EL PUEBLO HISTORY MUSEUM

A Capsule History and Guide

A MUSEUM OF THE COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spanish Peaks


DENVER (1858)
Cherry Creek
South Platte River
UTES
Monument Creek
PIKES PEAK
Fountain Creek
CHEYENNES AND ARAPAHOS
Republican River
Big Sandy Creek
N. Fork
Smoky Hill River
Sand Creek Massacre
Rush Creek
A·R·K·A·N·S·A·S R·I·V·E·R
EL PUEBLO
Bent's Old Fort
INTERNATIONAL BORDER 1819-48
Cuerno Verde battle
COMANCHES AND KIOWAS
SANTA FE TRAIL (MOUNTAIN BRANCH)
San Luis Valley
Fort Garland
SPANISH PEAKS
Trinidad
C·O·L·O·R·A·D·O (1·8·6·1)
N·E·W M·E·X·I·C·O T·E·R·R·I·T·O·R·Y
Canadian River
Taos
EL PUEBLO REGION
1779–1861

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Dianna Litvak, Writer
Darren Eurich, Graphic Designer, State of Colorado Integrated Document Solutions (IDS)
Maps: Susan Romansky, Staff Designer
Jay Di Lorenzo and Michael "Spydr" Wren, Photography

Angelica Docog, Director of Interpretive Services
David N. Wetzel, Publications Director
Modupe Labode, Chief Historian

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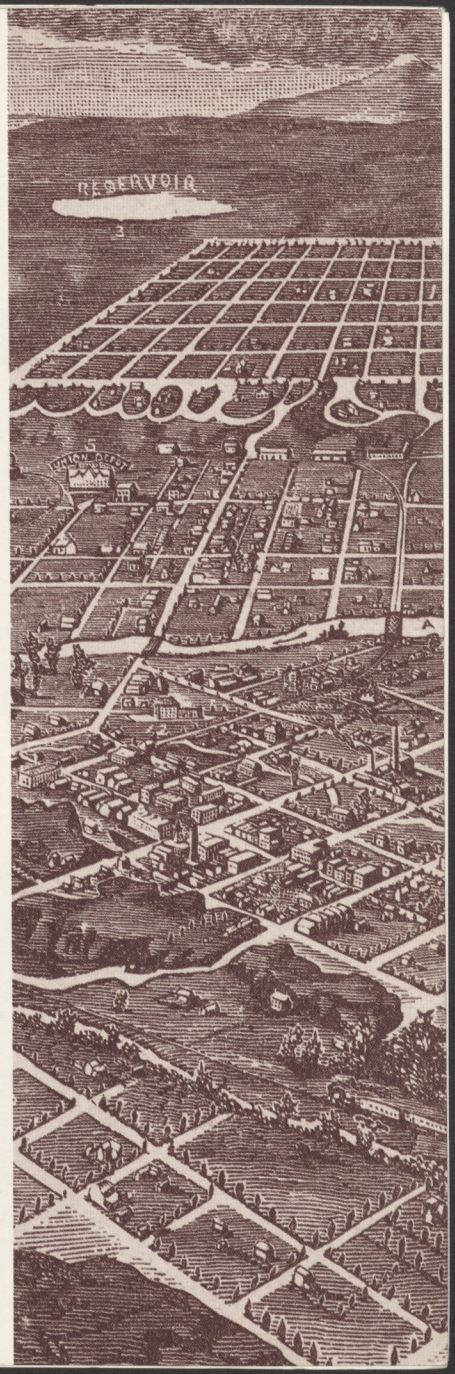
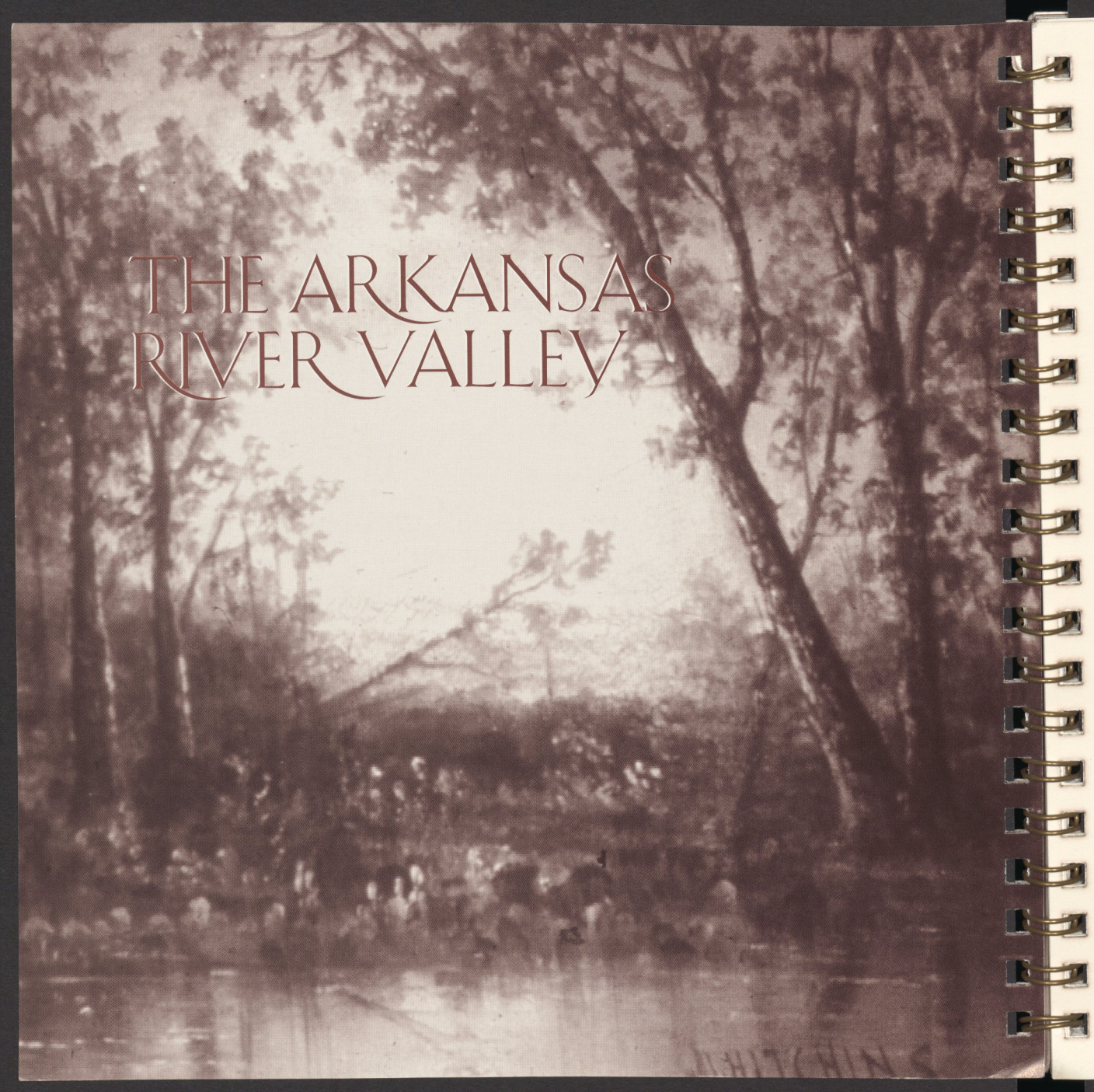


Detail of a bird's-eye view of Pueblo made in the early 1880s (see page 58). The ruins of the fort, and of today's El Pueblo History Museum, are located near what would be the exact center of the illustration.


THE ARKANSAS
RIVER VALLEY

Natural Setting Though Colorado is often considered part of the Rocky Mountain West, it is actually carved into three distinct geographical regions. The Great Plains sprawl across the eastern third of the state; the mountains dominate the center; and broad plateaus and mesas intermingle in the west. The plains are further subdivided by the Palmer Divide, an upland pushing eastward through Colorado's high plains. This, along with the lower piedmont created by the South Platte River flowing toward the northeast and the Arkansas River toward the southeast, splits these two watersheds.

The Arkansas River and its tributaries form the life-giving arteries of the semiarid grasslands, where precipitation

Above: Rain showers fall across the foothills of the Rockies near Pueblo—an infrequent event compared to the amount of annual moisture east of the Great Plains.

Facing page: Detail from *Confluence of the Arkansas and Fountain Rivers* by Joseph Hitchens (1838–1893), an English-born artist who studied at the Düsseldorf School in Germany and later made his home in Pueblo, Colorado, where he operated a studio at 322 Santa Fe Drive. COURTESY SANGRE DE CRISTO ARTS AND CONFERENCE CENTER

averages only 12.5 inches per year—far below that of Kansas, Colorado's eastern neighbor, which ranges between 20 to 40 inches per year. At the mouth of Fountain Creek, the landscape is flat and sparse. To the west, a low limestone bluff rises gradually to tree-studded foothills. Before permanent settlement, mule deer and antelope grazed through meager stands of cottonwoods, willows, wild plums, and strawberries along the stream banks and marshes. Beyond were short grasses, sage, rabbit brush, greasewood, yucca, and prickly pear. Among these hardy plants scampered prairie dogs, jackrabbits, coyotes, and black-footed ferrets, while overhead soared hawks, eagles, owls, and migrating bird species such as geese and ducks.

Arkansas River from an engraving in John Charles Frémont's *Memoirs of My Life* (1886)

Fountain Creek and the Arkansas Deep within a natural pocket, the mouth of Fountain Creek joins the Arkansas River in a flat valley surrounded by higher elevations on three sides. In this land of topographical extremes, the junction of these two waterways marks the western edge of the Great Plains, above which the Rocky Mountains rise like sentinels. On the south, the pocket is hemmed in by the Raton Mountains near present-day Trinidad, Colorado. On the north lies the deceptively gentle upward slope of the Palmer Divide. On the west, the

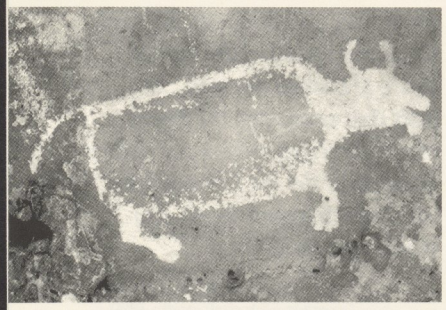
formidable Rocky Mountains, long a barrier to transportation and settlement, give birth to the headwaters of the Arkansas River, which tumbles some 7,000 feet through canyons and gorges to exit where the pocket opens to the eastern plains. Bison avoided this natural retreat, preferring to graze on the ample grasses surrounding it, but for millennia American Indians knew a good crossing was to be found here at a loop in the Arkansas River.

More than a slash across the earth, a trail is a record of the human desire to change destinies....The trails that crosshatch the Rocky Mountain states shaped our history as surely as did the humans (and wild animals before them) who shaped the trails.

—*Trails Through Time*, Colorado Historical Society, 1990

First Peoples As early as 12,000 years ago, Paleoindians followed animal herds through present-day Colorado. These peoples lived in a cooler, wetter environment than today and hunted large species of mammoth, camel, elk, and bison. Archaeological finds from these times include "kill" sites where nomadic hunters stampeded large herds of animals into deep *arroyos*, or gullies, where they were trapped and killed. The animals nourished the hunters and their families, providing hide for clothing and shelter, and sinew, horn, and bone for tools and other utensils. Some 10,000 years ago, a warming trend similar to today's

An excavation of a Paleoindian bison kill site.

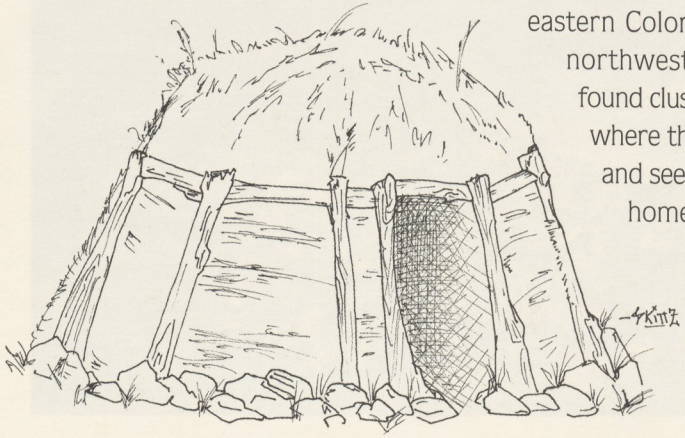


Petroglyph of a bison.

climate—or overhunting—may have brought about the extinction of the large mammals. During the Archaic period, which began approximately 7,800 years ago, humans hunted smaller species of bison, as well as antelope, bighorn sheep, wolves, rabbits, squirrels, mice, and birds, and gathered wild plants throughout the Arkansas River Valley. They remained relatively isolated in the valley, protected by the divide to the north and the Rocky Mountains to the west, and had limited trading contact with other groups to the south and east.

Apishapa Culture Between approximately A.D. 1050 and 1450, a group named the Apishapa (Ah-PISH-a-pah) lived atop high canyon rims and rock outcrops in the grasslands of the Arkansas River Valley. They are named for the Apishapa River, a tributary of the Arkansas River southeast of today's Pueblo, but they ranged through what is now southeastern Colorado, northeastern New Mexico, and northwestern Oklahoma. Archaeologists have found clusters of many-roomed circular dwellings where the Apishapa lived and stored wild plants and seeds to last throughout the winter. These homes consisted of stone slab foundations and wooden walls and roofs. The Apishapa mainly hunted bison, but they also ate jackrabbits, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, and bullfrogs. No one knows what happened

Apishapa dwellings consisted of upright poles with sod roofs. COURTESY DOMINI RANDOLPH



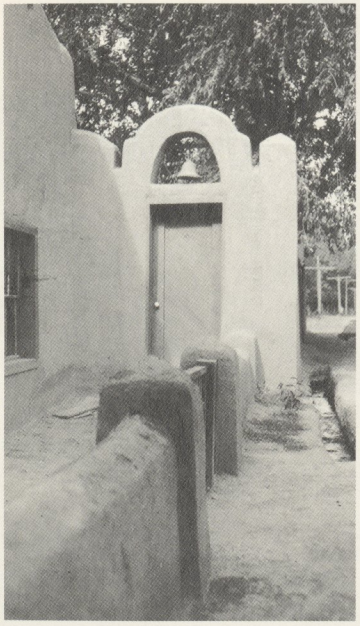
to this group after A.D. 1450, but the culture disappeared from the Arkansas River Valley. Perhaps they were absorbed into or pushed out by tribes from the north that began to claim the Arkansas River Valley as part of their territory during the 1500s.

Protohistoric Tribes The 300-year period between A.D. 1450 and 1725 is called the Protohistoric, and in the Arkansas Valley it describes the infrequent interactions between native tribes and Europeans, particularly Spaniards, who left behind the first written descriptions of the region and its inhabitants. Since archaeological sites remain scarce, the lifeways of native peoples during this period can be hard to trace. Prior to acquiring Spanish horses, the tribes in the Arkansas Valley attached their portable *tipis* to the

Plains Indian tribes used buffalo hides to construct efficient, mobile dwellings called tipis.

backs of dogs and followed the seasonal movements of the herds. During the summer they traveled to the high mountain valleys to feast on berries and other plants. In the late fall, they moved to river valleys at lower elevations where they soaked up the winter sun on the south-facing slopes.

They actively traded with nearby tribes to the south, east, and north, bartering meat, hides, and raw materials to obtain fabrics, turquoise, tools, pottery, and slaves. But they also clashed over prime hunting grounds both in the mountains and on the plains, and they vied for dominance as they sought out favored springs, mountain passes, campsites, and other natural advantages.



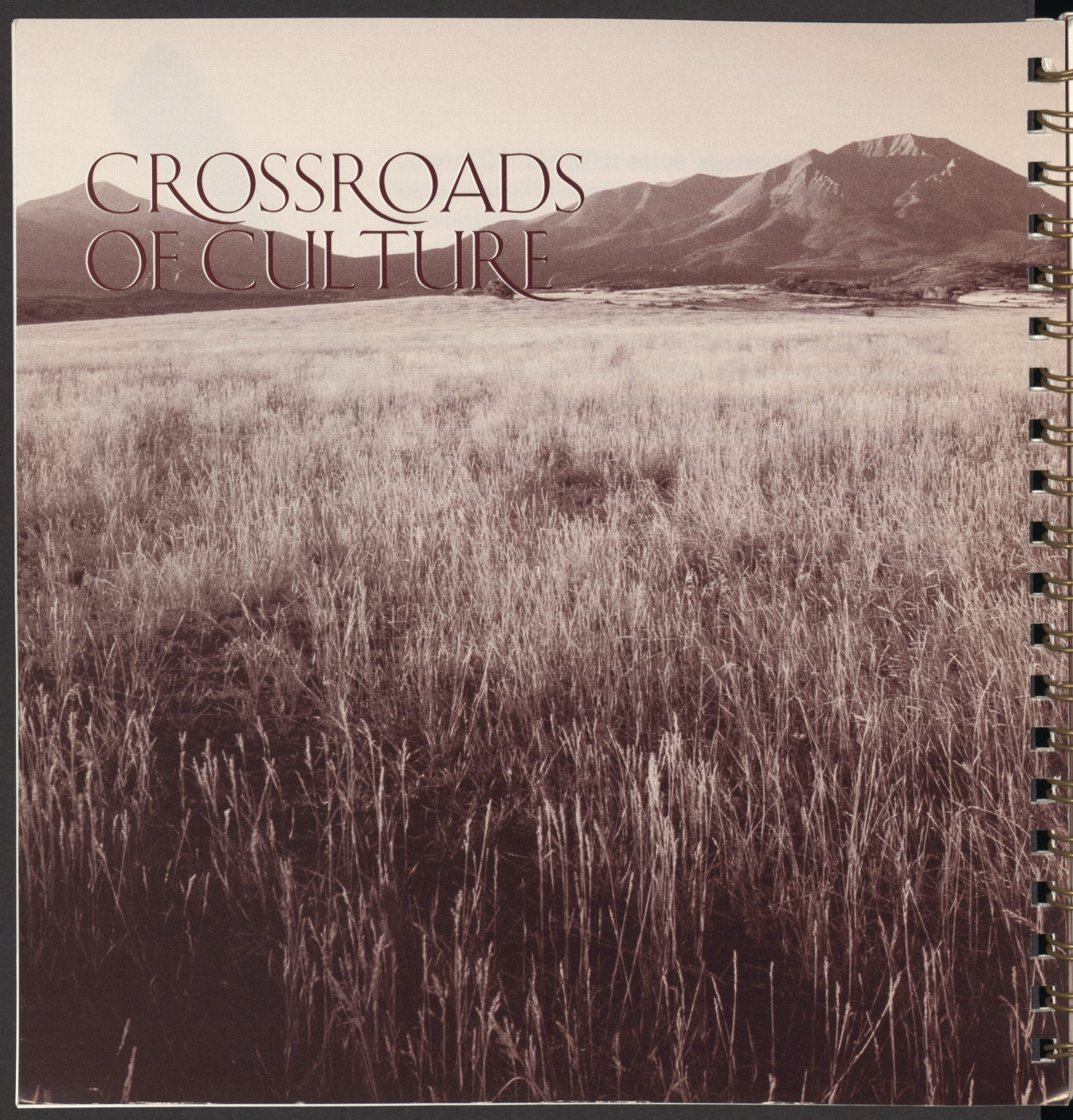
Santa Fe and Taos were northernmost outposts of Spain in what became New Mexico. The architecture of both places reflected Spanish and Puebloan influences.

Divide and Conquer Into this active mix of competition and trade came the Spanish. Beginning with the Aztecs of Mexico in 1521, Spanish conquistadors divided and conquered the tribes of the New World, eventually infiltrating most of Mexico, Central America, South America, and the southwestern part of the United States in a quest for precious minerals and religious converts.

In 1598, Spain established the province of New Mexico in a land where numerous bands of Pueblo Indians lived in adobe villages on the mesa tops. Fifteen hundred miles from the viceroy in Mexico City, Spanish missionaries and soldiers built outposts such as Santa Fe in 1609, and Taos, next to Pueblo Indian settlements.

Trade, War, Marriage By the 1600s and 1700s, Navajos, Apaches, Jicarilla Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas claimed various parts of the Arkansas River Valley. The Utes, known as the Blue Sky People, occupied all of the mountains of Colorado with related, but distinct, bands in each region. Members of these tribes traded and fought—yet sometimes married one another—and raided Pueblo Indian villages for slaves, knives, and horses. Most of the tribes received Spanish goods through trade with other tribes before they had any direct contact with the foreigners. Steel medals, swords, and most importantly, horses, became valued commodities in the Indian trading network, and their acquisition allowed tribes to achieve previously unknown levels of wealth and mobility. Mounted on horses, hunters easily found and caught buffalo—a strenuous and time-consuming task on foot. Horses also carried more weight than dogs, and traveled twice as far each day. On horseback, several tribes altered their ancestral territories, creating a new fluid movement for bands throughout the Arkansas River Valley.

Most of the European trade beads favored by Plains Indian tribes, like this set, came from Venice, Italy.


CROSSROADS
OF CULTURE

Spanish Domain In 1706, thirty-six-year old Juan de Ulibarrí departed Santa Fe on a mission of peace to assist Christianized Apaches and set a new tone for Spanish relations with Apaches and Pueblos. Crossing the eastern flanks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in present-day northeastern New Mexico, he traversed the extreme southeastern corner of Colorado, along Two Buttes Creek, and crossed the Arkansas River near the present Kansas-Colorado state line. There he paused to extol the agricultural promise of the Arkansas River. Continuing northeast to an Apache village, El Quartelejo, he claimed the watershed of the Arkansas for King Philip V. Noting the potential for settlement in the region, "because of the fertility of the land, the docility of the people, and the abundance of herds of buffalo, and other game," he believed "the propagation of our holy Catholic faith could be advanced very much."

But Ulibarrí and other Spaniards underestimated the will of nomadic tribes in the Arkansas River Valley. In 1779 the governor of New Mexico, Juan Bautista de Anza, routed the forces of Comanche chief Cuerno Verde southwest of Pueblo near Greenhorn Mountain. There Anza's men killed Cuerno Verde (which translates as "green horn") and his son, ending the threat of major Comanche raids on New Mexico. Later the Comanches agreed to inhabit an Arkansas River settlement six miles east of Fountain Creek named San Carlos de los Jupes. However, the settlement quickly failed—for, among

[The Arkansas River] *is much more than four times as large as the* [Rio Grande] *and bathes the best and broadest valley discovered in New Spain. It is…extremely fertile as is shown by the many plums, cherries, and wild grapes which there are on it.*

—Juan de Ulibarri, July 29, 1706

Above: Retablo of the Christ child. COURTESY ROBERT ADAMS

Facing page: High plains leading up to the Spanish Peaks, a dominant landmark for travelers from the earliest explorers and missionaries to todays' travelers. COURTESY MICHAEL "SPYDR" WREN

23rd November [1806], *Sunday. Encamped at night in the point of the grand forks* [confluence of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek].

As the river…must be near its extreme source, I concluded to…ascend [Fountain Creek] *to the high point of the blue mountain* [Pikes Peak], *which we conceived to be one day's march…*

—Lt. Zebulon Montgomery Pike

other things, it meant the end of a hunting lifestyle for the tribe, a switch they were unwilling to undertake.

International Borderland In the early 1700s, France claimed all of the lands west of the Mississippi River and north of the Arkansas River—a territory known as Louisiana—as part of its empire. Spain and France competed over control of the territory until Napoleon Bonaparte sold Louisiana to the United States in 1803. Spain kept the lands south of the Arkansas River as part of the Province of New Mexico, and it resisted trading with the United States after the Louisiana Purchase. Spanish officials even threatened imprisonment for American traders caught within its northern province.

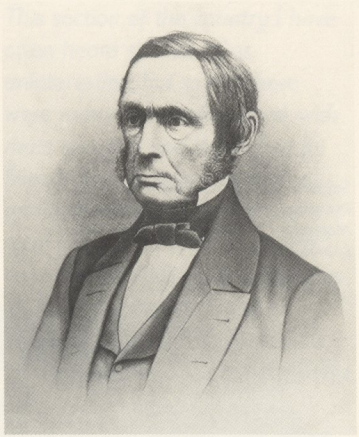
In 1806, Zebulon M. Pike built a breastworks, or low-walled defensive structure, near the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek. A marker designating the site is located a few blocks south of today's El Pueblo Museum.

Pike's Folly and Long's Wasteland In 1806, one hundred years after Ulibarrí, Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike, exploring the Louisiana Purchase, camped near the junction of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River in United States territory. He made an unsuccessful attempt to climb the mountain that now bears his name, then ventured below the Arkansas—in Spanish territory—to search in vain for the source of

the Red River. Spanish dragoons caught Pike and escorted him to Chihuahua, where he pleaded ignorance to trespassing. Other American explorers who passed through the Fountain-Arkansas region prior to the establishment of El Pueblo included Stephen Long, who scoffed at Ulibarrí's image of the Arkansas River Valley as an agricultural paradise. Long lumped the valley and the rest of the High Plains into a vast region he called the "Great American Desert," dismissing it as a sterile wasteland.

Víva México! More than two centuries of Spanish rule left a lasting impression on the province of New Mexico. The mixture of Spaniards and native peoples created a new, distinct culture—Hispanos—who blended Spanish and Indian customs to thrive in the Rio Grande and Arkansas watersheds in what is now New Mexico and southern Colorado. Spanish language, religion, architecture, agricultural methods, place names, and traditions persist in the region today.

After Mexico wrested its independence from Spain in 1821, officials immediately opened the northern border for trade, and welcomed American traders who carved new commercial routes between the two countries. Connecting the trading meccas of St. Louis, Missouri, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, the northern branch of the Santa Fe Trail followed the Arkansas River in United States territory before turning south to cross the mountains at Raton Pass and entering the trading villages of northern New Mexico. Mexican traders sold



Stephen H. Long

"Then hold your horses, Billy,
Just hold them for a day;
I've crossed the River Jordan,
And am bound for Santa Fe."

—Telegraphed poem, 1853

"Say, pard! have ye sighted a schooner,
A hittin' the Santa Fe Trail?
They made it here Monday or sooner
With a water keg roped on the tail..."

—James Grafton Rogers

sheep, hides, wool products, tobacco, and other goods to enterprising businessmen for hardware, textiles, and dry goods. While Mexicans and Americans forged important trading relationships after 1821, the infiltration of American colonists into Texas, which Mexico at first encouraged, resulted in rebellion and the creation of the Republic of Texas, which extended to the Arkansas River.

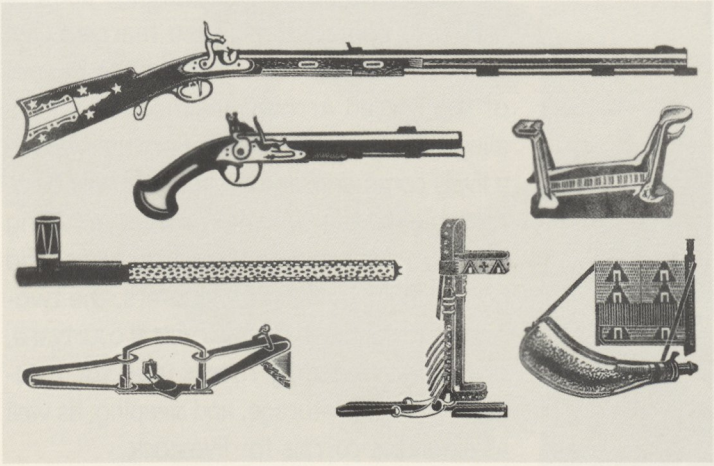
Settlers ford the Arkansas River in this illustration from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

The Fur Trade Era

Enticed by the scientific expeditions of Pike and Long, independent fur trappers probed Long's "wasteland" and proceeded farther west into the mountains in the 1820s. They trapped beaver and sold the pelts to commercial traders who freighted them east on the Santa Fe Trail to serve a thriving millinery trade. The traders, who included Mexicans and displaced eastern Indians, brought valuable items to trade with the Plains tribes, such as knives, guns, blankets, clothing, and kettles. For these, the Indians swapped beaver pelts

and buffalo robes. These brief trade interactions had long-lasting consequences. Traders demanded loyalty from the Indians and tampered with centuries-old alliances and traditions. Along with manufactured goods, they provided a steady supply of whiskey, or "Taos Lightning." Those Indian warriors who traded buffalo robes for liquor quickly drank away their profits. They left their families hungry and jeopardized the health and long-held customs of the tribes. Still, others resisted the harmful changes and infiltration of trappers and traders.

Traders and mountain men established small ranching and farming communities throughout the valley. These, as it turned out, provided a toehold for future settlement and marked the beginning of a decline in the dominance of Indian culture along the ramparts of the Rocky Mountains.



Trappers' tools and artifacts of the fur trade, including a tribal peace pipe, from a 1930s woodcut by William Traher.

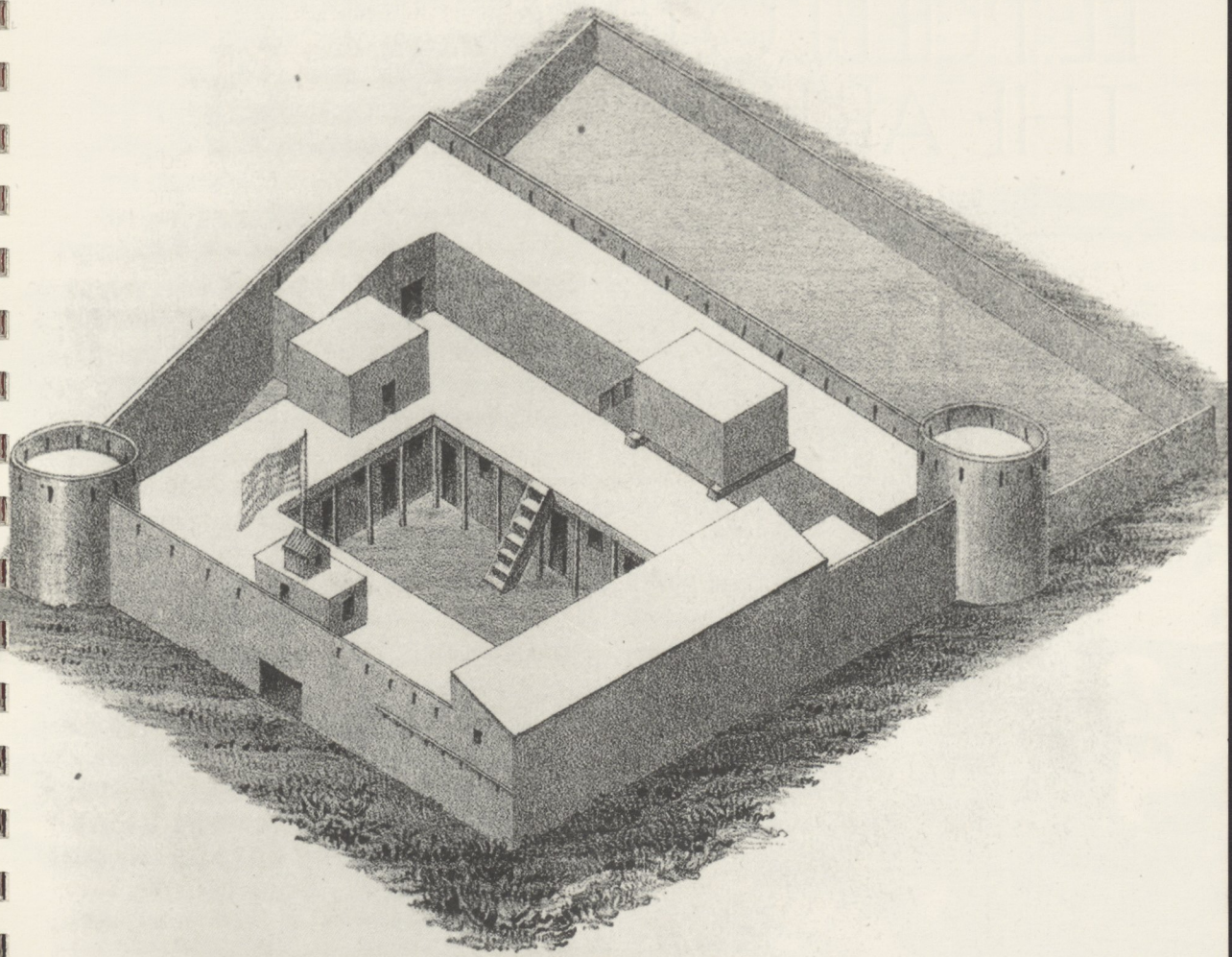
This section of the country I have often heard spoken of as uninteresting; but to me there were many attractions. Here, with mule and gun and a few faithful friends one experiences such a grand sensation of liberty and a total absence of fear; no one to say what he shall do; costumed as fancy or comfort dictates; his blanket his house; the prairie his home. Money he needs not, except for coffee, ammunition, and "Touse" [Taos Lightning]. No conventional rules of society restrict him to any particular form of dress, manner, or speech—he can swear a blue streak, or pray; it is his own affair entirely.

—Lewis Garrard on trappers and mountain men, in *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail*, 1850

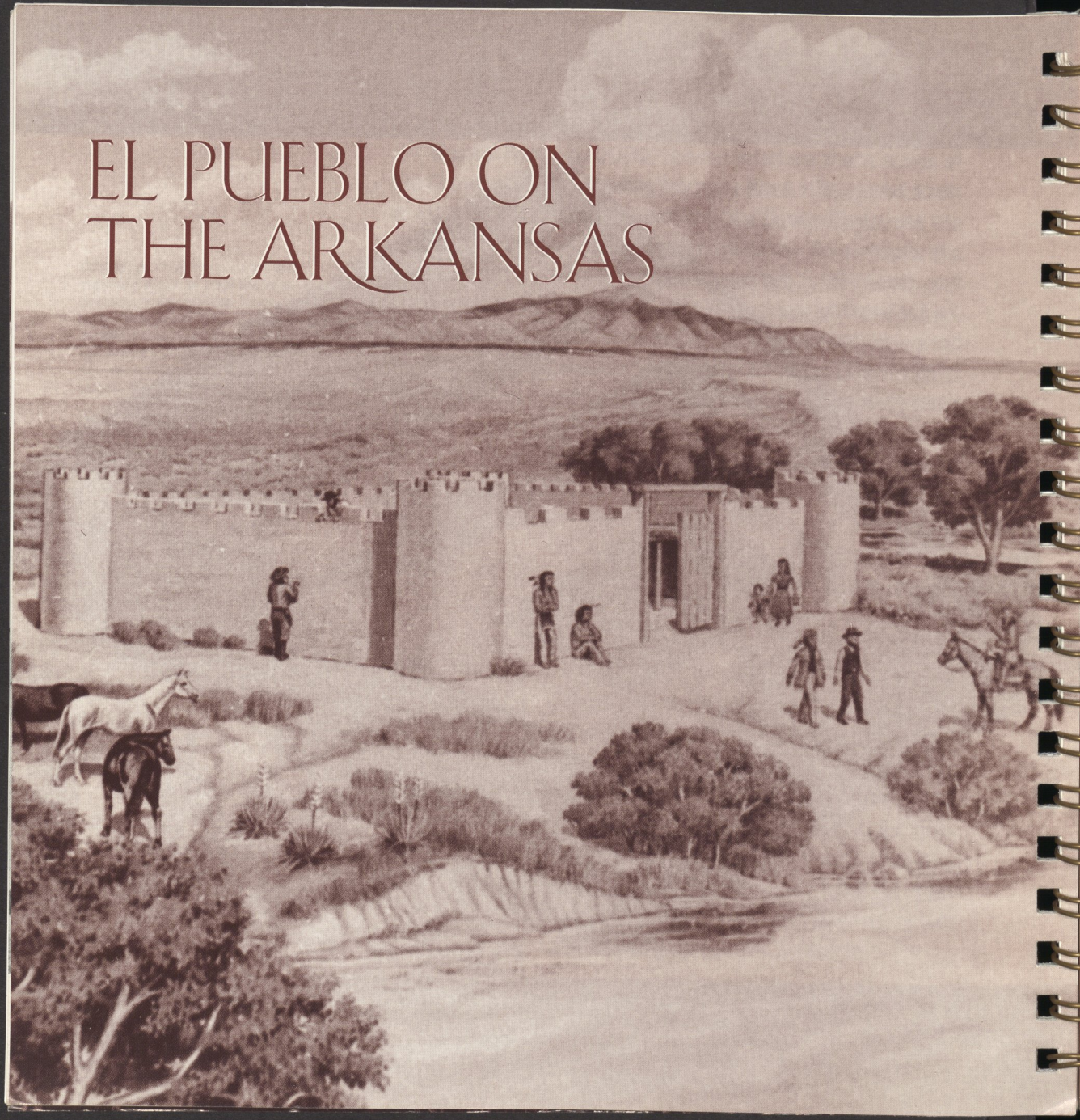
Facing page: Bent's Fort was the most important center of trade and intercultural exchange in the American Southwest from the early 1830s to the 1850s. Though heavily fortified, it was never attacked, and Bent remained a true friend of the independent Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes who camped outside its walls.

Below: William Bent, second from left, sits with Arapaho companion Little Raven, and Little Raven's sons and granddaughter, at Fort Dodge, Kansas, in about 1867. Bent, builder of Bent's Fort, was perhaps the most influential man, Indian or white, on the Great Plains during the height of the Santa Fe Trail.

Bent's Fort By 1820, the mounted northern bands of the Cheyennes and Arapahos from the Black Hills moved south to claim the Great Plains between the South Platte and the Arkansas rivers as part of their territory. As a result, the Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches shifted to the south and east, and traders competed for the business of these tribes. The firm of Bent, St. Vrain & Company effectively thwarted others from the Indian trade along the Arkansas River in 1833 by building an imposing adobe fur-trading post seventy miles from the mouth of Fountain Creek, between the present towns of La Junta and Las Animas. Located at the suggestion of Yellow Wolf, a Cheyenne ally of William Bent's, the post was called Fort William, then Bent's Fort (now Bent's Old Fort), for the man who came to be its primary operator. From his unique vantage point at the fort, William Bent, who married Owl Woman, Cheyenne daughter of the Keeper of the Sacred Arrows, claimed the tribe's allegiance for trade. Bent's Fort maintained a lively commerce and became the only comfortable haven in the region, enticing travelers for business, pleasure, news, and gossip. Built by Mexican laborers, the two-story fort featured a large central courtyard, or *placita*, ringed by rooms used for trading, recreation, storage, and sleeping, as well as extensive corrals for livestock.



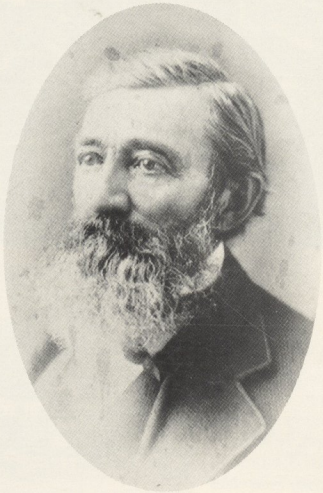
EL PUEBLO ON THE ARKANSAS



Trading Empire Bent, St. Vrain & Company dominated the Indian trade in the Arkansas River Valley during the first half of the 1800s. Run by three partners—brothers Charles and William Bent, along with Ceran St. Vrain—the company's influence stretched from St. Louis to the Rocky Mountains, and from the South Platte River on the north to the upper Rio Grande on the south. In Taos, Charles Bent managed the firm's commercial interests. William Bent employed as many as one hundred men at the fort, including acquaintances from St. Louis, itinerant trappers, and Mexican laborers. Among these employees were several men who left Bent's employment to establish a trading post near the junction of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River in 1842.

A New Enterprise Several factors combined to provide an opening for the Indian trade in the Arkansas River Valley. By 1840, overzealous trapping decimated the beaver population, and the fur trade turned to buffalo robes. During the winter of 1841–42, Bent, St. Vrain & Company failed to deliver on a large shipment of buffalo robes, and the shortage increased demand in eastern trading centers. George Simpson, a young native of St. Louis and a frontier greenhorn, observed these events and determined to enter the lucrative but dangerous Indian trade. Simpson came to the Arkansas River Valley with Robert Fisher, who had worked for William Bent for at least a decade. Simpson had none of Fisher's experience, but he found work at the fort in 1841. There he met other traders

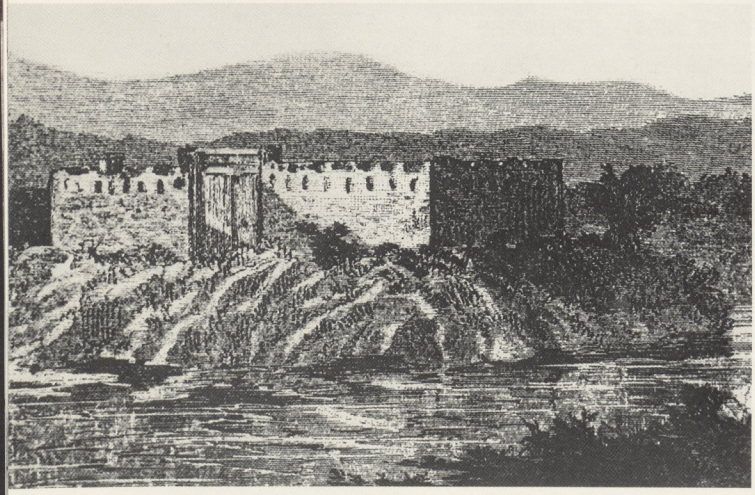
Facing page: Though not accurate in all respects, this 1959 painting of El Pueblo by Jolan B. Truan, artist for the *Pueblo Star-Journal*, expresses the character of daily life at the trading post during the 1840s. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT



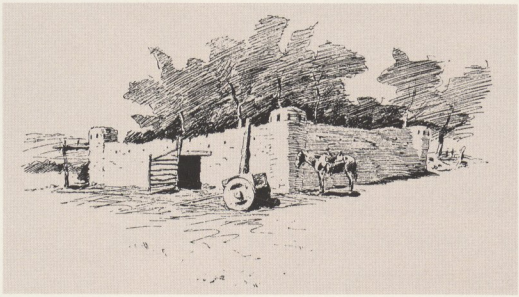
George Simpson

and trappers with whom he forged a new enterprise. They were later joined by Joseph Doyle and Alexander Barclay, cementing bonds that lasted for generations in the Arkansas River Valley. In addition to Fisher and Simpson, early traders at El Pueblo included Mathew Kinkead, Francisco Conn, and Joseph Mantz, as well as mountain man Jim Beckwourth.

Below: This imaginative woodcut rendering of El Pueblo appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* in December 1880, accompanying an article by George Rex Buckman entitled "An Historical Rocky-Mountain Outpost." The drawing depicts the fort with fanciful crenellations and lacking its known bastions on the northeast and southwest corners.



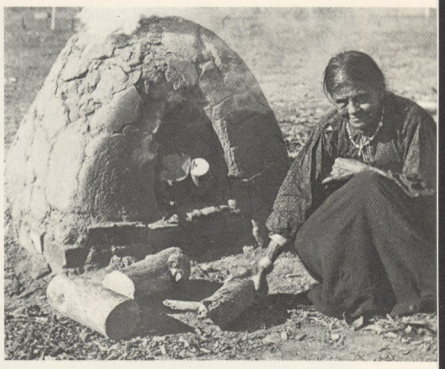
El Pueblo Emerges The men found a location with plenty of water, grass, and wood 150 yards north of a generous loop of the Arkansas and west of the mouth of Fountain Creek. The post, situated on the old Indian crossing of the Arkansas River, would be the nearest settlement in the United States to Taos, New Mexico. The traders hired New Mexican masons to build the post of adobe and named it El Pueblo, meaning "the town" or "the people" in Spanish. But visitors also called it the Arkansas Pueblo, Pueblo Almagre (for Rio Almagre, the Spanish name for Fountain Creek), Fort Pueblo, Fort Juana, and Robert Fisher's Fort.



Right: This adobe country house, from Col. Henry Inman's *The Old Santa Fe Trail* (1897), more closely resembles El Pueblo than the *Lippincott* engraving.

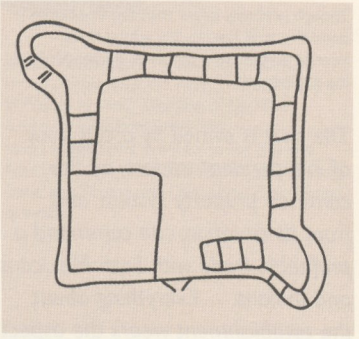
Placita Life Similar to Bent's Fort, the traders lived within the adobe post at El Pueblo—but on a much smaller scale, with a blacksmith shop, two bastions, and a gate made from cottonwood saplings. Each trader, along with his wife and children, occupied a room or two with tiny windows shuttered by wood planks and low wooden doors. The placita was the center of activity. There the men laid their goods on *serapes*, or blankets, for trading, the women gathered to string *chiles*, and children scampered about in play while the smell of baking bread, corn, and roasted meat wafted from *hornos*, beehive-shaped adobe ovens. The men frequently left the settlement to hunt or travel—east for goods, south to Taos for Mexican trade items, or in several directions to trade in the nearby Indian camps. Because ownership changed hands so rapidly, historians do not know how many traders occupied the post at one time, or who they all were.

Women of the Pueblo They are largely unknown, but the tasks the women mastered to survive on the frontier provide a clue into their lives. The first were either New Mexican or Indian, and they transformed the place into a true settlement, softening the business transactions with the necessities and pleasures of everyday life. The Indian wives preferred to live with their families in tipis outside of El Pueblo's gate. They acted as guides, translators, and negotiators for their husbands—while, at the same time, they cooked, hunted, dressed furs, and made moccasins and buckskin clothing for trade.



The aroma of bread baking in an *horno*, or adobe oven, would have filled the plaza of El Pueblo from time to time.

Vincent Trujillo, who lived at El Pueblo in 1846–47, drew this plan of the post.



Though probably larger than the one-room domiciles at El Pueblo, this adobe house interior suggests the simple character of life at the trading post.

The post is owned by a company of independent traders, on the common property system; and, from its situation, can command a profitable trade with both Mexicans and Indians. . . . Everything about the establishment wears the aspect of neatness and comfort.

—Rufus Sage, September 1842

The New Mexican women brought traditions and objects from home that made life more bearable. In their rooms were personal altars, covered with *colchas*, or embroidered cloths, where they observed the rituals of the Catholic faith. On their walls hung crosses and *santos*, images of the saints. Lively *fandangos* kept the social life active. Like the Indian women, they cooked, cleaned, provided for their children, cured the sick and injured, and bravely faced the trading post's many challenges. Together, they celebrated marriages, births, and other rites of passage—and mourned deaths.

Fluid Relationships To survive, the women of El Pueblo had to withstand the fickle nature of female-male relationships on the frontier. Some of them remained with the men who brought them to El Pueblo; others were abandoned or met new partners there. Louisa Sandoval arrived with Jim Beckwourth at El Pueblo while pregnant with their child Matilda. When Beckwourth left the post for three years, she

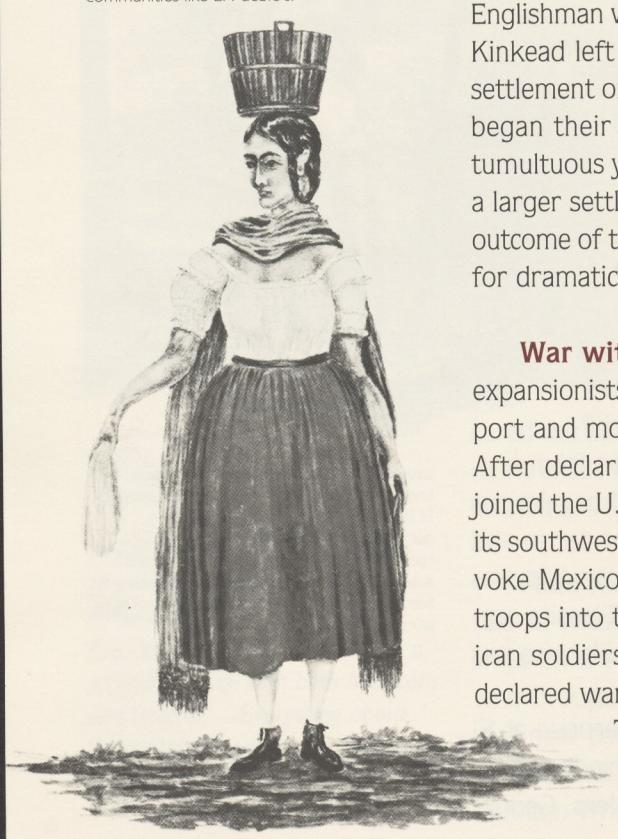
married another trader, John Brown, with whom she moved to California and eventually had ten children. The women deftly blended successful elements of Indian, Mexican, and American cultures to survive—and, in the process, forged new relationships and possibilities in the Arkansas River Valley. While we may not know all of their names, or the details of their daily lives, we know that their strength fortified El Pueblo during a period of tumultuous change at the international borderland of the Arkansas River.

Extended Family Several traders at El Pueblo formed a large extended family presided over by Teresita Sandoval, a native of Taos. She came to the Arkansas River Valley with Mathew Kinkead, a Kentuckian with whom she had two children, and brought with her at least three children from a previous marriage. They left New Mexico in 1841 as relations between New Mexicans and Americans became tense and uncertain. Kinkead established a buffalo ranch on the Arkansas six miles west of Fountain Creek. There he and Teresita captured buffalo calves to be fattened by a herd of milk cows and sold to zoos and circuses in the eastern states.

By 1842 the Kinkead family joined the enterprise at El Pueblo, and a diverse extended family emerged, binding Teresita and her children to the trading post's founders. George

James P. Beckwourth, a black frontiersman known throughout the West, helped to found El Pueblo in 1842. The title of his 1856 autobiography, from which this engraving was taken, suggests his many roles: *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth: Mountaineer, Scout, and Pioneer, and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians.*

An 1853 sketch of Teresita Sandoval by third husband Alexander Barclay. The drawing captures the moment Barclay first saw Teresita at El Pueblo, ten years earlier, as she climbed up the banks of the Arkansas River balancing a wooden water pail. Independent and self-assured, Sandoval typified women who held together ethnically diverse and fluid communities like El Pueblo's.



Simpson met and married Teresita's eldest daughter, Juana, a month shy of her fifteenth birthday at El Pueblo. The second-oldest daughter, Cruz, married trader Joseph Doyle. And then, wrapped in a blue *rebozo* and balancing a tub on her head, Teresita caught the admiration of Alexander Barclay, an Englishman who had worked as a bookkeeper for Bent. After Kinkead left El Pueblo to found Hardscrabble, a temporary settlement on the upper Arkansas River, Teresita and Barclay began their relationship. They remained together for ten tumultuous years, during which time they attempted to build a larger settlement in New Mexico Territory and awaited the outcome of the pending U.S. and Mexican war in a land poised for dramatic changes.

War with Mexico Led by President James K. Polk, expansionists in the United States, eager to acquire a Pacific port and more territory, eyed the northern half of Mexico. After declaring independence from Mexico in 1836, Texas joined the U.S. in 1845. The new state called the Rio Grande its southwestern boundary—a territorial claim meant to provoke Mexico, which also responded to the incursion of U.S. troops into the contested territory in May 1846. After Mexican soldiers attacked the baiting party, the United States declared war on Mexico.

The war ended quickly. By autumn 1846, volunteer U.S. troops had captured and occupied Mexico City and Chihuahua as well as Mexican

cities to the north—San Diego, El Paso, and Santa Fe. By February 1848 the two nations had signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, designating the Rio Grande as the boundary between the United States and Mexico—and effectively adding the present states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and parts of Nevada, Utah, and Colorado to the United States. The annexation of this territory created strong animosity among many New Mexicans, now forced under the rule of Americans like Charles Bent, the first U.S. territorial governor of New Mexico. In 1847, insurgents in Taos murdered Bent in the living room of his home, waging a short-lived rebellion before succumbing to U.S. control.

The war also took its toll on Bent's Fort. Increasingly subject to the demands of the army—from the billeting of soldiers, to the movement and storage of military supplies, to medical care for sick detachments of Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West—the fort also suffered from the war's detrimental effect on trade. When the army refused to purchase the fort for $15,000 in 1848, William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain divided their interests, and Bent abandoned the fort the next year in the wake of a massive cholera epidemic. He built another post a few miles down the Arkansas, but the great trading empire symbolized by Bent's Fort was on the wane.

The 1846 war with Mexico had an enormous impact on the American Southwest, not only extending the borders of the United States well into what was once Mexico but introducing ethnic tensions that had earlier been softened by mutual trade and commerce along the Santa Fe Trail. This scene, from *History of the U.S. Cavalry* by Albert Brackett (1865) is of the battle of Resaca, near present-day Brownsville, which took place before the United States declared war.

In the midst of the U.S.-Mexican War, members of the Mormon Battalion who were too ill to fight found a winter haven at El Pueblo, along with Mississippi Mormons who could not join the main exodus of Latter-day Saints heading toward the Great Salt Lake. For a few short months, before the Saints left for Zion in 1847, they and the inhabitants of El Pueblo shared food, company, and frontier skills. Drawing from the diary of John Brown. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Mormon Town Also during the war, beginning in August 1846, several groups of Mormons on their way west to establish Zion rested and recuperated near El Pueblo. These included sick and injured Mormon soldiers who joined Kearny's army as well as families from Mississippi known as the Mississippi Saints. They constructed wood cabins about a mile east of El Pueblo and plowed the earth to plant turnips, pumpkins, beans, melons, wheat, and corn. By early winter, approximately three hundred Mormons occupied more than fifty wood cabins and a large prayer house. They were welcomed by the residents of El Pueblo and the two groups traded, shared crops, and attended fandangos during the winter. By the end of May 1847, the Mormons continued on to the Great Salt Lake Valley. But they never forgot some of the things they learned at El Pueblo, including New Mexican irrigation systems and adobe construction techniques for their new homes in Utah.

Seeds of Decline El Pueblo existed on the fringes of the frontier, and most of the traders there operated without a legal license. Established traders who had obtained the necessary approvals vilified the traders at El Pueblo for supplying whiskey to the Indians—although alcohol was widely avail-

Ruins of Bent's Fort in the 1880s.

able throughout Indian country at that time. By 1846 western traveler Francis Parkman noted that El Pueblo suffered from lack of care, with its gate unhinged, cracked adobe walls, and the questionable integrity of its inhabitants. An ever-changing procession of traders and their families occupied the fort during this time.

We approached the gate of the Pueblo. It was a wretched species of fort of most primitive construction, . . . surrounded by a wall of mud, miserably cracked and dilapidated. . . . The gate dangled on its wooden hinges so loosely, that to open or shut it seemed likely to bring it down altogether.

—Francis Parkman, August 20, 1846

Arkansas Valley Roots Hispanos from New Mexico, looking for new lands with agricultural promise, built settlements throughout the Arkansas River Valley during the early 1850s. After five years in New Mexico, Joseph and Cruz Doyle, George Simpson, Teresita Sandoval, and her brother Benito

Sandoval returned to El Pueblo in 1853. They repaired roofs and adobe walls, and stayed at the post for a few months before forming new settlements in the area. In the fall of 1854, Doyle established a large settlement on the Huerfano River, twenty miles east. Teresita's brother Benito remained at El Pueblo waiting with his three sons for his wife to arrive from Mora after Christmas. Then the family planned to move to the Huerfano River settlement. It was a fateful decision.

As El Puebloans drifted away from the post during its declining years, they built ranches and small settlements that looked much like this open placita.

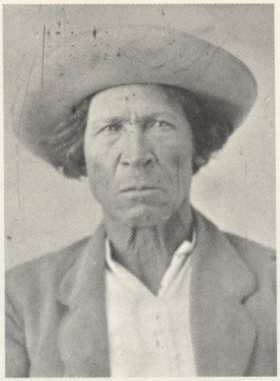
Half an hour after the Utes left [Marcelino] Baca's house, at seven or eight in the morning,[Felipe] Cisneros and the people at Baca's heard many reports coming from the direction of the fort, and then-silence.

—Janet Lecompte, *1954 Brand Book*, Denver Posse of the Westerners

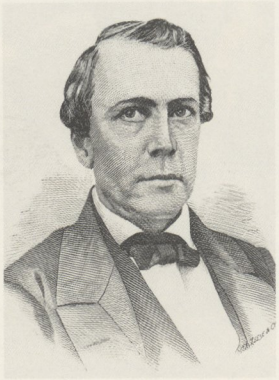
Attack! The Indians of the Arkansas Valley tolerated the presence of the settlers but often demanded restitution with crops, livestock, or other items. This was true especially of the Utes, who were generally friendly to non-Indians. But a combination of broken treaties, mishandled negotiations, lost trade goods, and a steady stream of emigrants on the Overland Trail to the north enflamed Indian anger and frustration. During 1854 the Utes began surprising settlers with warning skirmishes. Then, early in the morning on Christmas Eve Day, 1854, fifty Utes led by Tierra Blanca waged a devastating attack on El Pueblo. The fifteen to nineteen occupants, weary after an all-night card game, were taken completely by surprise. The Utes entered the post and killed nearly everyone there, except for two of Benito Sandoval's children and one woman—all of whom were taken hostage.

Demise, Scattering, and Legacy After the attack, El Pueblo was abandoned. Over time, the adobe walls crumbled, the roofs collapsed, and native grasses reclaimed the fields and garden plots that had sustained a frontier community for a decade or more. In the meantime, great change had come to the central Rockies. The gold rush of 1858–59 beckoned hundreds of thousands of easterners to the Pikes Peak region, where they plied the rivers and streams of the upper Arkansas.

The Ute attack on El Pueblo in the morning of Christmas Eve Day, 1854, was unprovoked, but it was the culmination of broken promises, encroachment, and other stresses that sparked a violent outcome. It marked the final abandonment of El Pueblo.



Fluent in English, Spanish, and several Indian languages, Charles Autobees personified the integration of cultures in the Arkansas Valley, one that crossed racial, national, and ethnic lines. Many of his descendants live here today.

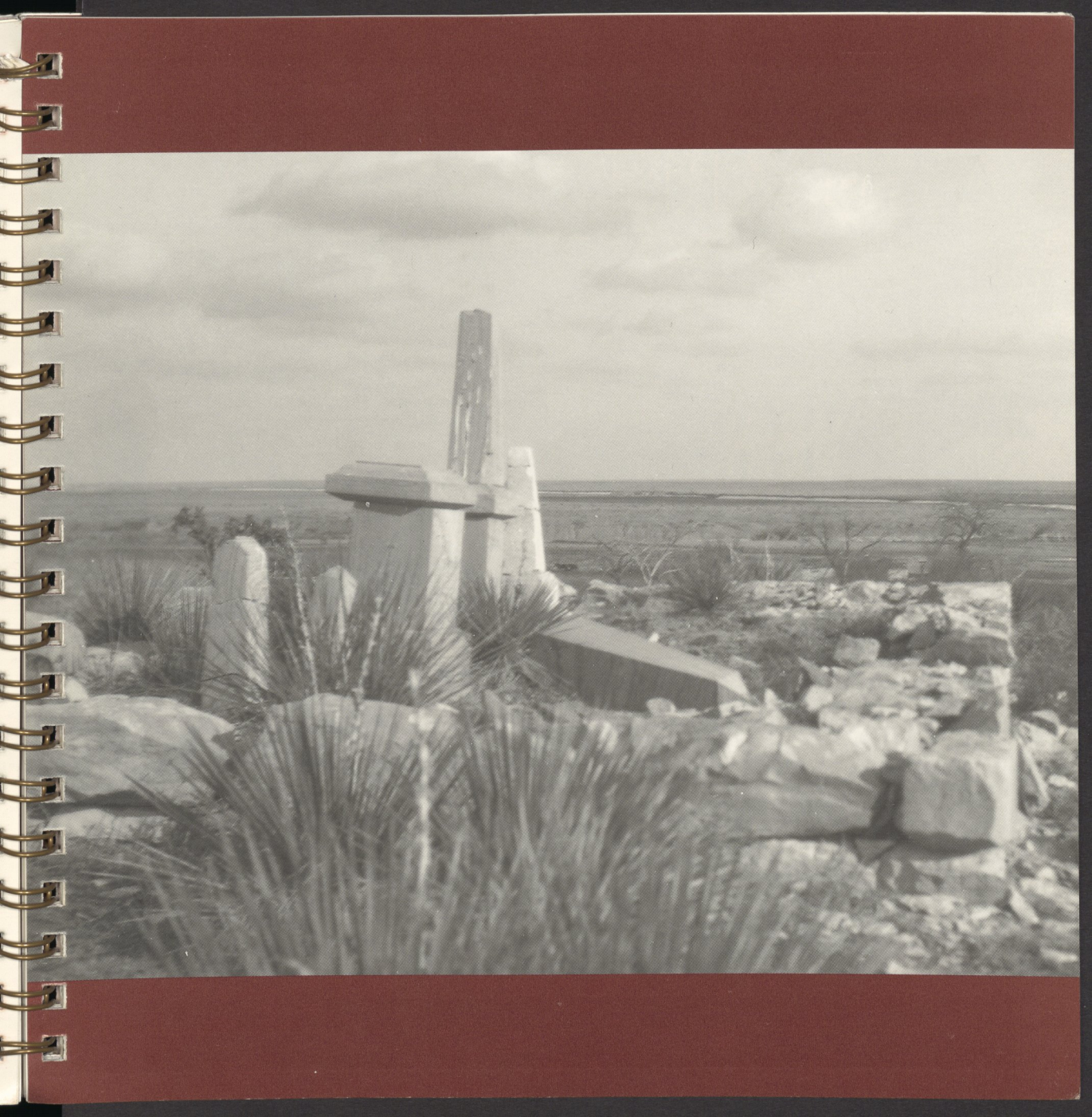


Joseph Doyle

During these years, some of the founders of El Pueblo quietly spent their last days at small settlements on the Arkansas and Huerfano rivers. Other valley settlers moved south to New Mexico; but Charles Autobees, an influential trapper, scout, and trader, remained on his ranch by the Huerfano River.

Teresita Sandoval stayed on a ranch built by Joseph Doyle for his wife Cruz near the Huerfano River. Before his death in 1864, Doyle amassed a large fortune and built Casa Blanca, a 600-acre ranch that included the first frame house in the Arkansas valley. He also built irrigation ditches and one of the first flour mills in Colorado. Teresita stayed at Doyle's ranch until her death in 1894 at the age of eighty-three. During that time she witnessed the arrival of the railroad, the transformation of Pueblo into an urban-industrial powerhouse, and the proliferation of homesteads throughout the valley. She and the other founders of El Pueblo established agriculture in southeastern Colorado and provided much-needed supplies to miners during the early years of the gold rush. They also encouraged other New Mexicans to settle throughout the valley, creating strong family ties between the Hispano families of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.

Facing page: Plot of the Doyle family, once thought to be the resting place of Teresita Sandoval, whose remains are now believed to lie in an unmarked grave. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT



A CITY RISES

Up from the Ruins Some of the prospectors journeying past the ruins of El Pueblo in 1858 stopped long enough to consider the region's mild climate and potential for growth and development. By the end of the year, a crude settlement of wood and adobe cabins sprang up east of Fountain Creek. The first arrivals named their town Fountain City, and two men, named Shaffer and Browne, surveyed and platted the town's future streets. The settlement grew to include a few more houses, an irrigation ditch, and the first harvested crops. But by 1860 a rival township appeared on the west side of the Fountain—near the site of the old trading post—and some of its inhabitants appropriated El Pueblo's fallen adobe bricks. The post slowly disappeared under the growing city—in fact, melted into it. All that remained of the venerable fort was its name, which carried over to the new town. Within two years, Pueblo rose over the abandoned post to incorporate Fountain City and emerge as the promising new seat of Pueblo County.

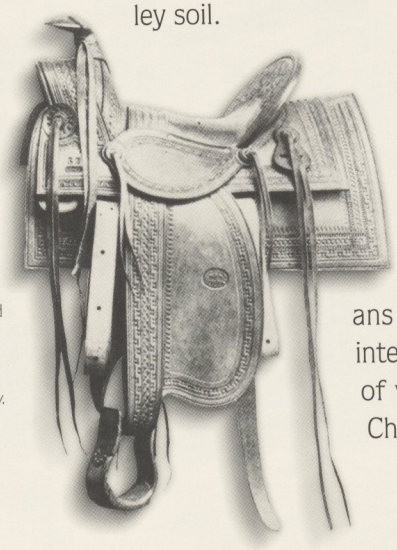
Facing page: The only known photographic record of El Pueblo's surface ruins comes from this 1873 image of the early city. Looking southwest across Santa Fe Avenue, the photographer captures the fort's eroded northern wall and a few El Pueblo adobe structures near its western end. The entire complex lies in the middle distance, just below the chapter's title. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Below: West side of Santa Fe Avenue in Pueblo, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, in spring 1870.

The Business of Settlement Just like their forebears, Pueblo's new settlers provided supplies and services, this time to the stream of goldseekers entering Colorado. Throughout

Like Denver to the north, Pueblo served as a major supply town in the south for prospectors heading into the mountains to dig for gold.

the 1860s the town grew modestly, enhanced by its first courthouse, school, church, jail, newspaper, and other community structures. Businesses lined Santa Fe Avenue in a procession of supply stores, blacksmith shops, saloons, and hotels. Though the town was miles from the nearest gold discoveries, prospectors en route to the Pike's Peak diggings stopped in Pueblo for supplies, paying inflated frontier prices for flour, eggs, milk, and other perishables. Farmers supplied fruits and vegetables to the residents of Pueblo and nearby Fort Reynolds, and sold the surplus in Denver. Soon support businesses flourished, including saddlery, clothing, furniture, and agricultural implements. The first plows turned the earth in the river bottomlands. With the expansion of irrigation systems, farmers began raising bumper crops of corn, wheat, oats, beans, and vegetables in the fertile valley soil.



Right: Pueblo became known for its fine saddles, such as this Pueblo Iron Horse Tree Saddle, advertised in the 1896 Gallup and Frazier catalog. The three major early saddlery houses were S. C. Gallup Company, R. T. Frazier Saddlery, and the T. Flynn Saddlery. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

A Massacre—and War As emigrants trekked through Cheyenne and Arapaho lands between the South Platte and Arkansas rivers, they destroyed the grasses and decimated the bison herds, proving to the Indians that the U.S. government had no intention of keeping earlier treaties—one of which promised a reservation for the Cheyennes and Arapahos east of Pueblo.

Indian raids increased, and hostilities between Indians and whites grew during the summer of 1864. In September, Col. John M. Chivington convinced peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho bands to camp near Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River, where they would receive protection from soldiers at the fort. Led by Cheyenne chief Black Kettle, a large group camped on Big Sandy Creek several miles away, only to be attacked by units of Chivington's First and Third Volunteer Cavalry at dawn on November 29, 1864. The Sand Creek Massacre, during which soldiers killed and mutilated approximately 150 Indian men, women, and children, was a watershed event for Plains Indians. Once word of the atrocities spread, 10,000 Indians united to wage retaliatory attacks, and open warfare ensued across eastern Colorado for four years. By the late 1860s the U.S. government defeated the Plains tribes and forced them onto reservations far from their native lands. The promised Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation east of Pueblo instead became available for the new economic pursuits of the West, including ranching, farming, and homesteading.

In the wake of the Sand Creek Massacre, Cheyennes and Arapahos raided farms, ranches, military units, and supply trains throughout Colorado. This drawing of a raid on a military supply wagon—depicted by the attacker, White Horse—might well be describing the torture and death of John Booth and a companion, both of them recently discharged Colorado volunteers who carried souvenir scalps of Indian warriors killed at Sand Creek. Plate 82, Cheyenne Dog Soldier Ledgerbook, Colorado Historical Society.

The business of breeding and handling live-stock in the west is one of deep interest. Most young men, no matter where living or what doing, think and feel that if they were...engaged in the live-stock business, they would wake up some fine morning to find themselves wealthy. Just how it would be accomplished they scarcely know, but nevertheless that such would be their happy lot they have a profound confidence.

—Joseph G. McCoy,
Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest, 1874

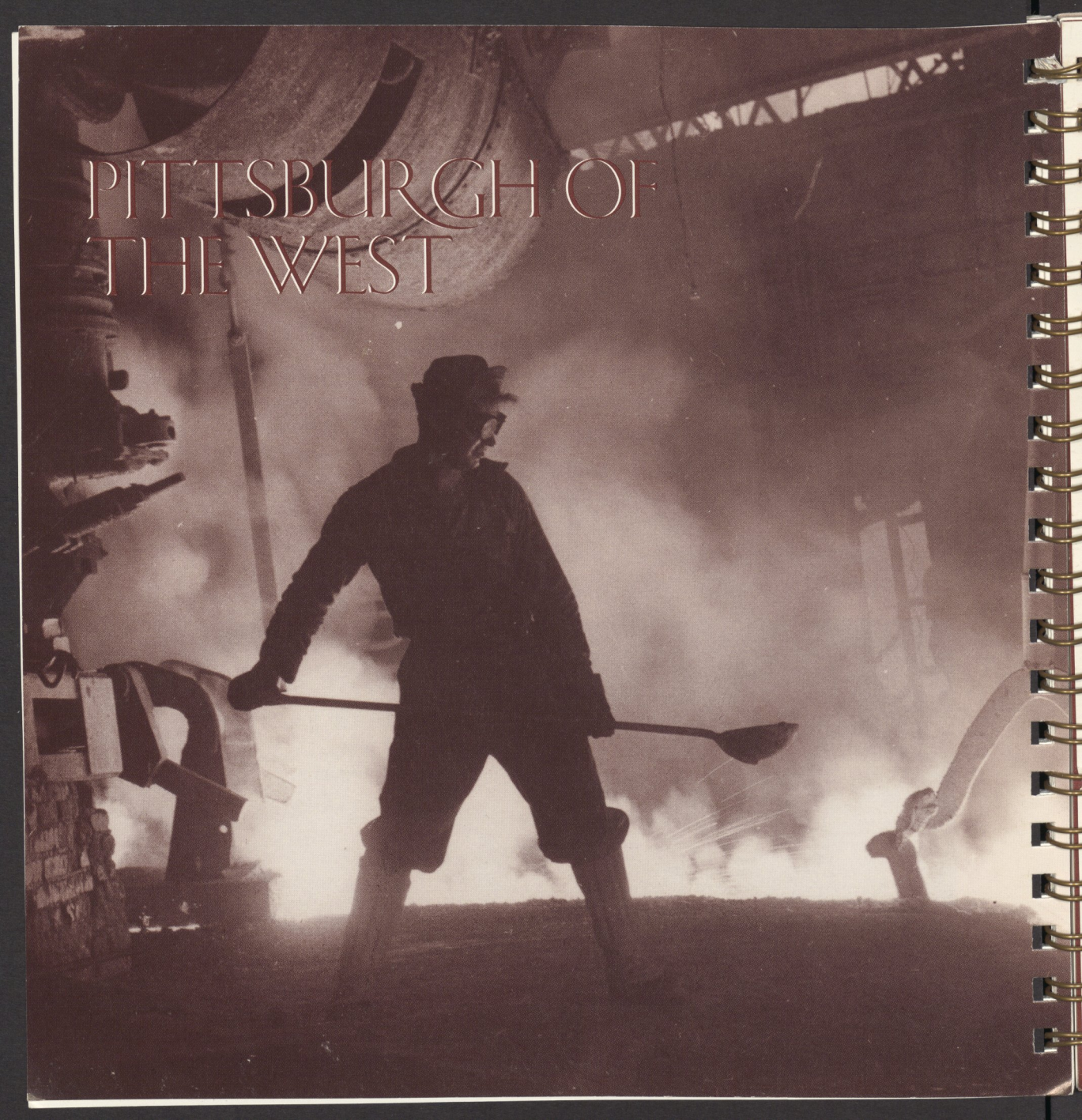
Cattle Era During the 1860s the Pueblo region became part of an extensive network of cattle trails snaking out of Texas to railroad markets in Kansas, Wyoming, and—in time—Colorado. By 1866 the Goodnight-Loving Trail, one of the West's best-known, carried cattle from Fort Worth to Pueblo. Meanwhile, ranchers established small and large spreads in the open surrounding grasslands, and when the railroad arrived in 1872, the city became a center for transporting stock to far-flung markets. The first livestock show took place that year, organized by Pueblo businessmen as part of the Southern Colorado Agricultural and Industrial Association—a precursor to the Colorado State Fair, which became a part of Pueblo's annual calendar in 1886.

By 1889 extensive stockyards near the railroad served ranchers with exchange offices, restaurants, loading chutes,

branding chutes, weigh scales, pens, a dipping vat, a barn, and three miles of spur track. Because of Pueblo's central location, its cattle yards handled millions of head each year. The stockyards typified drastic changes in the ranching business after 1890. With the proliferation of homesteads, the spread of barbed wire, and the need to protect cattle during harsh high plains winters, the era of the open range passed into memory. Now ranchers brought feed to their cattle in fenced enclosures and relied on windmills to pump water from underground aquifers to cattle troughs.

Facing page: Cattle ranchers and cowhands gather on horseback before the Arkansas Hall on Santa Fe Avenue in 1880. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Below: Carl "Little Tin Horn Hank" Keenen performs at the Colorado State Fair. The son of Henry "Tin Horn Hank" Keenen, a famous rodeo clown, Carl began traveling with his father and mother when he was six weeks old. He later became skilled at roping and trick riding. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT


PITTSBURGH OF
THE WEST

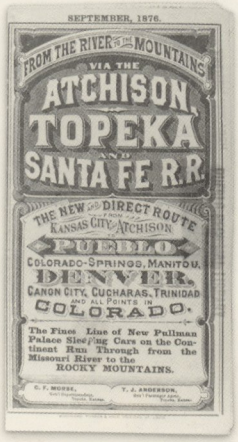
"Better Health, Better Climate"

Pueblo embarked on a new phase of development in 1872 when the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, organized in 1870 by Gen. William Jackson Palmer, steamed into town. The railroad built its own town, South Pueblo, spurning the older community on the north bank of the Arkansas River. South Pueblo attracted new settlers with articles and broadsides extolling "better health...better climate...[and] large crops," in addition to the potential for smelting, mills, and foundries. The natural crossroads made Pueblo a magnet for railroads, with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, the Denver & New Orleans, the Missouri Pacific, and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific roads connecting to all points from Pueblo by 1888. In 1890, these competing lines joined together in Union Depot, located at Victoria and B streets. The Romanesque Revival building became one of the busiest depots in the state and a center of social activity.

Pueblo Union Depot, built in 1889–90

Facing page: Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) steelworker

Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad schedule
COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT



Smokestacks of Prosperity

Railroads initiated new industries and transformed the modest agricultural burg of Pueblo into a smoky, gritty town dubbed the "Pittsburgh of the West." The first smelter, the Pueblo Smelting and Refining Company, began operations in 1878, owned by two

Facing page:

Top: CF&I Corporation steelworks

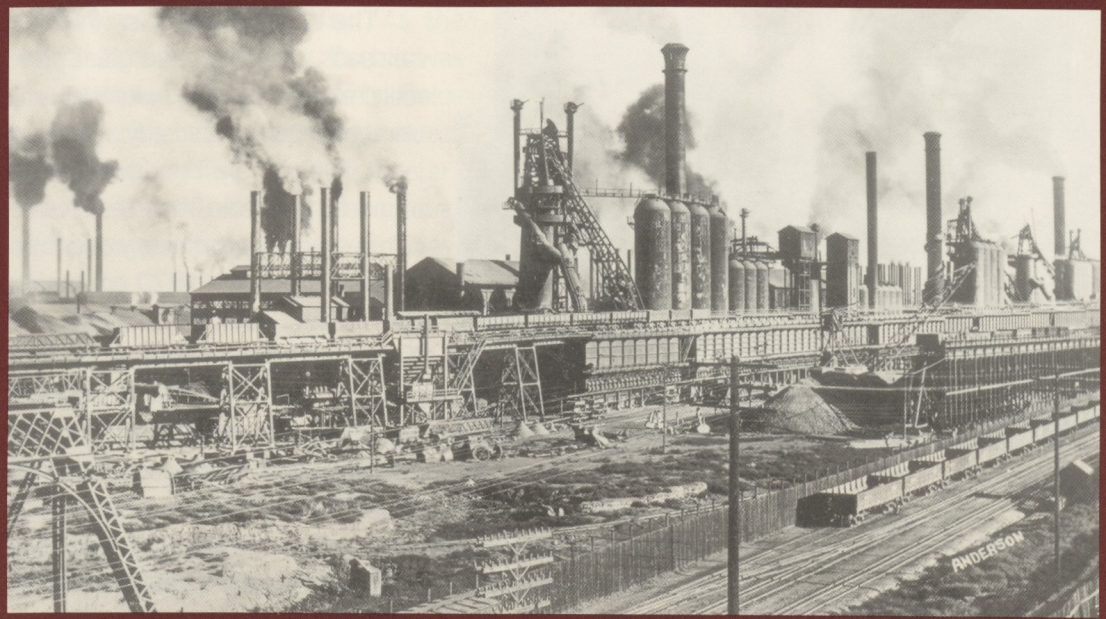
Bottom left: Industrial boosterism

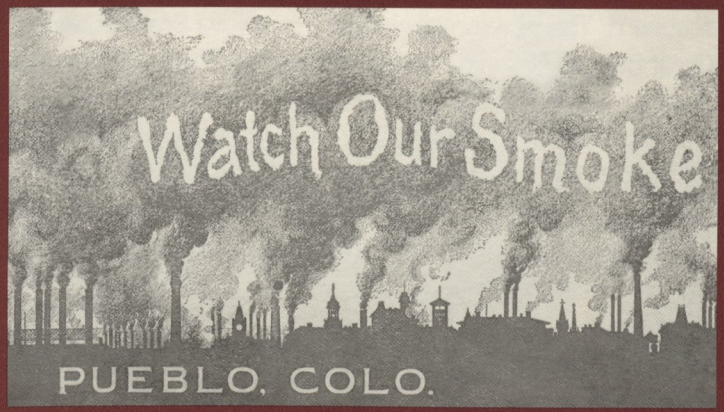
Bottom right: Steel magnate John Osgood

industrialists from Utah. Others included the Colorado Smelting Works, the Philadelphia Smelting and Refining Company, the New England Smelter, and the U.S. Zinc Company. The smelters produced lead, gold, silver, copper, and zinc until 1921. But Pueblo's most influential industry began with General Palmer's plan to manufacture steel for his railroad in South Pueblo, where he took advantage of the Arkansas's plentiful water supply. In 1880 Palmer's Colorado Coal & Iron Company began building an extensive steel works on open land east of South Pueblo. By 1882 the company's belching blast furnaces, powered by coal from nearby mines, provided all of the pig iron, pipes, spikes, and rails for the Denver & Rio Grande—with plenty more to sell to other railroads.

Soon, however, a competitor emerged. The Colorado Fuel Company, under the direction of John C. Osgood, gained control of valuable coal fields in Las Animas and Huerfano counties south of Pueblo. By 1892 Osgood had drawn a great deal of business away from Colorado Coal & Iron, and he forced the merger of the two companies. The resulting corporation, Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I), eventually became one of Colorado's most important. It operated coal mines, iron ore mines, and four coke plants on more than 69,000 acres between New Mexico and Wyoming. With more than 15,000 workers, CF&I employed one-tenth of Colorado's work force, with 6,000 in South Pueblo alone. At one time CF&I controlled 75 percent of the state's coal production, and for many years it operated the only integrated steel plant in the West.

William Jackson Palmer


ANDERSON


Watch Our Smoke
PUEBLO, COLO.

Above: Hispano family

Below: Italian mother and children. BOTH COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

The World Rushed In Pueblo's railroads, smelters, and giant steel mill created a thriving industrial center that required a steady source of labor. Even before the development of industry, Pueblo attracted diverse cultures, and approximately one-third of the residents in 1870 originated from New Mexico. To meet the demands of rapid industrial growth between 1880 and 1890, Pueblo's population ballooned from 3,000 to 24,000, an 800-percent increase. Immigrants disembarking from ships anchored at New Orleans or Galveston, Texas, received special stickers from company agents to board trains destined for Pueblo's industrial factories, while others were recruited in cities on the nation's eastern seaboard. The newcomers hailed from Nova Scotia, Canada, Great Britain, western and eastern Europe, Russia, China, and Japan, in addition to native-born peoples—African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians. Once men found work in the factories, their wives, children, brothers, sisters, parents, and cousins soon followed, settling in distinct ethnic neighborhoods—like the Grove, Peppersauce Bottoms, or Elm Street—anchored by local grocery stores, saloons, and fraternal halls. The profusion of cultures in Pueblo made for a diverse and complex city.

Prosperity and Pride As the state's second largest city, Pueblo was the financial center of southern Colorado and boasted a diversified business climate. Successful supply store merchants like John Thatcher and his brother Mahlon turned to the lucrative business of banking to serve the stockmen, farmers, industrialists, and workers of the region. Early banks included the First National Bank of Pueblo, Stockmen's Bank, and American National Bank. The Pueblo Savings Bank served Pueblo's working class, while Western National Bank, and later Minnequa Bank, served the mill workers at CF&I. As a symbol of the town's prosperity, on July 4, 1891, the businessmen of Pueblo proudly opened

Above: Albert Druva grocery store, Santa Fe Avenue

Below left: South Union Avenue

Below right: Mineral Palace

Below: John and Margaret Thatcher's mansion, Rosemount

Bottom: Smelter Hill or "Old Mexico," one of three squatters' communities in industrial Pueblo. An established neighborhood today, the area is still referred to as "Goat Hill" because the later Italian residents kept small herds for cheese and milk. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

the Colorado Mineral Palace, featuring a profusion of ornate columns, pediments, and balconies. Inside, visitors wandered through mineral exhibits underneath an elaborate ceiling of twenty-eight domes painted with scenes of Colorado wildflowers. The extensive grounds featured a sculpture garden and a park for promenading.

Rich Man, Poor Man Pueblo's elite lived in grand mansions, like the 24,000-square-foot Rosemount, built by John Thatcher for his wife Margaret and their children between 1891 and 1893. Nearby was Hillcrest Mansion, a high style English Tudor home occupied by Mahlon Thatcher and his wife Luna. The Thatcher brothers and their business partners influenced the business and social life of Pueblo, while entrepreneurs and industrialists, typically from the East, invested in and realized great profits from the industries of Pueblo and the surrounding region.

But for every person in Pueblo who made a fortune, thousands more barely scraped by, laboring to provide a brighter future for their families than those in their native lands. Work in the mills and smelters—if it could be found—was dirty, labor-intensive, and dangerous. Minnequa Hospital, established by CF&I and other industries, treated workers with burns, lacerations, fractures, and even amputations. But no matter how bad the injury, a worker received only fifty dollars for his troubles from the company—the same amount paid to his next of kin in the event of death.

Changing Landscape By the 1880s, ranching and homesteading in the Arkansas River Valley wrought irreversible impacts to the natural prairie ecosystem. Cattle and sheep ate the native grasses, which were replaced by invasive species such as sagebrush, cactus, and thistles. Homesteaders plowed the virgin soil, removing the stable layer of topsoil and leaving the earth vulnerable to severe drought and dust storms. And industrialists transformed the town of South Pueblo into a smoking jungle of factories. By the turn of the century, the original founders of El Pueblo would not have recognized the land at the junction of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River. But great changes lay ahead in the new century—a time when Pueblo would struggle through natural and financial disasters toward a period of regeneration and growth.

Above and below: The high plains surrounding Pueblo blended dryland farming with an expanding steelmaking industry that gave the city a nationwide reputation as the "Pittsburgh of the West." COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT


TWENTIETH-CENTURY
CHALLENGES

The New Century Pueblo remained Colorado's second largest city after 1900—and stayed that way for more than fifty years. Its turn-of-the-century economy was robust, its businesses and industries were varied, and its growing middle class was thriving. In addition to Santa Fe and Union avenues, Main Street and Northern Avenue became busy shopping districts. New suburbs sprang up, and their residents traveled to the city center on trolley cars and, in growing numbers, automobiles.

Above: Main Street, 1920s

Facing page: Aerial view of flood damage

Below: Lake Minnequa

For recreation, there was the Lake Minnequa Amusement Park, which opened in 1902 with boating, fishing, a merry-go-round, theater, and roller coaster. Professional theatre and vaudeville also entertained townspeople until movie houses proliferated throughout the city—where it was said that many of Pueblo's immigrants learned English. But Pueblo's workers had greater concerns than merry-go-rounds and movies during this period, for a larger force began to impact their lives and livelihoods—the bitter war between capital and labor. While big corporations

struggled to dominate all aspects of production, labor unions mobilized workers against long workdays, low pay, and wretched conditions.

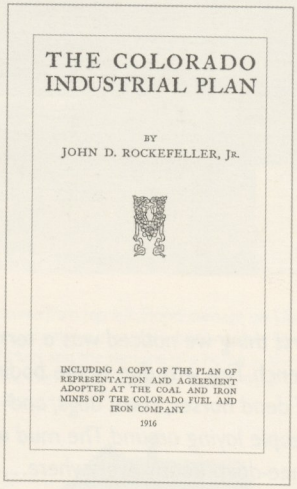
A small mountain of coal awaits delivery to the open-hearth furnaces of CF&I.

Power Struggles In the corporate world of high finance, CF&I president John Osgood fought against two takeover schemes in 1901 and 1902. He managed to fend off these attacks only to fall victim to financier John D. Rockefeller, who saved CF&I from bankruptcy, then took over the company in 1907 as part of his giant steel empire.

Meanwhile, in Colorado as elsewhere, big business allied itself with state government to oppose labor unions demanding the right to an eight-hour work day, improved safety and health conditions, payment in currency instead of company scrip, and the right to own a home rather than live in company housing. CF&I controlled the conditions of its workers' lives and monopolized nearly everything—from recreation to medical care to coal town housing, even to the books and newspapers workers read. Although Coloradans had approved eight-hour days for workers in mines, mills, and smelters, big corporations skirted the new laws by lowering hourly wages and offering higher pay to those who agreed to work longer days.

On April 20, 1914, a volley of Colorado National Guard machine-gun fire set ablaze the tent colony of striking miners and their families at Ludlow, south of Pueblo. In addition to other victims, two women and eleven children had sought safety in a dugout shelter underneath a tent—which became a deadly inferno. Two days later, a group of citizens from Trinidad, unofficially representing the Red Cross, took on the grisly task of retrieving the bodies—all under the hostile eye of the National Guard, which had refused undertakers entrance to the camp a day earlier.

Deadly Strikes Strikes throughout Colorado rarely ended in better conditions—at least, immediately. Mine owners, supported by the state militia, effectively suppressed the strikers and replaced them with new workers. A long strike in 1913–14 against CF&I in the Ludlow coal field north of Trinidad ended tragically when the Colorado National Guard, called to quell the strikers, fired on a tent colony occupied by the workers and their families. After six men, two women, and twelve children lost their lives on April 20, 1914, a ten-day war between the militia and strikers ensued. U.S. troops restored order and CF&I was finally forced to improve conditions for its employees. Rockefeller ardently opposed unions, but his son, John D., Jr., issued the Colorado Industrial Plan, including a company-controlled union to represent the workers. The reforms resulted in improved working conditions, better pay, and more extensive educational and social enrichments like kindergartens for the workers' children and classes


THE COLORADO
INDUSTRIAL PLAN

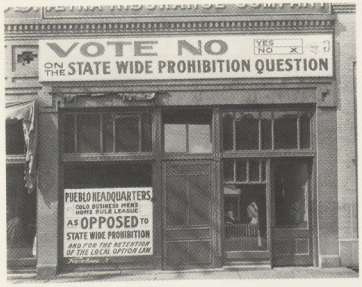
BY
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

INCLUDING A COPY OF THE PLAN OF REPRESENTATION AND AGREEMENT ADOPTED AT THE COAL AND IRON MINES OF THE COLORADO FUEL AND IRON COMPANY

1916

The Colorado Industrial Plan, or Rockefeller Plan, went into effect at CF&I in 1916. This concept rapidly spread throughout the country, and by 1935 nearly 2.5 million workers belonged to company-controlled unions. New Deal legislation made them illegal.

in home economics, language, and other skills needed by immigrants in a new country. But labor-company relations continued to be difficult, and it wasn't until 1938 that an independent steelworkers union was established in Pueblo.



Colorado outlawed liquor three years ahead of the nation, but not without local opposition.

First thing we noticed was a terrible stench. This was due to the bodies of dead horses, cows, dogs, and people laying around. The mud was knee-deep nearly everywhere.... Disease was already rampant, the hospitals were full and there was no medicine.

—Abe Maiman, relief worker, June 1921

Dry Days On January 1, 1916, Colorado's Prohibition laws closed bars and saloons throughout the state—three years before the rest of the nation. Some Puebloans fought hard against prohibiting liquor in their town, but lost. Nevertheless, until Prohibition was repealed in October 1933, the sale of illegal liquor flourished in Pueblo, with bootleg stills hidden in places like the zoo at Rye, abandoned underground sewer lines, and scattered homes throughout the city and county.

Wet Death Though the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek were typically shallow, flooding occurred periodically in Pueblo, as in 1893 and 1894, when water overtook City Hall. The town built dams and levees to stem floodwaters, but these measures proved futile when a "perfect storm" of three floods in June 1921 claimed approximately three hundred lives and sustained up to $19 million in damage. It began the evening of June 2, when heavy rain in the mountains near Leadville flooded Dry Creek, northwest of Pueblo. The rain continued through the next day, peaking floodwaters on the evening of June 3, when both the Arkansas and the Fountain spilled over their banks and into the streets, businesses, and

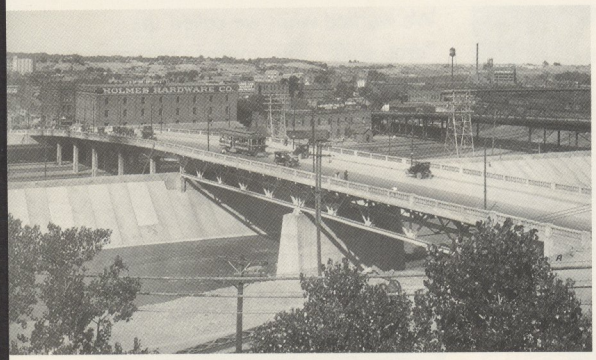
We worked what we called the "drop shift." You worked until you dropped. I worked 48 straight hours before I dropped the first time. The men would just leave you where you dropped, pick up your tools and carry on the job you'd been doing.

—Abe Maiman, June 1921

homes of Pueblo. As fires sparked at power plants and lumberyards, residents fled to high ground. On June 5, a nearby dam burst, causing still more damage. High water marks left telltale dirt and grime on prominent buildings throughout the city; at Union Depot, the line reached eleven feet above the ground.

Relief workers struggled to clean up and navigate through a city now lacking bridges, power, drinking water, and telephones, while residents coped with the loss of family members, friends, life savings, and livelihoods. Some of Pueblo's oldest buildings were destroyed, particularly the adobe and wood structures lining the banks of the rivers and along Santa Fe Avenue. Electricity was finally restored on June 24—three weeks after the flood.

Clockwise from top left: Flood damage on Union Avenue; water surrounds a building near First and Main, and the remains of a home in the Grove. LAST IMAGE COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT



The Union Avenue viaduct passes over the Arkansas River, now made more manageable through the construction of concrete embankments—all part of plans developed for the Pueblo Conservancy District following the flood of 1921.

Pueblo Conservancy District In the aftermath of the flood, legislators representing southern Colorado agreed to the construction of the Moffat Tunnel near Winter Park in northern Colorado, which they had fought for years because it would divert railroad traffic from Pueblo to northern cities. But in return, the state legislature approved the Pueblo Conservancy District to institute flood control measures. The city rechanneled the river in concrete near the bluffs, built the Barrier Dam, and constructed new bridges on Santa Fe Avenue, Union Avenue, and Eleventh Street. The Pueblo Conservancy District constituted the first comprehensive bridge-building effort ever undertaken in Colorado.

Sitting in a depression-era station wagon adapted for living, this man displays fruits and vegetables at his roadside stand. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Decline, Depression, and Dust By the time the Great Depression hit full stride in 1931, Pueblo had already experienced a ten-year depression of its own. Businessmen who had been wiped out by the 1921 flood had difficulty reestablishing themselves, and farmers struggled with a depressed market after World War I. The steel industry foundered, and by 1933 CF&I was bankrupt. In addition, as southern Colorado legislators had feared, Pueblo lost a good deal of its railroad traffic to northern Colorado via the Moffat Tunnel.

Then, as if all this weren't enough, dust storms ravaged the grasslands from 1933 to 1938, decimating crops and animal herds. People with a bit of money might buy masks from Harding Bullock's Store on Main Street to survive the gagging dust storms; the poorest, without any shelter, took refuge in the Pueblo County Home. A sad symbol of the community's decline, the Mineral Palace, once heralded as a statewide attraction, shut its doors in 1935, its extensive mineral collection sold at auction. The building was razed in 1942, just as World War II brought new economic promise for the future of Pueblo.

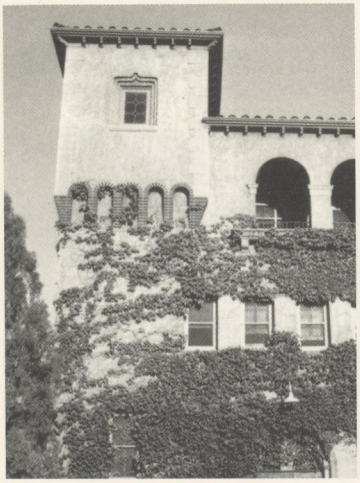
Employees of Harding Bullock's Store on Main Street demonstrate three models of dust masks. COURTESY PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Pueblo's New Deal Though the nation struck bottom in the 1930s, President Roosevelt's New Deal programs put people back to work—not only building roads, bridges, and park structures but conducting historical research, painting murals, and applying homemaking skills. In Pueblo, federal "alphabet" programs like the Work Projects Administration

WPA workers pose for a group photograph during the Great Depression—looking proud to be part of a line that is not a bread line.

Sunday school class, 1930s.

Even in the depths of the Great Depression, Pueblo financier Mahlon D. Thatcher funded the construction of the Pueblo YMCA on the site of his and his wife's earlier residence. Designed by Walter De Mordaunt, the Mediterranean Revival building is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



(WPA) and Civil Works Administration (CWA) constructed buildings for the Pueblo Junior College, Bessemer Community Center, State Fair, and other institutions, and made improvements to City Park, the Municipal Golf Course, Corona Park, and Pueblo Mountain Park in nearby Beulah. Steelmaking received a boost in 1936 when CF&I reemerged from bankruptcy as the Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation.

Wartime Relief During World War II, the steelworks and factories of Pueblo hummed in the production of war materiel, and Pueblo's years of decline came to a halt. In 1941 the federal government chose Pueblo as the home of an ordnance depot. The army received its first shipment of ammunition there in August 1942. When the war ended, the depot

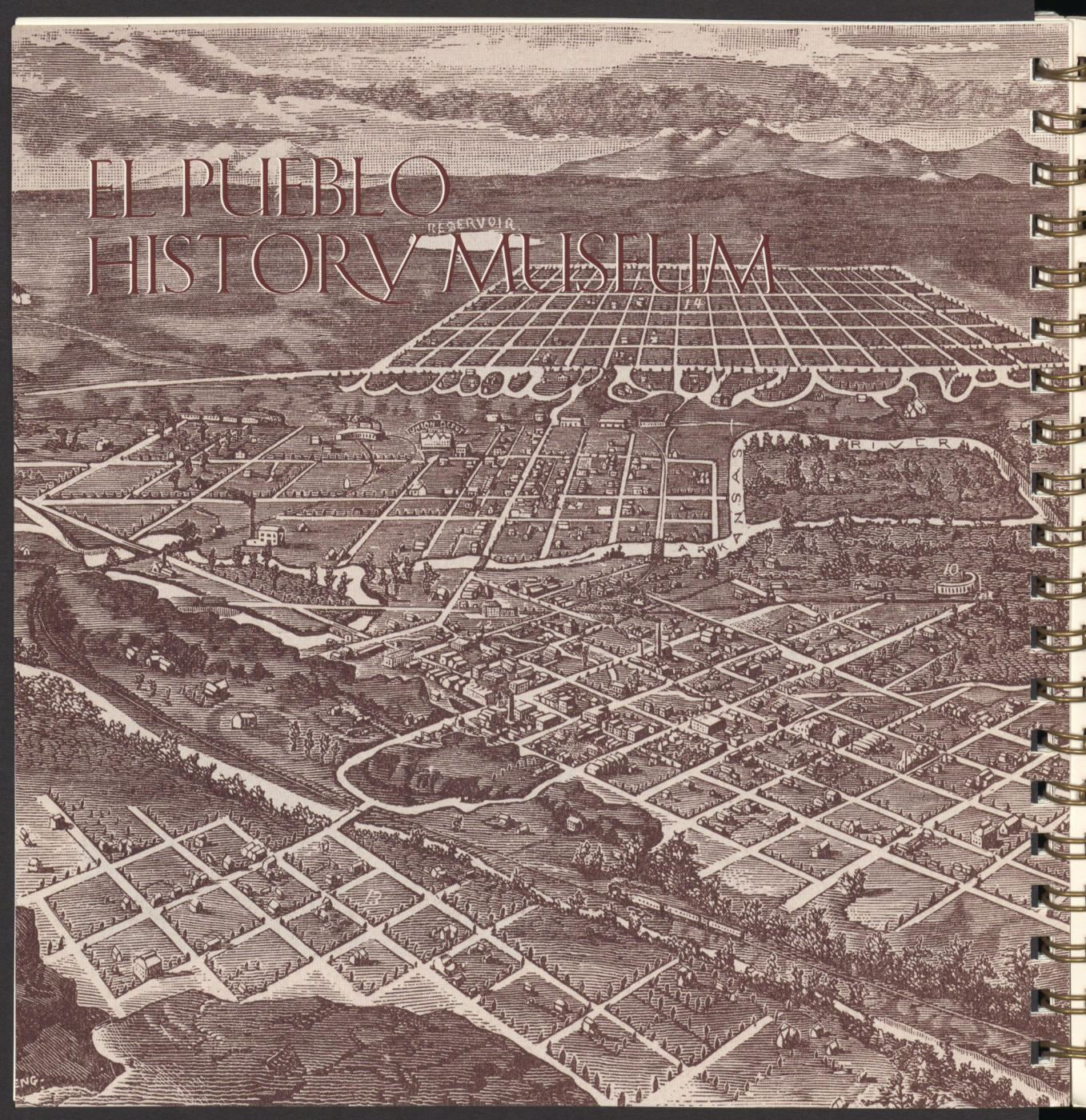
continued to serve as a regional ammunition distribution center. In 1962 it became the Pueblo Army Depot, and later the repository for historical objects and properties of the army. While Pueblo had an airport as early as 1925, the establishment of the Pueblo Army Air Base in 1942 solidified the city's prominence as a historical crossroads for more than surface routes. Crews trained there on heavy long-range bombers like the B-24 and *Liberator*. In 1953 the base, deeded to the city, became Pueblo Memorial Airport, named in honor of World War II veterans.

"We got a sandwich and a shot glass full of whiskey at the end of every raid. Whiskey was good for your nerves."

—Joe Autobee, B-24 gunner on the last raid over Germany and foreman of the Pueblo Army Depot for more than thirty-six years.

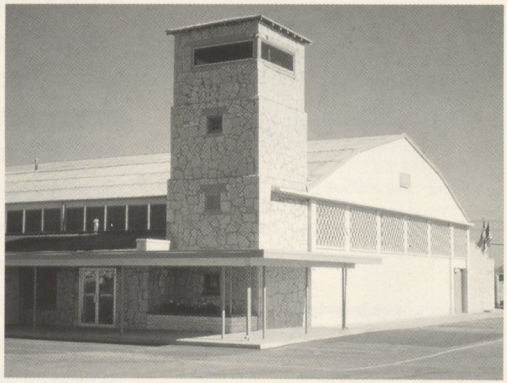
Above: Part of a fleet belonging to the Pueblo Air Service, this aircraft trained civilian pilots through a program developed at Pueblo Junior College, many of whom went on to become wartime pilots.

Right: In 1958, at the city's municipal airport, the city of Pueblo deeded the hangar to the Colorado Historical Society for use as a museum.


EL PUEBLO
HISTORY MUSEUM
RESERVOIR
UNION DEPOT
ARKANSAS
RIVER

Facing page: Detail of a bird's-eye view of Pueblo found in *Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado* (1881).

Good Times and Bad In 1959, when James Grafton Rogers, president of the Colorado Historical Society, dedicated the opening of El Pueblo Museum, he stood in front of a freshly built, full-scale replica of the old trading post. This and other exhibits on Pueblo's history sat inside a renovated airplane hangar on Pueblo's Prairie Avenue that was part of the Pueblo Municipal Airport. In a sense, the hangar connected Pueblo's past to its twentieth-century present, and the new museum reflected the energy and commitment many community members had put into the project.



For more than two decades, the dramatic replica of the old trading post inside the hanger on Prairie Avenue gave visitors a firsthand look into the lives of frontier traders and their families. But in the bicentennial year of 1976 another reconstructed trading post—Bent's Old Fort—went up with great fanfare along the Arkansas a few miles downriver from Pueblo. Managed by the National Park Service, the 48,000-square-foot Bent's Old Fort once again relegated El Pueblo to a subordinate role in western trade—only this time, it was the tourist trade.

Above and below: With funding from the state legislature, the Colorado Historical Society converted Pueblo's old hanger into a museum large enough to feature a full-size replica of the adobe fort

To make matters worse, Pueblo's economy stagnated during the 1970s as CF&I, fighting foreign competition, went into a steep decline and laid off hundreds of workers during the 1980s. The loss of the steel manufacturer had a tremendous impact on Pueblo's work force and economic future. The

[The original El Pueblo] *would be a great source of pride for Puebloans, an attraction for visitors, would enhance our downtown area, and in other ways...*[be] *an asset to the community.*

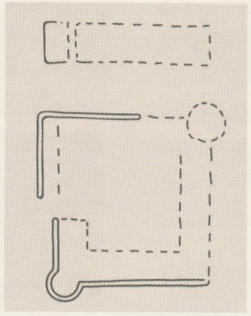
—William G. Buckles and Dan Oxford

city no longer boasted the second-largest population in the state; that role went to Colorado Springs, whose population soared during the 1980s and 1990s.

Digging for El Pueblo But a historical treasure still lay buried beneath the city—the site of the original El Pueblo trading post, its exact location long a matter of conjecture and dispute. In 1983, students and teachers at the University of Southern Colorado (USC), now Colorado State University–Pueblo, drew upon earlier investigations to search for El Pueblo's ruins using archival sources like newspapers, historical accounts, drawings, and other records. Their search was complicated by the fact that the river channel had changed over the years and now lay approximately a quarter of a mile south of its former location during the mid-1800s.

This sketch, made by William Quesenbury in 1850, offers the most reliable impression of El Pueblo and its location relative to the bend in the Arkansas River (see plan on next page and back cover map).

After much debate, it was determined that the most likely site of El Pueblo was beneath the Fariss Hotel at Victoria and Union avenues, originally built in 1882 in the city's historic core. Dr. William Buckles, professor of anthropology at USC, supervised the archaeological survey, which began in 1989 in the hotel's basement. It proved to be so promising that the city demolished the Fariss Hotel two years later to allow field workers room to work in earnest. Eventually, the dig yielded hundreds of remnants of El Pueblo and evidence of the city's beginnings. El Pueblo's occupants left behind fragments of rifle balls, percussion caps, stone tools, and Indian trade items like glass beads and red ochre, as well as pottery shards and fragments of glass and clay objects. The archaeological team also discovered hotel artifacts like ceramics and bottles.



Archaeologist William Buckles, who directed the research and excavation of El Pueblo during the 1980s and 1990s, offered this layout plan of El Pueblo based on the Quesenbury drawings.

In terms of civic pride, the importance of this archaeological work to Pueblo's sense of its past and present—was inestimable. The discovery of the original El Pueblo, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, strengthened the community's resolve to rejuvenate a part of town that had long been neglected.

A field worker digs for remains of El Pueblo in the crawl-space extension of the Fariss Hotel. COURTESY MICHAEL "SPYDR" WREN

Portion of the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk Project COURTESY MICHAEL "SPYDR" WREN

Heart of Pueblo During the 1980s, as well, Puebloans began several long-range projects to encourage tourism and preserve the natural and cultural history of their community. The City of Pueblo and the Colorado Historical Society began a drive to relocate El Pueblo Museum next to the excavation site, and in 1992 it occupied a building between Union Avenue and First Street, within walking distance of the Union Avenue Historic District (listed in the National Register in 1982). The district, featuring the restored Union Depot and a unique mix of shops and restaurants, was part of a movement to create new and diversified businesses and cultural attractions in downtown Pueblo.

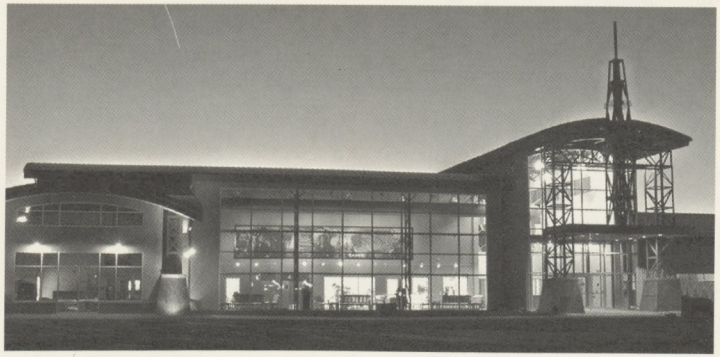
The city also undertook the multifaceted Historic Arkansas Riverwalk Project (HARP) to restore and preserve the river environment and provide recreational opportunities. A partnership between the City of Pueblo, Pueblo County, the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program, and the Colorado Historical Society resulted in a master plan to build a new museum complex, with funding launched by a leadership gift from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. During this time, museum staff also expanded educational programs and developed locally supported exhibits on Pueblo's ethnic communities.

A New Museum El Pueblo History Museum, which officially opened in 2003, is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history of Pueblo and southeastern Colorado, and providing a forum for education, entertainment, and community gatherings. The complex includes El Pueblo History Museum, El Pueblo Trading Post (an evocation of the original plaza), El Pueblo Archaeology Pavilion, the Scenic and Historic Byways Information Center, the James Beckwourth Park, and Carhart Plaza. As a gateway to the Arkansas Riverwalk and Historic District and the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway, the museum has once again become a prime destination for visitors to southern Colorado. With 9,000 square feet of exhibit space, it has opened the first of many exhibits on the history of Pueblo and the region.

Among other things, the story that is told of the first permanent settlers at the confluence of Fountain Creek and the Arkansas River, who came together to practice the

"The Arkansas River defines who we are more than any other physical landmark. It holds the story of our past, and it shapes our future."

—Deborah Espinosa De La Mora, Director, El Pueblo History Museum, 2005

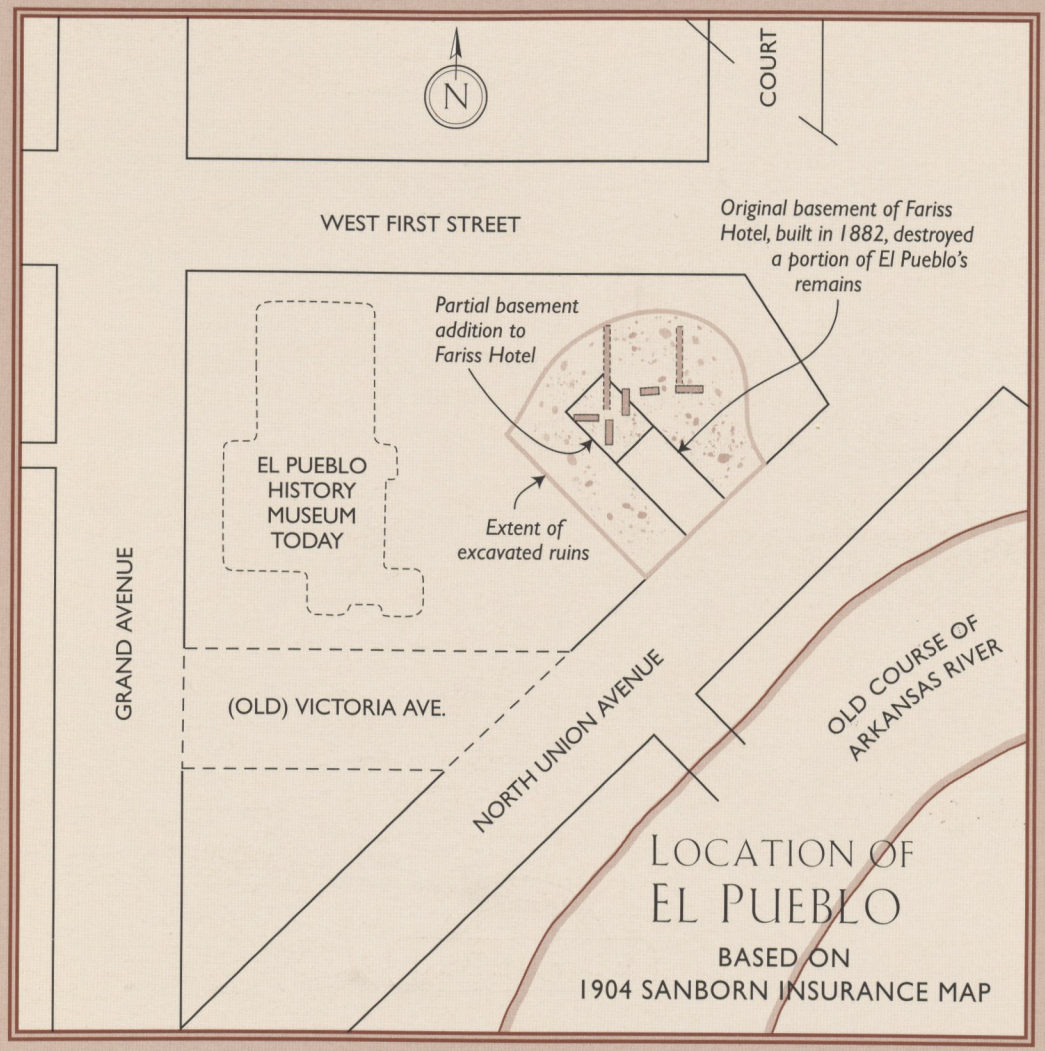


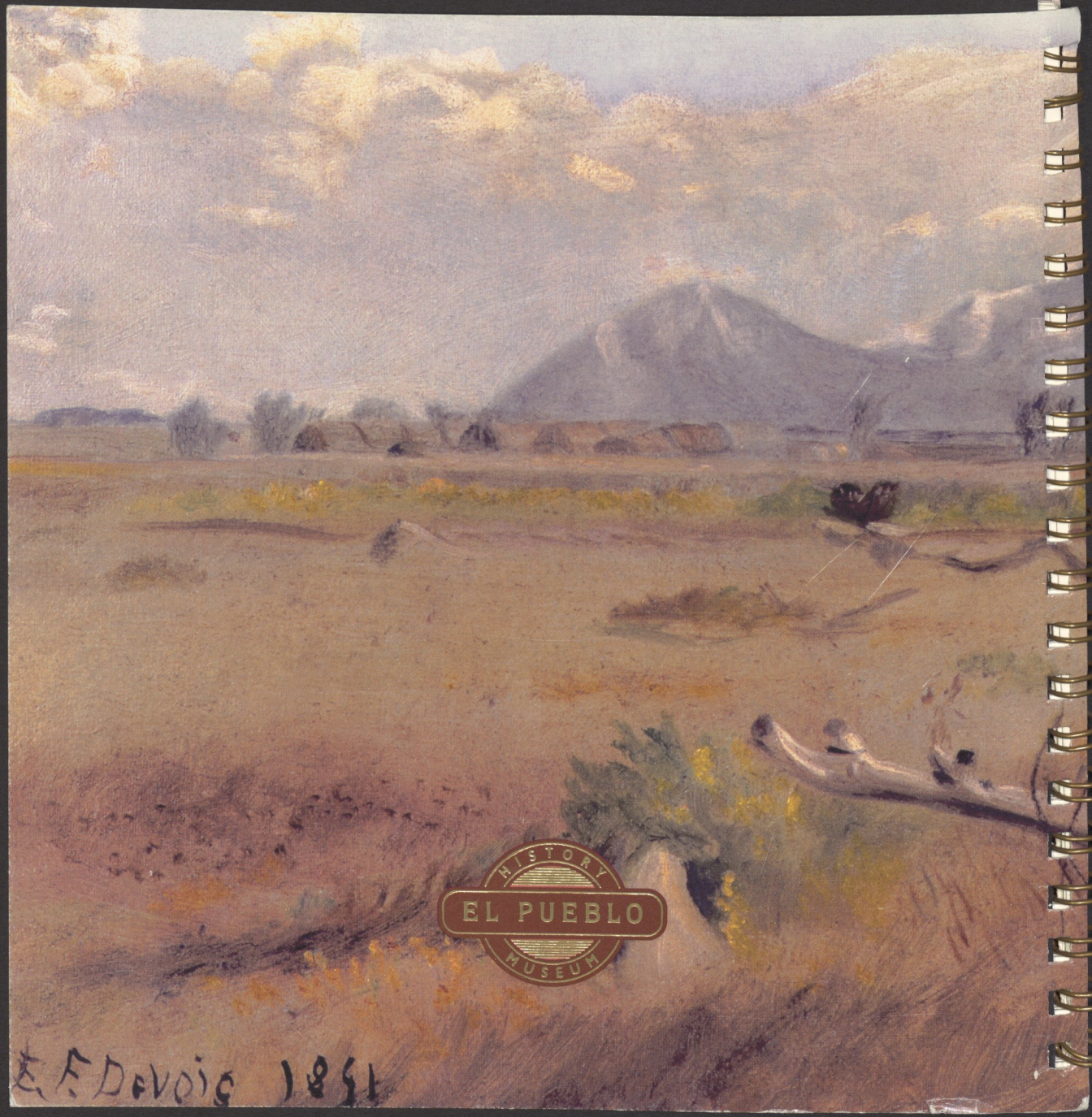
The glass façade of El Pueblo History Museum reveals a great hall complete with a large mural of Pueblo's history. Materials symbolizing past eras went into the museum's construction—adobe, brick, steel, and glass. COURTESY MICHAEL "SPYDR" WREN

time-honored tradition of trade, remains a key symbol of Pueblo's history. They learned from one another, built a community to withstand the pressures of isolation on the frontier, and provided a foundation for future settlement. Many generations later, Puebloans reclaimed the site of El Pueblo as the cornerstone of their rich heritage. In doing so, they ensured that future generations have a place to learn the values of diverse cultures, the importance of partnerships to withstand challenges, and the necessity of understanding the past to glean valuable insight into the present and the future.

Visitors study an *horno* inside the trading post evocation. COURTESY BEN FOGELBERG

Entrance to El Pueblo Trading Post, an evocation of the original post's interior. COURTESY BEN FOGELBERG


N
COURT
WEST FIRST STREET
Original basement of Fariss Hotel, built in 1882, destroyed a portion of El Pueblo's remains
Partial basement addition to Fariss Hotel
EL PUEBLO HISTORY MUSEUM TODAY
Extent of excavated ruins
GRAND AVENUE
(OLD) VICTORIA AVE.
NORTH UNION AVENUE
OLD COURSE OF ARKANSAS RIVER
LOCATION OF
EL PUEBLO
BASED ON
1904 SANBORN INSURANCE MAP


E. F. Devoig 1891
HISTORY
EL PUEBLO
MUSEUM