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J. Savage Library on the Campus of Western State College. The artist is Varina "Vari" Bradford, a senior Art major at Mesa State College. Vari Bradford grew up on a ranch near Gypsum, Colorado. After graduation, she plans to become a professional wildlife artist.

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Higher Education and Mesa State College: A Study of Roles and Influence

by Steve Scroggins

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An expression of appreciation accompanies this article because its production was due to the efforts of a number of individuals. The Board of Trustees of State Colleges in Colorado provided funds to each of its four schools to celebrate the centennial of the State College System. Because of the foresight and judgement of Dr. James Rybak, Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Paul Reddin, Professor of History, both at Mesa State College, these funds were designated for the production of this brief history of higher education and the defraying of its expense. It is to these people, the author wishes to extend his gratitude.

The State College System of Colorado, of which Mesa State College is an integral part, has been in existence since the first normal school for teacher training was established in Greeley in 1889. During the past 100 years, this system became the governing body for each state college and normal school. To understand the system of higher learning and its governance in Colorado, the author has found it necessary to look briefly at the history of higher education in the United States. Within this context, this study will review the inauguration of higher education in Colorado, and the development of the State College System. This study will focus on the governing of the institutions of higher learning from the Puritan church schools in colonial times to

the administration of Mesa State College by the Board of Trustees since 1972.

From colonial times to the present, and from Plymouth Colony to Grand Junction, education has played an important role in the lives of Americans. There has been a desire for education whether the reason was religious, utilitarian, or for self improvement. As America developed diverse dogmas and philosophies, an underlying question of who should control education remained an issue as much for early colonists of the eastern seaboard as it did for settlers along the Eastern Slope of Colorado. Issues of education and its control, with their foundations laid elsewhere, have had an impact on education on the Western Slope and, today, these issues are a part of the life of Mesa State College.

During the seventeenth century, the colonists of the New World of North America developed in a unique way, apart from the political and physical environment of their English and European origins. In a number of ways, the American colonists differed from their foreign relatives, one of which was their interest in education. Americans did not stand in awe of their ministers and government officials because the workings of the church and state held no mysteries for them. Colonists understood them better than the average European, not only because they had a large share in operating them, but also because they were better educated.[1]

Most Americans were Protestant, and Protestants believed individuals needed to read the scriptures to find religious truth. Therefore, they wanted to read and they wanted their children to learn how to read. The Protestant churches, held apart by doctrinal differences, believed firmly in the absolute correctness of their own interpretation of the scriptures. Sectarianism was bitter and had a marked effect on education. It meant that sects regarded education as of first importance in the maintenance of sectarianism. The education of children was controlled either in sectarian schools, or as in New England, in public schools which were controlled by the orthodox in the community.[2] The various churches, then, directed early education in America in order that their children continue in the faith of their fathers.

Puritan zeal for learning and the fact that New England settlements followed the township organization of closely settled communities led to the establishment of Latin grammar schools, installed by legislation and supported, in part, from the public funds of the towns themselves. Thus, almost from the start, New England had more schools in which classical training might be obtained than did the planting colonies to the south.[3] The Massachusetts general court passed legislation

requiring each town to institute some form of public education. The smaller towns were instructed to have a teacher, while towns with 100 families or more maintained a grammar school with a schoolmaster who could teach Greek and Latin.[4]

Country schools that existed in the middle colonies were maintained by churches in rural areas, while in the Southern colonies, "old field" schools were supported by neighboring farmers. By the end of the colonial period, these schools were enlarged and became "log colleges"[5] helping sons of ordinary farmers acquire some classical education.

Adults were able to continue their quest for knowledge by showing an interest in the printed page. By the middle of the eighteenth century, nearly every colony had a printing press, and the printer usually produced a weekly newspaper with news from abroad and from other colonies, as well as literary and political essays and verse. In addition, printers turned out broadsides, almanacs, pamphlets, and books, with local political issues often discussed in print. The most prolific of the colonial authors were the clergy, who had their sermons printed.[6]

There were educational opportunities in most communities for adults who could find the time to pursue them. Evening schools were advertised where one could learn mathematics, accounting, modern languages, and other subjects deemed necessary for success. Those with leisure time, like the merchants, officials, and some planters, often followed intellectual and cultural pursuits. The "academy," founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1744 and reorganized 25 years later as the American Philosophical Society, was one such organization in which men could participate.[7]

The need for higher education was addressed early in the colonial period, and, by 1770, nine colleges existed to provide an educated ministry and a political and social elite. Harvard College was the first, having been founded in 1636.[8] It offered students a traditional curriculum of the liberal arts found in European universities: grammar (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew), rhetoric, logic, mathematics, astronomy, physics, metaphysics, and moral philosphy. Theology was taught once a week on Saturday.[9] The other colonial colleges offered similar courses.

Colleges in colonial times were nearly all intended to advance the interests of religious sects. Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth were founded by the Puritans (New England Congregationalists). The College of New Jersey (Princeton) and many "log colleges" were established by the Presbyterians. The Church of England or Anglicans began work at the College of William and Mary and King's College (Columbia). Queen's College (Rutgers) was begun by the Dutch Reformed Church. Unlike these, Brown, established in Rhode Island, and the Philadelphia

Academy, the forerunner of the University of Pennsylvania, had members of various religious denominations on their boards of trustees.[10] The first Catholic college, Georgetown University, was founded in 1789.[11]

By the end of the colonial period, changes in higher education began to take place. Colleges broadened the traditionally classical and theologically weighted curriculum by offering more work in the modern languages and sciences. Such subjects were more useful to the merchants, civic leaders, and others in the non-clerical professions. Merchants and the clergy often disagreed about the philosophy of education. Merchants gave money and scientific apparatus in an attempt to secularize and modernize the curriculum,[12] while the clergy used their influence to maintain the traditional course of studies.

As the frontier advanced westward, churches and schools, both basic social institutions, seemed threatened in an environment where survival was more important than amenities. To help fledgling communities deal with the problem of education, the Congress of the newly formed United States passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 which set aside one section (640 acres) of land in each township of 36 sections to maintain local public schools.[13] This ordinance affected the northwest area of the new country, west of the Allegheny Mountains, which had become open for settlement. This ordinance ensured the continuation of education, and helped establish the government's involvement in it.

President George Washington, in his farewell address, declared that the diffusion of knowledge was essential for the welfare of the republic.[14] He believed two major changes had to take place in American education. First, a secularization of curriculum had to occur and, second, democratization of education had to develop. In other words, more pragmatic school work needed to replace classical and religious study, and education needed to be made available to everyone, regardless of their financial status.

Following the Revolution, religious authorities still controlled most schools. Because of the proliferation of religious sects and their different views of religious truth, no one wanted another's religious doctrines taught in schools which were supported in any way by public funds. Consequently schools taught secular subjects and religious instruction was left to the homes and Sunday schools.

In addition to the competition among the churches, other factors made the secularization of education necessary. The rise of factories and cities and the extension of the right to vote and hold office made it evident to far-sighted individuals that people in general would have to know more than they had before in order to vote intelligently and

take care of themselves properly. The large number of immigrants added urgency to the problem of providing education for the masses. These people needed to learn to read and write English and to acquire a knowledge of the geography and history of the new country. Strictly religious education had given way to new secular ideals.[15]

The second major change occurred gradually during the nineteenth century. Some reformers, revealing their debt to Jacksonian Democracy, as well as their sincere concern for the welfare of the common people, entered the crusade for free, tax-supported public education. In the early 1800s, except for Massachusetts, the children of the poor obtained their elementary education at home or in church or charity schools, while the children of the rich learned in private schools or from tutors.[16]

The struggle for tax supported schools was taken up by Horace Mann, the Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education. He journeyed throughout his home state, and to other states, pleading for the support of the taxpayers. In the two decades following 1830, Mann carried on the struggle. Noting the alarming contrasts between the rich and poor in his state, he maintained that "nothing but Universal Education can counterwork this tendency to the domination of capital and the servility of labor."[17] Education, he concluded, "is the great equalizer of the conditions of men.... It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich; it prevents being poor."[18] By the mid-nineteenth century, the battle for public responsibility had been fought and won, though in many states it took much longer for the idea to become a reality.

For most American children, formal education lasted only a few years in an elementary school. Secondary education was limited to those who could afford to pay the tuition to a private academy, where they took courses preparing them for college. After the Revolution, the number of academies increased greatly and almost completely displaced the Latin grammar schools in preparing students for college.[19]

Demand was growing for a public school, open to all without cost, to prepare children for the work of life rather than for college. This sentiment led to the birth of public high schools in the 1820s, first in Boston and later in New York. The schools were open to boys who had completed certain courses. They kept the boys for four to five years, giving them work in English, drawing, mathematics, surveying, navigation, bookkeeping, and other "practical" studies. The idea of public high schools spread very slowly and the battle for taxation had to be fought again. By 1860, there were no more than 100 high schools

in the country, and the private academy continued to prevail as the leading type of secondary school.[20]

Interest in adult education and the tradition of self-improvement so well exemplified by Benjamin Franklin in the previous century continued to develop. Since colleges served only a small fraction of the population, the mass of adults who thirsted for learning searched for more accessible roads to cultural advancement. The lyceum movement, a nationally organized program of adult education and entertainment, became popular.[21] The "penny press," magazines, debating societies, literary societies, and library associations were other examples of the cultural development of the nation.[22] Later in the century, Chautauquas, begun as a vehicle to train Sunday school teachers,[23] spread to New York and to other areas where lectures were held. Democratization of education had been extended to a variety of mediums and throughout the population.

One negative interpretation of the nation's zeal for education was that antebellum education tended to sacrifice quality for quantity. Too many colleges were founded, and too few truly well-based grade schools existed. There was the belief that "educators were producing a docile, industrious working class, literate enough to perform the tasks of the American economy, yet not educated, so to speak, beyond their station."[24] There were strong feelings about democracy in education, though most of the academic profession agreed with the head of Dickenson College in Philadelphia who believed that even though a few fine minds were lost for the want of a formal culture, "persons with uncouth and rugged minds" would be far better employed at a plow.[25] Still, the citizens supporting democratization were clearly in the majority.

The idea of free, tax-supported education also reached the college and university level. Leaders came to believe that education in all its branches should be free and open to everyone. The idea had germinated with the Land Ordinance of 1785 and had grown in the mind of Thomas Jefferson, who had devised a complete educational system for the state of Virginia. His plan incorporated a state run system of elementary schools, high schools, and a state university.[26] Though not brought to fruition, the plan remained in the minds of liberal educators and legislators who, following the War of 1812, favored more state involvement and ownership of colleges. Misguided attempts to convert private colleges to state ownership were thwarted by Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme Court.[27] Nevertheless, a clear call was given for newer states to embark on the establishment of truly public universities.

The answer to this call came in 1862, with legislation sponsored by James Morrill, a senator from Vermont. He proposed and obtained passage of the Morrill Federal Land-Grant Act of 1862 which conferred on each state 30,000 acres of public land for each senator and representative in its congressional delegation. This land was endowed to "promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." The proceeds from the sale of this land were to be invested and used to fund a college "to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts" as well as scientific and military subjects.[28] This act laid the foundation for a momentous expansion of a new type of higher education at government expense, which was particularly beneficial in the expanding areas of the West, whose educational development was in its infancy.

Demand for practical studies preceded the Morrill Act, but grew much stronger because of it. It was said that the schools should fit students for farming, for household management, for trades, professions, and other occupations in industrial life. In the West, the beginnings of professional education of teachers, doctors, ministers, and lawyers were established when the Western Literary Institute was founded in Cincinnati,[29] with the purpose of making the region less dependent on an imported supply of professionals from the East.

Following the Civil War, the Gilded Age brought on a need for requirements in the more technical and business world that was developing: The Civil War decade alone witnessed the foundation of twenty-five scientific institutions designed, like the new Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to train engineers and technicians for the new age of business enterprise.[30] Growth of industry created a demand for many specialists such as draftsmen, architects, and chemists; consequently, technical schools grew up very rapidly to meet this demand. A side effect of this new industrial age had an impact on colleges as well; fortunes made during this period went into the forming of new schools, many of which took on the names of their benefactors. These included Cornell, Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, Tulane, Stanford, and Clark. One notable exception was the University of Chicago which was founded in 1890 by the American Baptist Education Society with a $35 million investment by John D. Rockefeller.[31]

During the nineteenth century, the United States saw the development of more than 500 colleges, a number larger than the total in all of Europe.[32] These schools, founded with good intention, were mostly strongly sectarian, provincial, and undistinguished, while special interest colleges were called "bastions of separatism"[33] rather than of social

integration. Special interest also affected the governing of these schools, since choosing boards of trustees tended to follow the same pattern. Business leaders who replaced the clergymen on these boards were slow to acknowledge the status being claimed by the new scholar and were somewhat unable to distinguish between these and their relation to "other employees."[34]

In spite of differing viewpoints concerning the status of colleges in America, higher education had made a remarkable transition from a simple church school curriculum to that of universities containing a variety of schools with diverse programs. From the beginning of higher education in America at Harvard, the educational system matured and the college structure developed. The classical curriculum was broadened at the University of Virginia in 1819, and was fulfilled at Cornell in the 1870s where "any person can find instruction in any subject."[35] Johns Hopkins was built in 1876 on the model of the University of Berlin, determined to be an institution for advanced studies, "dedicated to research, human betterment, and material progress."[36] The University of Chicago was built to become a model American university. There, studies were organized into lower, upper, and advanced divisions, and a full array of professsional schools was established. With these developments toward the end of the 1900s and with the professionalization of the elite universities, the major innovations in higher education ended. With all its shortcomings, higher education in America had truly come of age.

The nineteenth century was a time of rapid growth and change for the United States. Colorado became a territory in 1861 primarily because of a gold rush and the need for government that came with the mining boom. Towns sprang up in the mountains and foothills close to the gold fields. Most important in the early history of the state and in the establishment of higher education was that strip of towns which stretched along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains from Fort Collins in the north to Pueblo in the south. This group of towns along the Front Range quickly became the population center of the state.

As these towns progressed through stages of development, community leaders realized that education was necessary to reproduce a "stable eastern society" and to foster economic growth.[37] A booster from Golden observed: "The social, literary, and moral influence of a college gives a place attraction and honor at once. It makes a city a very desirable place to live," attracting a "thrifty and choice population," and it is good for business.[38] Where towns were organized, colleges soon followed. Along the Front Range, eleven institutions of higher education were established by 1890. This period of college

building expressed the desire of many to build "a cultural commonwealth and affirmed the Coloradan's faith in the practical application of learning"[39] to the businesses and industries of the new state.

As the territory changed and diversified, mining operations changed as well. By 1870, placer mining discoveries were gone and hard rock mining became the method of recovering ore. This new method of extraction required technological expertise, which prompted the territorial legislature to appropriate funds for the instruction of mining and geology. Residents found this study unexcelled in "utility of purpose and magnificence of results, both scientific and politico-economical."[40] Golden's claim to and success in acquiring the School of Mines was due to its proximity to the mine fields and to its loss of the state capitol to Denver.

Other schools quickly followed. With the assistance of the federal government through the Morrill Act, Colorado leaders were determined to found both a state university and an agricultural college. Competition was keen for these and other "plums of politics" for aspiring towns in the new state. The colleges and university, together with the penitentiary, insane asylum, and state capitol building, were all strongly contested and awarded through the familiar processes of log-rolling and political horse trading. Votes were difficult to come by and decisions were often very close. After much political wrangling and balloting, Boulder received a majority of the votes and became the official site of the state university. Boulder's success was due to the tenacity of its representative and to the jealousy of many legislators who did not want to see Denver get the school.[41]

Fort Collins won the fight for the agricultural school, after Canon City elected to take the penitentiary.[42] The deciding vote on the first building appropriation for the agricultural school was cast by a Pueblo legislator who was not convinced of the need for the school in the first place. "I feel," he was reported to have said, "as if it was throwing money away, for you never can make Colorado an agricultural state. It is fit for cow pasture and mining."[43] The need for a state university was also questioned by some. The Greeley *Tribune* observed: "There are not probably 25 young people in the Territory who, at present, could afford to attend the University and take the regular course." It was argued that "it would be cheaper" to provide subsidies to send all Colorado students "to some Eastern college."[44]

Horace Greeley and the townspeople of Greeley had fought against Boulder for the university and against Fort Collins for the agricultural college. In 1874, Greeley wooed the Congregationalists for the new liberal arts school, Colorado College, but lost out to Colorado Springs.

When statehood was achieved in 1876, the only institution of higher education not yet established was the normal school. Greeley finally won this in 1889, despite the determined efforts of the people of Salida, Poncha Springs, Buena Vista, and Gunnison. One inducement for such competition among towns was that citizens knew that college towns did not become ghost towns.

In less than fifteen years after its birth, Colorado had four major public institutions of education: the University of Colorado, opened in 1877; the Agricultural College of Colorado, opened in 1879; the Colorado School of Mines, opened in 1874; and the State Normal School, which opened in 1890. At least three notable private institutions had been established by 1890 as well. The University of Denver began in 1864 as a seminary for Methodist students. The Colorado College in Colorado Springs was founded by the Congregationalists with classes beginning in 1874, and Regis College, a Catholic school, began operation in Morrison in 1884.[45]

The development of higher education in Colorado replicated the standard pattern of higher education in other Western States: "yeasty optimism, energetic faith in progress and a speculative bent, religious dedication and sectarian interest, provential pride and a genuine commitment to learning."[46] In other words, those principles that led men to establish schools in the East were taking root in the "colonial" West.

From the outset, Colorado's colleges and university were committed to the conjoined democratic ideals of equal opportunity, curricular utility, and public service. There was also a strong desire to make higher education relevant to the life of the state as well as its social welfare, economic development, and cultural uplift. This dedication was expressed in terms of the democratic principle essential to the maintenance of social mobility and political liberty. This was the heart of the Horatio Alger ethic to which the promoters of education in Colorado so warmly subscribed.

The value of practicality was stressed in the curriculum early in Colorado schools. As President Z.X. Snyder, a Darwinian biologist, liked to tell his students at Greeley, "the beet root took precedence over the Greek root as a subject for study."[47] The two technical institutions, the School of Mines and the Agricultural College, were explicitly commissioned to advance the development of Colorado's natural resources by scientific research and experiment. For example, the Agricultural College was the first in the nation to offer systematic training in irrigation engineering and the first to establish a four year curriculum in the subject.[48] In addition to precious metals

experimentation, the School of Mines, udner the direction of President Victor C. Alderson, worked closely with the state and federal governments in the testing of oil shale retort methods.[48]

In the all important quest for visibility, each institution addressed iself to an appropriate set of publics. The technical schools spoke to their respective constituencies on the farms, ranches, and in the mines. The normal school appealed to the parents and teachers of children in the elementary schools. The University of Denver regarded its home city as its private domain, while the University of Colorado took the entire state as its province. Publicizing each school fell to the local newspaper editor, who, for motives of commerce or culture, "greeted each new founding with outbursts of rejoicing."[49] They proved to be enthusiastic advocates of their respective local institution.

As programs developed and schools grew, competition for students and money from the state intensified. Around the turn of the century, the Agricultural College and the University of Colorado quarreled over the question of engineering education and who should supply it. Early in the twentieth century, the University and the Normal School battled over the training of high school teachers. At stake was the professional dignity of normal schools, who longed to become full-fledged teachers colleges, but were more often looked down on by other schools. All parties involved agreed that duplication shold be eliminated, but no one would concede that its particular offerings were unnecessary. Consequently, duplications were ultimately allowed to stand.[50]

Local rivalries, the diverse geography of the state, and political considerations produced a decentralized system in Colorado, with each institution placed under the authority of a local and separate board of control. This system opened the door to incessant controversy and political agitation. The colleges themselves, fully aware of the risks, deplored their own entanglement in politics. "I want to maintain my self respect," said Charles A. Lory, "and I despise the necessity of being compelled to go before the legislature and gumshoe for a few dollars. There is nothing I hate worse than to appear before that body, but if I don't we get no money."[51] Until the schools could find a way to settle their differences privately, higher education would continue to pay the price of decentralization.

Consolidating the management of higher education was the most discussed way to cut costs. This could be accomplished by fusing the institutions at a central location, or by unifying the management of the schools under the Board of Regents of the University, which had been established by the state constitution, or by a new board. Often, the argument for consolidation paid little attention to educational value,

and rarely did it rise above the proposition of economy for economy's sake. On the other hand, once a community had secured a school, they would not give it up. Several attempts at consolidation failed by very narrow margins; consequently, a fragmented and localized system continued.

With the financial pie being cut into so many pieces, it was a wonder that so many of the early colleges survived. But, then, there was no Darwinian corrective. No public institution, no matter how inefficient, was ever abandoned. As President Samuel Quigley of Western State College said years later, "State established schools do not die, they just struggle forward."[52] So the "time-honored" fight for appropriations began early in Colorado, and had the inevitable side effects. "I know," said one instructor, "we are not supposed to be in this calling for the love of money ... but the love of teaching will not pay the house rent and the coal bill."[53] The trickle down affected everyone involved.

In addition to the need for state funds, Colorado colleges needed a steady flow of students. In order for that to occur, educational improvement and consolidation were needed in the public schools of the state. Rural school districts in sparsely poulated areas on the plains and in the mountains were dominated by the one room school, and, since most of them were ungraded, they hindered high school development. Consolidated schools would make it possible for boys and girls to get a high school education, provide them with better training, and give them the prerequisites for higher education.

Consolidation campaigns were launched around the state, and in November, 1909, the first success was reported from Mesa County on the state's Western Slope. Realizing the importance of consolidation, the Agricultural College in Fort Collins took up the cause in 1912. The school appointed C. G. Sargent the superintendent of schools for Mesa County, giving him the title of Rural School Visitor. Sargent had engineered three consolidations in Mesa County and had helped with others in Delta and Montrose Counties. From the time of his appointment in 1912 until 1932, he conducted an unrelenting campaign against the one room school. He entertained no displaced nostalgia for the one room, little red schoolhouse or the rugged individualism which, he argued, depressed the standards of education in many rural districts. On the inefficiencies of these rural districts, he acidly stated, each one is "ready to fight to perpetuate its imagined 'independence'" and its right "to have as poor a school as it pleases."[54] With Sargent's constant prodding, these schools which had educated youngsters from the ages of six to sixteen for from three to nine months of the year, slowly became only a piece of history.

Another method used to attract students to college was to train their teachers, which became the purpose of normal schools in the United States. The formal training of teachers for elementary school age children commenced in the middle of the nineteenth century. Over a period of time, normal schools changed from programs hardly more sophisticated than high school curricula to those resembling legitimate collegiate institutions.

When Greeley was given the normal school for Colorado, legislation was passed making it part of the state's public school system, to "stand upon the same basis as ... union high schools"[55] in the appropriation of state funds. The Senate bill established a six person board of trustees to govern the school, subject to an important check. The discharge of their duties was often contingent on "the advice and consent of the faculty," including the determination of the books to be used and the "rules, regulations, and by-laws" necessary for "good management" at the school.[56]

On July 1, 1889, the trustees were organized with John M. Wallace as their first Board President. The new board was strongly influenced by its host community and the tight-knit group of business leaders who made up the trustees were determined to make the school an "integral part of [a] well matured state educational scheme."[57] After hiring Thomas J. Gray as the normal school's first president, the trustees sent him east to purchase equipment and supplies, and then began advertising for students. After only seventeen months, the normal school opened its doors for classes, much quicker than the nine years it took the Agricultural College and the sixteen years it took to open the University of Colorado.

During the first school year, President Gray put together an experiment in student teaching, whereby students would be placed in local schools for training. The results of the experiment were complete failure as the students were not well prepared due to mistakes in the poorly planned experiment. Largely because of this fiasco, Greeley schools did not permit student teachers in their classrooms again until 1948.[58]

Gray had shaky relations with the Board of Trustees almost from the start. His failed experiment, coupled with his strict policies with students, made him unpopular. Also, dealing with a determined board made it difficult for an independent thinking administrator to do his job. Two days after the school's first commencement on June 6, 1891, the Greeley *Sun* announced Gray's resignation.[59] In the aftermath of the resignation, it was clear that localism (few students living more than 50 miles from

Greeley attended), local control, and a strong board had all contributed to Gray's frustration.

Greeley was not the only college town having trouble because of an interfering board. Meddling from the Board of Agriculture prompted the resignation of President Ingersoll of the Fort Collins school. Both towns apparently learned from their mistakes, because they paid their next presidents handsomely. However, area newspapers chastised the boards for the high salaries and the General Assembly promptly reduced both men's pay in 1898.[60]

The new president at the State Normal School, Dr. Z.X. Snyder, immediately sought parity with other state institutions. Snyder pushed to add secondary education to the curriculum, which was being offered only in Boulder. The president of the University of Colorado sought, at the same time, to elevate the status of his own teacher education program and a bill was passed in 1909 allowing the university to grant teaching certificates to graduates of liberal arts colleges.[61]

At the turn of the twentieth century, the training of teachers differed at universities and at normal schools. Teacher training at the university was for high school and college instructors. They also had departments of education which were relatively new to most state universities. Teacher education at normal schools was for elementary school teachers, who allegedly did not need knowledge beyond the fundamentals. In an insulting reference to the female majority of students in Greeley, the regents of the University said that they hoped the state would never have to "entrust the training of future citizens to little girls"[62] from the normal school. By 1911, the State Normal School won a major decision when a bill to exclude normal school teachers from secondary schools failed. The school's name was also changed to the State Teachers College. Dr. Snyder had the school well on the way to respectability.

During his administration of twenty-five years, Dr. Snyder brought innovations and elevated the standards of instruction, making the State Normal School one of the best teacher training institutions in the nation. He began summer schools to assist teachers in furthering their education, and the Greeley school became the first of its kind in the nation to require a high school diploma of its matriculants. The programs and teaching methods employed at Greeley set a standard for the other normal schools soon to be formed within the state.

Other towns that had fought Greeley for the state's first normal school in the 1880s continued to contend for a school in their area. On the Western Slope, several towns argued that a normal school was needed on their side of the mountains due to the great distance students

had to travel to Eastern Slope schools, which was difficult at any time of the year, but particularly hazardous and often impossible in the winter. Also, they believed the Western Slope needed a normal school to train teachers in that part of the state.

During the last part of the nineteenth century, Gunnison had developed into a mining and smelting center and, for a time, was the largest and most important community in the newly opened area of the state. As early as 1885, the town had attempted to obtain an institution of higher education. In that year, State Senator Archie M. Stevenson introduced a bill for the establishment of the first normal school in Gunnison. The Senate passed the bill, but the House rejected it and Gunnison lost out to Greeley.[63]

At the turn of the century, Gunnison continued to try to obtain a normal school; however, it was no longer the only town of importance in the region. Legislators from Durango, Montrose, and Grand Junction presented their own proposals for colleges in their towns, but because of the factional politics involved, the General Assembly abandoned any action. Finally, in 1901, Gunnison overcame its rivals on both sides of the mountains and obtained a normal school. Fighting over the funding of the school persisted for the next eight years with Delta, Glenwood Springs, Trinidad, and Pueblo joining Durango, Montrose, and Grand Junction. At one point, Governor Buchtel privately urged Pueblo to make a strong effort "to keep Dr. Snyder in balance. He is very anxious to make a normal University at Greeley."[64]

Gunnison's strongest opposition came from Grand Junction, which was now the larger town of the two and whose leaders coveted the school for themselves. After vote trading and ballot stuffing charges, Governor Buchtel spoke to the Assembly in favor of Grand Junction. But Gunnison had a shrewd politician in Senator Sapp, and on May 5, 1909, Governor John F. Shafroth signed a bill into law providing money for building construction of a normal school in Gunnison.[65] After a twenty-five year effort, Gunnison had an institution for higher learning. The joyous Gunnison *News-Champion* could hardly contain its glee. Expressing its euphoria, its headlines read:

> We Have Secured The Western Slope Normal School At Gunnison. Hard Work and Persistence Won The Day. It Will Bring Other Good Things. It Will Win Broad-Gauging of the Colorado and Southern Extension To Delta. It Will Win a Smelter. It Will Win Manufactures. This is the Turn of the Tide. Now Is The Time To Push GUNNISON! Sure To Double and Probably Triple Our Population in Five Years. Things Coming Our Way.[66]

Most Western Slope towns conceded victory and papers expressed congratulations from both sides of the mountains. A notable exception was the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* which reported:

> It is folly to think of Gunnison as an ideal locality for a normal school for the Western Slope of Colorado. It is not ideal for climate, central location, and the winters are too dreadfully cold to invite considerable attendance from elsewhere in Western Colorado.[67]

Needless to say, the attitude between the two towns was confrontational and competition remained strong for years to follow.

The administration of the operation of the normal school at Gunnison was vested in the board of trustees which governed the normal school in Greeley. President Snyder became head of the new school, but he delegated most of his authority to the local principal, since he operated the school *in absentia.*[68] Thus, the administration of the school was placed in the hands of men who had strongly opposed its establishment.

On September 13, 1911, the Colorado State Normal School opened at Gunnison with eighty students registered for the normal elementary program (high school) and twenty-four enrolled in the advanced or college level program. Students were admitted to the elementary level courses upon certification from the eighth grade of a grammar school, or its equivalent. High school graduates could enter the advanced program with the possibility of completing the degree requirements within two years. The applicants, mostly female, were required to give evidence of high moral character, and had to be free from any contagious disease.[69]

Several times during the early years, it was predicted the school at Gunnison would have to close, but, by 1919, it was fully launched as an academic institution on the college level. In spite of continued attempts by Grand Junction leaders to move the college there, the Board of Trustees continued to extend the program. The school's new president, Dr. Samuel Quigley, pushed a bill through the Colorado General Assembly, making the institution a liberal arts college with a professional school of education. The bill also changed the name to the Western State College of Colorado.[70]

In the San Luis Valley of South Central Colorado, the people of Alamosa desired a normal school. Efforts to establish a third normal school for the state began as early as 1893, when William H. "Billy" Adams, a San Luis Valley rancher and legislator, introduced a bill to establish an academy in the Alamosa area. The bill passed both houses, but was vetoed by Governor Davis H. Waite.[71] Adams, who served

forty years in the State Senate and three terms as Governor, continued to push. Finally, in 1921, the Adams State Normal School was authorized and the Board of Trustees of State Normal Schools took over administration duties in 1924.[72] President Quigley of Western State opposed the school, charging that it was the product of "sheer political trading. Future futile struggle for funds [are] inevitable. Will increase weakness in all old schools and new ones will not be strong."[73] Quigley used the same arguments against Adams State that others had leveled against his school in its formation.

Adams State developed as a distinctively local institution because of the barrier of mountains that surrounded it, just as the San Luis Valley had become a largely self-contained and independent area, both socially and economically. "There is ... no reason," proclaimed the Alamosa *Courier*, "for students to go outside of the San Luis Valley for their advanced education."[74] There were also few compelling reasons for outsiders to come in. In its infancy, the horizons of Adams State were limited to the mountainous skyline that surrounded the valley.

The decade of the 1920s was an unusual time for higher education in Colorado. Undergraduate and professional enrollments had advanced to nearly 7,000 students and the "big three" schools had seen tremendous growth.[75] There was, however, an economic slump following World War I, which, added to the "red scare" and anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiments, brought an upsurge in Ku Klux Klan activity across the state. At its peak, the Klan boasted of 50,000 members in Colorado; bases of influence in Pueblo, Boulder, Canon City, Grand Junction, and Gunnison; and substantial political power in Denver. For two years, the Klan managed the government of Colorado, with Clarence Morley, a Klan member, as governor.[76] The Klan used its influence to block appropriations to Adams State, for Senator Adams had mobilized a majority coalition of Democrats and Republicans able to deny most of the Klan's programs. Adams wrested power from Morley in 1926 by being elected governor, but the Klan retaliated against Western State by forcing the resignation of President Quigley.[77]

The fear of communism left a legacy of panic in the form of a loyalty oath for teachers in both public and private schools at every level of the educational system of Colorado. This allowed groups such as the American Legion to single out teachers suspected of pacifism. George F. Trager, a teacher at Adams State, who defended due process and equal rights for communists, drew fire from members of the Alamosa Legion. "Now Ed," one of them wrote Governor Edwin C. Johnson, "It's get some action on this and for God sake clean out these reds as soon as we find them."[78] Governor Johnson asked President

Ira Richardson of Adams State to find some quiet way to terminate Trager, but the president turned away the attempt and the episode was soon over.

Other less serious incidents also were cause for alarm in their respective communities. In 1922, lurid reports were beng spread of orgies on the campus at the University of Colorado. Also, a bootlegging club was broken up at the Greeley Teachers College in 1923,[73] in a town which was founded as a "dry" community.

The struggle for appropriations became even more intense in the 1920s when several towns which had previously failed to get four year schools were able to obtain two year institutions. Colorado moved to the forefront of the junior college movement in 1925 when Trinidad and Grand Junction were assigned junior colleges. Fort Lewis School of Agriculture, which had operated as a high school since 1911, advanced to the junior college ranks in 1927.[80] The older schools had at first endorsed the junior college concept, believing it would provide them with more students. However, the smaller piece of the financial pie for everyone caused most schools to have a change of heart. There were many who thought that decentralization had been carried far enough. It was time Colorado learned to "exercise birth control." Others wonderd out loud whether or not "politically inspired" institutions such as Adams State and Western State ought to be abandoned altogether. "If an institution of learning cannot function, why make the bluff?"[81]

Undaunted, the community leaders of Grand Junction had worked since the turn of the century to obtain a college. From the well documented contest with Gunnison over the normal school beginning in 1899 to the founding of the junior college in 1925, the history of the efforts of the community is one of perseverance. Realizing the loss of the normal school, attempts were made to build extensions of Colorado A. and M. and of the University of Colorado, while several businessmen strived to form a university for technical studies. The Western University of Industries, Sciences and Arts was incorporated in 1907,[82] with the hope of acquiring the Teller Institute, a school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and designed for Indian instruction. The institute was closed in 1909, and later deeded to the state, which converted it to a mental hospital, ending local notions of its use as a college.

In 1919, with the founding of the Grand Junction Rotary Club, a concerted effort by three charter members to establish a junior college commenced. Walter Walker, publisher of the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel;* O.E. Bannister, local business leader and State Senator; and

(Courtesy of Mesa College Archives)
The Lowell School Building, built in 1884, was used for college classes from 1925 to 1939.

Richard Tope, superintendent of Grand Junction schools, contributed substantial efforts for the cause. After a legislative attempt in 1921 fell to Governor Oliver H. Shoup's veto, Senator Bannister introduced a new bill in 1925, which passed the Senate.[83]

Mesa County Representative C.J. McCormick sponsored similar legislation in the House, but ran into opposition from Ku Klux Klan supporters. McCormick, an anti-Klan spokesman, realized that, in order to gain support for his bill, he would have to compromise with Klan forces. In doing so, he vowed to retire from politics.[84] In April, 1925, the House passed the legislation and Governor Morley signed the bill into law creating the Grand Junction Junior College.[85]

Grand Junction finally had its college, though financing was meager. The legislation provided $2,500 for improvements, but gave no funds for the ongoing support of the school. Local individuals, organizations, and students financed the operation for the first twelve years.[86] The first classes were held in upper story rooms in the county courthouse and in a run down, former school building called the old Lowell building, located at Fifth Street and Rood Avenue. Mary Rait, the school's first history

teacher, claimed, "We had more pigeons than students the first year. The attic was full of them."[87]

Dr. L. L. Hydle was selected as the first dean of the school, and also served as the director of extension services for the University of Colorado on the Western Slope. In 1927, the University discontinued paying Dr. Hydle and, generally, made it difficult for him to do his job, so that, by 1928, he found it necessary to resign. Mr. O.N. Marsh was chosen by the local board as the new dean, and he served until his death in 1931.[88]

The junior college's third dean, Dr. Clifford Houston, served the school from 1931 to 1937. His tenure was marked by his efforts to solidify the school and its programs. He solicited funds to meet payrolls, visited outlying areas to recruit students, and helped lay the foundation for a strong college. Dr. Houston, along with Mesa County Representative Wayne Aspinall and State Senator Bannister, pushed legislation through the General Assembly creating junior college districts throughout the state.[89] These districts raised funds for their local junior colleges by establishing a property tax, while the state provided $100 per year for each student attending the school. The legislation also provided for the election of a local governing board to administer the school.

Horace Wubben took over the presidential reins of the new Mesa College and immediately set about an expansion program for the school. In its early days, the school had acquired thirty-seven acres on Capital Hill, north of town, for a future building site.[90] In 1937, the board decided the location was not ideal (it would later become the location of St. Mary's Hospital) and purchased ten acres at Twelfth Street and North Avenue. The first building at this new location was authorized and, with financial assistance from the Public Works Administration, construction began. In 1940, the college moved into its new home in the building that would later be named Houston Hall, and a new era at Mesa College began.

During the time of his administration, President Wubben developed the school's curriculum, reclassified courses, and expanded the size of the campus and its physical plant. By the time of his retirement in 1963, Mesa had grown from being a small community college, to one whose influence and reputation had spread throughout the intermountain West.

Dr. William Medesy took over as president in 1963, and set about extending the expansion process begun by his predecessor. Under his seven year leadership, six buildings were constructed, including the library-administration building, the Fine Arts Center, and the

(Courtesy of Mesa College Archives)

Dr. Clifford Houston, Dean of Grand Junction Junior College from 1931 to 1937.

(Courtesy of Mesa College Archives)

Horace Wubben, President of Mesa College from 1937 to 1963, led the school through much curriculum growth and its move to the North Avenue site.

Vocational and Technical Building. He instigated a professional management philosophy for both the faculty and facilities. Growing enrollments and notoriety testified to the fact that Mesa College was indeed a viable force in the development of higher education in Colorado.

Mesa College was not the only school achieving remarkable growth in the 1960s. Throughout the state, expansion of higher education was unprecedented. The state colleges were on solid financial footing because of the enlargement of their student populations which occurred, in part, because of the growth of the junior colleges. Pueblo Junior College, the state's largest two year institution, was transformed by local and state action in 1961 into Southern Colorado State College and joined the other teachers colleges as part of the State College System. In 1963, Metropolitan State College was created and became a commuter college for the students of the Denver area. It, too, was added to the state college system. Colorado Teachers College in Greeley continued its success and achieved university status in 1970. The new University of Northern Colorado then left the ranks of state colleges and the board that had nurtured it throughout its eighty year history.[91]

Until the middle of the 1960s, the Trustees of the State Colleges in Colorado served, in effect, as a separate board for each of the state colleges. The board had a fairly easy task of managing these colleges since they had presidents who were outstanding administrators and who remained with their respective schools for extended periods of time. Dr. George W. Frazier became president of the Colorado Teachers College in 1924 and led it until his retirement in 1948. During this time, there were no real controversies between him and the Trustees. He was allowed to administer the affairs of the school as he saw fit because the Trustees "left the administration of the college to his judgement."[93] Adams State College was under the capable leadership of Dr. Ira Richardson from 1925 until 1950.[93]

The Trustees never had the power of the University of Colorado's Board of Regents or of Colorado State University's Board of Agriculture. There was no board staff until 1962, and even then there were only the executive secretary and his clerical staff. It had only been since 1965 that the board began to take steps to deal with the colleges as a unified group of institutions.

Before the growth of the 1960s, higher education was a relatively small segment of state activity, with governors and legislative committees attempting to fulfill the educational needs of the state. Because of this growth, the issue was raised of how to best plan, coordinate, and govern higher education in Colorado. To that end,

legislation was passed in 1965, establishing the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.[94] The CCHE was created as a coordinating agency whose purpose was to strengthen the total system of higher education in the state. It quickly became, in the opinion of many, more of a governing board in actuality. State Trustees felt that CCHE "almost appropriated the money to us on line item: You spend this on this and this for this."[95] Thus, from the beginning, an adversarial situation developed. On the surface, higher education seemed healthy, but there were growing undercurrents of problems relating to growth. Higher education had begun in Colorado as a decentralized system, but by the 1960s, a centralized form of administration began to unfold at the instigation of legislators and executives in Denver.

By the end of the 1960s, the CCHE began studying the concerns of higher education in the state. A study was commissioned to inventory the needs and potential of the various geographic regions of the state.[96] About the same time, the directors of the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce and the board of the Industrial Developments, Incorporated held a two day retreat to discuss remedies for the sluggish economy affecting the Grand Junction area in 1967. One of the ideas that came out of these meetings was that there was a vital need for additional opportunities in higher education in the Grand Valley. A group of these men, headed by Ray Beckner of IDI began gathering information concerning the feasibility of a four year school in Grand Junction.[97]

The Chamber came up with a plan with four options for providing additional educational opportunities:

> 1. Create a State sponsored and financed four year degree granting institution.
> 2. Seek out a private or church oriented group that would create a four year school.
> 3. Request the state of Colorado to create a new upper division and graduate institution in the Grand Junction area.
> 4. Expand Mesa College into a four year baccalaureate program.[98]

The community appeared to be generally opposed to the possibility of changing Mesa College, since it had long been interlocked with the community and was considered to be one of the best junior colleges in the nation. As the decision to move forward was made, however, the plan was met with growing approval.

The Chamber group soon became aware of the efforts of CCHE in studying the needs of the state and the commission's finding a need for baccalaureate programs in the Grand Junction area. The CCHE

(Courtesy of Mesa College Archives)

Dr. William Medesy continued to expand college programs and facilities during his administration, from 1963 to 1970.

(Courtesy of Allen Porter)

Dr. Theodore "Ted" Albers, President from 1970 to 1974, led Mesa College as it expanded to a four-year degree program and full accreditation.

had authorized a study of the Central Western Colorado area and the firm of Baxter, McDonald, and Company agreed that a significant need existed and a school would have "important economic, cultural, and social consequences."[99] The study reported that the desire for an institution was justified, but that the only feasible option was the expansion of Mesa College.[100]

A proposal for a change in status of Mesa College to a four year institution was drafted and placed on the Governor's Call in 1972. Because of the efforts of State Senator Chet Enstrom and Representatives T. John Baer, Jr. and Dick Woodfin, along with William Foster, a local attorney and CCHE member, and with the support of Governor John Love, the bill was approved and signed in 1972. Mesa was to become part of the State College System by 1974.[101]

In the midst of these plans to modify the college, the Mesa College board hired a new president to replace Dr. Medesy. Dr. Theodore "Ted" Albers became president in 1970 and immediately set about the task of working with the college board, community leaders, and concerned faculty whose opinions ranged from consternation to delight over the changes that were takng place. By the end of the transitional period in 1974, Mesa County voters approved a plan to dissolve the junior college district, Dr. Albers had overseen the development of a baccalaureate curriculum and full accreditation for the institution, but in 1974, he became seriously ill and retired.

Dr. Carl Wahlberg, the Assistant to the President under Dr. Albers, served as Interim President until the summer of 1975, when Dr. John Tomlinson was selected as the seventh president of the college since its founding in 1925 and the first president of the new four year institution.[102] It became Dr. Tomlinson's task to complete the transition from planning the expansion of Mesa College to putting the objectives into concrete programs.

Throughout the transition period, planning groups and committees met to discuss various program and coursework options to be offered at Mesa. Innovative programs, such as a three year baccalaureate plan, were considered along with non-traditional programs already a major part of the college structure. The objectives which were incorporated into the Mesa College plan were the traditional liberal arts and sciences, as well as vocational-technical training, technologies, and adult education,[103] areas Mesa College had already utilized as a strong foundation. These programs had served as an important connection between the college and the community and had produced a strong bond between them.

Dr. Tomlinson enjoyed a honeymoon period for a time after his arrival because, he believed, the big decisions concerning the college had already been made. He did, however, face his own set of difficulties. None of the people who made up his staff had any experience in the administration of a four year institution. Also, the majority of the instructors had backgrounds that had taken them from the high school classroom, to the junior college, and ultimately to a four year college. He felt pressure from local interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the *Daily Sentinel,* though the paper was generally favorable.[104]

Perhaps the greatest change the college faced, aside from the addition of a four year program, was the elimination of local control through advisory and governing boards. The administration answered directly to the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges, which, in turn, answered to CCHE, and to the State Legislature, through the Joint Budget Committee.

Fear of being treated as a step child to the other colleges was not well founded. In fact, Mesa College had been given more funds for its transition than had Southern Colorado State College in Pueblo.[105] Relations were good with the other state schools, though Western State College remained cool toward Mesa, since it found itself in direct competition for students and programs. Common administration of the schools led to cooperative programs which otherwise could not have been offered at Mesa.

Dr. Tomlinson set about the task of solidifying the curriculum at Mesa and was able to attract support for the school from area businesses. The vocational-technical program, looked down on by most colleges, was expanded under Dr. Tomlinson and included training for workers having an immediate impact on the local economy. Sundstrand, Coors Porcelain, and Marmot, among others, were companies involved with training workers through the facilities of Mesa College.[106] Initially hurt by the recession following the latest energy boom-bust cycle, Mesa quickly recovered, with the downturn in the economy boosting enrollment at Mesa College because adults returned to school looking to get an education which would lead to more secure employment.

As Mesa felt more at home in the State Collge System, it found itself benefitting from salutory neglect.[107] The other schools in the system were having difficulties, with SCSC going through another transition. The Pueblo school attained university status, becoming the University of Southern Colorado, and was placed with CSU under the Board of Agriculture.[108] Searches for new presidents were being