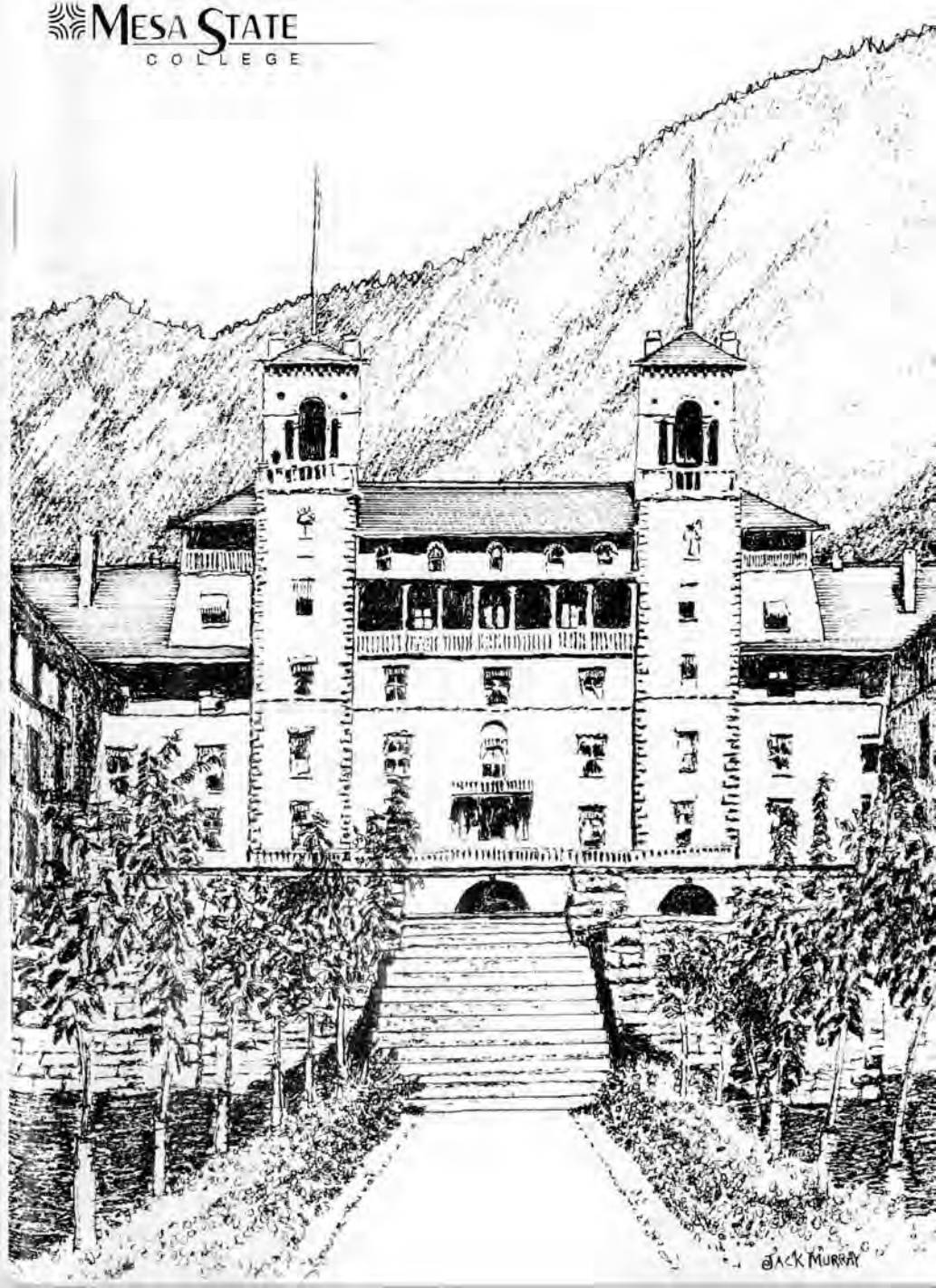
JOURNAL OF THE WESTERN SLOPE

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2 **SPRING 1994**

MESA STATE COLLEGE



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Mesa State College
Journal of the Western Slope
P.O. Box 2647
Grand Junction, CO 81502

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JOURNAL OF THE WESTERN SLOPE

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THE COVER: The drawing of the Hotel Colorado is by John H. "Jack" Murray, who has provided the JOURNAL OF THE WESTERN SLOPE with many outstanding cover illustrations over the years. Mr. Murray currently works in his studio in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Contents

The Hotel Colorado: Playground of the Rich and Famous

by Tonya Stites

The Hotel Colorado, which sits majestically upon Iron Mountain in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, has for one hundred years graced the Roaring Fork Valley. For much of this time the hotel was a gathering place for the rich and famous, including several presidents of the United States.

Hotel Colorado was the dream of Walter Devereux, a dream that was realized in 1893. Devereux and his brothers were miners in Aspen before they gained wealth in coal mining. Desiring a place to spend their wealth on material comforts like those available in the East, Devereux set out to realize his dream of a grand hotel. The hotel could not be built, however, until after the railroad had arrived in Glenwood Springs, providing transportation for both building materials and eventual clientele. [1]

On October 5, 1887 the Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad arrived in Glenwood Springs via Glenwood Canyon, giving Glenwood Springs connections to Aspen and Denver and making Devereux's hotel project financially feasible. Then on December 12 of the same year the Colorado Midland Railroad arrived in Glenwood Springs, giving the city a second connection with the outside world and a direct connection with Colorado Springs. The Midland also built a bridge across the Roaring Fork River in order to run a spur line up to the west side of Devereux's hotel.[2] Both railroads advertised luxurious Pullman sleeping cars with smoking rooms for maximum comfort.[3]

A major attraction in Glenwood Springs was the city's hot springs. Jonas

Lundigren was the first settler to use the hot springs commercially, placing a wooden tub at the springs and charging ten cents per bath — without privacy or frills, of course. The water was taken from the Yampah Springs and poured into the tub, then cooled with water from the river.[4] In 1887 the hot springs area was purchased for $125,000 by the Colorado Land and Improvement Company (soon to become Glenwood Hot Springs Company), headed by Walter Devereux[5], and the new owners proceeded to develop the natural springs.

A *natorium* (swimming pool) was the first built. It was three and a half to five feet deep with two thousand gallons of hot water pouring into the pool per minute. The water temperature ranged from 93 to 98 degrees Fahrenheit. In the center of the pool a fountain provided a shower of cold water.[6]

In 1888 Austrian architect Theodore von Rosenburg was hired to design and construct bathhouses alongside the natorium. The bathhouses were built by James Goldie in the Roman style, utilizing "peach blow" bricks transported by the Midland from the Frying Pan quarry on the Roaring Fork River.[7] When completed the complex contained forty-four large and well-ventilated bathrooms, complete with dressing and lounging rooms, all with electricity. The bathhouses also had a ladies' parlor, a physician's office, smoking and reading rooms, and reception rooms, while the second floor was furnished with a gambling casino for the gentlemen.[8]

On the east side of the bath houses was the *inhalatorium*. In this building guests inhaled the foggy healing vapors from the Yampah water. A cocktail spring was located nearby, where health-imparting mineral water was served to guests by Bartow Duncan, an African-American employee of the inhalatorium.[9]

The vapor caves along the canyon were developed also, where guests clad in heavy linen bags sat on elegant marble benches to take luxurious steam baths. Men and women had alternate time periods to use the vapor caves.[10]

A Dr. Schmitz from Holland was the resident physician. He claimed the mineral water could heal ailments such as headaches and nervous strain from work. Schmitz formed a partnership with Charles F. Chandler to establish a small plant to bottle the health-giving spring water and soon began to ship it world-wide.[11]

After the hot springs complex was completed in 1890, Walter Devereux and the Colorado Land and Improvement Company decided it was time to build a splendid hotel to promote the healing powers of the springs. The company chose the northern bank of Iron Mountain as the site for the new hotel. From this site the Roaring Fork and Grand River were visible, as well as an excellent view of Mount Sopris. The company was capitalized at one million

(Photo courtesy of Frontier Historical Society Museum of Glenwood Springs.)

Hotel Colorado circa 1905.

dollars with eastern and British investors putting up most of the money. A board of directors represented wealth of over one hundred million dollars.[12]

The hotel design was inspired by the Italian Villa Medici in Rome. Well-known New York architects Boring, Tilton, and Mellen were selected to built the massive structure, and two hundred laborers worked on construction. After two years, at a cost of $850,000, the Hotel Colorado was finished.[13]

The hotel was a magnificent building. It measured 224 feet by 260 feet. The first and second stories were of red Roman sandstone. The remaining three stories were of peach blow brick, again from the Frying Pan quarry. Twin towers were constructed to look like Italian belfries. In front of the towers were porticos, which provided a grand view of the entire valley. Between the towers the hotel reached six stories. In 1893 the sixth floor was a small gallery where guests could lounge and take in the fresh mountain air. Outside a court terrace separated the east and west wings of the hotel, and a wall of red sandstone masonry surrounded the outer edge of the court.[14]

The hotel had two hundred guest rooms with forty private bathrooms. In the main corridor there was a fireplace made of peach blow brick. A mounted deer's head hung over the mantle. The main wing of the hotel contained the lobby, a large parlor, smoking and card rooms, private drawing rooms, and the dining room. The front desk was made of light oak, topped with marble. The hall corridor ran the length of the hotel. Red stucco and light wood covered the ceiling, with Texas wainscoting (fancy wood paneling) decorating the walls. Nine double windows, each ten feet wide, highlighted the broad aisles that ran the length of the wings on the court side. When the windows were opened, the wings became sheltered verandas. In the side corridors, three open fireplaces kept guests warm during the cool summer weather (the hotel was not open during the winter months).[15]

A five thousand square foot dining room with Texas wainscoting highlighting the walls offered guests luxurious dining. The doors leading into the room were made of white poplar. The ceiling was pine with little electric globes running the length of each beam. A fireplace at the north end of the room had a sandstone mantle adorned with a mounted black deer.[16] Formal attire was required in order to eat in the plush dining room.[17]

If guests did not feel like dressing up for dinner, they had an option: along the east side of the dining room was a small interior court with an entrance to and from the dining room where food was served as well. The main feature of this interior court was a waterfall and pool on the north side. The waterfall was thirty-six by twenty-one feet. Water ran over the rocks and dropped twenty-five feet into the pool below. The pool was stocked with trout so guests

(Photo courtesy of Frontier Historical Society Museum of Glenwood Springs.)

Waterfall in the Hotel Colorado dining room.

could catch their own fish and have it cooked and served to them with fresh raspberries. At the turn of the century, the small court was enclosed to provide a more intimate atmosphere among the ferns and waterfall.[18]

The main entrance into the hotel was on the west side. The music room and the ballroom were located in this wing. A small parlor led to the grand ballroom. This was a spacious room with pink walls, trimmed with Texas wainscoting. The dance floor was made of maple, the best for gliding across the floor. Five huge windows provided a spectacular view of the valley. Four doors allowed guests access to the ballroom from the corridor, and there were fireplaces at either end.[19]

A small ladies' dining room, private banquet halls, children's playroom, ladies' billiard room, a gentlemen's waiting room, and a large kitchen were all located in the east wing. The ladies' billiard room, a popular spot for socializing, contained two billiard tables, along with a stand that held an electric tea pot. The gentlemen's waiting room was furnished with fourteen rolltop desks. The kitchen was fully equipped to service parties of any size. It was in the back, isolated from the rest of the hotel. Smoking and card rooms, along with the Presidential suite, were located at the extreme end of the wing.[20]

The hotel also had a full basement for additional needs. The men's billiard room and bar was located directly beneath the west wing, with a storage room for three hundred tons of ice placed directly under the dining room and kitchen. The rest of the basement area consisted of small storage rooms, the servants' dining quarters, and health baths.[21]

The individual rooms were very elegantly furnished also. Two hydroelectric elevators served the hotel — one for luggage and one for guests. Most rooms were heated with open fireplaces, with a few rooms heated by a steam system similar to radiators. Most rooms were arranged as suites without attached baths. Single rooms and bridal chambers were also available, some with connecting baths.[22]

The rooms were available in various color schemes. As the rooms were being built, the painter and upholsterer were given a sample of the carpet so the wall coloring and furniture would match the Brussels carpet. The rooms contained brass bedsteads with spring mattresses. The electric lights around the ladies' dressing mirrors had extensions that could be regulated in height.[23] Almost every room had an open fireplace in which piñon pine logs were burned, producing a fragrance famous in the Rocky Mountain region. The bathrooms had nickel-plated pipes and fittings, with special consideration toward proper drainage and ventilation.[24]

The servants' chambers were located behind the hotel. There was a large

room for ice storage, laundry, apartments for female help and forty bedrooms with attached bathrooms. These were heated by steam and furnished much like the guest rooms. A closed bridge connected the two buildings so the servants were not exposed to bad weather or the eyes of the guests.[25]

A broad arched porch in the front opened onto a 124 square foot court, decorated with beds of flowers and grass. This court surrounded three sides of the hotel. The main attraction on the terrace was the large colorful fountain which shot water over one hundred eighty feet into the air. It was ninety feet long, forty-two feet wide, and eight feet deep. The fountain's foundation was built of masonry, while the top of the structure was of clear glass. Colored electric lights reflected light into the fountain creating a spectacular sight. The employee in charge of the tinted lights passed through a tunnel that led into the structure from the basement so he could do his work beneath the fountain.[26] Corridors and verandas surrounded the court, adding additional charm. Arched corridors with beautiful ivy growing on them were complete with glazed sashes so they could be opened or closed as guests desired. A stone bridge, built earlier in 1888, led guests across the carriage road and connected with the river, bathhouses, and springs.[27]

Boston servants were imported to work in the hotel because they were believed to be the only ones capable of caring for the wealthy clientele. Management claimed that the Boston servants could better "uphold the desired standard of excellence than local help."[28] The servants were not permitted to walk the grounds or hotel corridors unless absolutely necessary. Some of the servants were African-American. At one time there were enough African-Americans residing in Glenwood Springs to have their own church under the leadership of one Deacon Jones.[29]

Some of the people involved in the executive management of the hotel included Walter Raymond of Raymond and Whitcomb Excursion Company, Elmer A. Thayer, A. W. Bailey of Manitou Springs, and E. E. Lucas.[30]

Hotel Colorado offered many activities for guests. Recreation facilities included croquet grounds and tennis courts. Captain Devereux and his family used ten acres of their land on the Roaring Fork River to create a race track and polo field, held to be the best in the United States. Grandstands and a clubhouse were erected by the Glenwood Polo and Racing Association. A golf course was built alongside the polo field. The Devereuxs taught the local cowboys to play polo in order to have some competition. The cowboys made excellent polo players, even beating some of the players mounted on thoroughbreds.[31] Polo gave the cowboys another source of income. They could train a five-dollar bronco to play polo and sell it to polo players for $125.[32] Teams from

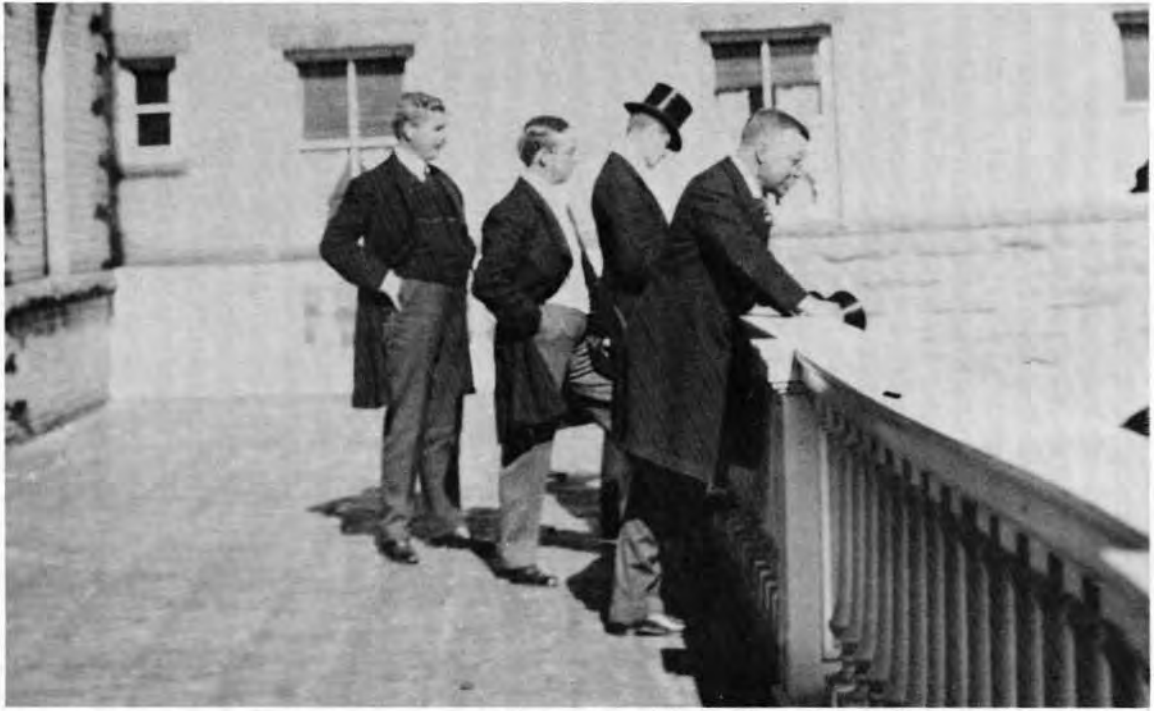
Denver, Colorado Springs, and the U. S. 10th Cavalry (from Fort Robinson, Nebraska) all played polo against the local team.[33]

Launching the hotel's successful career was a grand opening June 10, 1893. It was a spectacular event. A special train carried two hundred elite guests from Denver and other parts of the country to attend the grand opening. The guests arrived one day before the grand ball and stayed until Monday, June 12, free of charge. Guests took this time to enjoy all the recreation the hotel had to offer as well as the hot springs complex. The big event culminated with a grand ball on Saturday night. It was led by Walter Devereux and his wife, followed by A. W. Bailey and his wife. The concert program was prepared and performed by orchestra leader Gustav Natchke.[34]

After the grand opening, wealthy visitors flocked to Glenwood Springs to stay in the lovely Hotel Colorado and rest in the healing waters. The hotel had certain standards of conduct. Guests were expected to act as "proper "gentlemen and ladies. A person was not allowed to check in if they were not carrying luggage. One story of improper conduct involved a party for a group of industrialists being hosted by coal magnate J. C. Osgood and his wife. Hotel management had to intervene when the party became too noisy, and the management declared Mrs. Osgood had "overindulged." The party was asked to leave despite the status of the party participants. This angered Osgood, and he built his own castle "Cleveholm" in nearby Redstone, Colorado. There he entertained coal miners, cattlemen, and farmers — the very people the Hotel Colorado held in disdain.[35]

Famous people frequently stayed at the Hotel Colorado. Guests included western artist Charles M. Russell, Diamond Jim Brady, financier Jay Gould, the Armour meat-packing family, the Mayo Brothers, Buffalo Bill Cody, Clarence Day (the subject of the book *Life with Father*), Elalyn Walsh McLean (of Hope Diamond fame), and Mrs. J. J. Brown (better known as "the unsinkable Molly Brown").[36] Hotel Colorado was also a favorite visiting place for presidents of the United States, and so was sometimes dubbed "The Little White House." President Theodore Roosevelt was a frequent visitor, since Colorado was a favorite vacation and hunting spot. After a successful hunting expedition in 1905, Roosevelt held a private banquet in the dining room for the members of his hunting party. The members were sworn to secrecy about the stories and jokes told during the evening. The next day Roosevelt gave a speech to the local people from the second story balcony before embarking on his private railroad car, "the Rocket," for the return trip to Washington, D. C.[37]

The 1905 Roosevelt trip marked the beginning of the "teddy bear" legend. One version had Roosevelt returning to the hotel from one of his hunting



(Photo courtesy of Frontier Historical Society Museum of Glenwood Springs.)

President Theodore Roosevelt addressing a crowd from the balcony of Hotel Colorado circa 1905.

expeditions empty-handed. The maids of the hotel, feeling sorry for him, made him a small cloth bear and hung it in the lobby. A reporter following Roosevelt's hunt coined the phrase "teddy bear."[38] Another version, however, involved Roosevelt returning from a hunting expedition with ten bears and three lynxes. As his trophies were displayed on the hotel lawn for photographers, Roosevelt posed before one enormous bear. Roosevelt's daughter Alice suggested that the bear be called a "teddy bear."[39]

President William Howard Taft also stopped by Hotel Colorado and made a speech in 1909 from the same second story balcony after a breakfast of wild raspberries and fresh trout. Unfortunately, due to his tight schedule (he was only in Glenwood Springs for an hour), Taft refused to take a swim in the pool. He respectfully declined the offer by saying, "That's probably just as well. I've found it's much better for a fat man like myself not to bathe in public."[40]

During the years the Hotel Colorado served the elite, tourism grew for Colorado and the Western Slope. As tourism expanded as a major economic factor in Colorado, the Hotel Colorado became one of the social and commercial features of the state.[41] The Raymond and Whitcomb Excursion Company was able to get the Denver and Rio Grande to actively promote tourism in Colorado. The railroad published scenic pictures of Glenwood Springs and various chartered trips. The trips ran through Glenwood Canyon and the Roaring Fork Valley, or through Red Canyon into Spring Valley to watch the sunset on Mount Sopris. Another tourist attraction was the Fairy Caves, located in Iron Mountain above the hotel. The stalactites and stalagmites were illuminated with electric light. Also popular was Windy Point Road, a Concord stage ride to Deep Lake Resort near Glenwood Springs.[42]

The elite clientele that Hotel Colorado catered to did not last, however. As the 1910s approached, the impending trouble in Europe slowed tourism since many guests to the area were British. Gradually the clientele changed from wealthy, summer-long guests to middle-class stopover tourists.[43] In 1914, bookkeeper E. E. Lucas, along with Charles Hughes, Charles McCarthy, and Frank Zaitz, bought the hotel from British investors for approximately $75,000.[44] During World War I, Lucas wanted to sell the hotel to the U. S. Government to be converted into a tuberculosis hospital or used as an insane asylum. However, his plan fell through when local citizens staged a demonstration outside the hotel. It was believed that insanity was contagious, and that it would eventually affect the entire town.[45]

With the coming of the 1920s, Hotel Colorado was used by famous gangsters such as Diamond Jack Alterie, Al Capone, and "Legs" Diamond. A special enclosed entrance on the west side of the dining room was created so

the gangsters could come and go without being seen. In 1926 movie star Tom Mix stayed at the hotel during the shooting of the movie "The K & A Train Robbery."[46]

The end of the 1920s and the 1930s witnessed a continued decline in the hotel's business and popularity as a resort. Lucas died in 1927 and his wife managed the hotel until 1937 when she sold the hotel and hot springs to Frank Kistler, who founded the Glenwood Hot Springs and Hotel Colorado Company. Kistler leased the hotel to the Navy in 1943 for use as a convalescent hospital.[47] The Navy remodeled the hotel by removing and throwing away twelve thousand yards of Persian carpet and all but one marble sink and bathtub. It also "relieved" the hotel of all its original furniture.[48] The grand era as an elite hotel thus came to an end.

Today, Hotel Colorado is open once again to guests with its clientele mostly middle-class tourists. The present owner, Clark Bastian of Wichita, Kansas, is in the process of slowly remodeling the old hotel to restore it to its original grandeur. Entered in the National Register of Historic Places on May 26, 1977, the hotel continues to be a landmark in Glenwood Springs as it enters its second century of service to travelers and visitors, a colorful reminder of the Roaring Fork Valley when it was a spa for the rich and famous.

Tonya Stites graduated from Mesa State College in 1994 with a degree in History. She is currently teaching and coaching at the secondary level in the Grand Valley.

NOTES

[1]Alice Wright, "The Venerable Hotel Colorado," *Westworld*, 10 April 1977, 6.
[2]*History of Garfield County* (Glenwood Springs: n.p., n.d.), 152.
[3]*Denver Republican*, 4 June 1893, 17 (Hereinafter, *Republican*).
[4]Lena M. Urquhart, *Glenwood Springs: Spa in the Mountains* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1970), 36-37.
[5]*Republican*, 17.
[6]Charles W. Whitcomb, *The Colorado: Glenwood Springs, Colorado In the Heart of the Rocky Mountains* (Boston: n.p., 1892), 7.
[7]Urquhart, 78.
[8]Virginia Crowner, *History of Glenwood Springs* (n.p., 1948), 28.
[9]Urquhart, 78.
[10]Ibid., 78-79.
[11]Ibid.
[12]*Republican*, 17.
[13]Ibid.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid.
[17]Sandra Dallas, *No More Than Five in a Bed: Colorado Hotels in the Old Days* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 168.
[18]Betty Lynn Hull, *Cobwebs and Crystal: Colorado's Grand Old Hotels* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1982), 48.
[19]*Republican*, 17.
[20]Ibid.
[21]Urquhart, 97.
[22]Whitcomb, 7.
[23]*Republican*, 17.
[24]Whitcomb, 7.
[25]*Republican*, 17.
[26]Ibid.
[27]Whitcomb, 7.
[28]Hull, 48.
[29]Urquhart, 100.
[30]Whitcomb, 7-9.
[31]Urquhart, 79-80.
[32]Dallas, 170.
[33]Urquhart, 104.
[34]*Republican*, 17.
[35]Urquhart, 104.
[36]Hull, 48.
[37]Dallas, 170.
[38]Hull, 48.
[39]Dallas, 171-172.
[40]Ibid.
[41]*Denver Times*, 30 December 1900, 20.
[42]Urquhart, 101-102.
[43]Dallas, 171.

[44]Crowner, 30.
[45]Interview with Kathy Fleming, Glenwood Springs, Colorado, 18 October 1993.
[46]Wright, 7.
[47]Crowner, 30.
[48]Fleming interview.

Hotel Colorado and the Glenwood Hot Springs Pool circa 1899.

(Photo courtesy of Frontier Historical Society Museum of Glenwood Springs.)

(Photo courtesy of the author.)

Remains of Grand Junction Clay Products brickyard looking southeast. The Veteran's Administration Hospital can be seen in the distance.

Grand Junction Clay Products Company
by Bruse Alderman

In 1922 the estimated population of Grand Junction, Colorado was 10,478.[1] People in the area had been utilizing the fertile soil of the Grand Valley in a variety of ways for about thirty years. Farmers were obtaining good returns on sugar beets, corn, alfalfa, potatoes, and spring wheat. Orchardists were reaping the benefits from the soil by planting apple, pear, and peach trees. Cattlemen often fattened their cattle on alfalfa or grains grown in the valley before sending them to market. Some residents were manufacturing brick and tile from locally available materials.

Bricks were beginning to play an ever expanding role in the growth of Grand Junction. More residents were opting to construct their homes of brick, and general contractors were using a greater number of bricks in the construction of county and state buildings. As the focus of Grand Junction building shifted more toward the use of brick, five individuals from western Colorado formed the Grand Junction Clay Products Company on March 8, 1922.[2]

The five incorporators of this company were Louis Brodak, John Frank Baughman, Joseph W. Roessler, Harry Jones, and L. Roy Allen.[3] Allen and Jones were from Montrose while the other three resided in or around Grand Junction.[4] The brick and tile company started with a capital stock worth $25,000 which was divided into 250 shares worth $100 per share. The stock was non-assessable and no cumulative voting of the stock was allowed. The company was to operate for a term of twenty years.[5] The affairs of the company rested in the hands of all five of the incorporators: Harry Jones was president; L. Roy Allen had the job of business manager; Louis Brodak performed the secretarial

duties; and Joseph Roessler presided as treasurer. This arrangement lasted for two years. Brodak, Baughman, and a new addition to the company staff, Jim Goff, soon comprised the company.[6]

The brick plant was located on the property of Louis Brodak about one and half miles north of Grand Junction. Later when the property was incorporated in the city, the plant's mailing address became 2400 North 17th Street. The plant was equipped with the most modern brick-making machinery available.[7] It was operated with an eighty-five horsepower electric motor.[8] The initial brick-making process, the dry press method, utilized the electric motor to power a grinder that reduced the soil to a sandy powder. The motor also powered a press that molded the bricks under several hundred pounds of pressure per square inch. In spite of the modern electric machinery, much of the necessary power was supplied by men and animals.

For the Grand Junction Clay Products Company, horses served a dual purpose. A horse pulled a specially designed scraper manufactured by the Fresno Company. This scraper peeled up and held thin layers of clay and shale soil and deposited them near the grinder.[9] A worker guided the horse down a hill filling the scraper in the process. This laborious task was repeated continuously for an eight-hour shift. Horses were also used to haul wagon loads of bricks to local construction sites or to the railroad yard to be freighted to places that were not economically feasible to travel by horse and wagon.

Even though horses were an indispensable asset in the company's operation, it was the men who were responsible for running the plant. One of the most important aspects of plant operation involved coordinating the workers' shifts. They generally worked an eight hour shift, five days a week, from eight a. m. till five p. m.[10] However, if bricks were being fired, additional men and shifts were necessary. Two extra men each worked day, swing, and graveyard shifts.[11]

On a normal work day, one worker did the scraping. Knowledge of horses, machinery, and soil were essential. He had to be able to work the horse to its maximum capacity without overworking the animal; he had to effectively operate the scraper in conjunction with the horse; and he had to know the soil's makeup so he could adjust the depth of the scraper according to the amount of clay or shale in the soil. If he failed to keep enough material supplied to the grinder, the operation had to be shut down until the stockpile was replenished.

The man who fed the grinder had a mundane job. He shoveled soil onto an elevator, which took it to the grinder. After the shale and clay had been ground to a fine consistency, it was moved by elevator to a sifting screen. If the material did not go through the screen, it rolled down the screen and back into

(Photo courtesy of the author.)

Small horse-drawn Fresno scraper.

(Photo courtesy of the author.)

Large horse-drawn Fresno scraper.

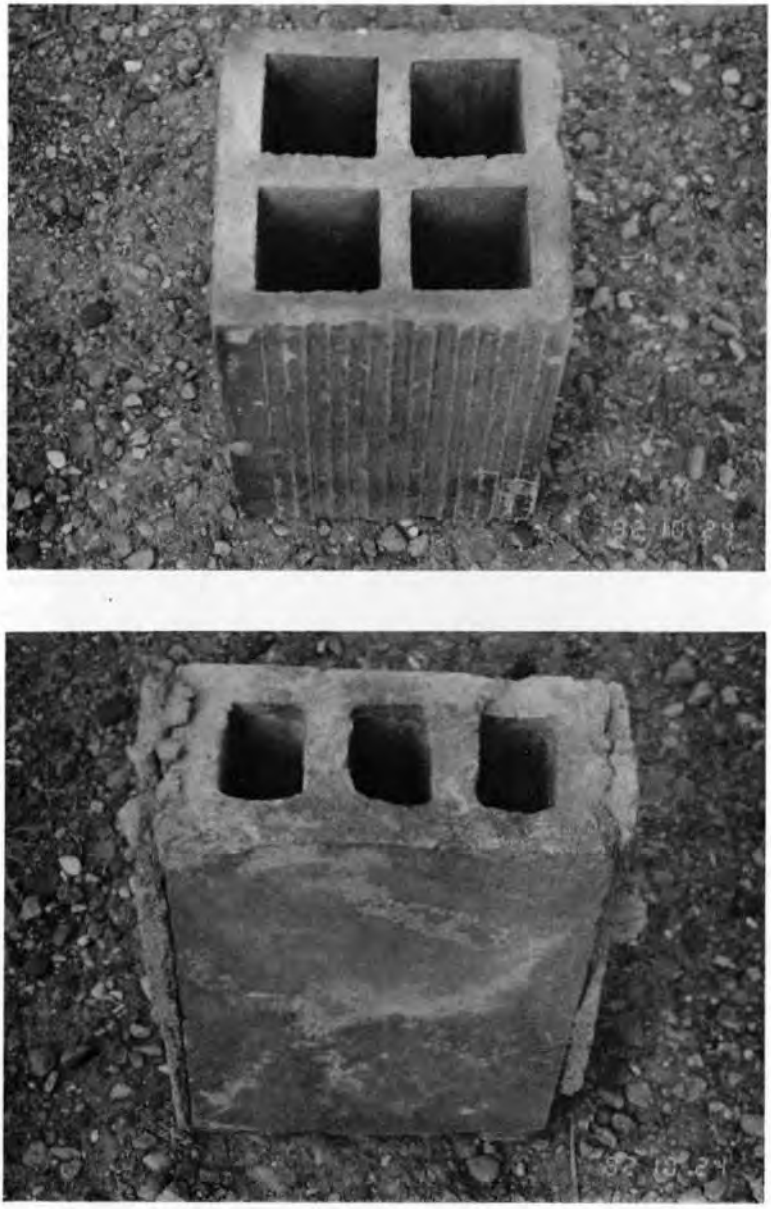
the grinder. If the clay and shale had been ground to the proper size, the brick material was then dampened with water before it was automatically fed into the dry press machine.

The dry press operator's main concern was that the raw material was subjected to the proper amount of pressure in the forming process. The dry press machine automatically filled the stamping forms with the dampened material and applied the pressure that formed the bricks or tiles. The machine was capable of pressing out four bricks at a time.[12] Throughout the first decade of production, the plant could produce twenty thousand bricks daily if everything ran smoothly.[13] If the dampened material received too much or too little pressure, the operator could stop the dry press machine by disengaging a clutch that ran the machine and adjust the pressure regulating screw to the proper setting.[14] This man also took the pressed bricks in a wheelbarrow to the kilns to be fired.

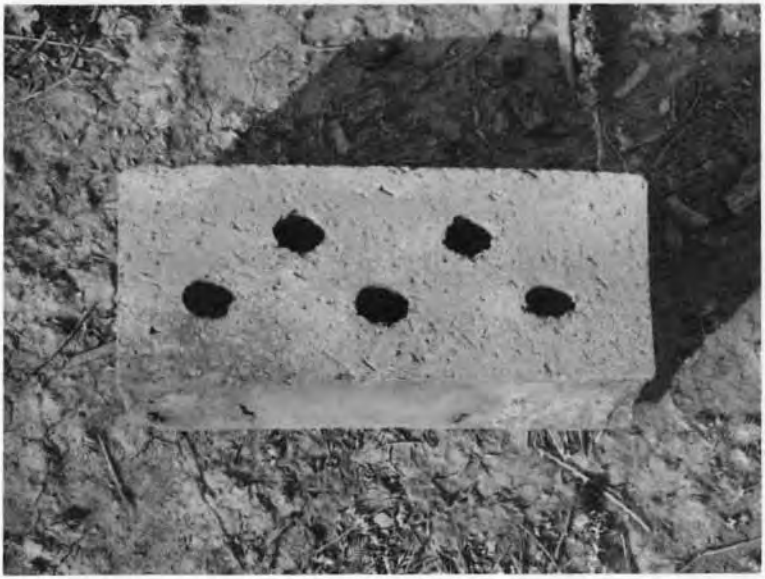
Two workers were in charge of the firing process. The bricks were placed in one of three kilns. They were stacked so the heat rose up around them. The bottom layer was stacked on edge with space left between each brick on all sides. The next layer was stacked on edge and perpendicular to the bottom row. This method of stacking continued until the bricks reached the top of the kiln. Once they were in place, a small coal fire was started in the kiln. The moisture was slowly cooked out of the bricks from top to bottom. This even heating resulted in high quality bricks. However, if the fire was too large, moisture content was removed too quickly, producing inherently weak or brittle bricks. Furthermore, careful firing prevented the bottom row of bricks from melting before the top layer was thoroughly fired. Once the fire reached the desired temperature, the kiln operators were responsible for keeping the fire stoked with coal which was mined locally at the Sanford and Garfield mines.[15] The kiln operators observed and regulated the fire through a peep hole in the arches of the kiln. The kilns had no thermometers on them, so the operators were required to keep a close watch over the fire.[16] If the fire was too hot, the men opened the peep hole which allowed the fire to cool down. If the fire wasn't hot enough, the peep hole remained closed.

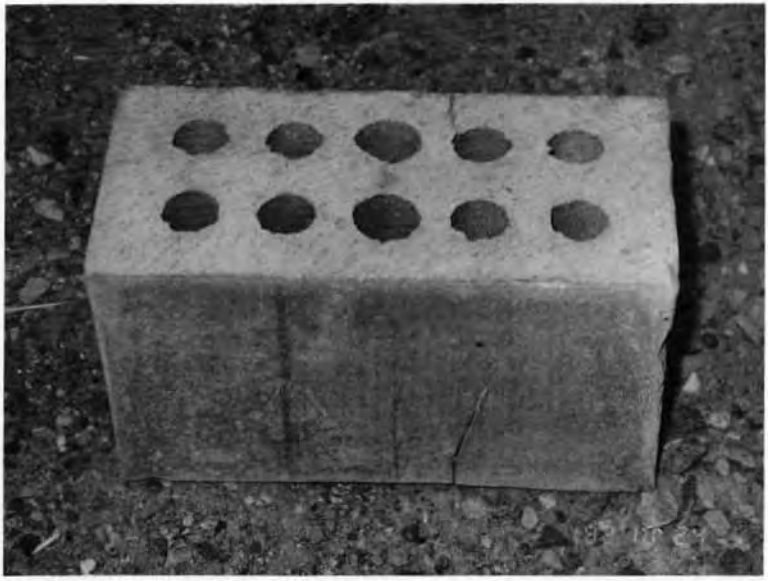
On November 16, 1930 the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* reported the plant had "three kilns with a capacity of 950,000 bricks at a burning."[17] A single firing in any of the kilns took approximately fifteen days. Once the bricks were fired they remained in the kiln until sold.

The mud press method was put into operation in the late 1930s.[18] It was similar to dry press in that the scraping process was the same, and the clay and shale were still ground, but from there the two methods varied. After the mate-



Mud bricks manufactured by Grand Junction Clay Products Company.





(Photos courtesy of the author.)

Dry press bricks made especially for the construction of Houston Hall at Mesa State College.

rial had been ground, it was conveyed to a mixer. The mixer operator visually monitored the incoming flow of water and ground material. It was this worker's responsibility to add the proper amount of water to the ground material. If the mud mixture was too stiff, the mud could not be pushed through the brick die, and if the mixture was too soft, the brick would flatten out after coming out of the die. An auger was used to push the mixture into the die that formed the bricks.[19] After it had passed through the die, the mud was ready to be cut.

Next the mud was moved to the cutting table on a conveyor. At the cutting table, the mud was cut into the desired lengths by one person using a piece of wire like a knife.[20] All day this worker stood at the cutting table making bricks. After being cut, the bricks were stacked onto pallets and hauled to the drying sheds. One man had the responsibility of stacking the bricks in the sheds.

Once in the sheds the bricks were dried by natural evaporation. The bricks remained in the sheds until they were ready to be fired. Four sheds measuring sixteen feet wide by forty-seven feet long were used in the drying process.[21] Two workers moved the bricks to the kiln after they were dry. Two other men stacked the bricks in the kiln and fired them.

A slow growing fire was unnecessary with the mud bricks since they had already dried naturally. The kiln fire was increased as quickly as possible without melting the bricks. The men still monitored the fire visually and opened or closed the peep hole as needed. The bricks were still fired for approximately fifteen days, but unlike the dry press method, the mud bricks were removed from the kiln and stockpiled in the yard after they had been fired.[22] The two brick-making methods were similar in that they both produced bricks that were used in more than a few western Colorado communities. On November 16, 1930, the Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel* reported: "The Grand Junction Clay Products Company has sold bricks in every town and city in western Colorado and over into eastern Utah. . ."[23] Locally, before 1930, this company provided bricks for the construction of the Daily Sentinel, the Juanita flour mill, the Mesa County Court House, Biggs-Kurtz Wholesale, the Masonic Temple, the La Court Hotel, Pacific Fruit and Produce, and the Whitman and Lincoln school buildings.[24] During the 1930s local buildings such as the DeMerschman Gardens were built with Grand Junction Clay Products Company bricks.[25] This company's products were also used in homes all around Grand Junction. After supplying western Colorado and eastern Utah with bricks for more than twenty years, World War II broke out. Along with the war came regulations regarding new construction of nonessential buildings.

This building housed a gas meter. It is the only standing structure on the site today.

(Photos courtesy of the author.)

This pipe was used to transfer heat throughout the plant.

(Photo courtesy of the author.)

Louis "Art" Brodak looks down upon the remains of the Grand Junction Clay Products Company's factory circa 1992.

Hoping to resume production after the war, the company filed for a renewal of its certificate of incorporation on March 12, 1942, and received it the following day.[26] But the wartime regulations prevented new construction unless it contributed to the war effort. These regulations virtually stopped the production of bricks in Grand Junction. Additionally, remodeling was allowed only if a permit was bought before the remodeling started. Wages and the price of building materials had been frozen. Thus, the war created conditions in which there was little demand for bricks. With no market for their bricks, the company stopped all production during the war.[27] Despite the great hopes and best intentions of its owners, the regulations imposed to help our country's war effort forced the sale of the Grand Junction Clay Products Company on April 20, 1945.[28]

The new owners bought the land and plant and ran it until the early 1960s, when Mr. Brodak's son bought the land back. Everything but one building is gone, including kilns and machinery. The one remaining building housed a natural gas meter that was installed when the new owner converted the plant from coal to natural gas.

Bruse Alderman graduated from Mesa State College in 1993 with a degree in History.

NOTES

[1]*R. L. Polk Directory Company's Grand Junction and Mesa County Directory,* Ninth Edition, (n. p.: n. p., 1922), 18.
[2]Colorado, Mesa County Records, County Clerk and Recorder, Trade Name Index, 1474, March 8, 1992.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Grand Junction *Daily Sentinel*, March 9, 1922. (Hereinafter, *Sentinel*).
[5]Records, Mesa County Clerk and Recorder, Trade Name Index, 1474, March 8, 1922.
[6]*Sentinel*, November 16, 1930.
[7]*Sentinel*, March 9, 1922.
[8]Interview with Louis Art Brodak, Grand Junction, Colorado, October 24, 1992.
[9]Interview with Louis Art Brodak, October 3, 1992.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid.
[13]*Sentinel*, March 9, 1922.
[14]Phone interview with Louis Art Brodak, Grand Junction, Colorado, November 14, 1992.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Brodak interview, October 24, 1992.
[17]*Sentinel*, November 16, 1930.
[18]Brodak interview, October 24, 1992.
[19]Brodak interview, October 24, 1992.
[20]Ibid.
[21]Ibid.
[22]Ibid.
[23]*Sentinel*, November 16, 1930.
[24]Ibid.
[25]Brodak interview, October 3, 1992.
[26]Records, Mesa County Clerk and Recorder, Trade Name Index, 3222, March 13, 1942.
[27]Brodak interview, October 3, 1992.
[28]Records, Mesa County Clerk and Recorder, Trade Name Index, 3333, April 20, 1945.

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