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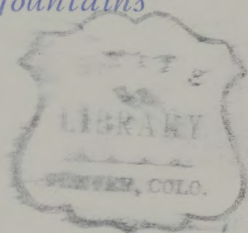
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A Fragment of Old France



*In the Depths of the Rocky Mountains
Georgetown, Colorado*



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DENVER, COLORADO

*Printed by Johnson Publishing Company
Boulder, Colorado*

HOTEL DE PARIS AND LOUIS DUPUY
IN GEORGETOWN, COLORADO



LOUIS DUPUY

HOTEL DE PARIS AND LOUIS DUPUY IN GEORGETOWN, COLORADO

A fragment of Old France
widely known Everywhere in the West



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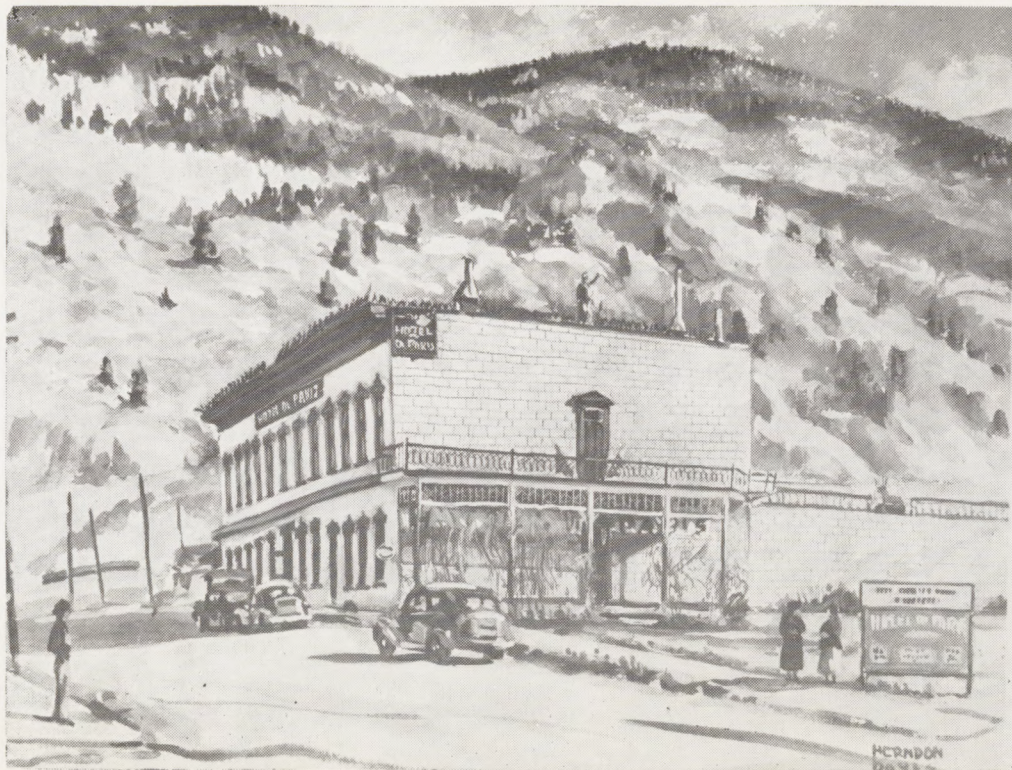
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HOTEL DE PARIS

(Courtesy Western History Dept., Denver Public Library)

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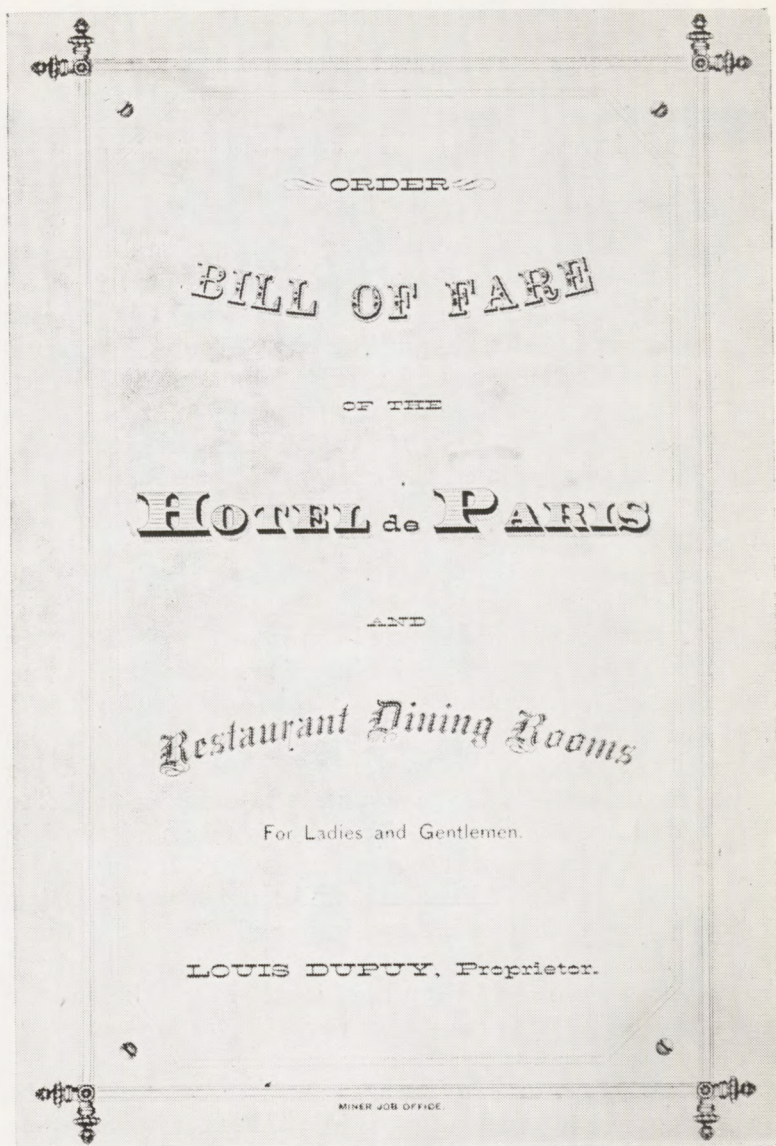
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Hotel De Paris and Louis Dupuy in Georgetown

THE Hotel de Paris is a fragment of old France. It was lifted three generations ago across the ocean and a continent to be set down by an astonishing Frenchman in a mining camp during the rough days of the Rocky Mountain frontier. It is a tavern from Normandy, tucked away in a pocket among some of the loftiest mountains in the United States, and surrounded by the relics which remain of a once rich and substantial little city. Around it are tumbling streams, some quaint Victorian homes, and churches, the white towers of old volunteer fire companies, the traces of stage-roads and of an abandoned narrow-gauge railway that somehow penetrated the canyons. Above them all rise the steep wooded slopes of a glacial gorge, and a glimpse of snowy summits.

From 1875 to 1900 the Hotel was known throughout the West for French culture, French wine and food delicacies and a sort of erratic high-handed European hospitality. Men travelled distances to enjoy its luxuries, some men famous but most of course unknown. The square two-story building, stuccoed to resemble stone; the tall effigy of Justice with her scales swinging in the breeze; the big metal lion and stag which stood on the walls; the fountain in the cafe; the dozen living rooms massively and richly furnished and framed in walnut; the hundreds of books, engravings and prints of classic subjects which lined the walls; the masonry cellars that sheltered casks of wine and imported tidbits and above all the personality of "French Louis" who talked freely of literature and philosophy but hid his own history behind the fragrance of his kitchen—these were widely known everywhere in the West.

We have discovered today a good deal of the life of the mysterious Frenchman who called himself Louis Dupuy but little was known until after his sudden death in 1900. This much was common knowledge. He had appeared first in the town of Denver in 1869 just after the Gold Rush had



COVER OF MENU, HOTEL DE PARIS, 1875

HOTEL DE PARIS

AND

Restaurant Dining Rooms.

ORDER BILL OF FARE.

OYSTERS.

Half Doz. Raw,	-	35c.	One Doz. Raw,	-	65c.	
Half Doz. Stew,	-	40c.	One Doz. Stew.	-	75c.	
Half Doz. Fried,	-	50c.	One Doz. Fried,	-	80c.	
Coffee,	-	-	10c.	Milk, per Glass,	-	10c.
Tea,	-	-	10c.	French Chocolate,	-	25c.

MENU OF THE HOTEL DE PARIS, 1875

subsided a little and the country was settling down to orderly mining. He was a highly trained writer and was soon doing newspaper work. After a year or two of itinerant journalism he settled in Georgetown, attracted perhaps by its dramatic scenery, perhaps more by its bounding silver production. He became a common miner. In 1873 he was severely injured by an erratic explosion of powder in the underground workings. He gave up the risky labor, got employment as a cook in a bakery, and with the help of a public subscription of the sort Georgetown still solicits for injured townspeople, soon bought and enlarged the shop. In 1875 after much excavating, much stone, brick, and cabinet work done mostly with his own hands but aided by a French woodcarver and some Italian craftsmen, he opened his hotel with a flourish. It boasted steam heat, perhaps the first such equipment in the mountains, hot and cold water in every room, elaborate decorations, Haviland china, a huge French bake oven, rich carpets and many imported furnishings from Europe or New York hauled into the mountains fifty miles by wagon from the railroads on the plains.

For twenty-five years the Hotel de Paris was famed for its comfort and its cooking. The ornate little cafe opened directly from the street just as did the restaurants Louis had known in France. Guests were served under candlelight at small tables set around a miniature Italian fountain. French mushrooms, truffles, anchovies and peas were offered along with oysters from the Atlantic Ocean or venison, elkmeat and quail from mountains nearby. The great attraction for those who appreciated his culinary skill and were hungry for talk of books and art was Louis himself.

Dupuy was a philosopher, an atheist, a socialist, a gourmet, a master cook, sometimes a gracious host, sometimes a scornful and forbidding one who refused guests. He rarely welcomed women. There is evidence that one Georgetown girl of French origin (as were all his most loved associates) stirred romance in him but it came to nothing. One woman only appears publicly in his history, called Aunt Sophie by the town. She was the illiterate widow of a French cabinet maker named Galet or Gally and many years older than

Dupuy. She never learned English. For more than twenty years she lived in a little room on the second floor of the Hotel and did much of the household drudgery. Louis however called her a guest.

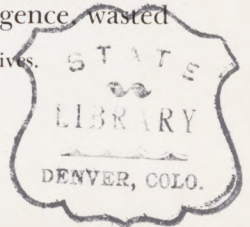
In 1896, Dr. James E. Russell visited the Hotel. He was on the faculty of the University of Colorado but soon became the head of educational training at Columbia University and a figure of national fame. He met at first a cool reception at the Hotel but he was fascinated with Dupuy's theories of the preparation and importance of food and the fiery Frenchman soon softened. Russell himself testifies that this visit was the inspiration for his own leadership in the development of household arts as a part of a university curriculum. Dupuy has been called "the Father of Domestic Science in America." There is some ground for it.

At the end of the century, after years of prosperity and many visits from notable travellers, Louis died suddenly from pneumonia. It happened perhaps because he insisted on continuing his practice of daily baths in the icy water of a town where snow is seldom far away. A year or two before he had visited France apparently for the first time since his boyhood but we know nothing of what he learned there. At any rate he left the Hotel and his entire property, a small fortune to Aunt Sophie. Four months later she too died. The French philosopher and dilettante, who spoke several languages and enjoyed a wide range of human culture and the old woman befriended who could not sign her name, write a letter or even accurately account for her relatives are buried side by side in the town cemetery below the inscription "Deux Bons Amis",—"Two Good Friends."

Since the death of the man called Dupuy his story has gradually come to light. His name Adolphus Francois Gerard. He was born in 1845 or 1846* at Alencon, France, a notable lace center west of Paris. Coming from a family of means, and said to be chiefly one of soldiers, he was nevertheless sent to a seminary to be trained as a priest. He ran away to Paris as a boy, washed dishes for food, was taught to cook by a chef who was attracted by the waif's intelligence, wasted

*According to the enlistment record in the National Archives.

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Hotel de Paris and Restaurant Dining Rooms.

ORDER BILL OF FARE.

Georgetown,

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Porter House Steak - - -	75	Tenderloin Steak - - -	60
" " with Onions - - -	35	" " with Onions - - -	70
" " with Mushrooms - -	1.00	" " with Mushrooms -	70
Sirloin Steak - - -	40	Veal Cutlet - - -	40
" " with Onions - - -	50	" " Breaded - - -	50
" " with Mushrooms - -	70	Mutton Chops - - -	40
Ham - - -	40	Pork Steak - - -	40

FRIED

Breakfast Bacon - - -	25	Liver with Salt Pork - -	40
Mackerel - - -	35	Ham and Eggs - - -	40
Sausage - - -	35	Pigs Feet - - -	40
Tripe - - -	35	Brains - - -	40

GAME.

FISH.

EGGS.

Boiled - - -	25	Ham Omelet - - -	40
Fried - - -	25	Cheese Omelet - - -	40
Scrambled - - -	25	Jelly Omelet - - -	50
Poached on Toast - - -	25	Ram Omelet - - -	50
Omelet, Plain - - -	25	Mushroom Omelet - - -	60

MISCELLANEOUS.

Cold Roast Beef - - -	25	Apple Fritters - - -	25
Cold Ham - - -	25	Bread and Milk - - -	25
Cold Tongue - - -	24	Mush and Milk - - -	25
Pigs Feet, Pickled - - -	30	Welsh Rarebit - - -	25
Pickled Tripe - - -	35	Milk Toast - - -	25
Wheat Cakes - - -	10	Coffee, per cup - - -	10
Corn Cakes - - -	10	Tea, " - - -	10
Buckwheat Cakes - - -	10	Milk, per glass - - -	10
Toast - - -	10	French Chocolate - - -	25

POTATOES, 10c.

All orders above 25 cents are furnished with Bread, Butter and Potatoes

MENU OF THE HOTEL DE PARIS, 1875



Denver Post

DINING ROOM OF HOTEL DE PARIS

a small inheritance, tried journalism in Paris, then London and finally New York, the story goes. He was guilty of copying other people's work it appears but he certainly learned to write skillful English. Finally, perhaps in desperation, he enlisted in the United States Army near New York and was sent as a soldier to a post in Wyoming. There, in Cheyenne, in 1869 he deserted. He made his way to Denver and took an assumed name. As already noted, we find him there carrying papers for the *Rocky Mountain News*.

The Hotel went by Aunt Sophie's will to a regiment of her heirs in France who soon sold it to a local woman, Sarah Burkholder. She and her daughter have preserved the building almost intact for a half a century,—the heavy furniture, the engravings, richly bound books, the dishes, chandeliers, carpets and even some of the imported preserves and delicacies. The hostelry has been closed for many years. It is today a treasure house of Victorian luxury and French reminiscences, almost untouched by the passage of two generations and the shrinking of Georgetown to a tenth or less of its original size.

A frontier population as picturesque and varied as that which swept into the empty Rocky Mountain area after the gold discoveries of 1858-1859 contains many an eccentric and dramatic figure. French Louis and his hotel are unique but their very novelty is typical of the wild years when thousands of young adventurers, old refugees, rebellious men of talent, unemployed soldiers from the Civil War and disappointed lawyers, doctors, engineers and politicians rode or tramped westward in search of refuge or fortune.

Georgetown itself is another example of the variety of the Frontier. It has today less than four hundred winter population. When the Hotel de Paris opened it was the second city in Colorado and possibly also the wealthiest, with five or ten thousand residents. It was for a time the greatest silver camp in the world. Even today its form of government is that carried over from the "mining district" set up in 1860 by a mass meeting. The town has always been a beauty spot much visited by tourists and from the earliest days a community noted for its churches, lodges, cultural interests



GEORGETOWN LOOP

and civic societies. Its newspapers were run by one after another of stormy and rather celebrated men some of whom like Louis hid their past. The surviving paper, the *Courier* is still printed by power from a water engine installed some eighty or more years ago. The greatest mining litigation in American history, the Dives-Pelican war, centered in this town, led to murder on its streets and to fortunes still represented in pretentious houses standing along its hilly avenues. The Grace Episcopal Church stands today as the oldest surviving structure of that denomination in the Rocky Mountains and a building so delicate and tiny that it could never support the weight of its own bell. Three of the five fire houses where the volunteer fire departments of nearly a century ago kept their hand-drawn hose carts and from which they governed the social prestige and political affairs of the county still stand near the Hotel. There is a log cabin next the white barn which has always been the court house. There lived and worked a young lawyer who became a United States Senator and was seriously considered for the Presidency of the United States.

The little lakes above the town and famous peaks which have always charmed visitors still remain of course, unspoiled. Indeed only "the Loop" is gone. This stretch of winding and spectacular narrow-gauge track above town once carried every day trainloads of breathless sightseers. It and the mines are gone.

The rest of Georgetown, like the Hotel de Paris is nearly all preserved. It is one of the few great mining camps in the world never swept by conflagration. It remains as a museum piece, almost intact, tucked in among the mountains below the curving pavement of a main continental highway, only an hour or so from Denver. The Hotel de Paris is its jewel—a corner of France in depths of the Rocky Mountains.



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