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THE COVER: The drawing of Mary Rait was done by Charles Hardy, Associate Professor of Art at Mesa State College.

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"DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND JUNCTION AND THE COLORADO RIVER VALLEY TO PALISADE FROM 1881 TO 1931—Part II"

by Mary Rait

CHAPTER V
BEET SUGAR INDUSTRY AND GENERAL FARMING

Farmers started investigating the possibility of raising sugar beets in the Grand Valley in 1887. These experiments showed that Grand Valley beets ranked among the best, some testing as high as 19¾ percent sugar content.[1] Many believed that a good yield of superior quality beets could be grown with as little labor as any other crop. In view of these facts, residents hoped that a sugar factory would soon be located in Grand Junction. The *Grand Junction News* stated that such a factory should utilize the product from a large acreage, give employment to local labor, distribute money in the community annually, and double the value of every acre of farm land in the valley.[2]

Tariff uncertainties delayed development. In 1893, Mr. Charles E. Mitchell of Grand Junction visited the Lehi, Utah, factory, and brought representatives of the Utah Sugar Company to western Colorado. Test plots of beets were grown and in 1894 three cars were shipped to the Lehi factory. The results were good. No further action was taken until 1899 when disturbances in Cuba made it difficult to get sugar from there. Mr. C.E. Mitchell and Mr. C.N. Cox took the matter up, pointing out that vacant land, fuel, a

market, and the high sugar content of beets should make beet sugar manufacture successful around Grand Junction.

These men worked long and hard to secure a sugar factory for the locality. The company which considered building a plant demanded that 3,500 acres of beets be planted under contract with the factory, 1,500 acres of land be given as a bonus, and that local people buy stock in the enterprise.[3] In November 1898 it was announced that these conditions had been met, and a plant would be erected in time to handle the next season's beet crop. Beet growers contracted their crops for the next three years with a company later known as the Colorado Sugar Manufacturing Company. The contract price was $4.25 per ton delivered.[4] Work began at once in order to complete the plant for that season's run.

Colorado's first beet sugar factory started its initial run in November 1899, too late to allow the harvest of all the beets before cold weather. Though part of the crop froze in the ground, both growers and the management of the factory gained valuable experience.[5]

As the raising of sugar beets has continued, both advantages and disadvantages have been found. Irrigation is an advantage, for water can be had as needed in the spring and through the growing season; as the end of the growing season approaches, water is turned off to allow the beet to mature with a high sugar content. Sugar beets are a stable crop, having a guaranteed cash market. Tops, pulp, and molasses are by-products which aid materially to the value of beet growing. These by-products put cattle, sheep, and hogs in good condition for market in less time and at less cost than any other feed.[6]

Insect pests and plant disease have prevented the sugar beet farmers from making satisfactory profits some years. For example, during the first year beet growers lost heavily because of damage done by caterpillars.[7] Blight injured some sections in 1905.[8] In 1930 the crop was below average because of nematode damage. This parasite stings the leaf, which turns yellow and curls up, thus causing the plant to be deficient in its sugar content.[9] Seep water also offered a serious problem to the beet growers.[10] In 1915 the field agent of the Western Sugar and Land Company found the situation serious. He stated that some land which had earlier produced a good tonnage of beets had become useless, and the company would no longer contract it. Wherever seepage affected the land, the tonnage per acre decreased.[11] Drainage has remedied the problem to a great extent, however.

The new industry was launched with great enthusiasm. The Colorado Sugar Manufacturing Company advertised for five hundred farmers to raise beets in Grand Valley. Profits would result in

proportion to the tonnage of marketable beets produced. In a banner fruit country, the company stated, beets grown between rows of fruit trees would yield from forty to fifty dollars an acre.[12] The company also offered prizes for highest percentage of sugar and purity per ton, on tracts of various sizes.[13]

The Grand Junction Business Men's Beet Growers' Association furnished literature, and many businessmen offered to furnish land and water to people who would raise beets, or hire labor. After the first year they felt there would be no difficulty in getting sufficient acreage of beets to maintain the factory.[14]

Throughout the spring and summer of 1899 the *Grand Junction News* ran a Sugar Beet Department. Two columns of the front page were devoted to articles on methods of cultivation and items of general interest to growers.

The Colorado Sugar Manufacturing Company had financial difficulties from the first. Growers demanded better prices; the acreage of beets did not increase as had been anticipated; and, in 1902, no beets were grown. In 1903 the Western Sugar and Land Company purchased the factory at Grand Junction, together with 3,800 acres of land.[15]

The plant resumed operations under the new company in 1904. That year for the first time large numbers of sheep and cattle were brought in to be fed on beet pulp. To accommodate the animals, pens were built near the factory. At that time the stock was owned by individuals who brought it in from Utah and Idaho.[16] Later the company purchased cattle which it fattened and marketed.

No decided change came in the sugar industry until the World War. The acreage of beets steadily increased, with a corresponding increase in output of sugar and money paid to the growers. The capacity of the factory was increased in 1911. The company offered an option between a flat rate of five dollars a ton for beets or a sliding scale, dependent upon sugar content and purity.[17] In 1917 a slight reduction in price occurred. This, the company stated, was due to the Underwood Tariff. It resulted in a reduced acreage, which only supplied the Western Slope market the following season.

The World War had made procuring beet seed difficult. In 1915, as the war also caused a period of rapidly rising prices for beets, Western Slope growers decided to produce their own beet seed.[18]

The sugar factory in Grand Junction was sold to the Holly Corporation in 1916. The new company installed improvements at the factory, and adopted the policy of sharing profits with the beet growers if the price of sugar rose between the time of signing the contract and the maturity of the crop.[19] Increased prices led to a greater acreage

of beets. Much new land under the High Line irrigation project was devoted to the cultivation of beets. The price paid per ton in 1919 was $12.60.[20] In 1920 the Holly Company distributed $1,300,000 for beets and labor. That same year, the Holly Company built a factory at Delta, as the acreage of beets was considered sufficient to justify two plants.[21]

This prosperity proved to be of short duration. Declining prices due to post-war conditions caused a decreased production of sugar beets. Some years there was difficulty in securing the acreage necessary to justify the continued operation of the plant. Average production for these years was about fifty to sixty thousand tons of beets.[22]

In June 1929, it was announced that the Holly factory in Grand Junction would not operate that season. Owing to a drop in prices the three preceding years, many former growers did not sign contracts. Insufficient acreage on the Western Slope led to the closing of the Grand Junction factory. The more economical Delta plant continued to operate. About 3,700 acres were contracted in the vicinty of Grand Junction. Beets delivered there were billed to Delta. The contract price was seven dollars a ton; the sliding scale added nearly one dollar to this.[23]

The sugar industry expressed hope that the acreage on the Western Slope might increase to the point where both factories could be operated again, a hope not yet realized. Due to the chaotic condition of the sugar industry, the 1931 contract price was not announced until March. It contained a minimum guarantee of $5.50 a ton, with an additional fifty cents a ton guaranteed to the growers provided the price of sugar did not fall below $4.25 per hundred pounds between September First and July First. The company promised a material reduction in the cost of hand labor.[24]

The closing of the sugar factory was a severe blow to Grand Junction in terms of lost revenue. It had been for many years an important economic factor in the community. Businessmen, eager to have the factory reopen, made efforts to interest more farmers in beet raising. Despite the small number of farmers willing to raise beets at prices offered, it was stated in the fall of 1930 that the sugar beet was the only crop in the immediate vicinity of Grand Junction bringing adequate returns to the grower.[25]

Work in the sugar factory and the beet fields brought Mexican labor to the Grand Valley. Some of these laborers left the vicinity; others have remained and have suffered from lack of employment.

The earliest industry in the Grand Valley was general farming to meet the needs of settlers and to supply nearby mining camps. After a few years, fruit raising proved to be more profitable and general farming dwindled. Farmers held that crops raised between rows of fruit trees

did more damage to the orchard than was justified by the value of the crop produced,[26] and they dropped this practice during prosperous fruit years, so that the orchards might be cultivated to a greater advantage.

General farming gained in favor as prices for fruit fell. Growers sought to add to their income by cropping land between tree rows. Fruit prices continued low for a number of years, and the contract price for beets was cut in 1914. These factors turned many toward general farming. New land opened under the High Line irrigation project was largely devoted to general farm crops. War prices further stimulated the industry.

After fruit prices fell, beginning about 1913, the farmer was advised to diversify his crops to make the valley more nearly self supporting. Farmers should not depend on fruit alone, but raise alfalfa, grain, vegetables and livestock.[27] The valley did not have proper marketing connections, yet packed meat, grain for the local mill, and other commodities were shipped in, when many of these could be supplied by local farmers.[28]

The poultry industry was in the valley on a small scale from the first. By 1909 the industry had grown until the Grand Junction poultry show was the second largest in the state.[29] Poultry raising continued to hold its place, and in more recent years has increased rapidly. In 1923 twenty-five cars of poultry were shipped from Grand Junction.[30] In 1927 the Intermountain Poultry Co-operative Marketing Association was organized to facilitate marketing poultry and eggs. The output of both had far outgrown local demands, and prices had not been satisfactory.[31]

Turkey raising began to assume importance in western Colorado about this time, and has continued to grow. Most of the turkeys are raised north and west of Grand Junction but are handled by Grand Junction shipping associations.

In 1930 the Western Colorado Poultry Association, which superceded older organizations, was organized to solve marketing problems.[32] Another organization, the Mutual Creamery, handles eight to ten carloads of eggs a year, furnishing a cash market.[33]

The first creamery was established in Grand Junction in 1913. Prior to that time dairy products had been shipped into the valley. With increasing diversification, the dairying business grew rapidly. In 1924 it was ranked second to fruit growing.[34] In 1923, the creamery shipped thirty-six carloads of butter out of the valley.[35] The industry has continued to grow. There are now three creameries and a cooperative butter shipping association operating in Grand Junction.

The raising of swine became quite important during the readjustment period. In addition to supplying all local needs, a surplus was shipped to Denver and eastern markets with satisfactory results.[36] Hog raising has since increased in importance. The chief markets are to the west, in particular Salt Lake City and California.

During the war years there was enthusiastic effort to increase agricultural lands. A meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce in Grand Junction, April 11, 1917, heard messages from Director A.P. Davis of the Reclamation Service and Secretary of Interior Frank K. Lane urging that the cultivated area under all reclamation projects be increased. It was pointed out that spring wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, or alfalfa could bring good returns to the Grand Valley farmer. The government granted a low water rate, ten cents per acre foot, to leases.[37]

The Water Users' Association also backed this move, offering 2000 acres of High Line land rent free to any applicants who desired to break it and put it in crops. A committee from the Chamber of Commerce solicited funds to finance farmers.[38]

Grains and alfalfa were raised on the valley's irrigated lands long enough for the farmer to learn to work to the best advantage, with a fair average of productiveness. In 1921 corn grown on Orchard Mesa took first prize at the Chicago grain and hay exhibition.[39]

Production of alfalfa seed proved remunerative. This industry started in 1913, an alfalfa mill was installed, and in 1916 the value of the crop rose to an estimated $80,000.

A Farm Bureau was organized in 1919; representatives from the agricultural college and a government agent aided the organization. A fair membership was gained.[40] The following year the Farmer's Unions over the valley attempted to extend the scope of their activities to include the collective marketing of farm crops.[41]

In 1929, the *Daily Sentinel* painted the optimistic statement that "Diversified farming had brought success to the valley's farmers, and placed the ranchers on a sound financial footing. Livestock, poultry, turkeys and cash crops take their place with fruits as a source of revenue."[42]

The Agricultural and Industrial section of the *Daily Sentinel* in February 1931 advised the farmer to insure himself a cash crop by growing some contract crops; then if speculative crops fail, he will not suffer a total loss. The farmer has met disappointment due to disease, insects, and overworked soil, but the chief hardship remains the market conditions. The added labor and the cost of water tax make it difficult for the farmer in an irrigated district

to raise and market crops in competition with farmers of non-irrigated districts.

There are several outlets for cash crops grown under a contract which designates the price to be paid on delivery of the crop. This largely eliminates hazards. Two canneries are operating; each uses only such contract crops as tomatoes, green beans, pumpkins, peppers and carrots. Any of these crops should yield the grower one hundred dollars per acre. The Grand Junction Seed Company also contracts crops. The firm has established a nationwide reputation for "Mile-Hi" seeds, and has steadily increased its acreage. Cucumbers, melons and tomatoes raised for seed have proven profitable, as have some flowers. The acreage for this company remains limited, as raising seeds for commercial purposes requires special training.

NOTES

[1]*Grand Junction News,* 2 January 1892, p. 1.
[2]*Ibid.,* 29 January 1890, p. 1.
[3]*Daily Sentinel,* 19 September 1898, p. 1.
[4]*Ibid.,* 31 November 1898, p. 1.
[5]*Grand Junction News,* 30 December 1890, p. 1.
[6]*Daily Sentinel,* 19 November 1930, p. 8.
[7]*Grand Junction News,* 9 September 1881, p. 1.
[8]*Daily Sentinel,* 8 October 1905, p. 1.
[9]*Ibid.,* 9 November 1930, p. 9.
[10]Seepage is discussed in Chapter VII.
[11]*Daily Sentinel,* 21 July 1915, p. 6.
[12]*Grand Junction News,* 4 February 1899, p. 1.
[13]*Ibid.,* 6 June 1899, p. 1.
[14]*Ibid.,* 18 March 1899, p. 1.
[15]*Daily Sentinel,* 23 May 1903, p. 1.
[16]*Ibid.,* 8 December 1904, p. 1.
[17]*Ibid.,* 4 March 1911, p. 3.
[18]*Ibid.,* 30 October 1915, p. 1.
[19]*Ibid.,* 30 January 1917, p. 1.
[20]*Ibid.,* 16 February 1920, p. 1.
[21]*Ibid.,* 19 June 1921, p. 1.
[22]*Ibid.,* 1 December 1923; and 13 December 1924.
[23]*Ibid.,* 19 November 1929, p. 8.
[24]*Ibid.,* 16 March 1931, p. 1.
[25]*Ibid.,* 12 November 1930, p. 3.
[26]*Ibid.,* 11 September 1901.
[27]*Ibid.*
[28]*Ibid.,* 20 February 1915, p. 2.
[29]*Grand Junction News,* 29 December 1909, p. 1.
[30]*Daily Sentinel,* 17 January 1924, p. 1.
[31]*Ibid.,* 14 July 1927, p. 8.
[32]*Ibid.,* 26 September 1930, p. 8.
[33]*Ibid.,* 11 January 1931, p. 8.
[34]*Ibid.,* 13 June 1924, p. 8.
[35]*Ibid.,* 17 January 1924, p. 1.
[36]*Ibid.,* 22 January 1915, p. 1; and 10 November 1915, p. 8.
[37]*Ibid.,* 11 April 1917, p. 1.
[38]*Ibid.,* 16 April 1917, p. 1.
[39]*Ibid.,* 30 November 1921, p. 3.
[40]*Ibid.,* 22 March 1919, p. 1.
[41]*Ibid.,* 24 March 1920, p. 8.
[42]*Ibid.,* 1 January 1929, p. 1.

CHAPTER VI
DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND JUNCTION

The city of Grand Junction, established in the fall of 1881 at the confluence of the Grand and Gunnison Rivers, continued a steady growth. It passed through the stages of development similar to most frontier towns. By 1900 the city boasted a population of 3,503,[1] and its enthusiastic citizens felt that it was the future metropolis of western Colorado. In 1905 the *Daily Sentinel* characterized Grand Junction as an up-to-date western city. There was at that time one million dollars in cash on deposit in the banks of the city.[2]

The 1910 census recorded a population of 7,754 for Grand Junction. The census of 1920 showed that the city had made a gain of 11.7 percent in population in ten years, making it 8,665.[3] The low point between these dates was the summer of 1916, with about seven thousand residents. In commenting on the census report, local papers stated that few new houses had been built in the decade, Grand Junction could house no more people in comfort, and homes had to be built if the town was to grow.[4] Fifteen families, unable to get residences, left town during September 1919. Business interests joined to launch a building campaign. Lumber companies began erecting new dwellings for rent or for sale on a partial payment plan.[5]

The census of 1930 showed Grand Junction as having a population of 10,459. Ninety-two percent of the population were native born Americans, 7.07 percent were foreign born, .48 percent Negro, .05 percent Indian, and .01 percent Japanese. Deposits in two banks, December 31, 1930, totalled $3,493,925.[6]

The earliest water system soon proved inadequate. It did not furnish sufficient water to flush sewers, which the city council considered installing in 1894. The council discussed bringing mountain water to the town, but that proposition was dropped, as it would involve too heavy an indebtedness.[7] The city wished to construct its own water system. The Grand Junction Water Company, which had installed the earlier system, delayed this action with an injunction which prevented the city from issuing bonds. The courts held that the city might purchase the company's waterworks at an appraised valuation at the end of ten years' service. In 1899 the plant was purchased and a contract granted to bring a water supply from the Gunnison River.[8]

The question of bringing mountain water to Grand Junction was again opened in the spring of 1906. Kannah Creek, some miles southeast of the city, was selected as the best source of supply. Once again litigation concerning the sale of water bonds, and the awarding of the

contract for constructing the system followed.[9] This was settled in 1909. Then further lawsuits followed over land values, as the city wished to acquire a right of way.[10] A satisfactory settlement was reached, the system completed, and "Mountain Water Day" celebrated August 4, 1912. A spectacular pageant and sports events made up the day's program.[11] The city has since fenced the source of the water supply to prevent contamination.[12]

The Grand Junction Electric and Gas Company had built a plant in 1903. In 1909 electric street railway service superceded the old horse car system, and Grand Junction celebrated the opening of the first electric railway system on the Western Slope.[13] In June of that year the Grand Junction electric street railway, the light, gas, and ice plants merged into one company.[14]

City leaders contemplated interurban lines, to operate in conjunction with the Grand Junction Street Railway Company. These lines were to reach Palisade, Fruita, Montrose, and Plateau Valley. The company prepared to start work on the line to Palisade, but failed to obtain a right-of-way because of high land values in that district. The Fruita line was then undertaken. It was completed and opened in July 1910.[15]

Busses replaced the city street cars late in 1926.[16] Soon after that passenger service over the interurban line was discontinued. Freight cars still ran on the line, especially during the canning season to bring in produce.

The utility company found it necessary to increase the capacity of its power plant frequently to keep pace with the growing demands of the city and valley. Grand Junction utilities were bought by the Cities Service Company in 1926.[17]

In September 1930, a natural gas well north of Fruita was successfully tapped. Production was estimated at thirty million feet daily. This gas is still being piped to Grand Junction in 1931. Increasing industrial development to create a greater market for the gas is being stressed.[18] Grand Junction rejected a plan for a municipal light plant in the April 1931 election, for local, and largely economic, reasons. The division did not follow political party lines. The Public Service Company serves districts outside the city. This service includes a pumping plant which supplies the Redlands, a large area southwest of Grand Junction, with irrigation water. Public Service Company promised to reduce rates and to construct two hydroelectric plants in the valley. People of the city have not been satisfied with the municipally owned water system; it owes about $700,000 in 1931, and it has been twenty-three years since the system was completed. Grand Junction raised rates in the spring of 1931 because funds were needed for replacement. The city feared

a $750,000 indebtedness. The present franchise of the Public Service Company allows the city to regulate rates. The opposition to the municipal plant had several advantages: the only newspaper opposed the plan, preliminary organizational work had been done thoroughly, and the Public Service employees were well organized. The proponents of the plan lacked a specific proposal.[19]

The city procured a municipal aviation field northeast of town. Improvement was delayed, but in 1929 hangars were constructed. Grand Junction established charter air service in November 1929, with local flights to Denver and Salt Lake City. The airfares approximated railroad fares to those points. The Public Utilities Commission of Colorado in September 1930 granted the Pike's Peak Air Commerce Company the right to operate regularly between Eastern and Western Slope points.[20]

The people of Grand Junction had believed, almost since the town's founding, that it was the logical smelting center for Western Slope ores. Many unsuccessful efforts have been made to locate a smelter there. In 1902 the Loder Company was ready to construct a pyritic smelter as soon as Grand Junction donated a site, subscribed for part of the stock, and arranged satisfactory freight rates for ores. These terms were met by the end of the year, and construction started.[21] The smelter, with a capacity of 400 tons a day, was for low grade ores. Several factors made the venture look good; more ores had been promised than could be used, the location seemed advantageous, coal was plentiful and cheap, there was a large territory to be served, and there were a variety of ores available.[22]

The smelter was ready for business late in 1905. The company had been accumulating ores for the preceding year and a half. Railroads had granted favorable rates, and the smelter officials expected unlimited amounts of ores could now be shipped from Aspen, Ouray and Telluride districts.[23] However, the smelter was a disappointment and operated only a short time. Internal dissension and failure to obtain the promised ore led to the smelter's failure.

The Colorado Chemical and Spray Manufacturing Company (the name later changed to the Latimer Chemical Company) has had a spectacular and interesting development. Incorporated in 1905, this company entered a new field of business, with a capacity to produce only a few barrels of spray daily. It has since grown to be one of the largest plants of its kind.[24]

The Grand Junction Clay Products Company, a successful concern incorporated in 1923 which uses local materials for the manufacture of its products, has lowered the cost of brick, and stimulated building

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (F188)

The Federal, Masonic, and Y.M.C.A. buildings were three of Grand Junction's most impressive structures in the 1930s. The studio of local photographer Frank Dean is to the right of the Y.M.C.A. Barely visible in the intersection is the old watering trough now in the Museum's parking lot.

with that material. The company's output is sold throughout western Colorado and eastern Utah.[25]

Two flour mills operate successfully in Grand Junction. These mills use all available grain produced in the district and ship in some from outside.

Building and loan associations have been a great factor in the development of Grand Junction. They have furnished capital for safe investment, a service always needed in a new and growing community. They have brought in needed capital from the East and furnished investment for local capital.

The federal industrial census of 1930 gave Grand Junction a high rating as a business city. It was credited with business totalling $9,265,962 annually. There are 196 retail stores, with a combined payroll of $1,029,608. Of these stores, 168 are "single store independents," 4 are two- and three-chain multiples, 8 are units of local chains, 4 are sectional chains, and 11 are units of national chains. Single store independents do eighty percent of the entire retail business of Grand Junction, and chain stores conduct twenty percent.[26]

Wholesaling has become an enormous factor in the business life of the community. Grand Junction is the second largest distributing point in Colorado.[27]

As a business center, Grand Junction enjoys an advantageous location. Its territory extends from the crest of the Rocky Mountains to the crest of the Wasatch. The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad has recognized this by granting Grand Junction the same rates as a distributing point as they granted to Salt Lake City.[28] It has a more intimate acquaintance with the western Colorado and eastern Utah territory (its merchants, its resources, its capabilities, its past, its present, and its problems), and is therefore better equipped than are more distant markets to serve the needs of the merchants of this territory. For those in its territory, Grand Junction offers prompt delivery, has almost all desired merchandise, and offers merchandise at competitive prices.[29]

Businessmen see a good future for Grand Junction because of its location in the Colorado River Valley and the natural resources of the Western Slope. Population will grow. As the only large city within three hundred miles, Grand Junction will continue to be the trade center of this section and, consequently, such nationally known firms as Crane O'Fallon, Morey Mercantile Company, and many others have chosen to establish branch houses in the location. The city's dominant status also makes it the material center for the jobbing carried on by local concerns.[30] Grand Junction's wholesaling business reaches into millions. It is probably the largest single industry in the city.[31]

In 1905, the *Daily Sentinel* commented on Grand Junction's prominence and said that it opened a new era in the city's growth. Before that time, trade had been confined to residents of the city and county. This influx of trade was attributed partly to the increased number of good mercantile houses which offered prices comparable to those in Denver and Pueblo.[32]

R.J. Derry opened a pioneer jobbing house in Grand Junction in 1890, handling tobacco, cigars, and confections. The business continued to grow as the Derry-Blackwell Company until it was purchased in 1930 by the C.D. Smith Drug Company, a successful local wholesale and manufacturing business established in 1910.[33]

Many local wholesalers offer some local goods. The Rettig Packing Plant uses much locally produced livestock. Morey Mercantile Company contracts in advance the entire output of the Grand Valley cannery, and buys large quantities of Currie canned goods.[34] Grand Junction is also a shipping center for goods produced in the surrounding territory such as livestock, wool, and a variety of agricultural and horticultural products.

Another important development in Grand Junction's history was the post office. Postal receipts grew rapidly, and in 1900 Grand Junction applied for a post office building. It was ready for use in June 1901.[35] The city inaugurated carrier service that year, and rural delivery for districts around Grand Junction started early in 1902.[36] Grand Junction asked again for a new federal building in 1908. Civic leaders based the request on the fact that, in the decade 1897 to 1907, the post office business had increased from $3,031.86 to $22,081.56 a year.[37] In 1915 the post office was raised to first class. In March of 1918, the post office moved into the new building, which is a fine structure and remains adequate for the needs of Grand Junction.

Postal receipts increased steadily, with a rapid rise about 1920. Much of this increase has been attributed to the establishment of jobbing and manufacturing houses in Grand Junction. In 1929 the total receipts amounted to $117,000.95. The receipts for 1930 dropped to $103,985.01 due to the improved condition of roads and the corresponding increase of shipment by truck. A tie-up in railroads to the south forced shipments there to go by trucks for a time. The decrease in the mining industry on the Western Slope caused smaller shipments to and from mining districts.[38]

After some years of agitation Grand Junction received a new railroad depot, which was put in service in 1906.[39] A new county courthouse was completed and opened in 1924.[40]

Several new organizations emerged to further the development of Grand Junction and vicinity. The first of these, the Western Slope Development Congress, met in Grand Junction in November 1909. Several hundred representatives from nearby districts attended the congress. A permanent organization resulted. Addresses were heard and resolutions adopted concerning the following issues: reclamation, freight rates, failure of railroads to furnish a sufficient number of refrigerator cars, Grand Junction as a common shipment point, protection of power sites, and opening of Paradox Valley.[41]

The Mesa County Business Association was an attempt to interest people outside Grand Junction in publicity work. They sought members throughout the county. This organization secured valuable publicity for Grand Valley. An article appeared in the *National Irrigation Journal* about the Orchard Mesa irrigation system. *Popular Mechanics* published an article on "Smudging in Grand Valley."[42] Grand Junction's Fifty Thousand Club was organized to increase the population of the city to 50,000.[43] This club urged all businessmen to bring as many people as possible to Grand Junction.

A home industries campaign, conducted by the Chamber of Commerce in 1913, resulted in another organization, the Western Slope Manufacturers' Association. The Association launched a city-wide campaign to increase the use of home products in 1914. The effort was successful because the consumption of such goods noticeably increased.[44]

Growth and development of a school system and increased enrollment gauge a city's development. A steady population growth has meant that the school district has had to provide facilities to an increasing number of residents. At some times rented quarters and half-day sessions have been necessary to relieve overcrowded conditions.

The Grand Junction schools received the highest award for a general display at the Omaha exhibition in 1899.[45] School enrollment at that time was over 800. An exhibit of schoolwork sent to the State Fair in Pueblo in the fall of 1911 won first prize for the best general work for a system of city schools.[46] A statement issued in 1912 by the government census bureau showed that Grand Junction led all cities in the state in percentage of enrolled school children.[47]

A junior high school was established as a unit of the school system in 1918. The junior and senior high school buildings are now located on the same building site, in order that they can cut costs by sharing the same athletic field, gymnasium, manual training rooms, shops, domestic science rooms, music rooms, cafeteria, and heating plant. Free textbooks are furnished

throughout the public schools. Total enrollment for 1930 was 3,115, and 102 teachers were employed.[48]

A parochial school, built by St. Joseph's Catholic Church, was opened in the fall of 1916.[49] This school includes eight grades.

A Mesa County Teachers' Convention was held in Grand Junction in 1893. Many complained that the county was so large they could not get to Grand Junction, and many teachers from the outlying sections of the county did not attend.[50] This remained an annual event, however, until the Colorado Educational Association was divided in 1916, and Grand Junction became the meeting place for the western division.[51] The meeting of this branch of the association has brought an increasing number of teachers to Grand Junction. In 1930 enrollment surpassed 900. This is the largest of numerous conventions held in Grand Junction.

In 1896 enrollment at the Teller Institute grew to 144 students, representing nine tribes of Indians. The Utes had not attended the school to the extent that had been expected; so the school was filled from other tribes, especially those from the south.

The Institute taught cooking, baking, sewing, laundry work, shoemaking, harness making, saddle making, carpentering, farming, and stock raising. Students spent half the day in class work, and the other half learning a trade. Academic training covered most of the work of the first nine years of public schools.[52] By 1899 the enrollment had

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado
(State Home & Training School Collection 79.66 [8])

The Grand Valley's Teller Institute, an early effort to educate Native Americans.

increased to 300, probably the largest the school obtained.[53] Visitors and inspectors praised the school.[54]

Late in 1907, the Indian school received word that all nonagency schools might be abolished, since the education of the Indians could be better and more cheaply handled on the reservations.[55] Area residents expected the school property to be donated for some state institution. Many people suggested that this might be the opportunity for Grand Junction to obtain a normal school. Some favored converting Teller Institute into either an agricultural or a horticultural school.[56]

The school was closed and turned over to the State of Colorado on July 1, 1911.[57] For a number of years the buildings stood idle. In 1917 and 1918 some individuals urged that the locality be converted to a recuperation camp for war veterans.[58]

Early in 1919 there was talk of converting the Indian school property to a State Home and Farm for Mental Defectives. The school property is well located for such a home. Buildings valued at over $200,000 were available with few repair costs. The Indian School bill passed, making an appropriation of $300,000 for repairs and maintenance of a state home for mental defectives.[59] The Bureau of Reclamation agreed to drain the land of seep water on a cost basis. This was done successfully, and work of repairing buildings began at once.

Late in 1920 patients began to arrive at the home. During the first few months, 186 came to the institution.[60] In 1923 it was decided to move the children from the State Home for Mental Defectives at Ridge to Grand Junction.[61] The number of persons at the Grand Junction home is 268 in 1931.

The state home was fortunate in having a good school building. A principal and three teachers, experienced in work with the handicapped, worked with those at the State Home, and have produced some surprisingly good results.

Some efforts have been made in Grand Junction toward adult education. Opportunity schools, primarily for the Americanization of the foreign population, have been received with enthusiasm by both men and women.

Grand Junction has a good business college. The Hoel Business College was organized in 1909, and its steady growth since then proves that it meets a need in the intermountain district.

The Western Slope had long felt that some state institution of higher learning should be located in that section of the state. The people of Grand Junction felt that their town was the logical location for the school. Grand Junction, along with Gunnison, Delta, and Glenwood, asked the legislature for a state normal college in 1905.[62] Gunnison won

the normal school in 1909.[63] In 1921 representatives from the Grand Valley approached the legislature again, asking for the establishment of a junior branch of the state university in Grand Junction. The bill passed the State's Senate and House, but was vetoed by Governor Oliver H. Shoup, who believed that a junior college would endanger the normal school at Gunnison. In Shoup's opinion, the state should strengthen existing educational institutions rather than establish new ones.[64]

In 1925 a bill establishing a junior college in Grand Junction was passed. The bill stipulated that the town donate a site for the institution. The city appropriated $2,500 for the school.[65] Governor Clarence J. Morley appointed a board of trustees. In 1925 and 1926 only the first year of college work was offered. After that a student could take two years' work at the college.

Grand Junction has a representative and influential group of churches, which work in harmony for the general welfare of the community. In 1924 there were fourteen organizations and a total membership of 4,000.[66] Church membership has increased as the town has continued to grow.

The Grand Junction Library Association began in 1894. This group wished to raise money for books, but did not receive the desired support from the public. The next effort was made by the Woman's Library Association, organized in 1898 for the purpose of establishing a public library.[67] Following some correspondence, the Library Association received the offer of a conditional gift from Andrew Carnegie. He would give $5,000 (later increased to $8,000) for the building, if the city would maintain the institution and provide a site. The offer was accepted, and the library opened in 1901.[68] The library has grown steadily in popularity and importance.

Grand Junction has provided the residents with worthwhile amusements from the beginning. Its location, midway between Denver and Salt Lake City, has made it possible to bring in talent which otherwise would have been unavailable in a small town. Eminent lecturers, including William Jennings Bryan, who spoke in the city several times; William Howard Taft, John Jacob Riis, Samuel Gompers, Robert M. Lafollette, and Eugene V. Debs have spoken here. Sousa's band, the Chicago and Minneapolis Symphony Orchestras, concerts by Madame Schumann-Heink, and Florence Macbeth are examples of musical notables. *Pinafore, Parsifal,* and Shakespearean plays by good companies have been put on at various times.

Grand Junction has splendid parks. Charles K. Holmburg, who planned and supervised the development of the parks, showed rare

foresight. The parks are distributed throughout the city, affording residents the benefits of having a park nearby. All but one of the school buildings face a public park, and all of these parks have been equipped for playgrounds. The parks are of unusual beauty for a town of this size.[69]

The largest and newest of these parks, Lincoln Park, was made from the old fairgrounds, bought by the city. A natatorium, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Moyer of Grand Junction, was built in this park and presented to the city in 1922. A small but interesting zoo is attractively housed in Lincoln Park. The park also contains a football field, cinder track, baseball diamond, small stadium, and the municipal golf links. A municipal auditorium, used for amusement and display purposes, has been erected there.

The city government of Grand Junction has passed through the stages common to many towns. It was changed in 1909 from the mayor and city council type to a charter form of government with five commissioners.[70] The city-manager plan was voted in by a large majority and put into effect on January 1, 1922.[71]

Grand Junction voted in favor of prohibition in 1909, after a vigorous campaign by the prohibition forces. Saloon men were given thirty days to close their businesses. Then began the usual story of raids and numerous arrests for violation of the prohibition law.[72]

In politics, Grand Junction and Mesa County have always been uncertain, voting Democratic or Republican as men or measures have appealed to local interests. For example, Grand Junction in the early days, regardless of party lines, favored the election of men who advocated silver coinage.[73] Sugar production has largely determined the attitude of the locality on tariff. This district gives a majority of votes to one party about as often as the other. In the 1928 election Grand Junction and Mesa County both gave a substantial majority of votes to a Democratic governor, and to Republican presidential electors.

NOTES

[1]*Federal Census, 1900,* Vol. I, Population, Part I, p. 440.
[2]*Daily Sentinel,* 23 October 1905, p. 1.
[3]*Colorado Year Book, 1928, 1929,* compiled and edited by Tolbert H. Ingram (Denver: Bradford Robinson Printing Co., 1929), p. 17.
[4]*Daily Sentinel,* 6 April 1920, p. 1.
[5]*Ibid.,* 5 May 1920, p. 1.
[6]*Ibid.,* 19 February 1931, p. 1.
[7]*Ibid.,* 29 December 1894, p. 1.
[8]*Ibid.,* 29 September 1899, p. 1.
[9]*Ibid.*
[10]*Ibid.,* 9 December 1909, p. 1.
[11]*Ibid.,* 5 August 1912, p. 1.
[12]*Ibid.,* 22 January 1914, p. 1.
[13]*Ibid.,* 22 May 1909, p. 1.
[14]*Ibid.,* 21 June 1909, p. 1.
[15]*Ibid.,* 14 July 1910, p. 1.
[16]*Ibid.,* 30 October 1926, p. 1.
[17]*Ibid.,* 3 March 1926, p. 1.
[18]*Ibid.,* 26 September 1930, p. 1.
[19]Walter Walker, Interview, 11 June 1931, and Interview with Scott Heckman, 9 June 1931.
[20]*Daily Sentinel,* 17 September 1930, p. 1.
[21]*Ibid.,* 20 December 1902, p. 1.
[22]*Ibid.,* 5 January 1903, p. 1.
[23]*Ibid.,* 21 November 1905, p. 1.
[24]*Grand Junction News,* 9 January 1908, p. 1; *Daily Sentinel,* 30 April 1924, p. 8.
[25]*Daily Sentinel,* 16 November 1930, p. 10.
[26]*Ibid.,* 19 February 1931, p. 1.
[27]*Ibid.,* 19 February 1930, p. 1.
[28]*Ibid.,* 18 August 1928, p. 3.
[29]*Western Colorado,* Booklet, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce (Grand Junction: Daily Sentinel Press, 1928), p. 5.
[30]*Daily Sentinel,* 19 October 1930, p. 9.
[31]*Ibid.,* 3 August 1930, p. 9.
[32]*Ibid.,* 18 December 1905, p. 1.
[33]*Ibid.,* 19 October 1930, p. 8.
[34]*Ibid.,* 26 October 1930, Part 2, p. 2.
[35]*Ibid.,* 25 June 1901, p. 1.
[36]*Ibid.,* 16 January 1902, p. 3.
[37]*Ibid.,* 9 January 1908, p. 1.
[38]O.O. Schubert, Interview, 25 March 1931. Mr. Schubert is head of the finance department, Grand Junction P.O.
[39]*Daily Sentinel,* 16 April 1906, p. 1.
[40]*Ibid.,* 4 April 1924, p. 1.
[41]*Ibid.,* 11 November 1909, p. 1.
[42]*Ibid.,* 26 August 1910, p. 1.
[43]*Grand Junction News,* 5 November 1911, p. 1.
[44]*Ibid.,* 14 May 1914, p. 1.
[45]*Daily Sentinel,* 22 May 1899, p. 1.
[46]*Ibid.,* 3 April 1912, p. 6.
[47]*Ibid.,* 29 November 1912, p. 1.
[48]*Report of Schools to the Board of Education of Grand Junction, Colorado, April, 1931,* pp. 1-2. (Superintendent's report.)
[49]*Daily Sentinel,* 5 September 1916, p. 4.
[50]*Ibid.,* 23 December 1893, p. 1.
[51]*Ibid.,* 30 November 1916, p. 1.
[52]*Ibid.,* 6 February 1896, p. 1.
[53]*Ibid.,* 3 August 1899, p. 1.
[54]*Ibid.,* 7 April 1903, p. 1.
[55]*Ibid.,* 10 September 1907, p. 1.
[56]*Grand Junction News,* 1 February 1910.
[57]*Daily Sentinel,* 1 July 1911, p. 1.
[58]*Ibid.,* 30 September 1917, p. 1.
[59]*Ibid.,* 3 April 1919, p. 1.
[60]*Ibid.,* 20 December 1920, p. 1.
[61]*Ibid.,* 13 February 1923, p. 1.
[62]*Ibid.,* 20 February 1905, p. 1.
[63]*Ibid.,* 2 April 1909, p. 1.
[64]*Ibid.,* 27 April 1921, p. 1.
[65]*Session Laws of Colorado, 1925* (Senate Bill No. 262).
[66]*Daily Sentinel,* 28 April 1924, p. 6.
[67]*Ibid.,* 10 November 1898, p. 1.
[68]*Grand Junction News,* 3 August 1901, p. 1.
[69]*Daily Sentinel,* 2 June 1923, p. 1.
[70]*Ibid.,* 7 April 1909, p. 1.
[71]*Ibid.,* 2 January 1922, p. 1.
[72]*Grand Junction News,* 24 December 1909, p. 1.
[73]*Ibid.,* 17 January 1885, p. 1.

CHAPTER VII
TRANSPORTATION

Grand Junction had two standard gauge railroads from the east and one from the west by 1890. The Denver and Rio Grande, following the Gunnison River, reached Grand Junction in 1882; the Rio Grande Western opened its line from Grand Junction to Salt Lake City in 1883. The Denver and Rio Grande and the Colorado Midland, having arranged for joint use of tracks, entered Grand Valley by way of the Grand River canyon. Business interests now expected better service and lower rates. However, these expected benefits did not materialize, and Grand Valley business interests came to believe that the railroads discriminated against the Grand Valley with high charges and by hauling through Grand Junction to Denver ores which should be smelted in Grand Junction.[1] Agitation for better rates developed, and the president of the Denver and Rio Grande came to Grand Junction in 1892 to discuss the problem with a group of citizens. He stated that the road was anxious to build up the territory through which it ran. The citizens compared the rates with those of Salt Lake and other Western Slope towns, and said they could not build a city and factories unless given better rates.[2]

In 1895, Representative M.V.B. Page of Mesa County raised the question of freight rates on the floor of the House of Representatives. The Denver traffic manager of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad said the rate for Grand Junction fruit was low, having been reduced to give the Western Slope an outlet for its surplus. Mesa County shipped little by freight in car lots, eighty-five percent going by express. The management of the Denver and Rio Grande had made constant efforts to stimulate fruit growing as one of the coming industries of Colorado. In 1893 the president of the company offered to haul a carload free of charge to stimulate shipping in that amount. Even then the carload was not sent. Transportation could not be satisfactorily handled, he averred, until fruit could be shipped in car lots or, better still, trainloads.[3]

W.T. Carpenter constructed the Little Book Cliff Railroad from Grand Junction to a coal mine eleven miles north of the city, and used it to market coal and to develop a resort near his mine. Carpenter made public, in March 1895, plans for an extension of his road northward across Garfield and Rio Blanco counties, through Rangely, to Green River, Wyoming. He had surveys and estimates of cost made. The proposed road was to be known as the Colorado, Wyoming, and Great Northern. It was stated that bonds

had sold readily, and work would begin at once and proceed as rapidly as men and money would allow.[4] By late summer differences between Carpenter and the board of directors became serious. Sale of further bonds was blocked, and the enterprise was dropped.[5] Talk of a north-south road had been resumed numerous times since then, but always without results.

In 1901 George J. Gould acquired control of the Denver and Rio Grande in the interests of the Missouri Pacific. The Denver and Rio Grande held an option on the Rio Grande Western, and through it he acquired control of the latter.[6] On January 1, 1903, the Rio Grande Western went out of existence. From that date it formed the western division of the Denver and Rio Grande.[7] Even before this it was known that the Gould interests were fighting the Colorado Midland, which got little through business.[8]

Because of the type of country through which the railroads serving Grand Valley must be built, trouble due to washouts, landslides, and cave-ins was inevitable. Especially during the early period, trains were late and traffic was held up frequently.

In August of 1909 the *Grand Junction News* carried the statement that the previous sixty days had been the most disastrous in the history of the Rio Grande. Countless mishaps cost lives, caused inconvenience, and did thousands of dollars worth of damage. A cave-in on Tennessee Pass blocked the road for two weeks. For four days nothing could leave Grand Junction for Salt Lake City due to washouts, landslides and wrecks. The worst tie-up in the history of the road cost the Denver and Rio Grande $100,000. For forty hours no train moved east or west, because one washout was no sooner repaired than another occurred. Freight movements, including perishable fruits, were at a standstill.[9]

Improvements were made as rapidly as possible. The railroad company spent vast sums of money to build a road which would not be subject to such disasters in mountainous districts. The Denver and Rio Grande improved its road and roadbed, and suspensions of traffic occurred less and less frequently. In 1906 the narrow gauge was standardized from Grand Junction to Montrose.[10] Much of the main line was re-ballasted in 1917. A statement given out by the company in 1930 showed that thirty million dollars had been expended by the Denver and Rio Grande Western in the preceding five years in improving road, roadbed, facilities and service along the entire line.[11]

The Colorado Midland Railroad Company had difficulty financing its road from the first. The line operated at a loss for two years, and its earnings were not sufficient to pay interest on bonds in 1894.[12] In December 1912, the road passed into the hands of a receiver, because

of default in payment of demand notes. The Denver and Rio Grande controlled half of the capital stock of the Colorado Midland, and bought the collateral security sold after the default in payment of the notes. Under the receiver the road became a competitor of the Denver and Rio Grande, operating entirely apart from that road.[13]

In 1917 the road was sold at auction to A.E. Carlton, a Colorado Springs financier, who planned elaborate improvements and extensions.[14] Carlton, when in Grand Junction in June 1917, stated that he had refused a profit of a million and a half dollars to sell the Midland to another road to junk. He proposed to make the road pay.[15] The following summer, however, the Colorado Trust and Title Company, which held a two million dollar mortgage on which the interest was not paid, brought suit against the Midland. Carlton was named receiver and authorized to suspend operations as a common carrier on August 5, 1918.[16]

The interests along the line appealed to Congressman Edward T. Taylor to help them save the Colorado Midland. He replied that Carlton had told government investigators that $300,000 above the earnings of the road were necessary to keep it running. That amount constituted fifteen percent of the total investment, and the government did not feel justified in spending so much.[17] The only way to keep the road would be an effort on the part of the territory it served to make it more self-supporting.[18]

The government, seeking to keep the road running and to avoid leaving a large territory without a railroad, offered to absorb all losses and pay $100,000 a year compensation. Carlton refused. Appeals were made to the State Public Utilities Commission also, but service was discontinued on the date set. The struggle to prevent the junking of the road was continued by those most interested. However, operation could be continued only at a loss and, therefore, was not resumed.[19] This left the Grand Valley with but one railroad, and, while not as vitally affected as districts now deprived of railroad facilities, it had benefitted by having the service of two lines.

The Denver and Rio Grande, after the junking of the Midland, was the only road through this section of the state and prospered for a time. It had, in 1917, reported record-breaking business, and during the war the road carried more freight than it could handle efficiently.[20] However, in 1920, the Western Pacific obtained a judgment against the Denver and Rio Grande and the courts ordered the road to be sold. The Western Pacific bought the Denver and Rio Grande by assuming its indebtedness and making a five million dollar cash payment.[21] The stockholders lost heavily, and opposed confirmation of the sale. It was

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (Palisade Public Library 79.23.141)

Sons and daughters of pioneers rode the first Palisade ferry, at the east end of 4th Street, across the Colorado River to Vineland.

nevertheless upheld by the federal district court and the court of appeals.[22] A.R. Baldwin, vice president of the Western Pacific, was made receiver for the Denver and Rio Grande. The road now became known as the Denver and Rio Grande Western, and it contined to operate as a separate unit.[23]

The Denver and Rio Grande Western was consolidated with the Missouri Pacific and Western Pacific in 1924, under a plan approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The sale ended two years' litigation following the default of interest on first mortgage and refunding bond issues.[24]

The Denver and Rio Grande Western has made remarkable advancement under this administration. Good service, improved physical condition, and enlarged facilities have meant much to the district it serves. Perfected interchange facilities speed shipment of products, especially perishables, to markets. The road has, by favorable rates, assisted the growth of trade in the territory.[25]

Residents of the Grand Valley watched with much interest a proposal to construct a six-mile tunnel under James Peak. When such a tunnel should be completed, the construction of a forty-one mile link from Dotsero, on the main line of the Denver and Rio Grande Western, to the Moffat Road at Orestad, would put the Grand Valley about 170 miles nearer eastern markets. Optimists held that this would improve land values by fifty percent. Enthusiastic talk was heard about eliminating the effect of the Rocky Mountain barrier.

The Moffat Tunnel was opened in the summer of 1928. Railroad men discussed construction of the cutoff, linking the Moffat and the Denver and Rio Grande roads as part of a transcontinental line. The Denver and Rio Grande Western immediately started negotiations to gain the right to construct the cutoff, or to secure from the Moffat road an equitable agreement for operating over the cutoff if built by that road, and trackage rights through the tunnel and east to Denver. The Moffat officials refused to entertain any suggestion relative to sale of interest.[26] The Denver and Salt Lake (Moffat) Railroad made application for permission to build the link connecting the Moffat and the Denver and Rio Grande roads. The State Public Utilities Commission took testimony for the Interstate Commerce Commission. The northwestern part of the state opposed construction of the link, which would leave Craig on a spur, and allow the Grand Valley to reap the greatest benefits from the tunnel, for which it bore no expense. Utah also opposed the project, because if the cutoff was built the line of the Denver and Salt Lake would not be extended through the Uintah basin.[27] The Denver and Rio Grande Western filed a plea with the

Interstate Commerce Commission, pointing out the great advantages which would accrue to all interests from the construction and joint use of cutoff, tunnel, and track to Denver. In addition the Denver and Rio Grande Western stated that it would not cooperate with independent operation of the cutoff by the Moffat road. Throughout the brief, the Denver and Rio Grande Western expresssed apprehension of a tariff war with the Moffat, which, it admitted, might decrease its own income so seriously as to imperil, if not destroy, its credit and ability to serve the public, and also injure the Denver and Salt Lake.[28]

The decision, rendered by the Interstate Commerce Commission in April 1929 stated that necessity demanded the construction of the cutoff. The Moffat line was given the right to build it, but the permit was conditional upon a joint track agreement whereby the Denver and Rio Grande Western could operate over cutoff, tunnel, and Moffat line to Denver. The required certificate would not be issued until the two roads completed an agreement. The decision was considered a victory for the Denver and Rio Grande Western, as the Moffat road had asked for an unconditional permit.[29]

Early in 1929 the Denver and Rio Grande Western started a movement to gain control of the Denver and Salt Lake, in order to solve the dispute over the construction of the cutoff. Representatives of the company purchased 21,344 of the 50,000 shares of stock. The Denver and Rio Grande Western applied to the Interstate Commerce Commission for the right to purchase additional stock to give it a controlling interest.[30] The request was granted in December 1930. The Interstate Commerce Commission made acquisition of the Moffat line contingent upon the immediate construction of the cutoff. It ordered that work start within six months, and be completed within two years. This removed the last apparent obstacle to construction.[31]

In March 1931, the Denver and Rio Grande Western asked for more time for settlement of the question, as the original period for accepting the conditions imposed by the Interstate Commerce Commission was about to expire.[32] This was granted. In May the Denver and Rio Grande Western again applied for a ninety-day extension of time. The petition represented that an agreement had been reached on trackage rights for the Denver and Rio Grande Western over the Moffat tracks from Orestad to Denver. The road requested the delay in order that negotiations might be continued over control or ownership of the cutoff. However, the announcement was made June 27, 1931, that the Denver and Rio Grande Western had completed arrangements for the purchase of the Moffat. This makes it possible for the larger road to build, own and operate the Dotsero Cutoff.[33] The Moffat road, as a

result of this agreement, is to fit its line for transcontinental traffic. It will lengthen existing passing tracks, construct whatever additional passing tracks are necessary, reduce curvature, and install a block signal system. An application for permission to construct the cutoff is being prepared by the Denver and Rio Grande and will be filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission.[34]

The difficulty and expense of reaching markets has been one of the most seroius problems for Grand Valley producers and business men. The Rio Grande suffers serious handicaps; its branch lines, many of which are narrow gauge, aggregate a much greater mileage than the main line; on the main line grades, curves, and circuity are a serious disadvantage in competition. Freight rates have been a subject of frequent discussion and compromise between the business interests of the district and the railroads. High rates on outgoing freight affected coal, agricultural products, fruit, and shipments from wholesale houses. Incoming rates were also a subject of protest.

The valley did suffer from high freight rates, and frequently referred to these rates as discriminatory. The roads countered that the necessary expense made the rates high to Grand Junction; fruit was difficult to handle, required specialized equipment, must move rapidly, and discommoded other freight shipments. The profits they made did not justify reductions.

The question had been debated periodically for fifteen years with varying results when in 1910 the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce appealed to the Interstate Commerce Commission. They believed the existing charges to be illegal, and alleged that the discrimination favored Salt Lake City over Western Colorado towns. The Chamber asserted that shipments from New York to San Francisco were handled more cheaply than from New York to Grand Junction.[35]

The Denver and Rio Grande held that Grand Junction received no interstate freight, and had to be reshipped at Denver. They also claimed that the Western Slope was too prosperous to need lower freight rates. The plaintiffs showed that homesteaders were kept away by the rates on household goods, wholesale houses had abandoned the Grand Valley because of exorbitant rates, and that factories were forced to seek other locations because of unfair rates.[36]

The case was won in May 1912, and Utah tariffs were applied to Grand Junction. The application of carriers for relief from the long and short haul clause of the Interstate Commerce Act was denied and a reduction in rates was ordered.[37]

In the spring of 1911, while this case was pending, the railroads cut the rates on crude oil by one third. This helped the farmers secure fuel for smudging. The apple rate was also reduced.[38]

In 1912 a determined effort was made to get better rates on outgoing fruit. This movement started in Palisade, but shipping organizations throughout the valley participated. The Denver and Rio Grande and the Colorado Midland both refused to lower rates.[39]

The Denver and Rio Grande voluntarily cut rates on merchandise in 1913, and again in 1914. These rates allowed Grand Junction to become a jobbing center; wholesale merchants could compete with Salt Lake City in nearby Utah towns.[40] Increased rates, protest and readjustment recurred time and again, usually affecting rates between Grand Junction and nearby towns.

A fruit-rate hearing was held in Grand Junction in 1930, before examiner Witters of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The plaintiffs, fruit growers, shippers, and civic groups, asked for reduced rates on Colorado fruits. Although the burden of the defense fell on the Denver and Rio Grande, many involved railroads sent representatives to attend the proceedings. The critical status of the fruit industry was portrayed. Representatives of the two banks testified that eighty to eighty-five percent of the valley's fruit growing was carried on with borrowed money, and more fruit would be raised if the growers could borrow. Many others were partly financed by the associations advancing credit. Of the loans advanced, one half extended beyond harvest season. The carryover of loans to businessmen and stockmen was slight compared to those of fruitmen. Other witnesses stated that growers could not make a living raising apples and pears. In 1929 fifty carloads were left on the trees because it did not pay to ship them. Freight took one-fourth of the value of the product at its destination. The railroads maintained that the handling of perishable fruits was not lucrative enough to warrant any reduction. The depression in the fruit industry, they held, was due to causes other than freight rates, and western Colorado was more prosperous than most agricultural regions.[41] Both sides displayed good will throughout the hearing.

The dismissal of the suit was later recommended by the examiner who conducted the hearing. He felt that the existing schedule was justified.[42]

Express rates, while not as vital, have also been a subject for concern. These rates have been lowered to meet parcel post rates, and the change has benefitted fruit shippers and wholesalers alike. In 1922 the State Public Utilities Commisssion ordered a cut in express rates charged on all shipments of fruit to Colorado cities.[43] Most of the

changes in express rates have been made by the company without outside influences being brought to bear.

In Grand Junction, as in any town of its size which is a railroad division point, the railroad and shops are an important economic factor. The Denver and Rio Grande Western has made large expenditures at various times enlarging and improving the shops. They employ a large force of workmen, and the payroll gives substantial support to Grand Junction business.

The Denver and Rio Grande Western abolished the division point at Soldier Summit in 1930; and in 1931, as another step in the reorganization of the road, the division point at Salida was eliminated. This made Grand Junction headquarters of a main line division from Cleora, Colorado, to Helper, Utah. It brought additional officials and employees of the road, and a dispatcher's office to the town. The shops from Salida are to be moved to Grand Junction. This increases the importance of Grand Junction as a railroad town.[44]

The American Refrigerator Transit Company opens headquarters in Grand Junction every summer to handle the business of the district. Icing and re-icing the refrigerator cars used throughout the valley give employment to many during the months when fruit shipping is heavy.

To an isolated district as the Grand Valley, the building of good roads to connect with outside points is of great value. As early as 1898 Edward T. Taylor, then a state senator, advocated the building of a thoroughfare across the state from east to west. The state lost settlers because no wagon road extended into the new lands in the valleys west of the range.[45]

Not much was done to improve existing highways for automobile use until the Midland Trail was planned in 1912. This highway crossed the range at Tennessee Pass and came down the Colorado River, through Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction. A Midland Trail Association had been formed in Grand Junction to exert influence to bring the trail through the valley. The "Pathfinder" car reached an enthusiastic Grand Junction late in October of that year, and a group of twenty-seven local men started for Salt Lake City with the pathfinders. Work had been done improving the road west of the state line, but heavy rains made the dirt roads almost impassable.[46]

A tour from Indianapolis to the Pacific Coast was routed over the Midland Trail in 1913. A car went from Grand Junction to pilot the party from Denver. It took this group five days to reach Grand Junction.[47] A trip over practically the same route is now made in twelve hours.

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (source unknown, F374b)

Travel by automobile was a challenge as this 1912 photograph on the Midland Trail illustrates.

In 1912 the Rainbow Route was made a through highway. This route crosses the continental divide at Monarch Pass, and passes through Gunnison and Montrose to Grand Junction.[48] Both of these highways traverse some of the most beautiful scenery in the state, and as more money was made available to improve the roads, they became popular with tourists.

The old Colorado Midland Railroad bed was donated to the state for an automobile road in 1918. It was put in use three years later, and still offers the shortest route from Grand Junction to Denver.

The old Midland Trail was superceded by the Pike's Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway. In 1925 both of the roads through Grand Junction were designated part of the great national system of highways.[49] Most of the roads across the continental divide in Colorado join one or the other of these highways. The Tennessee Pass road is kept open all winter, and with the completion of a gravel road from Palisade to De Beque, opened in the spring of 1931, this route gives an all weather road from Grand Junction to Denver. This road is gaining in popularity

as a coast to coast route for tourists.[50] Monarch Pass is kept open for automobile travel most of the year.

In mountainous districts around Grand Junction are territories not reached by railroads. As soon as it was practical, wagon roads were built, connecting such sections with Grand Junction, and a thriving freighting business emerged. These roads have been improved, and freighting is done by truck.

One of the largest and most productive of these districts, and one of the earliest settled, was the country to the east, reached through the canyon of Plateau Creek. In 1911 the state used convict labor to widen and improve this road.[51] A railroad to Plateau Valley to open new markets was discussed several times, but the expense was prohibitive.[52]

A road following the Colorado River to Moab, Utah, opened new trade territory to Grand Junction wholesale houses and offered an attractive scenic route. This road was opened in 1920.[53]

A road to the Uintah Basin by way of Douglas Creek Pass, completed in 1924, brought an isolated district into a trade relationship with Grand Junction. Business with the Uintah Basin grew rapidly. Freight went by truck from Grand Junction and a load was assured both ways as the Basin sent much of its produce out by truck. Four large trucks were used on this line almost from the beginning.[54]

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce spent almost $30,000 for a road through Rangely to Vernal, Utah, to open this section to the local market. Bus and truck service have been operated over this line since 1924.[55]

Mining experts have declared the Paradox Valley, located fifty miles south and west of Grand Junction, to be one of the richest regions in the state. In 1911 agitation was started to build a road to the then almost purely agricultural setting, to turn its trade to Grand Junction. Nothing was done, however, until the mineral wealth of the district became better known.

In 1921 Grand Junction business houses and the Chamber of Commerce raised funds, completed a survey, and did some work on a road to the border of Mesa County.[56] However, Montrose County commissioners obstructed work in their county, and the road has never been completed. The output from the vanadium and radium mines is hauled from Naturita to the narrow gauge railroad at Placerville, or south to Durango, a distance of about seventy-five miles over bad roads. A road to Grand Junction would give a shorter route to a standard gauge, through railroad, and a better place to trade. Those interested hope that this

road will soon be given state and federal aid and constructed, as it would become a link in a north-south highway.

Another incentive for the building of roads is the scenic attractions near Grand Junction. One of the most easily accessible and most popular of these is Monument Canyon. This canyon had long been popular with people of the valley, and in 1910 Secretary of Interior Ballinger ordered the land office at Montrose to withdraw from entry lands including Monument Canyon and adjacent territory, for the benefit of a proposed national park.[57] This region came to be known as Colorado National Monument. It contains 14,000 acres, having many magnificent specimens of erosion.[58] Elk and bison were placed in Monument Canyon.

The Serpent's Trail, an extremely winding road up a steep mountainside, skirts No-thoroughfare Canyon just south of Grand Junction. Interesting Indian writing on the rock walls is plainly visible. This road leads across Pinon Mesa into Glade Park, a farming district.

There is a field of dinosaur remains near Grand Junction. Numerous tourists have visited this site, as it is easily accessible. It has provided some of the world's finest fossil specimens for the Field Museum from this bed.[59]

Discussion of building a good road to the top of Grand Mesa was renewed annually. The cost of such a road exceeded the amounts which could be raised, and although some had erected cabins, the resort was not within easy reach. In 1919 Grand Junction and Mesa County joined efforts. They agreed to try to interest some parties in the construction of a resort hotel, and they petitioned the Forest Service for a road.[60] In 1920 the Forest Service set aside $12,000 to build a road to Mesa Lakes, if local interests would raise $4,000. Roads to and across Grand Mesa were extended and improved rapidly. In 1925 the skyway was opened, and for the first time automobiles crossed the top of the world's largest flat-topped mountain. Alexander Lakes, toward the south end of Grand Mesa, had been reached by a road from Delta. The Skyway from Mesa to Alexander Lakes cost $150,000, and was built by the Forest Service solely for recreational purposes. The top of Grand Mesa, about sixty miles square, is included in the Grand Mesa National Forest. There are over three hundred lakes and reservoirs in this reserve, more than fifty of which are stocked with trout.[61]

The Western Slope Chamber of Commerce petitioned for a change of the name of this national forest from Battlement to Grand Mesa National Forest in 1924. This petition was granted. They opposed the creation of a national park of the district, believing greater benefits could be had under forestry supervision. If it became a national park,

no grazing could be allowed, all tourists and visitors would be subject to restrictions, and summer homes could not be obtained. There were too many commercial interests, such as the many irrigation reservoirs on Grand Mesa, for such a change to be easily made,[62] and it remains a forest reserve.

The number of summer homes and small resorts on Grand Mesa has increased rapidly. Every year more tourists and people from nearby regions take advantage of the cool air and beautiful scenery.

NOTES

[1]*Grand Junction News,* 27 November 1890, p. 1.
[2]*Ibid.,* 30 July 1892, p. 1.
[3]*Daily Sentinel,* 19 January 1895, p. 1.
[4]*Grand Junction News,* 16 March 1895, p. 1.
[5]*Ibid.,* 17 August 1895, p. 2.
[6]*Daily Sentinel,* 27 March 1901, p. 1; W.F. Stone, *History of Colorado,* 4 vols. (Chicago: J.S. Clark Co., 1918), I, p. 362.
[7]*Daily Sentinel,* 3 January 1903, p. 1.
[8]*Ibid.,* 26 February 1902, p. 1.
[9]*Grand Junction News,* 25 August 1909, p. 1.
[10]*Daily Sentinel,* 19 July 1906, p. 1.
[11]*Ibid.,* 28 April 1930, p. 1.
[12]*Ibid.,* 31 October 1894, p. 1.
[13]*Ibid.,* 14 December 1912, p. 1.
[14]*Ibid.,* 21 April 1917, p. 1.
[15]*Ibid.,* 14 June 1917, p. 1.
[16]*Ibid.,* 2 July 1918, p. 1.
[17]The government had taken over operation of roads as a war measure, and any amounts expended above the income from the road would have to be met by it.
[18]*Daily Sentinel,* 8 July 1918, p. 1.
[19]*Ibid.,* 6 January 1919, p. 1
[20]*Ibid.,* 11 October 1918, p. 1.
[21]*Ibid.,* 11 November 1920, p. 1.
[22]*Ibid.,* 28 February 1922, p. 1.
[23]*Ibid.,* 8 December 1920, p. 1.
[24]*Ibid.,* 19 September 1924, p. 1.
[25]*Ibid.,* 28 April 1929, p. 9.
[26]*Rocky Mountain News,* 18 April 1928, p. 1.
[27]*Denver Post,* 16 September 1928, p. 1.
[28]*Ibid.,* 17 November 1928, p. 1.
[29]*Daily Sentinel,* 23 April 1929, p. 1; *Rocky Mountain News,* 24 April 1929, pp. 1, 2.
[30]*Daily Sentinel,* 1 February 1930, p. 1.
[31]*Ibid.,* 12 December 1930, p. 1; *Rocky Mountain News,* 13 December 1930, p. 1.
[32]*Daily Sentinel,* 3 March 1931, p. 1; *Denver Post,* 20 May 1931, pp. 2, 4.
[33]*Denver Post,* 27 June 1931, p. 1.
[34]*Ibid.,* 30 June 1931, p. 8.
[35]*Daily Sentinel,* 8 October 1910, p. 1.
[36]*Ibid.,* 27 October 1911, p. 1.
[37]*Ibid.,* 15 May 1912, p. 1.
[38]*Ibid.,* 29 April 1911, p. 1.
[39]*Ibid.,* 20 June 1913, p. 1.
[40]*Ibid.;* 9 February 1914, p. 1.
[41]*Ibid.,* 22 April 1930, pp. 1, 9.
[42]*Ibid.,* 29 January 1931, p. 1.
[43]*Ibid.,* 22 July 1922, p.1.
[44]*Ibid.,* 15 April 1931, p. 1.
[45]*Ibid.,* 15 August 1898, p. 1.
[46]*Ibid.,* 1 November 1912, p. 1.
[47]*Ibid.,* 15 August 1913, p. 1.
[48]*Ibid.,* 12 January 1912, p. 1.
[49]*Ibid.,* 6 August 1925, p. 1.
[50]Report, *Tourist Traffic* (Denver: State Highway Department, January 1930).
[51]*Daily Sentinel,* 13 October 1911, p. 1.
[52]*Ibid.,* 3 July 1913, p. 1.
[53]*Ibid.,* 24 February 1920, p. 8.
[54]*Ibid.,* 27 June 1924, p. 8.
[55]*Ibid.,* 24 June 1924, p. 2.
[56]*Ibid.,* 28 June 1921, p. 1.
[57]*Ibid.,* 1 January 1901, p. 1.
[58]Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, *Western Colorado,* Booklet (Grand Junction: Daily Sentinel Press, 1928), p. 11.
[59]*Daily Sentinel,* 2 April 1925, p. 1.
[60]*Ibid.,* 5 August 1919, p. 1.
[61]*Ibid.,* 8 August 1925, p. 1.
[62]*Ibid.,* 25 January 1924, p. 1.

CHAPTER VIII
IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE

The earliest ditches constructed in the Grand Valley had reached the most easily irrigable land. Individual efforts to provide water to less accessible lands were perhaps best illustrated on Orchard Mesa, south of the river. At one time there were five pumping plants lifting water to that mesa from the opening of the canyon to the Gunnison River. Almost every spring one or more of these stations was washed out because of poor construction. People felt that one large plant, well constructed, would survive the periodic floods. Residents expressed a desire for state or federal aid, preferably state, in constructing such a plant.[1]

The Smith and Struther's Ditch, which carried water from Rapid Creek to valley lands west of the mouth of the canyon, was constructed at great expense. They used 1,485 feet of fluming, and a fourteen-inch pipe, stretched on cables across the Grand River.[2] This money-losing enterprise was abandoned in 1905.

High water also damaged the pumping plant of the Mt. Lincoln Ditch, and the recurring water shortage caused ranchmen to complain about poor service. Many were setting out new orchards each year, and lack of water caused loss of trees. In the spring of 1905, land holders under Mt. Lincoln Ditch, which became known as the Price Ditch, formed the Palisade Irrigation District.[3] They voted bonds to purchase the ditch and pumping plant, and to enlarge and improve both.[4] Better service resulted. Late in 1905 a strip of land lying between the Price Ditch and the Book Cliffs was formed into the Mesa County Irrigation District. The district bought and completed the works started by a company which had failed, installed a pumping plant, and was ready to supply water to the ranchers by the season of 1907.[5] This ditch was known as the Stub Ditch.

All these ditches had difficulties; high waters in the spring repeatedly threatened the headgate of the Grand Valley Irrigation Company and the pumping plants of the Price and Stub ditches. Emergency workers frequently rushed to the scene to save the works. It was impossible to keep sufficient irrigation water in the ditches during high water. Under the Price and Stub ditches, crops were damaged some years because enough water did not reach the lower end of the valley. The growers in that section protested that the Palisade ranchers took more than their share of water.[6] The Stub Ditch, especially, was hard to keep in condition. Land and rock slides from the mountain blocked it; rain from the

steep slope washed it out, resulting in loss to the grower and expense to the company.

These three ditches served a large area north of the river from the opening of the canyon to a point west of Clifton. The Grand Valley Irrigation Company had paid the last of its bonded debts, and was supplying water for ninety-six cents an acre in 1923. The board claimed that this was the lowest water rate known.[7] The Palisade Irrigation Ditstrict had paid off its bonded indebtedness, and the Mesa County District made a deal whereby each tract of land was released from a blanket indebtedness as it paid its proportional share.[8]

Desire for a "High Line" canal, to irrigate a larger amount of land, dates back to 1889, when proponents held that 100,000 acres of land could be watered.[9] They discussed federal aid, and considered a state ditch, constructed in part by convict labor. Efforts to interest private capital in the undertaking were unremitting for several years.[10] One group of capitalists had some surveying done in the canyon above Palisade, filed upon the water rights, and later sought to force the government to abandon the building of the "High Line" or pay for a right-of-way.[11]

In 1905 a Water User's Association was formed in Grand Junction, in accordance with the wishes of the Secretary of the Interior. This association guaranteed the return of any investment which might be made by the government, as the reclamation fund was a revolving fund, not subject to appropriation.[12] Secretary of Interior James R. Garfield, Land Commissioner Richard A. Ballinger and Senator Smoot of Utah made a short stop in the valley on their way west from a public land convention in Denver in 1907. They were shown about the valley, and were assured that, if the government built the canal, the cost would be paid back in three years.[13]

In 1908, the United States Reclamation Service made a topographical survey and soil classification of the irrigable area and selected a site for a diversion dam for the Grand Valley Irrigation Project.[14] A contract between the water users and Secretary Garfield was approved in 1909, and people felt that the ditch would be built at once.[15] Secretary of Interior Ballinger, however, questioned the legality of the contract, and Attorney General George W. Wickersham declared it not binding.[16] Late that year, however, Secretary Ballinger stated that work on the canal would begin as soon as the line of survey could be decided upon. The original survey would cause heavy damage to the landowners in the highly developed district around Palisade, as it cut through valuable orchards. Palisade people offered to help obtain a right of way if the government would take

over and enlarge the Price and Stub ditches instead of constructing a ditch on the line of the government survey.[17] A more expensive line, close enough to the Book Cliffs to avoid the entire orchard area, was also considered. The route of the original government survey was more feasible from an engineering standpoint than either of the other plans proposed.[18]

A landholders' protective association was formed in Palisade to negotiate the canal route and the value of orchard land traversed. The controversy between the Palisade interests and the Water Users' Association grew heated. The project engineer miner and an attorney from the legal department of the Reclamation Service continued negotiations with the farmers, and by 1912 agreements were reached in all cases, making condemnation proceedings unnecessary. By the final agreement the government paid $210,000 for 184 acres of land.[19] These contracts are recorded in the county clerk's office as separate contracts with each of the 117 farmers who sold the right of way.

Two interesting developments arose from the purchase of land by the government. The government ordered the right-of-way, the longest orchard known, at eleven miles long and 135 feet wide, to be leased to the highest bidder until the canal could be constructed. There were 117 tracts, varying in size from a fraction of an acre to three acres. The former owners proceeded to lease the land even though the tract in question usually was a strip through the middle of an orchard.[20] The second development concerned the paying of taxes on the right-of-way. It was an unusual situation, and the irrigation districts lost the taxes during the two years of the lease.[21]

The final contract between the government and the Water Users' Association was approved in 1913,[22] but work had been ordered the previous fall. Workers moved earth for the first tunnel on October 10, 1912. Appropriate ceremonies marked the occasion.[23]

The land which was to be irrigated by the new ditch is a strip above the old ditches, from two to six miles wide and forty miles long, and contains about fifty-three thousand acres. Thirty thousand acres of this was public land. This public land fringes the cliffs, or is at the lower end of the project and includes areas of less value for cultivation because of poorer soil or greater difficulty of irrigation.[24]

A roller crest type dam, in the canyon eight miles above Palisade, diverts water into a sixty-mile canal. It is one of the few, and is the largest dam of this type, in the country. Because of the proximity to the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, which traverses the canyon, it was necessary to provide a dam at this point which could control the river during low water, and draw away excess water

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (Palisade Library Collection 49.23.38)
Digging the High Line Canal.

during high water without flooding the adjacent railroad tracks. On account of its novel design and easily accessible location this dam is of especial interest to the engineering profession and the traveling public.[25]

The first six miles of the canal is in the Colorado River canyon; two and a half miles of this are concrete-lined tunnels, and there are three reinforced concrete siphons. The record on the tunnels was a model of efficiency, since all were completed without accident. The Reclamation Bureau took two years to complete this work.[26] The government leased construction of the canal through the valley to private companies. The main canal traverses the orchard section to a point a little west of Clifton, then goes in a northwestern direction. These companies employed local labor and thus provided real aid to the valley, for during these years fruit raising was not profitable. The project provided employment for 300 men at the dam and 450 on the canal. Water was turned into the canal in June of 1915. Chairman J.J. Fitzgerald of the House Appropriations Committee swung open the gates. A group of congressmen and reclamation officials attended the ceremony. Water sufficient for crops was carried as far as Fruita in 1916, and extensions were made in 1917 and 1918. The total cost of the project was about four and a half million dollars.[27]

The Price and Stub ditches made application for water from the government ditch. They maintained their own systems until 1919, but the tunnels were large enough to carry water for all, and the government agreed to furnish water at a definite rental.[28] Operation has been

on that basis since. The irrigation companies may at any time dissolve their district form of organization, and come under the project, or they may continue under the present contract.[29]

Large scale irrigation creates a debtor community in a way which is seldom realized. Irrigation bonds equal, in practice, a first mortgage on lands under the projects.

The Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce planned to bring settlers to the project lands. The Chamber established a press bureau to furnish information about the land to daily papers and to prospective citizens. The Grand Valley Water Users' Association employed a colonizing agent in 1917.[30] However, these efforts were not as successful as had been hoped.

The project engineer reported a gain in land value and prosperity of residents under the project in 1924. The irrigation commission ruled in 1925 that settlers must begin payments on construction work.[31] The settlers asked for an extension, holding that their financial circumstances made it impossible to start payments at once. In 1927 the Superintendent of Reclamation offered to extend to forty years the repayment time of the investment, and that the government would deduct $812,000 from the original cost. The settlers requested a lower schedule of payments for the first five years and, when this was granted, the members of the Water Users' Association approved the contract unanimously.[32]

The 1928 contract with the government provided that the water users take over and operate the canal, exclusive of the dam and tunnels, after January 1, 1932. At a well attended annual meeting in 1931 the Water Users' Association authorized their board of directors to negotiate with the government for continued government operation to 1937, or to such time as they decided upon. Those at the meeting expressed the opinion that more efficient operation, greater confidence, and higher morale among actual and prospective owners of land under the High Line canal would result from continued operation of the project by the Bureau of Reclamation.[33] The Reclamation Bureau has issued a statement that the Water Users' request will be granted. Government operation will continue until 1937.[34]

A plan to irrigate 12,000 acres on the south side of the river was proposed in 1902. The Orchard Mesa Construction Company built a system in 1909 and 1910. This consisted of a dam across the river, five miles of flume, thirty miles of canal and a power plant.[35] The water taxes amounted to ten to fifteen dollars an acre. It was impossible to develop raw land under such a high rate; therefore the company could not raise enough revenue to run the project efficiently. As a result, most

of the lands failed to meet the tax levy, and were abandoned after a promising beginning, especially at the east end of the mesa. The company was about to go bankrupt. Flume, ditch and machinery were in bad condition. Orchard Mesa was formed into an irrigation district, which voted bonds for one million dollars and bought out the company which owned the irrigation plant.

In 1921 representatives of this irrigation district approached the Bureau of Reclamation, to see if it would rebuild the system. The works were badly located, the main canal for seven or eight miles ran along the foot of a precipitous cliff, from which rock slides occurred frequently. Wooden flumes and pressure pipes had deteriorated, making them difficult to repair and operate. At the request and at the expense of the bond holders, the Reclamation Service examined the works and estimated the work necessary to relieve conditions in the district. The report of the examiners recommended that the upper portion of the canal be abandoned, the water diverted at the government dam and carried to the end of tunnel number three, siphoned under the river, and taken on in the existing reconstructed canal. Wooden structures should be rebuilt. The Reclamation Service believed that the investments on Orchard Mesa would be lost if the system were not rebuilt, and that the interests in jeopardy were sufficient to justify the undertaking, provided that outstanding indebtedness could be settled satisfactorily, and at least ten thousand acres of land be pledged to the repayment of the cost.[36] Secretary Albert B. Fall approved these recommendations.

The land owners on Orchard Mesa acted favorably upon the government's terms.[37] The first work was done on parts of the old system most urgently needing repairs. The work was completed in about three years. Many felt that a guaranteed supply of water would bring more settlers to Orchard Mesa.[38]

This was true especially of the east end of Orchard Mesa. There settlers bought land readily and set out many new peach orchards. Farther down the valley conditions were not so good. In the summer of 1929 Professor Frank Adams of California University made a study of the project. He found difficulties due to low gross income per farm and per acre, poor soil conditions in seeped areas, and idle land. Further, all lands were assessed equally, regardless of ability to pay.[39] Residents believed that most of the idle land could be purchased for tax certificates but was not, because of the high rate of repayment to the government. The government investment was to be repaid in twenty years.

A reassessment was completed under which the more productive lands carried the greater proportion of the burden of repayment.

Negotiations were then opened with the government, asking forty years' time for repayment.[40]

Drainage usually follows irrigation because the majority of people over-irrigate, using a volume of water equivalent to sixty inches of rainfall a year. The type of land determines, in part, the amount of damage seepage does. Palisade land is sandy, and this looser soil does not hold seep water as much as the finer soil of the lower valley.[41] Any earthen irrigation canal carrying a large head of water for a considerable portion of the year will seep. The High Line seeped more than other canals because it carried a larger volume of water and passed through the looser soil close to the mountain.

Some lands in the valley showed traces of alkali quite early. By 1911 it was stated that drainage, an essential part of the valley's future development, would be of benefit to the land from Palisade to Fruita.[42] The action of the government made drainage possible sooner than it could otherwise have been accomplished. The Reclamation Service conducted a successful experiment in 1912 and 1913, draining a tract of badly seeped land east of Grand Junction.[43] The following year it made a drainage survey of the valley, and urged the formation of a great drainage district without delay. The valley sent a representative to Washington to ask the government to drain the valley.[44] However, this effort was not successful.

The following summer landowners voted almost unanimously in favor of the formation of the Grand Valley Drainage District. This included the lands under all existing irrigation districts except the towns of Palisade and Fruita. The district wished to carry out the plans recommended after the government drainage survey. For six years the board of directors of the drainage district worked with the Reclamation Bureau.

Late in 1917 the United States signed a contract with the drainage district providing for the construction, at the expense of the government project, of about forty miles of ditches, which would serve both as drains for the drainage district and as outlets to carry surplus water from the High Line irrigation project. The district agreed to secure the right-of-way, and maintain the drains when completed.[45] This work was finished by the summer of 1921, and project engineer S.O. Harper warned the district that the Reclamation Service had neither legal authority nor money available for additional work. He stated that the Reclamation Service was ready to cooperate in any way, even to the extent of doing the construction work if the people desired. Harper urged that the valley raise a fund to continue the work.[46]

The drainage board debated the question of financing drainage by a bond issue of $800,000 or by levying an assessment of four mills on the dollar, of assessed valuation. The question was submitted to the voters in 1923, and they decided in favor of the assessment.[47] The work was expected to run ten years, and was started early in 1924. Contracts for construction of drainage laterals were let to private firms. The board decided first to relieve districts which were still producing, but were threatened with seepage, later to seek to reclaim lands already worthless.

Work progressed steadily and the plan proved successful. The board of directors announced late in 1930 that work was practically finished and no levy was needed for 1931. The board built the system at about one-third of the cost estimated by the government, between $350,000 and $360,000. Four hundred miles of drainage ditches have been dug, many of which are now dry, and the water table has been receding for several years. Hundreds of acres have been reclaimed and are producing crops. The long, unselfish service of the drainage board has been commended by all.[48]

In the Redlands district individual ranchers in many cases tiled their own orchards to prevent seepage from killing the trees while they waited for action. In some cases after the first few years, the Grand Valley Drainage District furnished the tiles.

NOTES

[1]*Grand Junction News*, 14 July 1897, p. 1.

[2]*Daily Sentinel*, 2 June 1894, p. 1.

[3]*Session Laws of Colorado, 1901*, 198-231 (House Bill No. 43) authorizes formation of irrigation district whenever majority of resident freeholders desire.

[4]*Palisade Tribune*, 25 March 1905, p. 1.

[5]*Ibid.*, 17 November 1906, p. 1.

[6]*Daily Sentinel*, 27 July 1909, p. 3; and 12 June 1910, p. 8.

[7]*Ibid.*, 9 November 1923, p. 8.

[8]*Palisade Tribune*, 9 January 1930, p. 1.

[9]*Grand Junction News*, 23 November 1889, p. 1.

[10]*Ibid.*, 8 October 1904, p. 1.

[11]*Daily Sentinel*, 9 December 1907, p. 1.

[12]John C. Page, Interview, 27 December 1930.

[13]*Daily Sentinel*, 21 June 1907, p. 1.

[14]*Ibid.*, 25 February 1908, p. 1.

[15]*Ibid.*, 21 February 1909, p. 1. Government contracts with the Water Users' Association were not recorded. No reports of this agreement were available.

[16]*Daily Sentinel*, 4 June 1909, p. 1.

[17]*Palisade Tribune*, 10 June 1911, p. 1.

[18]*Daily Sentinel*, 17 January 1911, p. 1.

[19]*Ibid.*, 1 June 1912, p. 1.

[20]*Grand Junction News*, 13 April 1913, p. 1.

[21]*Daily Sentinel*, 2 December 1913, p. 1.

[22]United States Government and the Grand Valley Water Users' Association contract made and entered into 13th day of February, 1913. Signed Walter L. Fisher, Secretary of Interior, for and on behalf of the United States of America. The Grand Valley Water Users' Association by W.S. Wallace, President, D.W. Aupperle, Secretary. Instrument 115,142, Book 175, p. 532. Agreement made under provisions of act of 2 June 1902; *U.S. Statutes at Large*, XXXII, 388.

[23]*Grand Junction News*, 10 October 1912, p. 1.

[24]*Daily Sentinel*, 1 January 1911, p. 1.

[25]*Grand Valley Irrigation Project*, Colorado, United States Reclamation Service, pp. 7, 9.

[26]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

[27]*Daily Sentinel*, 23 June 1915, p. 1.

[28]Contract, United States to the Mesa County Irrigation District. Filed, office of County Clerk, 6 January 1919, Book 210,289, and United States to the Palisade Irrigation District. Filed office County Clerk, January 6, 1919. Book 210,292.

[29]Interview with John C. Page, 27 December 1930.

[30]*Daily Sentinel*, 24 May 1917, p. 1.

[31]*Ibid.*, 4 December 1925, p. 1.

[32]Contract between the United States and the Grand Valley Water Users' Association, providing for transfer of project to the association, and payment of project costs by the association. Draft approved 7 July 1927, amended 12 October 1927, United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand Valley Project, Colorado. Contract made 4th day of January 1928. *Daily Sentinel*, 23 November 1927, p. 1.

[33]*Daily Sentinel*, 5 January 1931, p. 1.

[34]*Ibid.*, 3 June 1931. The contract has not yet been drawn up and signed.

[35]*Ibid.*, 31 March 1910, p. 1.

[36]Letter, A.P. Davis, director reclamation, to Secretary of Interior Fall, *Daily Sentinel*, 25 March 1921, p. 4.

[37]Contract made by the United States, the Grand Valley Water Users' Association, and the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District, providing for reconstruction of the Orchard Mesa project. Agreement made 18 February 1922, under provision of Act of Congress of 2 June 1902, *Statutes at Large*, XXXII, 388. Filed in office of County Clerk 7 April 1922, Book 258,269-295.

[38]*Daily Sentinel*, 12 April 1925, p. 1.

[39]*Ibid.*, 24 February 1930, p. 3.

[40]*Ibid.*, 2 March 1930, p. 8: "An agreement on all practical points has been reached by the Interior Department and the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District, but no contract providing for forty year repayment has been signed as yet."

[41]Interview, John C. Page, 27 December 1930.

[42]*Grand Junction News*, 8 February 1911, p. 1.

[43]*Daily Sentinel*, 17 December 1913, p. 1.

[44]*Ibid.*, 15 August 1914, p. 1.

[45]*Ibid.*, 14 November 1917, p. 1.

[46]*Ibid.*, 9 June 1921, p. 8.

[47]*Ibid.*, 15 August 1923, p. 1.

[48]*Ibid.*, 7 November 1930, p. 8.

CHAPTER IX
COAL

Coal mining progressed rapidly during the early history of the valley with much development of coal property and the opening of many new veins. It looked as though Mesa County would become one of the largest coal producing counties in the state.[1] To the present time, however, only the thickest, best, and most easily accessible veins have been worked. Coal of good quality is easily obtained, but the expense of getting it to market has limited production.

Shipments from the Book Cliff Mine, north of Grand Junction, then the best developed one, averaged 150 tons a day in 1894. This coal was sent to the San Juan district, Aspen, Glenwood and Leadville. The Rio Grande Western that year denied Mr. W.T. Carpenter, owner of the Book Cliff Mine and Little Book Cliff Railroad, access to the main yards, as their lease extended 260 feet beyond the Little Book Cliff Railroad's switch. Orders were delayed until arrangements could be made about trackage.[2] The following year Carpenter was forced to close the Grand Valley Mine temporarily, the reason being given as increased freight rates to mountain towns. Meanwhile the Rio Grande Western was shipping coal from Utah to the same points.[3]

Repeated efforts were made to get better rates on outgoing coal. The State Public Utilities Commission in 1915 granted a reduction on fuel tariffs to Eastern Slope markets. This benefitted especially the Palisade mines, opening to them a market in Denver and points near there.[4] In 1919 the mining companies joined in a plea, charging discrimination by the Denver and Rio Grande. Again a reduction was won, this time to points to the west and northwest.[5]

Despite gains, the expense of getting coal to out-of-valley markets restricted production. When an unusual demand forces prices up, Grand Valley mines flourish; but with the return to normal conditions, production must be cut again. Interest in coal mining increased in 1917 when a Grand Junction coal company received a government contract for 300,000 tons a year to supply one of the naval fleets with coal. Immediately the company advanced wages, employed more miners and doubled the daily output of its mine.[6] War conditions and prices enabled all mines to work to capacity, and to ship coal. Because of this, the price of coal in the home market rose until general protest, unfavorable newspaper comment, and threatened investigation forced it down.[7]

Many mines increased capacity and installed new machinery. For example, the Midwest Coal and Iron Company expended one-third of a million dollars on its mine near Palisade. Its output increased to

one thousand tons a day. During the war years, the Bankers' Security Company of Denver bought the old Grandview Mine, also near Palisade. The new company increased the number of men employed. A new steel tipple was built, having a capacity of 1,500 tons every eight hours. The company constructed its own track from the mouth of the mine to the Denver and Rio Grande tracks, a distance of about one-half mile. It constructed its own railroad yards with a capacity of one hundred cars, and arranged it in such a fashion that it was possible to load three cars at a time under the tipple. Erection of houses for an increased working force was begun. Before these improvements were completed, the war-time demand ended. Then the Colorado Midland Railroad suspended operations. Because of its shorter route it had been able to handle coal at almost one dollar per ton less than the Denver and Rio Grande. The mining companies found they could not ship east of Salida and compete with eastern coal. They sought to extend the market on the Western Slope, but without marked success.[8]

Coal strikes elsewhere have stimulated production of coal in Mesa County. The 1919 strike did not become serious in any of the valley's mines and they increased coal production, which was sent out to relieve the shortage elsewhere.[9] After this strike ended, production declined again until in 1922, owing to strikes, a ready market was found for all the coal being produced. Output was still greater in 1923, when mining companies had all the orders they could fill and employed a steadily increasing number of men.[10] When this strike was settled, production again increased.

The coal mines of the district are not worked by union labor. The reason for this is that the output of the mines is small, and it is fairly constant. The professional miners congregate around larger mines, where there are no other industries. Many of the laborers employed in coal mines in Grand Valley are men who own farms and work part-time in the mines. Numerous efforts have been made to unionize the miners, but without lasting success.[11] Since 1923 there has been no artificial stimulus to increase the amount of coal mined. It is not likely that coal mining will afford a great amount of wealth to the district in the near future. Competition is keen, and the low price for coal does not justify expenditures for equipment to increase output.

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (Palisade Public Library Collection 79.23.103)

The Mt. Lincoln coal mine about 1892. This operation, east of Palisade, was one of the first mines in the area. Left to right: Frank Hickman, David T. Lloyd, Arthur R. Lloyd.

NOTES

[1]*Grand Junction News,* 6 March 1897, p. 1.
[2]*Ibid.,* 31 March 1894, p. 1.
[3]*Ibid.,* 3 July 1895, p. 1.
[4]*Daily Sentinel,* 17 May 1915, p. 2.
[5]*Ibid.,* 8 July 1919, p. 3.
[6]*Ibid.,* 15 May 1917, p. 1.
[7]*Ibid.,* 6 December 1917, p. 1.
[8]*Ibid.,* 13 January 1919, p. 1.
[9]*Ibid.,* 5 December 1919, p. 1.
[10]*Ibid.,* 23 June 1923, p. 1.
[11]Interview with Fred Rowley, Manager of Palisade Fuel and Supply Company, 9 June 1931.

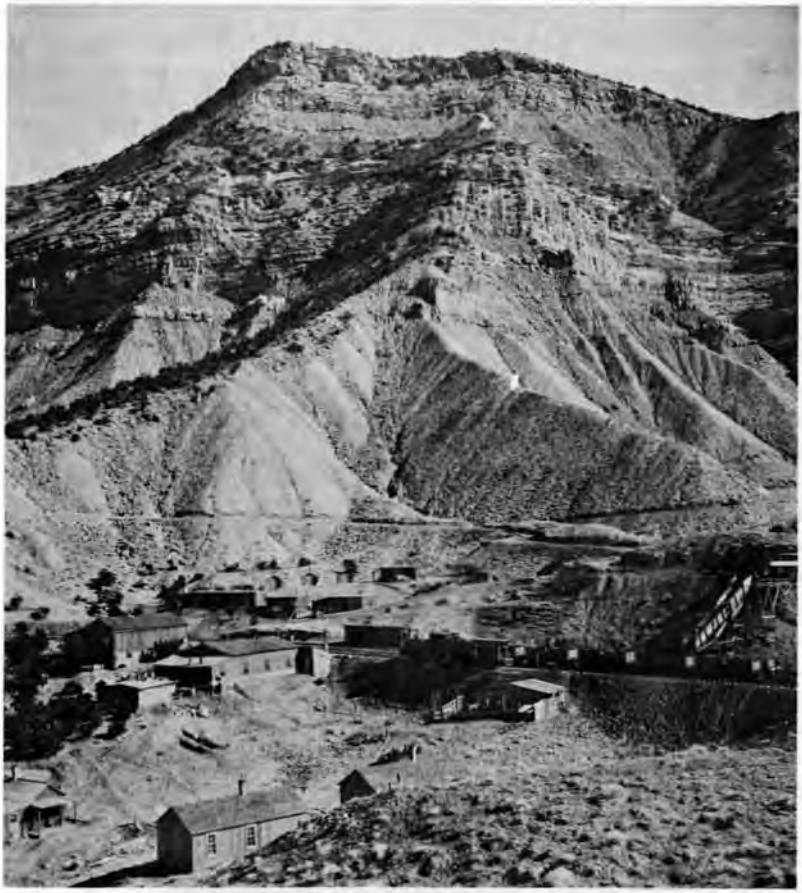

Photo courtesy of The Museum of Western Colorado (Dale Luke Collection 79.26)

The coal mining town of Carpenter, Colorado before 1900. A cut to the left leads to the Book Cliff Mine; the Grand Valley Mine is to the right. A boarding house and restaurant occupy the tallest building (it later became the school). The company store is to its right.

CHAPTER X
PRESENT PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

As has been indicated, a number of problems confront the residents of the Grand Valley. One of the most serious is taxes. The high valuation of land has proven disadvantageous. When fruit land began to be unprofitable, there was not a proper adjustment of assessed valuation and many farmers were ruined by the burden of taxation. As more landowners cease to pay taxes, the burden becomes even heavier on those in the district who do pay. The water tax, which the farmer must pay in advance to obain water for his year's crop, increases the burden. The landowner has a constant struggle to break even after paying taxes, labor and other necessary expenses.

The lack of any large local market, and the expense of reaching outside markets, have made it difficult for fertile soil and vast coal deposits to bring prosperity. The fruit industry in the western part of the Grand Valley has been ruined by the depredations of the codling moth, and the orchard area recedes eastward at the rate of about one half mile a year. Nothing else has been found which pays well. A number of orchardists are re-setting with peach trees in the vicinity of Clifton, and west to Grand Junction. They feel that, even if the crop is lost some years, it is still more profitable than other fruits or general farming. At present, from the valley opening to a line about three miles west of Palisade, from mountain to river, ninety percent of the land is in bearing peach trees. The remainder is in non-bearing peaches, which have replaced old orchards. From there to Clifton, a belt three miles wide, about one-fourth of the land is set to peaches, one-fourth to pears, one-tenth or less to apples, and the remainder is open land devoted to general farming, with alfalfa and corn predominating. From Clifton to Grand Junction, about twenty percent of the land is in pear orchards, ten percent in apple and the balance of the land is used for general farming. Here, trucking, the raising of tomatoes and cantaloupes, is more important, and more sugar beets are raised. South of the river on Orchard Mesa from Palisade to Clifton three-fourths of the land is in peaches, about two-thirds of which is bearing orchard and the rest young trees. One-fourth of the land is open. Some of this is rough land, which can not easily be used. From Clifton to Grand Junction about eighty percent of the land is used for general farming. There are a few pears, peaches and apples there. Most of the peach trees are young trees.[1]

Many feel that the future of the county ought to depend on diversified farming, that the raising of vegetables and other produce

could be made profitable. The one obstacle, freight rates, might be adjusted satisfactorily. A large part of the traffic through the valley in 1930 has been northern California produce, fruits and vegetables, going to eastern markets. Many of the ranchers here are not attracted to that kind of farming, but that attitude might change over time. To ensure a good agricultural future, the people of the Grand Valley might look to scientific studies done by an agricultural or industrial engineer. Leadership and counsel would be worth much to the district.

Some local people have made money by putting out fruit and vegetable stands along the highways. One of the larger ones yielded as high as sixty dollars a day; a number of them brought in material gain. A few of these stands open about June first with strawberries and early garden produce, and remain open for about six months. For most the season lasts about four months. These stands are numerous, but they could handle a wider variety of goods. As tourist travel increases, there is possibility of greater profit.

The Dotsero Cutoff should help this district. It would establish another trade route to Omaha and Chicago, a direct line which would bring the valley closer to market. Furthermore, it would increase the number of people working on the railroad in Grand Junction, and make the city a greater shipping center.

The construction of Boulder Dam and consequent development of a territory capable of supporting a large population should turn a larger part of the produce of the valley westward, and create a new and closer market in that direction.

Since the war, good roads have accounted for a great deal of development. Tourists have augmented the development of Grand Junction, and this business promises to increase in importance.

It is impossible to predict manufacturing possibilities. Probably any development along that line must start in a small way. Interest was created in Grand Junction by the recent announcement that an eastern concern planned the erection of woolen mills in Colorado. J.B. Summerhays learned that Colorado wool growers ship forty-eight percent of their wool clip to Boston. This necessitates long freight hauls. Grand Junction is the center of the largest wool producing district of the state.[2]

Hydroelectric possibilities are not utilized. The Public Service Company made public in 1931 plans which include the erection of two large hydroelectric plants in the valley within a year. One of these plants will be on the Colorado River near Palisade. This plant will have a capacity of about 20,000,000 kilowatt hours per year, nearly three times the total present consumption of the entire Grand Valley. The excess

will be available for industrial growth in Grand Junction for years to come. Surplus power will be turned into the main lines for use elsewhere. The other plant, on the Gunnison River west of the city, is primarily to supply the Redlands Reclamation project with power, and will replace the present plant. This plant will be capable of producing energy beyond the needs of the irrigation company.[3]

Deposits of oil shale lie a few tens of miles north of this region. If these deposits should be extensively developed in the future, the resultant industry would doubtless exert a marked effect on the economic conditions of Grand Junction and vicinity.[4]

The undeveloped and mineral resources of western Colorado are rich. Paradox Valley contains lead in great quantities, and almost inexhaustible beds of salt and commercial potash. Drilling for oil proved the thickness of these beds. Gold may be found in gravel bars of the Uncompahgre, San Miguel and Dolores rivers. Fertilizer shale exists in the Book Cliffs; gypsum in vast quantities is not far away; and barium is found on Pinon Mesa and near Gateway. The marble quarries of the district are barely touched. Tantalum is found near the Serpent's Trail. Blue and yellow sapphires have been brought in from the desert west of Grand Junction. Alkali has ruined crops in part of the valley; it is composed of valuable chemicals, the extraction of which would swell the wealth of the district. The carbon dioxide well in the Black Canyon can furnish enough concentrated ice to revolutionize our refrigeration.[5] What can be done with nature's deposits on the Western Slope depends on man's energy and the capital necessary for developing and marketing them.

Grand Junction is a center for the surrounding territory, which has contributed much to its development. Educational facilities have attracted population; five rural school districts send students to Grand Junction High School, thus bringing them and their parents in contact with the city. Excellent hospital facilities bring people to Grand Junction from a wide territory. The shopping district in Grand Junction is the best which is within reach of most western Colorado towns, and the out-of-town trade grows with improved transportation. Grand Junction will gain in importance as a wholesaling, jobbing, and manufacturing center as the population and wealth of the area it serves becomes greater.

Communities grow and prosper in part as a result of community spirit. The fact that western Colorado is isolated from the rest of the world has fostered a fraternal feeling which is of great value. This feeling extends to eastern Utah and northwestern New Mexico.

NOTES

[1]This is an estimate, based on careful observation; it is not statistics.
[2]*Daily Sentinel,* 23 August 1930, p. 1.
[3]*Ibid.,* 10 May 1931, p. 1.
[4]Letter, 21 February 1931, W.C. Mindenhall, Acting Director Geologic Survey, Washington, D.C.
[5]R.E. Meserve, "Mineral Resources in Western Colorado," *Daily Sentinel,* 10 May 1931, pp. 1, 2; T.W. Monell, "Western Colorado, a Field for Geological Research," *Daily Sentinel,* 18 May 1931, pp. 1, 2.

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