually reminding residents of the link between bootleggers and immigrants, the Klan veiled their racist intentions behind a veneer of patriotic vigilantism.

In Walsenburg, south of Pueblo, 350 Klansmen paraded silently through the streets on a chilly January morning bearing American flags and banners with slogans like "The Bootlegger Must Go" and "America for Americans." Cheers and enthusiastic applause met the Klansmen all along their parade route, which underscored just how influential the KKK had become in Colorado. Klaverns appeared in Trinidad and other Southern Colorado towns, and held similar rallies to prey on fear of immigrants and pent up frustration with the local police department's feckless response to bootlegging.

This exasperation was particularly acute in Denver. As the biggest city, as well as the state's financial and political center, Denver eclipsed even Pueblo as a regional hub for the liquor trade, making

it a ripe target for Klan organizing. Speakeasies dotted the city, and bottles of booze were easy to find if you had the cash to pay black market prices. Despite help from a dedicated but undermanned corps of Prohibition police, Denver cops were just as helpless as those in Pueblo at stamping out bootlegging and violence that went along with the sale of illegal

come with the dry laws. Homebrewers went almost completely unpunished, and individual drinkers usually slid under the radar. Even when the cops did catch the odd tippler or homebrewer in their dragnet-style Prohibition sweeps, prosecutors were hesitant to bring charges against individual drinkers or brewers, and juries were equally hesitant to convict.

So, much to the annoyance of many local residents, Prohibition scofflaws—a term that was coined during Prohibition specifically for them—walked free more often than not. Making matters worse was a pervasive knowledge that Denver's police department was rife with corruption. Some of the police force was indeed on the take, as mobsters with rolls of cash found cops willing to look the other way. Corruption was so extensive that in 1923 Denver's district attorney was quoted in *The Denver Post* as saying "The present city administration is a disgrace to American government." Just like elsewhere in Colorado, the situation proved ripe for exploitation by the KKK.

Arriving in Denver in the spring of 1921, organizers for the Atlanta-based Klan found fertile ground among men of the city's white and Protestant population who were fed up with rising crime. Organizing these men on the ground and protecting the Denver Klavern from the city's anti-Klan reaction was a job eagerly filled by a local physician named John Galen Locke. Born in New York in 1873, Locke moved to Colorado in the early twentieth century. He was a charismatic leader with a genius for effective organization and theatrics—traits he would



Colorado's Klansmen positioned themselves as a vigilante Prohibition enforcement gang to help legitimize their discriminatory and xenophobic agenda. *Wikimedia Commons.*

booze. *The Denver Express* reported on the unprecedented "wave of lawlessness sweeping Denver" in 1921.

Just like in the rest of the nation, Denver police were generally ineffective at apprehending bootleggers, and residents were frustrated that the police were unable to bring about the promised social benefits that were supposed to

employ to extend the Denver Klavern's control over state and local government.

The Denver Klan's first opportunity to grab the levers of political control came during the mayoral election of 1923. Running as a Democrat and promising to address bootlegging and corruption, Benjamin F. Stapleton beat incumbent Dewey Bailey with broad support from important institutions like *The Denver Post* as well as powerful individuals including his personal friend John Galen Locke. Despite his well known affiliation with the KKK, Stapleton won and appointed Klan members to fill positions at all levels.

Notably, however, Stapleton initially refused to appoint a Klan member to lead his police department, fearing (correctly, as it would turn out) that mixing the Klan and the leadership of the police would bring about disastrous results for Denver's residents as well as his political image.

By 1924, just months after he took office, the chorus of Denverites questioning Stapleton's integrity was growing, and citizens of the metropolis initiated a recall campaign explicitly motivated by their mayor's obvious entanglement with the Klan. In order to defeat the recall, Stapleton was forced to whole-heartedly embrace the KKK and its aims.

To appease Locke and show his gratitude for their staunch support (and their \$15,000 campaign donation), Stapleton appointed William Candlish to be the new chief of police. Candlish had no police experience and no qualifications other than his Klan connections. His appointment was certainly connected to Stapleton's campaign pledge to "work with the Klan and for the Klan in the coming election" and to "give the Klan the kind of administration it wants."

Stapleton won his recall election thanks to Locke's political organizing. After celebrating their victory by burning a cross atop South Table Mountain in Golden that was so large the fire was visible in Denver, the Denver Klavern acted with even more impunity. With William Candlish (who gained the

nickname "Koka-Kola-Kandlish" for his overt displays of his Klan connections) at its head, the Denver police department turned into one of the primary vehicles by which the Klan executed its agenda of intimidation.

White Protestant officers were asked to become Klan members, and those who did were, in the words of historian Robert Alan Goldberg, "rewarded with choice assignments, shorter hours, and promotions. The rest joined Jewish and Catholic police officers working night shifts on undesirable beats."

At Candlish's direction, these new Klan members within the police department concentrated on Prohibition enforcement efforts in Denver's Black, Jewish, and Italian neighborhoods. The Denver police initiated a widespread campaign of terror and repression in the guise of enforcing Prohibition. Officers cited obscure and semi-forgotten laws as they terrorized and intimidated non-white, Jewish, and Catholic shop owners who carried government-permitted sacramental wines.

In Five Points, Denver's historically Black community, Klan-affiliated police used speakeasy raids as their preferred tool of intimidation, and went house to house searching for illegal beer and spirits. Despite lingering anti-German sentiment following World War I, the Klan did not target German Americans or even former brewers in any meaningful way. All across the city and the state, Prohibition enforcement became an excuse for sending an unmistakable message: unless you are white and Protestant, you are not welcome here.

The Klan reached the height of its influence in Colorado after winning several statewide offices including the governorship in 1924, and the organization's white supremacist agenda appeared poised to dominate Colorado politics for some time. But mastering the means of obtaining power was a different thing than exercising it. As the decade wore on, Klan-backed politicians found that Prohibition enforcement was a less appealing message when it was coming from a

group with such obviously anti-democratic and discriminatory aims.

As a result, Klan support ebbed in the latter half of the 1920s, and by the time Prohibition was repealed in 1933, Colorado's Klan had all but dissolved. Stapleton distanced himself from his hooded patrons, and Locke was forced out of the Klan after a well-publicized arrest for tax evasion.

Though KKK political dominance ultimately proved to be a flash in the pan, its use of Prohibition enforcement as a guise for more sinister discriminatory action was an effective political move that helped legitimize the more odious planks of its hateful platform.

Repeal: Beer Leads the Way Back

By the 1930s, the nation that clamored for Repeal was not the same one that lobbied for Prohibition. Much of the change in sentiment was a result of the Great Depression. Beginning with the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and lasting throughout the 1930s, the Depression fundamentally re-ordered social and financial priorities in American homes and in the halls of Congress. Throughout Prohibition, badly needed tax revenues from liquor sales were not collected. Instead, those dollars were shunted into bootleggers' pockets.

The cost of enforcing Prohibition compounded the revenue problem for Depression-era governments at all levels. As the crisis wore on, the hypocrisy of Prohibition was laid bare as voters saw enforcement efforts focused on poorer communities, while the rich were largely allowed to consume without consequence. So by 1933, with the Great Depression sowing despair and Prohibition's failure to deliver on its promises in full view, many more Americans were thinking that they could really use a (legal) drink.

As Repeal dawned across the nation, beer led the way back. Brewers and pro-Repeal groups argued that beer was not as intoxicating or dangerous as liquor or wine, and successfully lobbied the

government to classify low-alcohol beer as “non-intoxicating.” This expedient got beer flowing and people back to work as quickly as possible because it exempted weak beer from federal Prohibition laws. Brewers were therefore able to deliver beer that was 3.2 percent alcohol without waiting for full repeal, and so by April 7, 1933, legal beer was again for sale in the state.

The Cullen-Harrison Act (which brought low-alcohol beer back) filled in the gap until the Twenty-First Amendment could be ratified by the states. Weak beer was on sale throughout the summer and fall of 1933, but liquor and stronger beer sales waited for Utah to provide the deciding vote ratifying the amendment on December 5 (Colorado had voiced its approval in September.) Even with the full return to legality on the federal level, the states would need to re-write their own alcohol laws—all of which had been nullified by the Eighteenth Amendment in 1920.

In Colorado, legislators argued with each other through that first week of April 1933 about whether to allow municipalities a “local option”—laws that would allow specific towns to stay dry and enforce a ban on even low-alcohol beer. Lawmakers in support of self-determination at the community level prevailed, leaving cities across Colorado—including Fort Collins, Greeley, and Boulder—to continue enforcing Prohibition within their limits as the rest of the state embraced Repeal.

But those across Colorado hoping to welcome beer back with a late-night cold one were disappointed. Most who said farewell to legal beer at the outset of Prohibition with lemonade toasts may have found themselves welcoming Repeal in the same manner. *The Rocky Mountain News* reported that “Hotels are planning no beer party celebrations for tonight. Whatever celebrating is done, has been left entirely to individuals in Denver—and there is little likelihood many of them can obtain the beer for such a celebration before tomorrow night at the earliest.” One reporter covering the

nonevent in an article headlined “Beer Becomes Legal Here but City Sleeps Thru It” noted that “You couldn’t hear a quaffing sound any place.”

Coors and Tivoli-Union—the only two breweries in Colorado ready to ship their product on April 7—discouraged a boisterous welcome back. They feared raucous parties would give voters second thoughts about Repeal. And they had good reason to be worried: Committed Prohibitionists clung to hopes that legal beer would either slake the nation’s thirst or prompt enough bad behavior that it would horrify lawmakers into realizing their mistake and put a halt to the full Repeal campaign. But the brewers refused

Brewers took advantage of the widespread adoption of refrigerators and radios in American homes during the 1920s and 1930s to move beer out of the saloon and into the home.

to play into their hands. “We’re not in favor of any national holidays,” said one brewer to a reporter from Denver’s *Rocky Mountain News*. “We plan to conduct a decent, respectable merchandising business and we will start the sale of our product on that basis.”

When the taps finally started flowing the next day, “the rush to sample the beer exceeded the expectations of the most enthusiastic sponsors of the beverage.” Supplies quickly ran low in the face of overwhelming demand, but revelers remained on their best behavior. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported that, whereas Denver had been averaging three to ten arrests per night for drinking during the waning days of Prohibition, there were “no arrests, auto accidents, or disturbances of any kind” as Denverites welcomed legal beer back. The open

presence of women at the celebrations added to the strangeness of that day for some, since co-mingled public drinking would have been uncommon before Prohibition. In a dramatic demonstration of just how many changes Prohibition had wrought, Denver’s servers reported that “women were among the enthusiastic samplers of the beverage in its initial day.” The paper even ran a photo of smiling, well-dressed women raising a stein with the men to prove it.

After Repeal, the most visible change in Colorado’s beer landscape was the absence of saloons, which never regained their central role. Even those who had worked hardest to defeat Prohibition did not intend to welcome the saloon back to its former place in American life. Pauline Sabin, enemy of Prohibition and leader of the Women’s Organization for National Prohibition Reform, made it clear to reporters in 1933 that she was in no way advocating for a return to pre-Prohibition ways: “I can’t conceive of the old saloon being allowed to come back,” she said. “Of course, if you mean by a saloon a place where liquor is bought and consumed, it will come back, but there will be improved conditions.”

Brewers took her point (or perhaps her warning) and, in place of the saloon, began promoting the home as the proper setting for enjoying a cold one. Combining several technological advances made during the Prohibition years to transform the industry in Repeal, brewers took advantage of the widespread adoption of refrigerators and radios in American homes during the 1920s and 1930s to move beer out of the saloon and into the home. The vinyl-coated or “keg-lined” steel beer can, introduced in 1935, was a major catalyst for the shift. Cans were less expensive for brewers to produce, and they were easier for consumers to store in the refrigerator. In-home mechanical refrigerators had been a rare luxury at the beginning of Prohibition, but by 1933, they were in a quarter of American households, allowing Americans to grab a cold one with unprecedented ease.

The trick for brewers was actually getting consumers to buy their beer at the grocery or liquor store. To do so, marketers focused on convincing middle-class women (who they assumed did the shopping for their household and who had been the moral force of the temperance movement) to view beer as a household staple and an important component of the American Dream, rather than a threat to their family. Keeping the fridge stocked for the men in their lives would, advertisers suggested, keep those men from heading out to drink in bars and would promote domestic happiness. As radios became common household appliances through the 1920s and 1930s, marketers found that sponsoring programs intended for housewives was an effective way to convince women to buy their products.

The brewers' message quickly took hold: whereas 90 percent of beer before Prohibition had been packaged in kegs destined for saloon taps, by 1935, about a third of all beer was shipped in cans and bottles. By 1940, nearly half of all beer came in packaging meant to be consumed at home.

In order to appeal to a wider range of palates, some brewers lightened their lagers, tamping down the "beer flavor" and lowering the alcohol content. Brewers reduced the amount of malt in their recipes and mixed in more additives with milder flavors. Hops were cut back to a minimum. The result was a style of American lager that was (and is) easy to drink.

Changes in the way it was made and marketed reflected a brand-new understanding of beer's place in society. Co-ed drinking was a rarity in Colorado before 1916, but the necessarily underground nature of alcohol consumption during Prohibition, when mixed with the shifting social norms of the Roaring '20s, enabled men and women to drink together in public establishments. With Repeal came a more relaxed attitude toward beer consumption, and advertisers across the nation encouraged this change by positioning beer as the perfect

accompaniment to every household event. By the 1950s, industry advertising pushed beer into a new role. Not only had beer become a backyard beverage, it had morphed into a basic element of home life in post-war America.

Today, of course, Colorado is known for beer. Until recently, it was the headquarters of Coors, and our brewing industry currently leads the nation in terms of per-capita economic impact. We have more breweries than all but four other states, and still host the nation's largest craft beer and home brewing competition: the Great American Beer Festival. It is quite the turnaround given our position in the vanguard of states banning brews just over one hundred years ago.

Those tumultuous eighteen years left a lasting mark on our attitudes towards alcohol, and utterly reconfigured the legal, economic, and social landscape of the state. We often think of Prohibition in terms of exciting speakeasies and glamorous flappers. But in Colorado, homebrewers, sawed-off shotguns, and Klansmen's hoods are perhaps equally fitting symbols of the times. ●

For Further Reading

Anyone interested in learning more about Prohibition owes a deep debt of gratitude to Daniel Okrent for his book *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. It really is the definitive book on the subject, plus it's a great read. Lisa McGirr's *Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* is a perhaps more focused account connecting the dots between Prohibition, the expansion of police power, and the government's involvement in Americans' daily lives.

Closer to home, historians Elliott West and Tom Noel have both written excellent books examining the role of beer and saloons in Colorado history. West's *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* and Noel's *The City and the Saloon: Denver, 1858–1916* provide eye-opening glimpses into the social roles of saloons in Colorado and beyond. They also contain tragic, funny, and shocking

true tales—that wonderful combination which makes for great books to talk about over a pint. Likewise, Maureen Ogle's book *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* would be a fantastic read with a brew in hand. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Nathan Michael Conzine, whose 2010 article "Right at Home: Freedom and Domesticity in the Language and Imagery of Beer Advertising, 1933–1960" in the *Journal of Social History* helped show us how effective beer can be at tracking change in American history.

Much has been written on the rise and fall of Colorado's mafia. Dick Kreck's *Smaldone: The Untold Story of an American Crime Family* is perhaps the most famous resource about organized crime in Denver. But Betty L. Alt and Sandra K. Wells's *Mountain Mafia: Organized Crime in the Rockies* is another great resource for those curious about the southern Colorado mafia.

Much less has been written about Colorado's KKK. Robert Alan Goldberg's forty-year-old *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado* remains the definitive history of their dramatic rise and fall. For a more national perspective on how the KKK rose to such prominence in the 1920s, Linda Gordon's *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* would be an excellent choice.

Source material for many of the stories in this essay came from the Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection. Their repository of many Colorado newspapers contains some of the earliest published in Colorado, and makes a historian's job easy. Articles from the *Rocky Mountain News* and *The Denver Post* aren't accessible there, but the crack team of researchers at History Colorado's Hart Research Center can help anyone interested in searching those publications.

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LAST LOOK



The Show Must Go On

Opened on May Day in 1890, Elych's Zoological Gardens in northwest Denver promised a whole lot of entertainment, including a zoo, botanic garden, and theatre (as the Elych's originally spelled it). After John Elych died in 1891, Mary Elych continued to run the operation, which became one of Denver's biggest attractions. The theatre's stage would ultimately host world-famous performers including Sarah Bernhardt and Helen Bonfils, and hosted entertainment until it shut down in 1991 (the amusement park moved downtown in the mid 1990s). But there is another act for the historic cultural venue thanks to several rounds of restorations (the latest of which was completed last year), and is open for tours and special events. For example, this May, playwright Christina Crawford and composer David Nehls presented a performance on the historic stage from Act One of *The Lady of the Gardens*, a musical Crawford wrote about Mary's life. As they say, the show must go on, and that's just what is happening under the bright lights at this historic theatre.

—Natasha Gardner

A poster promoting Elych's Zoological Gardens, printed around 1923. Denver Litho. Co. History Colorado. 2004.67.8.

NOW AND THEN

Ryan Heckman, an entrepreneur, civic leader, and philanthropist, spoke with us about learning from the past, celebrating superpowers, and how to inspire action today.

Q To say the least, you wear a lot of hats as an entrepreneur at Rallyday Partners and with your work at CiviCO, the leadership development foundation. With all that you've got going on, why do you think it is important to support History Colorado's work and the creation of the *What's Your Story?* exhibition?

Ryan Heckman: I grew up in rural Colorado and some of my first exposure to the big ideas and stories that museums can tell was on field trips to Denver from Granby. I have great memories of the spark that those excursions gave me as a young person, and so I've always been a passionate supporter of the work that all museums do in that regard. But, in particular, History Colorado is a celebration of a state that has given me so much opportunity, and I feel like I owe so much of who I am today to this state and supporting the work that you do.

Q Why was it important to feature contemporary members of the Colorado community in a history museum for the *What's Your Story?* exhibition?

Ryan Heckman: First, I need to give credit to the Board of Directors for their willingness to do something bold. The big idea was to have a museum exhibit that celebrated individuals who were creating history and not just part of our past. It says something powerful to thank people, while they're still alive, for putting others ahead of themselves, whether it be as public servants, or nonprofit leaders, or leaders in the private sector. Second, I think younger people, in particular, relate more strongly to the present. Having a museum exhibit that celebrates the contributions of people like Gitanjali Rao, Kalyn Heffernan, and Anthony Garcia, Sr., bridges the gap between the past, and the present, and the future. Featuring young people that are living today, that are doing incredible things, that are contributing to the state, is a lot different from going into an exhibit where you just see a black and white photo of an old guy with a top hat.

We have a tendency to talk about the good old days. But the reality is that we're living in the good old days today—right now. We're doing some very special things in Colorado that will have generational impact. It's important, I think, to tell those stories, so that more potential leaders jump on the field and create new stories.

Q How can our history guide us in confronting some of the challenges that we face today?

Ryan Heckman: We have a tendency to think that our challenges today are somehow more complex than in the past. That, somehow, we can't solve today's problems. And I think when you go into a museum, there is a sense of humility around how complex our



society was in the past and how there were heroes and people who took it upon themselves to solve incredibly challenging situations. The past can belittle our problems today in a good way.

Q I know that your children were an inspiration to you for this exhibit. What do you hope kids feel when they enter and exit the museum?

Ryan Heckman: I want them to feel aggressively humble and what I mean by that is I want them to be humbled by the work and the contributions of the people that came before them and I want them to be aggressive in their lives and have a sense of responsibility to serve now versus giving back later in their lives. For example, part of the exhibit is highlighting the Colorado Governor's Citizenship Medals and each year we partner with the Boettcher Foundation and give a medal to a student leader. This year's award went to Fabian Jimenez from Lake County High School, who led a very successful voter registration drive during the 2020 election, encouraging his peers to engage with the political decisions that will shape their future. All of these young leaders are creating new stories that are super inspirational.

Q We know that people love taking the superpower quiz in *What's Your Story?* Will you share what your superpower is?

Ryan Heckman: Courage, which means strength of heart and bravery. One of the great aspects of the superpower quiz is that everyone gets the chance to discover one of their superpowers and then meet other people, both past and present legends from Colorado, who share it. Then, they learn how to use that skill to make Colorado an even bigger success. It's inspiring and I get teary-eyed thinking of that moment of awakening in young people's lives—that they have a superpower that is unique and important to our state's future.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

You can discover your superpower in the award-winning *What's Your Story?* exhibition at the History Colorado Center.



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