



Historic Contexts Report

1999 – 2002 Cultural Resource Survey of Unincorporated Jefferson County

Submitted by:
Preservation Publishing
Cathleen Norman, M. A., Principal
459 South Routt Way
Lakewood, CO 80226

Prepared for:
Jefferson County Historical Commission
Jefferson County Archives and Records Management
Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Division
100 Jefferson Parkway
Golden, CO 80419-4530
(303) 271-8446

Prepared by:
Cathleen M. Norman
Preservation Publishing
459 South Routt Way
Lakewood, CO 80226
(303) 985-2599

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Jefferson County Historical Commission

Deborah Andrews, Lucy Bambrey, Donald Ebner, Jane Munro Gardner, Lorre Gibson, Liz Priest Grady, Jerry Grunski, Viona Mae Hader, Chuck Hanson, Leota Heideman, Max W. Haug, Erlene Hulsey-Lutz, Carole Lomond, Lawrence Lotito, Norm Meyer, Tim Montgomery, Rita Peterson, Jack Raven, Milly Roeder, Richard Simmons, Joyce Weedon

Jefferson County Archives and Records Management

Duncan McCollum, Director

Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Division, Long Range Planning

Stephanie O'Hara, Planner

Lor Pellegrino, Planner

Colorado Historical Society, State Historical Fund

Gheda Gayou, Technical Advisor

Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Dale Heckendorn, National Register Coordinator

Suzanne Doggett, National and State Register Historian

Cover photographs, clockwise from top:

1. Red Rocks Park and foothills beyond, taken from Dinosaur Ridge, facing southwest, photographer Cathleen Norman
2. Loading structure near clay pits beside Highway 93 west of Leyden, photographer Clair Lanier
3. Aloha Lodge in Upper Bear Creek Canyon
photographer Carole Cardon
4. Foxton Post Office, County Road 96 northeast of Buffalo Creek
photographer Cathleen Norman
5. Church Ranch at 10500 Old Wadsworth
photographer Cathleen Norman

Note: Unless otherwise noted, photographs within this document were taken by Cathleen Norman from 1999 through 2002.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Overview	2
Survey Purpose	2
Funding and Project Participants	3
Methodology	3
Research Sources	3
Jefferson County Topography	4
Map of Jefferson County	5
Plains and Foothills	6
Mountains	7
Historic Contexts	9
Pre-Settlement	9
Indigenous Peoples	10
European-American Expansion	11
Transportation	14
Early Trails	15
Wagon Roads, Toll Roads, and Stage Lines	15
Wagon and Toll Roads, 1859 – 1862	17
Wagon and Toll Roads, 1863 – 1870	19
Wagon Roads, 1871 – 1880s	20
Stage Coach and Express Lines, 1859 – 1870s	21
Railroads	28
Colorado Central Railroad, 1870 – 1941	28
Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad, 1873 - 1937	29
Denver & Northwestern, 1901 – 1950	32
Denver Northwestern & Pacific, 1904 - 1950	32
Short Lines and Spurs 1870 – 1941	33
Interurban Streetcar Lines, 1901 – 1950	34
Funicular Railways, 1909 – 1919	35
Automobile Roads and Highways, 1913 – 1950	37
Agriculture	42
Eastern Jefferson County – Farming and Ranching, 1859 – 1950	44
Irrigation, 1859 – 1950	51
Mountain Ranching, 1860s – 1950	52
Granges	65
Extractive Industries	68

Mining and Quarrying ,1860s – 1950	68
Logging, 1860s – 1950	72
Tourism	75
Railroad Tourism, 1878 – 1937	77
Automobile Tourism, 1913 – 1950	79
Lodges, Resorts, and Ranches, 1870s – 1950	83
Private Residences	83
Commercial Lodges and Ranches	86
Cottage Resorts and Summer Subdivisions, 1914 – 1950	88
Northern Mountains	90
Evergreen Vicinity	90
I-70 Corridor	90
Lower Bear Creek Corridor	91
U.S. 285/Conifer Vicinity	91
Turkey and Deer Creek Canyons	92
North Fork	92
Outdoor Recreation, 1870s – 1950	97
Camping	97
Fishing	98
Hiking	98
Rodeos and Horseback Riding	99
Skiing and Ice Skating	100
Settlement and Town Building, 1859 – 1920s	104
Communities	105
Bergen Park (1859)	105
Conifer (1860)	105
Evergreen (1875)	106
Buffalo Creek (1878)	108
Pine (1886)	109
Leyden (1902)	110
Idledale (1906)	110
Indian Hills (1923)	111
Kittredge (1925)	112
Coal Creek Canyon (1920s)	113
Commerce	114
Public and Community Services	115
Defense Industries, 1941 – 1990s	119
Denver Ordnance Depot	119
Rocky Flats Plant	120
Glen L. Martin/Martin-Lockheed Facility	123
Bibliography	126

Introduction

The Cultural Resource Survey of Unincorporated Jefferson County was initiated by the Jefferson County Historical Commission (JCHC) in November 1999. The project was undertaken to create an inventory of historic (pre-1951) properties, evaluating each in the field to determine its architectural integrity and its potential for historic or architectural significance. Archaeological sites were not addressed at this time.

The multi-phase project was motivated by concern for preserving historic properties in the county's unincorporated areas. These once rural places now experience ongoing urban development. Residential subdivisions are being built on agricultural lands, and commercial centers constructed along historic roadways. Summer cabins are being expanded for year-round living. Transportation improvement projects may remove some historic properties. The 1999 – 2002 Cultural Resource Survey (Phase I and II) is intended to lay a foundation for a pro-active program to preserve the last physical links to the county's past. Future phases will build upon this foundation.

Phases I and II took place November 1999 through April 2002 and produced a *Historic Contexts* document, *Reconnaissance Survey Report*, and Survey Database. These products provide a framework for documenting, evaluating, and designating significant Jefferson County properties for landmark designation. The Survey Database also assists the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commissioners, and staff of the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Division in making historic preservation land use decisions.

The *Historic Contexts Report* describes influences on the county's origins, early settlement, and subsequent growth. The information is organized by themes, such as transportation, agriculture, tourism, and community development. Historic contexts will be applied when evaluating the historic significance of buildings, structures, sites, and districts.

The *Reconnaissance Survey Report* contains the results of fieldwork that visually inspected and evaluated over 4,000 historic (pre-1951) properties throughout unincorporated Jefferson County. Evaluation identified: 1) whether a property was architecturally intact; and 2) if it possessed potential for historic or architectural significance. Results of the fieldwork were organized geographically into ten survey areas.

The Survey Database contains the inventory of pre-1951 properties and results of survey evaluation. Reconnaissance survey work concluded that over 800 properties are architecturally intact and potentially significant. Integrated into the county's planning database and mapping system, this property list will notify Jefferson County Planning and Zoning staff when proposed land uses will impact historic properties. The property list will also facilitate designation of an eligible property when the owner wishes to do so.

The survey project committee prioritized these over 800 properties for more intensive survey work. Eventually, each will be documented and further evaluated for eligibility as a county landmark and for listing in the State



Historic building on Kerr Gulch Road.

Register of Historic Properties and/or the National Register of Historic Places. Approximately 60 of these properties were intensively surveyed in 2002 as part of Phase II. Intensive survey work continued in Phase III, 2003-2004, and in subsequent project phases.

Overview

Situated in the north-central part of Colorado, Jefferson County is one of the original 17 territorial counties. Its location along the Front Range made it a gateway to the mountains for indigenous peoples and for Euro-American gold seekers who arrived in this remote western territory beginning in late 1858. Prospectors had discovered a small amount of gold in 1850 at Ralston Creek in present-day Jefferson County. During the gold rush of the late 1850s and early 1860s, some placer mining occurred in Clear Creek east of present-day Golden, but little gold was discovered in what would become Jefferson County. Instead, the county prospered by providing transportation, food, timber, coal, bricks, and supplies to Denver and to mining districts in Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. Abundant natural resources contributed to this early growth — fertile farmland, vast timber stands, and deposits of stone, clay, and coal supported early industries.

In the twentieth century, the county's scenic beauty and the availability of the automobile encouraged tourism and outdoor recreation as important industries in the western mountains. Development of the Denver Mountain Parks and the Pike, Arapahoe, and Roosevelt National Forests encouraged outdoor activity and stimulated construction of summer dwellings in western Jefferson County, ranging from small woodframe cottages to elaborate stone lodges.

Agriculture continued into the mid-century, in particular on mountain ranches and on the farms and ranches on the northern plains. The World War II development of the Denver Ordnance munitions plant at Kipling Street and West Sixth Avenue was a precursor to the dominant role that the defense industry would play in eastern unincorporated Jefferson County in the last half of the twentieth century. Transportation improvements accelerated growth in the county's western mountains.

Survey Purpose

The survey was undertaken to identify properties in unincorporated Jefferson County that could be considered for designation as local landmarks or listed in the National or State Registers. Phases I and II of the survey accomplished the following:

1. Researched and established historic contexts — influences on the county's historic development, such as transportation, agriculture, mining, logging, and tourism.
2. Visually examined and evaluated historic properties.
3. Created a list of intact, historic, potentially significant properties.
4. Produced the *Historic Contexts Report*, *Reconnaissance Survey Report*, and Survey Database.
5. Prioritized and began intensive survey work.

Funding and Project Participants

Phases I and II were funded by two State Historical Fund grants, a Scientific and Cultural Facilities (SCFD) grant, and cash match provided by Jefferson County. The project was conducted by Preservation Publishing, Cathleen M. Norman, M. A., principal. The project was overseen by a project committee composed of JCHC members Deborah Andrews, Milly Roeder, and Joyce Weedon. Work was aided by subcontractor April Bernard and by Laveta Bermudez, Kim Grant, Liz Heckart, Carole Lomond, Norm Meyer, Bette Taggart, Sally Thompson, and Lynn Yehle. The grant was administered by Duncan McCullom, Director of Jefferson County Archives and Records Management. P&Z staff Lor Pellegrino and Stephanie O'Hara furnished additional project guidance and input. Archives and Records provided assessor's database records, the Jefferson County Place Names Directory, county maps, and *Historically Jeffco*, as well as clerical support. Planning & Zoning provided mapping support, fieldwork assistance, and made available subdivision plats for research.

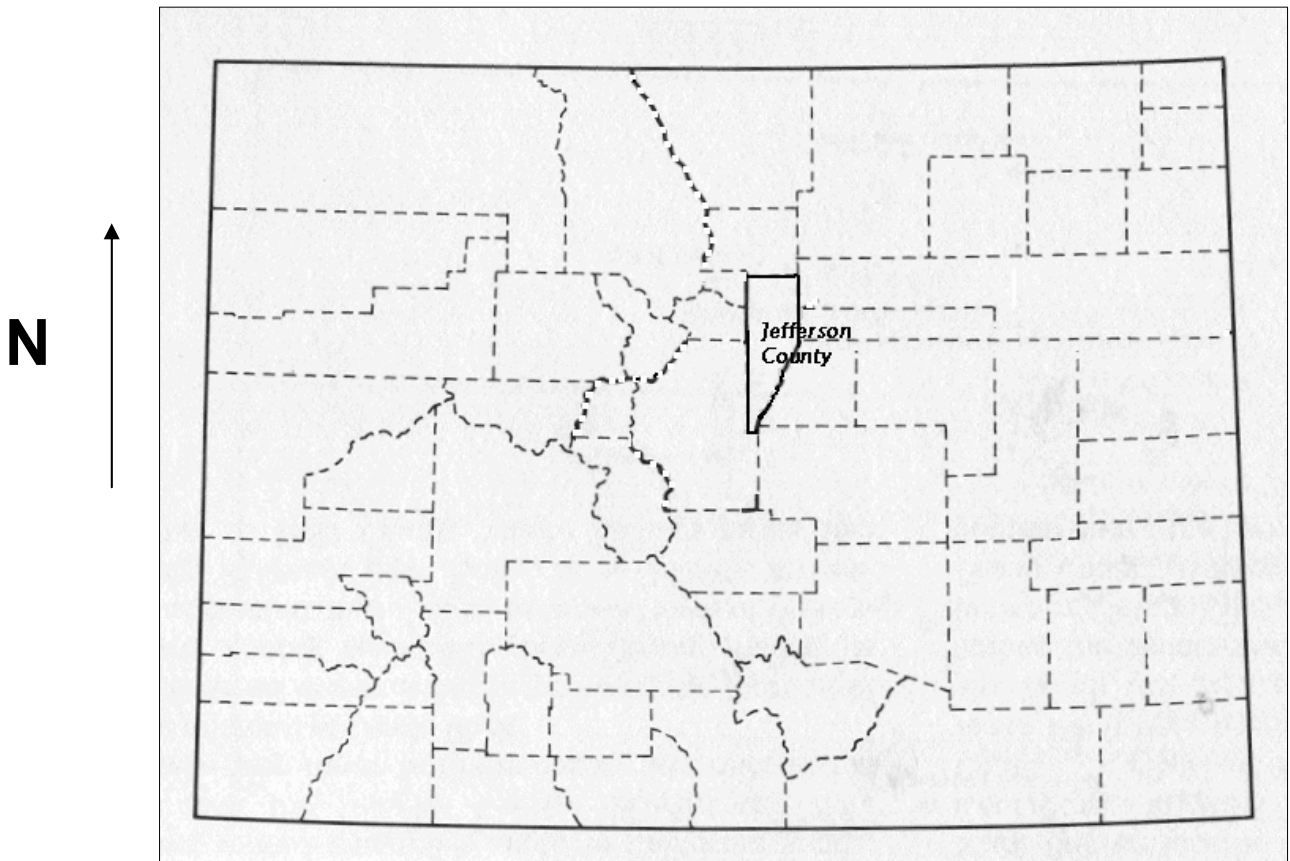
Methodology

The survey methodology is described in the *Reconnaissance Survey Report*. The survey focused upon privately owned properties in unincorporated Jeffco, however, the *Historic Contexts* and *Reconnaissance Survey* reports provide summary information about the incorporated cities and public lands (city, county, state, and federal).

Research Sources

Various primary and secondary sources provided information for developing the historic contexts. Historic contexts prepared by the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) in the 1980s were examined. Research relied heavily upon several published county histories and upon booklets on the history of specific geographic areas, communities, and places within the county. Research employed secondary and primary sources. Research began with reading several histories of the county and its different locales, supplemented by field observations and interviews with local residents. Texts on specific topics were consulted, such as the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad (DSP&P), logging industry, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Grange, and farming and ranching. National Register nomination forms provided information for several properties. Primary resources included pre-1951 newspapers, clipping files, photographs, maps, business directories, residential directories, pamphlets, and brochures.

Property records provided by the Jefferson County Assessor's office contained data for approximately 4,000 pre-1951 properties. Physical addresses, subdivision names, construction dates, and square footages from these records were used during reconnaissance fieldwork. A survey area code was added to each property record. Property records were sorted by survey area, subdivisions, physical addresses, or other criteria and reports printed as needed. Sorting database records by various criteria yielded summary level information for broad observations and general conclusions. Survey fieldwork provided visual information, with field notes and photographs integrated into both the *Reconnaissance Survey Report* and the *Historic Contexts Report*. Jefferson County Topography



State of Colorado, showing Jefferson County.
Reprinted with permission from *Historical Atlas of Colorado*.

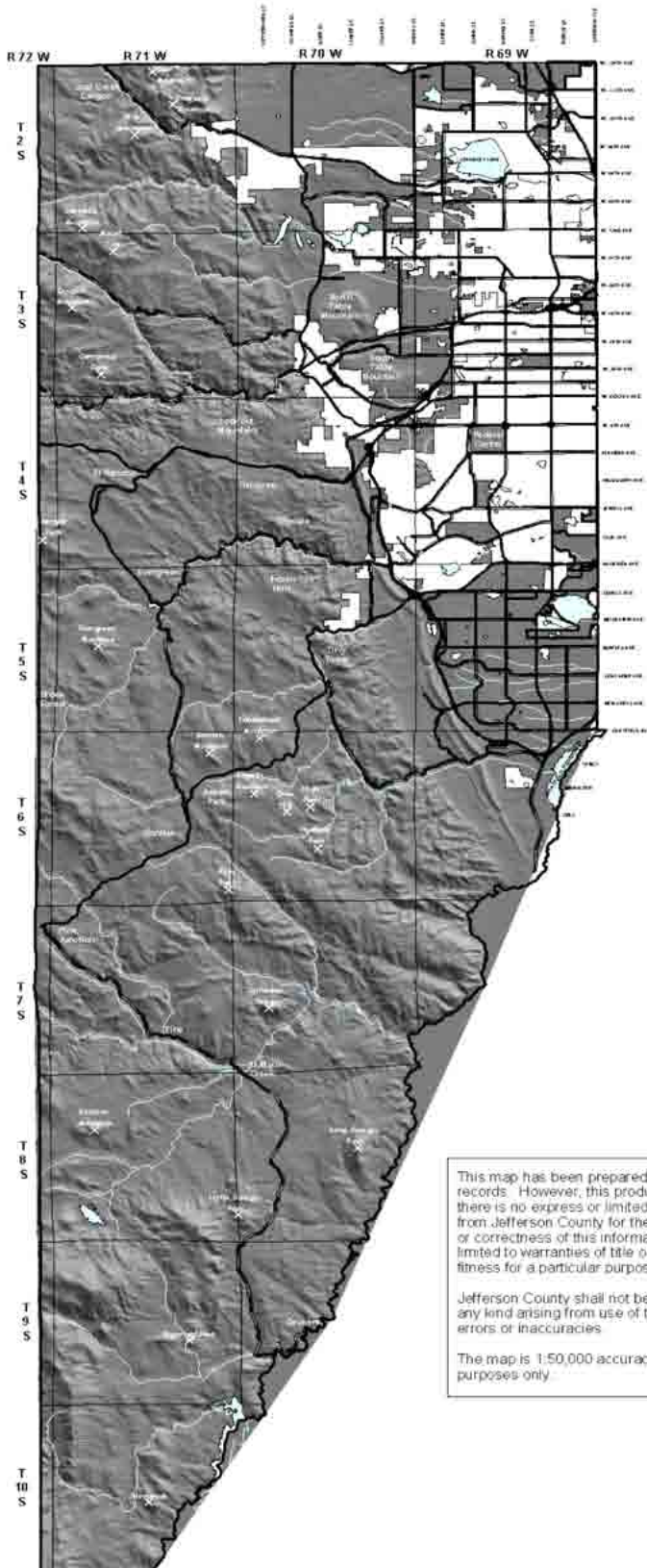
Jefferson County Topography

Jefferson County is approximately 777 square miles in area with a long, narrow shape. Extending from north to south, the county is 54 miles long and 20 miles wide, tapering to a point at the south end. The county is composed of 72% mountain area, and 28% plains area. The southern end is comprised of 172 square miles of Pike National Forest, about 22% of the county's area.

Jefferson County is part of the Colorado Front Range, which extends approximately 185 miles north from the Arkansas River to the Colorado-Wyoming border. The mountain chain is composed of Precambrian crystalline rocks including granite, schists, gneiss, and quartzite. Along most of the Front Range, the mountains are flanked by Paleozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary rocks that have been exposed in the hogbacks. The Front Range, foothills, and eastern plains have experienced geologic folding, faulting, and uplifting. Each cycle produced alluvial deposits of materials that were subsequently eroded and carried from the mountains by streams and creeks. Subsequent cycles of erosion created alluvial terraces, bedrock benches, and hogbacks. Some of the geologic formations that occur along the foothills include the Fountain Formation, Lyons Sandstone, Lykins Formation, Ralston Creek Formation, Dakota Formation, Greenhorn Limestone, and Niobrara Formation.¹

¹ Adapted from: Steven Mehls, "Draft Survey Report - Cultural Landscape Survey of the Golden Legacy Project," Lafayette: Western Historical Studies, September 2001, 12 - 13.

Map of Jefferson County



This map has been prepared from the best available records. However, this product is sold "as is" and there is no express or limited warranty of any kind from Jefferson County for the completeness, accuracy, or correctness of this information, including but not limited to warranties of title or merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

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Topography

The geological formations along the foothills provided resources for industry. Clay pits near the hogback yielded materials for Golden brick plants. Coal mined from local deposits fueled industry and transportation locally and in Denver. Gravel pits served road construction beginning in the late 1900s and continuing through today. Meanwhile, the red sandstone Fountain formation at Morrison, near the Turkey Creek Canyon entrance, and at Deer Creek Mesa provided sheltered places where native peoples camped. These striking geologic features attracted visitors and tourists in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century.

The natural landscape is inherently connected to Jefferson County's identity and its role as the gateway to the mountains. The county's canyons have provided mountain access to Native Americans, pioneer settlers, and people of today.



The Dakota Hogback (left) and the red Fountain sandstone bedrock (right) at the base of Mount Morrison are among the county's most striking natural features.

Plains and Foothills

Jefferson County's diverse topography influenced settlement and historic growth in many ways. The eastern plains consist of rolling creek valleys that leveled off to short-grass prairie. The foothills are a transitional zone between mountains and plains composed of hogback ridges, hills, low mountains, and varied geological formations. The foothills contain abundant mineral resources. These included as stone quarries, clay beds, coal mines, and gravel pits that provided materials for building, industry, and road construction.

The eastern plains and foothills initially sustained ranching and farming that served Denver markets and the mining districts in Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. Coal Creek, Ralston Creek, Clear Creek, Bear Creek, Deer Creek, and lesser creeks provided water for early cultivation. Construction of irrigation ditches, canals, and reservoirs stimulated agriculture on the county's eastern plains. Grains were the most common crops, although fruits and vegetables were also cultivated, especially in the creek valleys. Beef and dairy ranching also took place. Agricultural production was declining by the mid twentieth century. Most of eastern Jefferson County is now developed, resulting from steady urban expansion that began in the late 1940s. The cities of Arvada, Lakewood, Wheat Ridge, and Westminster have expanded until most share common urban boundaries, creating a patchwork of unincorporated segments of county surrounded by incorporated areas. Meanwhile, subdivision

development also continues in the northern plains, Golden vicinity, and southern Jefferson County.



Mount Morrison is one of the county's most visible peaks.

Mountains

The Front Range mountain chain that extends the length of Jefferson County and beyond occupies the western two-thirds of the county. The county's highest peak is Buffalo Peak (11,589 feet) in the Pike National Forest. Most mountain elevations range from 7,000 to nearly 10,000 feet. Several mountains create the dramatic backdrop viewed from the county's eastern plains. Coal Creek Peak (8,484), Crescent Mountain (8,945), and Blue Mountain (9,322) mark the entrance of Coal Creek Canyon. Lookout Mountain (7,600) and Mount Zion (6,476) provide a mountain backdrop to Golden and vicinity. Mount Morrison (7,881) overlooks the Bear Creek Valley east of Morrison, while Mount Lindo (7,814) marks the mouth of Turkey Creek Canyon. Mount Evans (14,264) rises west of Jefferson County. Its foothills straddle the Jefferson-Clear Creek County line supplying the headwaters of Bear Creek, and its pinnacle visually dominates the Front Range west of Denver.

The mountains of Jefferson County were first settled by farming and ranching in the mountain creek valleys and high country meadows. Homesteaders raised livestock, hay, and root vegetables. However, the high elevation, short growing season, lack of water, and rocky soil each hindered agricultural production.

Jefferson County's steep, rock-walled canyons became transportation routes into Colorado's central mountains. From 1859 through the early 1860s, settlers built pioneer wagon roads across the county and up the mountain canyons; most operated as toll roads. By the 1870s, railroads transported goods, supplies, and people into and through Jefferson County. The Colorado Central ran up Clear Creek Canyon from Golden to Clear Creek and Gilpin counties. The Denver, South Park & Pacific (DSP&P) followed the South Platte River south from Denver and into the mountains, then followed along the North Fork to the Park County line. In the early 1910s, road improvements allowed automobile travel into the mountains.

Topography

The mountains of Jefferson County also contained abundant natural resources. The county's vast forests provided railroad ties and lumber products. Stone quarries and gravel pits provided materials for building, industry, and road construction. Scattered mineral deposits yielded copper, feldspar, gold, quartz, tin, and uranium, although mining was never a major industry. Wellington, Cheesman, Ralston, and smaller dams were built on waterways to supply water for urban populations in mountain towns and Front Range cities.

The scenic potential of mountains was recognized soon after initial settlement. The rugged terrain and animal-drawn transportation first discouraged visitors. By the 1880s, construction of the DSP&P Railroad encouraged development of summer resorts and cottage subdivisions along the North Fork. By the 1920s, increasing affordability of the automobile as personal transportation allowed Denverites and residents of the Midwest to visit the cool mountains in western Jefferson County. Many bought small summer cottages, triggering a construction boom in the 1920s. Concurrent development of the Denver Mountain Parks and their advertisement and promotion by the City of Denver hastened this tourism development. In the early twentieth century, skiing attracted people to the Jefferson County mountains.



County topography includes mountain meadows, narrow canyons, and wide creek valleys. Top to bottom: Blue Creek Valley south of Evergreen, Bear Creek Canyon west of Morrison, and Van Bibber Creek Valley at the northeast edge of Fairmount.



Historic Contexts

Jefferson County was established in 1861, one of the original 17 counties of Colorado Territory. Varied events, influences, and people have shaped and created the county's rural historic properties and landscapes. Understanding the larger context of what happened here in our county helps us to identify and preserve the cultural resources that best represent this heritage. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood, and by which its meaning within history or prehistory is made clear.² The purpose of identifying themes and contexts is to define and characterize the important background of a community or region. A cultural resource survey then identifies buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts associated with the contexts.³

To identify and describe the important factors that affected the county's rural places and communities, this *Historic Contexts Report* draws upon a variety of primary and secondary sources. It lists the types of cultural resources that best represent these early influences and suggests research materials for further investigating and expanding the contexts.

The historic contexts include:

- Pre-Settlement
- Transportation
- Agriculture
- Extractive Industries
- Tourism
- Outdoor Recreation
- Settlement and Town Building
- Defense Industries

Pre-Settlement

Until 200 years ago, what is now Colorado was inhabited by nomadic, indigenous peoples who subsisted on hunting and gathering. In the early nineteenth century, exploration parties and fur trappers crossed the plains and entered the mountains. The gold discoveries of 1858 and 1859 attracted a rush of immigrants into the region and stimulated subsequent settlement of the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains regions. Farming and ranching, railroad construction, mining, and town building encroached upon native peoples' traditional lands. Conflict between the settlers and native inhabitants resulted in forced removal of the Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma and the Ute and Mountain Ute tribes to reservations in the southwestern-most part of Colorado and in Utah.

² *National Register Bulletin 15 – How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, 7.

³ *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual – Volume I: The Steps*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, June 1998, 19.

Indigenous Peoples

When the first Europeans arrived, the Jefferson County plains, foothills, and mountains were populated by native peoples. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were the last in a series of nomadic tribes that roamed the plains east of the Rocky Mountains from the 1700s on. A third tribe, the Utes, traditionally inhabited the mountains, but often wintered in sheltered sites at lower elevations, such as Jefferson County's foothills. These three native tribes hunted buffalo as their chief food source, following the herds on foot and, after the horse was introduced by the Spanish in the eighteenth century, on horseback. Their trails followed natural routes into the mountains, trails later developed by settlers as wagon roads.

Many settlers reported casual encounters with Native Americans, and for decades foothills residents have found arrowheads and other artifacts. George A. Jackson, whose discovery at present-day Idaho Springs preceded the rush into the mountains, reported in 1859: "Indians are thick here. We apprehend danger from them. They have sent us word by some of their chiefs to quit their country, but we think we can stand them a rub, as we have 700 white men here. We have laid out a town by the name of Arapahoe City after the aborigines."

Utes camped in the vicinity of Deer Creek Mesa, Kittredge, and Indian Hills, and traveled the path up Strain Gulch between Morrison and Parmalee Gulch, locally called "the Ute Trail." Evergreen was inhabited by six loosely affiliated bands of Utes. Utes hunted at Bergen Park under Chief Colorow, and a Ute village under Chief Washington camped near Hayward Junction on Soda Creek. In the vicinity, two children of the Greene family were scalped by Native Americans. Utes inhabited Ken Caryl Valley and the Bradford Road (1860 – 1867) followed a Ute trail. Chief Colorow frequented the area, camping near the Rooney Ranch and living in a cave near Willow Springs.⁴

Native habitation on the plains and mountains ended in the 1880s, as a series of treaties removed Cheyenne, Arapaho and Ute tribes to reservations. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge required the Cheyenne and Arapaho to move in 1867 to present-day Oklahoma and Wyoming. The Brunot Agreement of 1874 and Ute Treaty of 1880, precipitated by discovery of silver in the San Juan Mountains, forced the Utes onto two reservations in southwestern Colorado, the Southern Utes at Ignacio and the Ute Mountain Utes at Towaoc. The Utes continued to travel the Turkey Creek road through Jefferson County, to visit Denver to collect tribal payments from the Indian Agency at Denver.

Cultural Resource Types

Trail, campsite, cache, trail, tool-making site, lithic scatter

Physical sites

These nomadic tribes left behind few physical remnants of their presence. Archeological investigation has recorded evidence of tribal activity; these include camps, rock shelters, and stone tool manufacturing sites found in the Jefferson County foothills and hogbacks. The oldest sites are associated with the Plains Woodland people (A.D. 150 to 1750). More common are sites from the Recent People (A.D. 1750 – 1940), who occupied the

⁴ Georgina Brown, *The Shining Mountains*, Gunnison: B&B Printers, 1976, 142; Helen N Brush and Catherine P. Dittman, *Indian Hills – the Place, The Times, The People*, Englewood: C & D Printing, 1976, 15; Sternberg, Barbara and Gene, *Evergreen, Our Community*. Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1993, second edition. First edition, 1987, 12; C M. Hamilton, *Our Memories of Bergen Park*, Bergen Park: self published, circa 1935, 24, 33.

area at the time of Euro-American exploration and settlement. The following have been identified as important sites:

- Hall-Woodland Cave west of Golden.
- Several sites on Dinosaur Ridge.
- Magic Mountain site (5JF223) south of Golden near Heritage Square.
- Cherry Gulch north of Red Rocks Park (5JF63).
- Plains Woodland site (5JF11), George W. Lindsey Ranch north of Golden.
- Campsite near Van Bibber Creek (5JF10).
- Lambs Springs south of Ken Caryl Ranch.
- The LoDaiska rock shelter site, the pottery-bearing Graeber Cave rock shelter, and Willowbrook camp sites south of Morrison.
- Chief Colorow's cave at Willow Springs.

Just west of the present-day Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center grows the Council Tree, believed to have been used for council meetings by the Ute Chief Colorow. Several Native American trails became wagon roads.

European-American Expansion

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Spanish Empire administered and controlled present-day Colorado south of the Arkansas River as a territory of New Spain (Mexico). Founded in 1609, Santa Fe was the political capital and social and economic headquarters of this northern outpost of New Spain.⁵ The first documented Spanish expedition into Colorado occurred in 1694 when Don Diego de Vargas followed the Culebra River north into the San Luis Valley.

With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the United States acquired from France the vast region west of the Mississippi. Several exploration parties crossed the Great Plains and entered the Rocky Mountains to map the region's natural features and evaluate its natural resources. Several of these passed through Jefferson County. In 1804, President Thomas Jefferson sent the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the Missouri River and the Pacific Northwest. In 1806, Jefferson dispatched an exploration party led by Zebulon Pike to investigate the Arkansas and Red rivers that formed the new Spanish-U.S. border. In 1820, Stephen Long led an expedition to the headwaters of the South Platte River, entering present-day Colorado at the northeastern corner and following the South Platte and its North Fork. Long's party named several Jefferson County features, including Buffalo Creek because herds of bison were seen there, and Cannonball Creek (now Creek Clear) due to round rocks found in its creek bed. In the 1840s, Captain John C. Fremont led five expeditions into the Rocky Mountains following the Arkansas River and its tributaries; none of these ventured into Jefferson County.

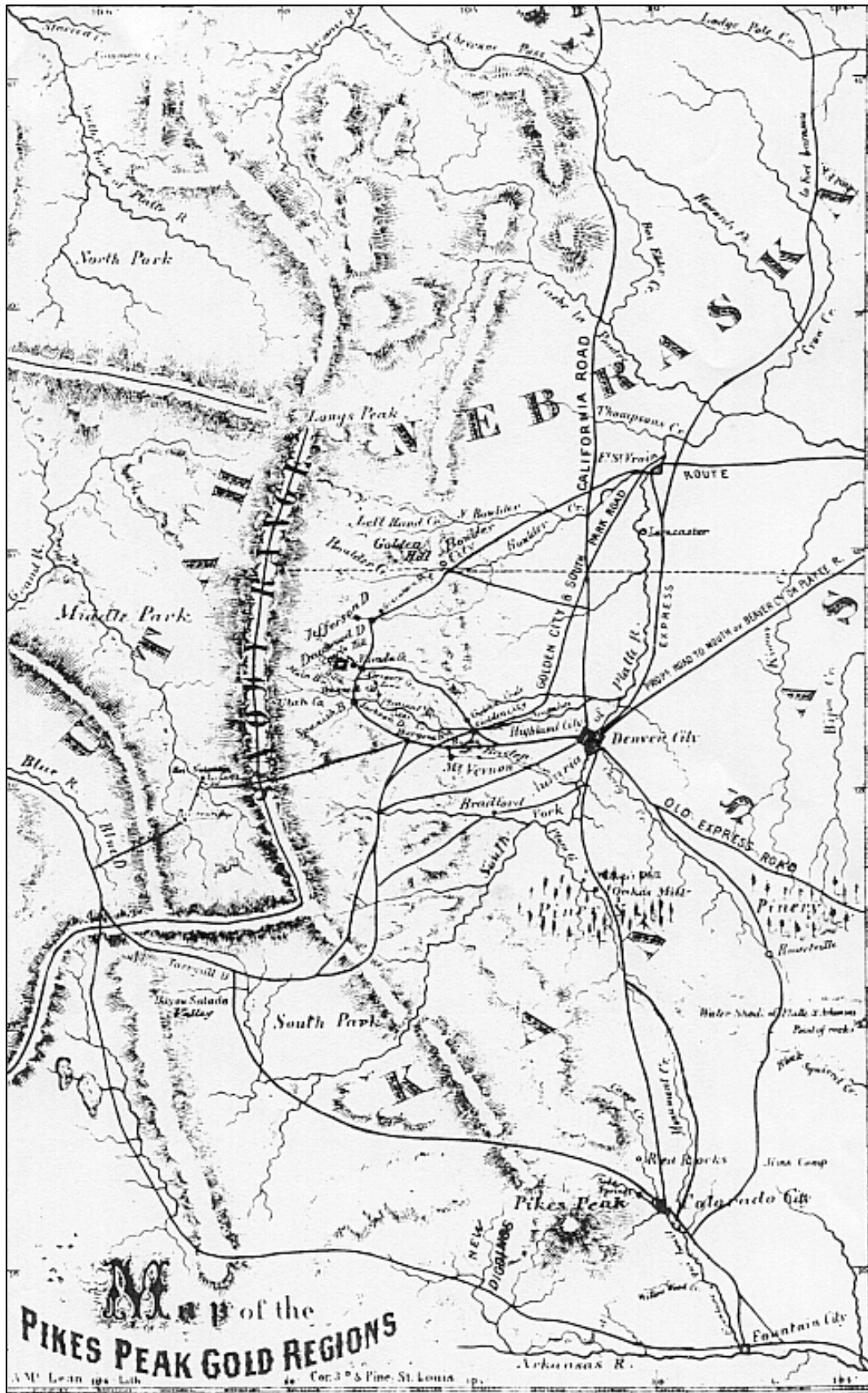
In the 1870s, Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden led several U.S. Geological Survey parties through the Rocky Mountains, to map natural features, transportation routes, and locations of natural resources. The Hayden party also conducted scientific study and noted deposits of dinosaur fossils in Jefferson County. Photographer William Henry Jackson accompanied these expeditions.

⁵ Mehls, 14 – 15.

French fur trappers entered the Rocky Mountain region beginning in the 1820s, seeking beaver pelts that were in demand for beaver top hats, fashionable in affluent European society. These hardy mountain men followed the South Platte River, Arkansas River, and their tributaries into the mountains. They typically lived in isolation from civilization except for fur trading rendezvous in Wyoming and Montana, which became annual events beginning in 1825. Rufus Sage and Louis Vasquez were two trappers who frequented Clear Creek near present-day Golden. Vasquez established a small trading post at the confluence of Clear Creek and the South Platte and built Fort Vasquez on the South Platte northeast of present-day Denver. These early traders cohabited peaceably with the native tribes, and sometimes intermarried with them. By 1840, trapping had depleted the beaver supply, beaver hats had gone out of style and the fur industry collapsed. Traders turned to the buffalo robe trade, until the near extinction of the buffalo on the Great Plains in the 1870s.

The 1848- 49 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in present-day California attracted prospectors across the continent. Many circumvented the imposing barrier of the Rocky Mountains, instead traveling south of the Rockies on the Santa Fe Trail or north on the Overland and Oregon trails. Some ventured on the Cherokee Trail, running north-south along the Front Range to link Santa Fe with Wyoming. The ancient trail was named for the Cherokees who traveled along it in 1849 enroute to California gold fields. One party from Georgia, led by William Green Russell, passed through Colorado on their way to California, and returned to the Rocky Mountains in 1858, curious about the possibilities of precious metal deposits.

The site of the first documented gold discovery in the region was in 1850 near the confluence of Ralston and Clear creeks (5JF419), southeast of present-day Arvada in Jefferson County. In late 1858, a larger gold discovery at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, excited interest in the region. As many as 100,000 prospectors, entrepreneurs, and settlers crossed the plains from 1859 to 1861. The Colorado gold rush followed the nationwide economic recession of 1857, with many out-of-work men eager to seek their fortune in the unknown territory. This mass migration was further fueled by nearly 50 publications that trumpeted the riches of the "Pikes Peak" gold region, some of these promulgated by freight companies along the Missouri River who profited from increased business in outfitting goldseekers.



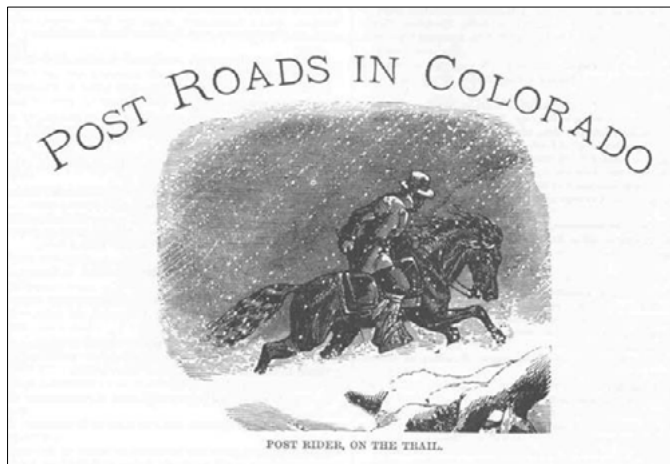
Henry Villiard, "Map of the Pikes Peak Gold Regions," St. Louis, 1860.
Courtesy DPL, Western History Collection.

Transportation

Jefferson County lies along the Front Range west of Denver so that nearly all travel routes from Denver to the mountains passed through the county. From 1859 into the 1870s, dozens of roads were built through the county's foothills to access the mining regions to the west. Roads enabled animal-drawn, wheeled vehicles to transport people, mining equipment, supplies, foodstuffs, and other freight into the mining districts. They also advanced the local industries of stone quarrying, logging, and agriculture, and encouraged settlement in remote parts of the county.

Three major railroads traveled west from Denver through Jefferson County. The Colorado Central ascended Clear Creek Canyon to serve the mining districts in Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. The Denver, South Park & Pacific (DSP&P) followed the North Fork of the South Platte River into Park County to mining districts at Fairplay and Leadville. This line stimulated the logging and tourism industries along the North Fork. The Denver, Northwestern & Pacific entered the mountains near Coal Creek Canyon and crossed the Continental Divide to ship lumber and coal from northwestern Colorado to Denver markets. A fourth line crossed the northeastern corner of the county, a segment of the Colorado Central line built in the 1870s from Denver to the east Boulder County coal fields and the city of Boulder.

New transportation modes emerged in the twentieth century. Electric interurban streetcar lines ran from Denver to Golden and Denver to Leyden. During the 1910s, three small tourist railways ascended South Table Mesa, Lookout Mountain, and Mount Morrison. By the 1920s, the affordability of automobiles as personal transportation increased their number and pushed improvement and construction of roads. After World War II, ongoing highway enhancements hastened suburban development in rural Jefferson County.



**Mail was delivered by horseback in many rural Colorado areas.
Crofutt's Gripsack Guide.**

Early Trails

Native tribes established trails along the Front Range, which were used later by Euro-American explorers and fur trappers. The Utes occupied winter camps in the Jefferson County foothills and mountains, and they traversed the mountain canyons to summer hunting grounds at South Park and Middle Park. The Cheyenne and Arapaho plains tribes also camped in the foothills in sheltered areas such as the rock formations near Deer Creek Mesa and in Ken Caryl Valley.

Native American trails included routes through Turkey Creek and Mount Vernon canyons and up the east face of Mount Falcon.⁶ Northwest of Golden, the Arapahoe Travois Trail ascended Indian Gulch and traveled along the mountain tops.⁷ A Ute trail ran west from the present day Bradford Perley House at Ken Caryl.⁸ The Cherokee Trail crossed the northeast corner of the county near Wadsworth Boulevard and West 104th Avenue. This ancient trail ran north-south along the foot of the Front Range between present-day Santa Fe, New Mexico and Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. The trail received its name because it was used by a band of Cherokees traveling to California during the 1849 gold rush.

Wagon Roads, Toll Roads, and Stage Lines

During the 1859 – 1861 gold rush, the first surge of prospectors traveled on foot or horseback, following early trails or clambering through canyons into the mountains. Soon, settlers organized companies to build wagon roads through Front Range gulches and canyons to access mining districts in Gilpin, Clear Creek, and Park counties. The earliest road companies were authorized by territorial legislatures. Several followed trails first used by Native American tribes. The earliest roads were merely wagon tracks, from which the largest rocks had been removed. Denver historian Smiley described the primitive routes thus: “In some places the trails were as steep as stairways and not much better than unimproved goat paths. Toward autumn they were improved somewhat, but they were still hard roads to travel. Most people went on horses or mules and had experiences they remembered as long as they lived.”⁹

Settlers cooperated to improve roads and construct new roads, but many were also built for commercial profit and operated as toll roads. The toll station typically was placed at a canyon entrance, and travelers paid average tolls of 25 cents for a team and wagon, ten cents per horse, and five cents per sheep, goat or hog. The toll was waived for anyone on foot or traveling to a funeral.¹⁰ Located about ten miles west of Denver, Jefferson County’s canyon entrances became places where livestock were rested or replaced with fresh animals in preparation for the grueling climb into the mountains. Stables, livestock corrals, and inns were erected at several canyon entrances. By 1880, wagon roads had been built up nearly every canyon in the county, including Coal Creek, Ralston Creek, Golden Gate, Clear Creek, Mount Vernon, Bear Creek, Deer Creek, Turkey Creek, and North Fork canyons. Additional alternate routes were built at Apex, Chimney Gulch, Parmalee Gulch, to name a few.

⁶ Brown, 142.

⁷ Ramstetter, 84.

⁸ Donald and Dolores Ebner, 04/02/02.

⁹ Arthur Ridgway, “The Mission of Colorado Toll Roads,” *Colorado Magazine*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, Volume 9, September 1932, 162; Smiley 363.

¹⁰ Glenn R. Scott, *Historic Trail Map of the Denver 1° X 2° Quadrangle Guide*, Denver: United States Geological Survey, 1999, 7.

Transportation

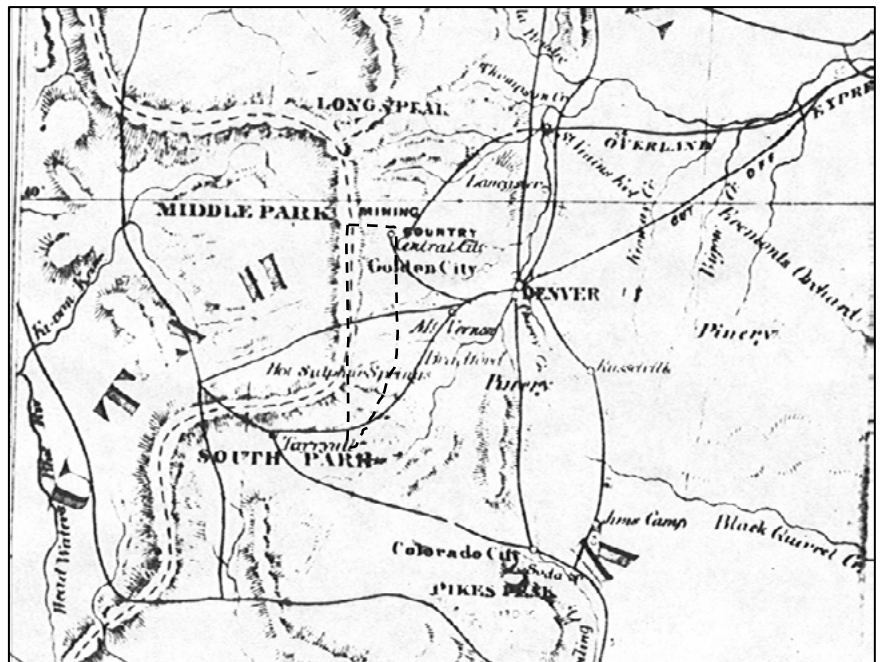
Wagon freight was essential to settlement. Large companies moved food, goods, and supplies into the trans-Mississippi West. Russell, Majors & Waddell dominated wagon freighting during the 1850s. Typical wagons carried 2,000 to 8,000 pounds of freight and required five to seven yoke (pairs) of oxen or more for steep terrain.¹¹ In 1858, the firm operated 2,000 wagons pulled by 25,000 oxen between Missouri and Salt Lake City, mainly transporting freight to forts and other government posts.¹² The gold rush created a critical need to move freight into mountains, and many freighting companies met this demand.

Transportation stimulated the local economy. Providing animal feed, livestock, meals, and lodging to wagons, stagecoaches, and their passengers and drivers became an important form of commerce. Farmers and ranchers raised hay and feed grains and furnished fresh horses, mules, and oxen to pull animal-powered vehicles. Early settlers performed transportation services, such as collecting toll gate fees, repairing wagons, driving stagecoaches and freight wagons, and providing meals and lodging. Some ranchers supplemented their income by accommodating overnight travelers.

The burst of road building that began in 1859 slowed considerably by 1862. Territorial settlement dwindled because the most accessible gold and silver deposits had been mined; the 1861 onset of the Civil War drew thousands of settlers back to “the States”; and Cheyenne and Arapaho attacks along the Overland Trail and Arkansas Trail discouraged pioneer immigration.

By 1865, the pace of settlement increased. Many people displaced by the Civil War came west. Mining surged again as ore extraction technologies introduced by Nathaniel Hill at Black Hawk in 1867 rejuvenated the precious metal mining industry. The 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge removed the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes to Indian Territory at present-day Oklahoma, and wagon trains crossed the plains with greater safety. New toll roads and small wagon roads were built to serve this movement of miners, settlers, and freight wagons into the mountains. Completion of railroads in the 1870s reduced freight and passenger traffic on many wagon roads, but most were still used for local travel and transport.

Routes to the Pikes Peak Gold Regions Map, by Edward Berthoud, 1861. Three major wagon roads pass through Jefferson County into the western mining regions. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.



¹¹ Oscar, O. Winther, *The Transportation Frontier*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1964, 29.

¹² Smiley, 351.



The Patrick House, now within Genesee Park, was the residence for the Toll Road operator.

Photo by Milly Roeder.

Wagon and Toll Roads, 1859 – 1862

The 1859 – 1861 gold rush focused on discoveries at Idaho Springs, Central City and Black Hawk, Fairplay, Breckenridge, and California Gulch (near present-day Leadville). A majority of the roads into Gilpin, Clear Creek, and Park County originated in Jefferson County. The Jefferson Territorial legislature chartered four toll roads on December 7, 1859, of which three wagon roads passed through the county: the St. Vrain, Golden City & Colorado; Denver, Auraria & Colorado; and Denver, Auraria & South Park. A fourth road was the Boulder City, Gold Hill & Left Hand Creek Wagon Road that served mining districts in west Boulder County.¹³

St. Vrain, Golden City & Colorado Wagon Road (1859)

This toll road was incorporated by John W. McIntyre, J. M. Ferrell, Henry Gunnell, and Lucien W. Bliss, with an intended route from Fort St. Vrain on the South Platte River in northeast Colorado through Golden and west to Saratoga West (Hot Sulphur Springs) on the Blue Fork of the Colorado River. The company built a bridge across the South Platte River at St. Vrain and constructed the road southwest to Golden. Bypassing Denver, the road joined the Denver, Auraria & Colorado Wagon Road north of Mount Vernon Canyon at Mount Vernon Junction and continued through Bergen Park to Bradford Junction (Conifer) and on to South Park.

Denver, Auraria & Colorado Wagon Road/Mount Vernon Road (1859)

This toll road was incorporated by Joseph Casto, Horner Fellos, Christian Dorsey and Solomon Shrop to travel from Denver-Auraria to Saratoga West (Hot Sulphur Springs) on the Blue Fork of the Colorado River. It climbed Mount Vernon Canyon and branched southwest through Bergen Park and Bradford Junction, where it connected at Bradford Junction (Conifer) to continue on into Park County. In 1860, it was the most frequently used route in the county, with up to fifty wagons passing daily up the canyon.

Denver, Auraria & South Park Wagon Road (1859)

This toll road was incorporated by J. H. Cochran, Samuel Brown, and Joseph Brown. It originated at Denver-Auraria and ran south to Piedmont (later the Bradford townsite) in the

¹³ Except where otherwise footnoted, information is summarized from Glenn R. Scott, *Historic Trail Map of the Denver* and “Mission of Colorado Toll Roads,” *Colorado Magazine*, Volume 9, Sept., 1932.

north end of Ken Caryl Valley.¹⁴ It was intended to reach South Park. Apparently the incorporators built the road southwest from Denver, but the west leg from Bradford into the mountains was constructed by Major Robert Bradford as the Denver, Bradford & Blue River Road.

Denver, Bradford & Blue River Road (1861)

Major Robert Bradford developed this toll road to access Park County and points west. He received a charter from Colorado Territory on October 11, 1861 for the road, which went from Denver via Bradford on to Hamilton to reach Breckenridge. Bradford's partners were George D. Bayaud, Luther A. Cole, Daniel McCleery, J. W. McIntyre, A. McPhadden, and D. C. Vance.¹⁵ The road scaled "terrible" Bradford Hill, dropped into South Turkey Creek Canyon near Twin Forks, where it continued west and joined the road from Bergen Park at Bradford Junction (Conifer) to continue on into South Park. Toll fees were \$1 per wagon and team, each additional span 25 cents, horsemen 10 cents, livestock 5 cents, sheep 1 cent. No toll was charged for people traveling to church services or a funeral.

Colorado & Pacific Wagon, Telegraph & Railroad Company (1861)

William A. H. Loveland with other investors constructed this road up Clear Creek Canyon to Idaho Springs, with intentions to cross Berthoud Pass. Loveland and other investors developed the route as the Colorado Central Railroad in the 1870s.

Genesee Wagon Road Company (circa 1861)

John D. Patrick immigrated from Missouri. He received a twelve-year charter from the territorial legislature to operate a portion of the road in Mount Vernon Canyon as a toll road. His residence and the tollhouse were located at the head of the canyon. In 1880, the Jefferson County commissioners paid \$700 for the Genesee Wagon Road and dedicated it as the Mount Vernon Road public highway.¹⁶ The road was also called Mount Vernon Road, Jackson's Trail, Casto's Road, and Tarryall Road to South Park Diggin's.

Golden Gate & Gregory Road (1862)

This toll road climbed Tucker Gulch and Golden Gate Canyon to access the Central City Mining District. It operated through 1871.

Clear Creek Wagon Road (1862)

This road branched from Bergen Park westward to cross Floyd's Ranch to the Beaver Creek crossing of the Central City – Mount Vernon Road. One branch went north to Central City, and another branch continued on to Empire and Georgetown.

North Golden Road (circa 1862)

This road ran between Denver and Golden along present-day West 44th Avenue. It provided access to the 1859 – 1870 settlement of Arapahoe City.

Middle Golden Road (circa 1862)

Also known as Old Prospector Trail, this road ran between Denver and Golden along present-day West 26th and 32nd avenues.

¹⁴ Smiley, 319.

¹⁵ Dolores Ebner, "The Bradford Years, 1859 – 1876"; Littleton: Ken-Caryl Historical Society, 1999; A. B. Sanford "Mountain Staging, '66 – 67," *Colorado History Magazine*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, Volume IX, March, 1932.

¹⁶ Brown, 162.

Transportation

South Golden Road (circa 1862)

This road ran between Denver and Golden, preceding West Colfax Avenue, which was built approximately along South Golden Road from Denver through Lakewood in the early 1900s. The road continued west of Lakewood passing through Wide Acres subdivision and Camp George West to reach Golden.

Wagon and Toll Roads, 1863 – 1870

Clear Creek & Guy Gulch Wagon Road (1864)

This road traveled through Guy Gulch, connecting Clear Creek Canyon with the Gregory Road up Golden Gate Canyon.

Boulder to Golden Wagon Road (circa 1865)

This road ran north-south parallel to the foothills, connecting Golden and Boulder.

Leadville Free Road (circa 1865)

The Leadville Free Road was built to compete with toll roads. Built to compete with the toll roads at Apex and up Mount Vernon Canyon, it ascended Chimney Creek, ran along the east face of Lookout Mountain, through the New York Ranch and on the south slope of Genesee Mountain to Cold Springs Ranch, to reach Bergen Park.¹⁷

Ralston Wagon Road (1865)

This road ran from near the Murphy Coal Mines on Ralston Creek west toward Central City. Later, it provided access to the Glencoe Quarry and settlement of Glencoe, located where Ralston Reservoir is today.

Apex & Gregory Wagon Road (1866)

Chartered in 1861 but built in 1866, this toll road scaled Lookout Mountain at Apex (northwest of present-day Heritage Square) and continued through Floyd's Ranch and over Big Hill (Floyd Hill), then followed North Clear Creek to Gregory Gulch (Central City and Black Hawk) with a branch to Russell's Gulch (Idaho Springs).

Denver, Turkey Creek & South Park Wagon Road (1866)

This toll road was built through lower Turkey Creek Canyon to compete with the Denver, Bradford & Blue River Wagon Road. It joined the Bradford road in South Turkey Creek Canyon near Twin Forks to continue through Bradford Junction (Conifer) and on to South Park and points west. It became the primary route from Denver to South Park in 1867.

Coal Creek & Black Hawk Wagon Road (1866)

This road connected upper Coal Creek Canyon with the road between Nederland and Black Hawk. The seven-mile-long Ramboz Wagon Road was built the same year from the canyon mouth through Coal Creek Canyon.

Boulder Farm Road (1866)

This road ran approximately along Ralston Road, then north to Boulder following part of present-day Simms Street. It served farmers and ranchers northwest of Arvada.¹⁸

¹⁷ Brown, 163.

¹⁸ Marcetta Lutz, *More Than Gold, History of Arvada, Colorado, During the Period 1870 – 1904*, Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1976, 77 – 82.

Transportation

Laramie Road(1867)

This road ran from Golden to Laramie, Wyoming. The road was vacated in 1886, when Standley Lake was built.¹⁹

Deer Creek Wagon Road (1867)

This road was built along Deer Creek. The lower four-mile-segment from the hogback was constructed by the Deer Creek Wagon Road & Lumbering Company in 1867. The upper portion followed Fall River to reach Pleasant Park and subsequently Bradford Junction (Conifer). The steep, treacherous nature of the Fall Road discouraged travel, and it was replaced in 1920 by the High Grade Road that climbed the steep southern slope of Sampson Mountain. Local residents built the lower half of the High Grade Road with hand tools, and the county agreed to construct the upper portion.

Farmers & Freighters Wagon Road (1869)

This road ran along Ralston Creek from Boulder to Golden Road to the Gregory Road in Golden Gate Canyon.

Wagon Roads, 1871 – 1880s

During the 1870s, completion of several railroads substantially reduced wagon traffic. The roads provided local transportation, and several were built to serve the logging activity. Loggers also constructed numerous unnamed “skid roads” in the Jefferson County mountains to haul timber.

Bear Creek Canyon Wagon Road (1872)

John Evans constructed this road to transport timber for railroad ties from his Evans Ranch west of Evergreen down to Morrison. In 1880, he turned the road over to the City of Morrison, which operated it as the Bear Creek Canyon Toll Road.

Chimney Gulch Road/New York Trail (1872)

This road ascended Chimney Gulch southeast of Golden and ran to the New York Ranch at Mount Vernon Canyon.

The South Platte & Deer Creek Tram & Wagon Road (1873)

This was built as a logging road.

Cub Creek & South Park Road (1875)

This road was built from the mouth of Cub Creek Canyon to the canyon head, then continued southwest to join the Bradford Road.

Morrison & Bergen Park Wagon Road (1876)

This road ran up Bear Creek Canyon and through Troublesome Gulch to Bergen Park.

Elk Creek Toll Road and Tramway Company (1882)

This road was built from Pine Grove (Pine) up Elk Creek to the junction with the Denver, Bradford & Blue River Road, then continued up Elk Creek to its source.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Stage Coach and Express Lines, 1859 – 1870s

The stagecoach provided faster and safer transportation into the West, and the stage lines delivered the U. S. mail, business documents, and valuables. Russell, Majors & Wadell organized the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express, acquiring 52 new Concord coaches and a “full quota of draft mules.” On May 7, 1859, the first stage coach arrived in Denver.²⁰ Fares for the seven-day, 687-mile ride were \$100 each way, meals included. Its arrival ushered in a period where stage lines were a primary transportation mode. Jerome C. Smiley, author of *History of Denver*, commented: “Denver was a thoroughly stagecoach town.”

Across the plains, stagecoaches traveled five to ten miles per hour, pulled by a team of four to six mules or horses. They carried seven passengers, mail bags, business documents, and valuables. Stage stations established at regular intervals served as support facilities for the stagecoaches, which traveled at higher rates of speed than ordinary freight wagons, necessitating frequent changing of horses. At ten to twenty mile intervals, “swing stations” furnished fresh livestock to relieve exhausted teams of horses. Every fourth station was the “home station” that provided meals and lodging for passengers and drivers. Stage travel diminished with construction of railroads in the 1870s.

Prominent stage lines serving Denver included the Southern Overland Stage (Butterfield) Company (1857-1861), Western Stage Company (1859 – 1863), Central Overland Stage Company, California & Pikes Peak Express Company that operated the Pony Express (1860 – 1862), Overland Mail Company (1861 – 1862), Ben Holladay’s Overland Mail Company (1861 - 1866), and Wells Fargo (1866 – 1870s).²¹



Several stage lines traveled through Jefferson County, providing passenger service and express delivery from Denver to the territory’s outlying settlements and mining camps. The first line was established by D. B. Castro in 1859 providing express service between Denver and Auraria to Gregory Gulch (Central City and Black Hawk). The Mount Vernon House at the entrance to Mount Vernon Canyon served as an express office and watering station. Several stage lines were established in 1860 and traversed Jefferson County. Kehler & Montgomery ran a daily stage express between Denver and the mountain mining districts. The Denver & South Park Stage Company began a line from Denver to Fairplay, Breckenridge, and California Gulch (Leadville). Hinckley’s Express began operation between Denver and Central City and other mining towns and camps.²²

The Western Stage Company filed for bankruptcy in 1863 but the following year established several local lines out of Denver to the Clear Creek mining towns, Boulder, South Park, and other mining points. During the 1860s and 1870s, a branch of the Overland Stage line ran up Golden Gate Canyon to Black Hawk and Central City.

²⁰ Smiley, 353 - 356.

²¹ Smiley, 362 - 367.

²² Smiley, 363 – 364.

Transportation

In 1872, Colonel Robert J. Spotswood, W. C. McClellan, and J. W. Bogue acquired the Western Stage Company, operating it as the Spotswood and McClellan line. When the silver boom erupted in Leadville, the line was awarded the contract to deliver the mail to the burgeoning mining camp. The DSP&P rail line reached Morrison from Denver in 1874, and Morrison became a terminal for the Spotswood and McClellan stage line. Town founder George Morrison drove the stage coach west through Turkey Creek Canyon, and his son Thomas C. Morrison ran the toll house at the canyon entrance.²³ With completion of railroad lines into Leadville in the late 1870s, the Spotswood and McClellan line closed.



Travel conditions in Golden Gate Canyon were dramatically depicted by the cover illustration from Harper's Weekly, February 8, 1868. "Overland Mail-Coach Crossing the Rocky Mountains – Scene in Guy's Gulch."

²³ Brown, 43.

Transportation

Cultural Resource Types

Wagon roads - trail, road bed, bridge, bridge abutment, toll house, stable, barn, corral

Stage lines - stage stations (swing station, home station), road house, inn, stable, corral

Physical Sites

Vacated roadbeds are the most prominent cultural features associated with animal-powered transportation. Many were converted into railroad beds, automobile roads, or bike paths, but segments of wagon roads can be seen along Highway 93 between Golden and Denver, from I-70 in Mount Vernon Canyon, and other places in the county. There are few barns, stables and corrals remaining from wagon and stage transportation. The roadside inns are the most intact properties associated with this early mode of travel.



The Midway House at 9345 U.S. 285 (left) and Centennial House on Golden Gate Canyon Road (right).



Clifton House in 1900 (left, photo courtesy Jefferson County Historical Society) and Clifton House today with barns (right), located near 12394 U.S. 285.

Transportation

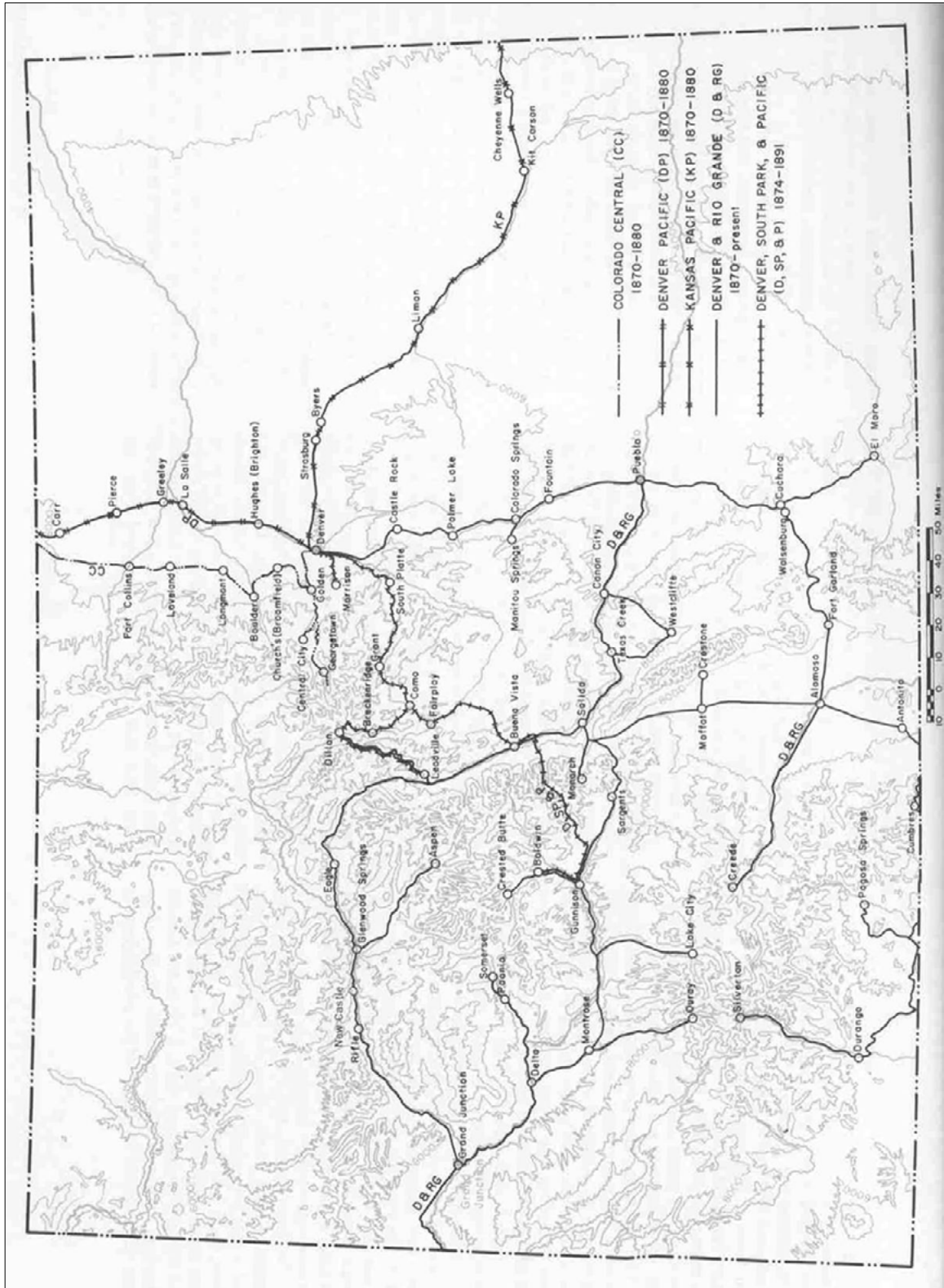
Extant Jefferson County Stage Stations, Inns, and Tollhouses			
Property	History	Address	Status
Centennial House	Daniel Booten built the Centennial House in 1876 as a stage station and inn. The property was purchased by Ernest S. Koch in 1895 and operated as the Centennial Ranch for several decades by the Koch family.	Golden Gate Canyon	Private residence
Churches Ranch (5JF1042, NR)	Ranch property contains a stone building believed to have been used as a rest station for travelers and their livestock enroute to Gilpin County. ²⁴	17999 West 60th Avenue	Churches Ranch complex now an Arvada Open Space park
Clifton House	Built in 1870 by Rudolph Poltz, whose step-son, Charles Long, and his sons owned it for over a half century. ²⁵ The original homestead cabin became the back portion of the 14-room inn. From 1888 to 1921 the telephone exchange was located here.	Near 12394 U.S. 285	Vacant, in need of restoration. Intact barns remain nearby.
Mt. Vernon House (5JF185, NR)	Built by George Morrison in 1861, and served as a stage station, general store, roadhouse, post office, saloon, Wells Fargo Express Station.	Northwest of Mathews Winters Park	Private residence
Midway House (5JF303, NR)	Built in 1890 as the residence for the 480-acre Santino and Rosa Granzella ranch; also served as the Midway House inn for travelers between Fairplay and Denver.	9345 U.S. 285	Norm Meyer residence
Patrick House	John D. Patrick built the toll house in the 1870s.	Genesee Park (DMP), south of I-70 between Exits 253 and 254	Private residence, caretakers house for Genesee DMP
Unnamed		Lookout Mountain	Private dwelling on Main Street
Unnamed		Highway 73 at Giant Gulch	Private residence

²⁴ Lutz, 23 – 24.

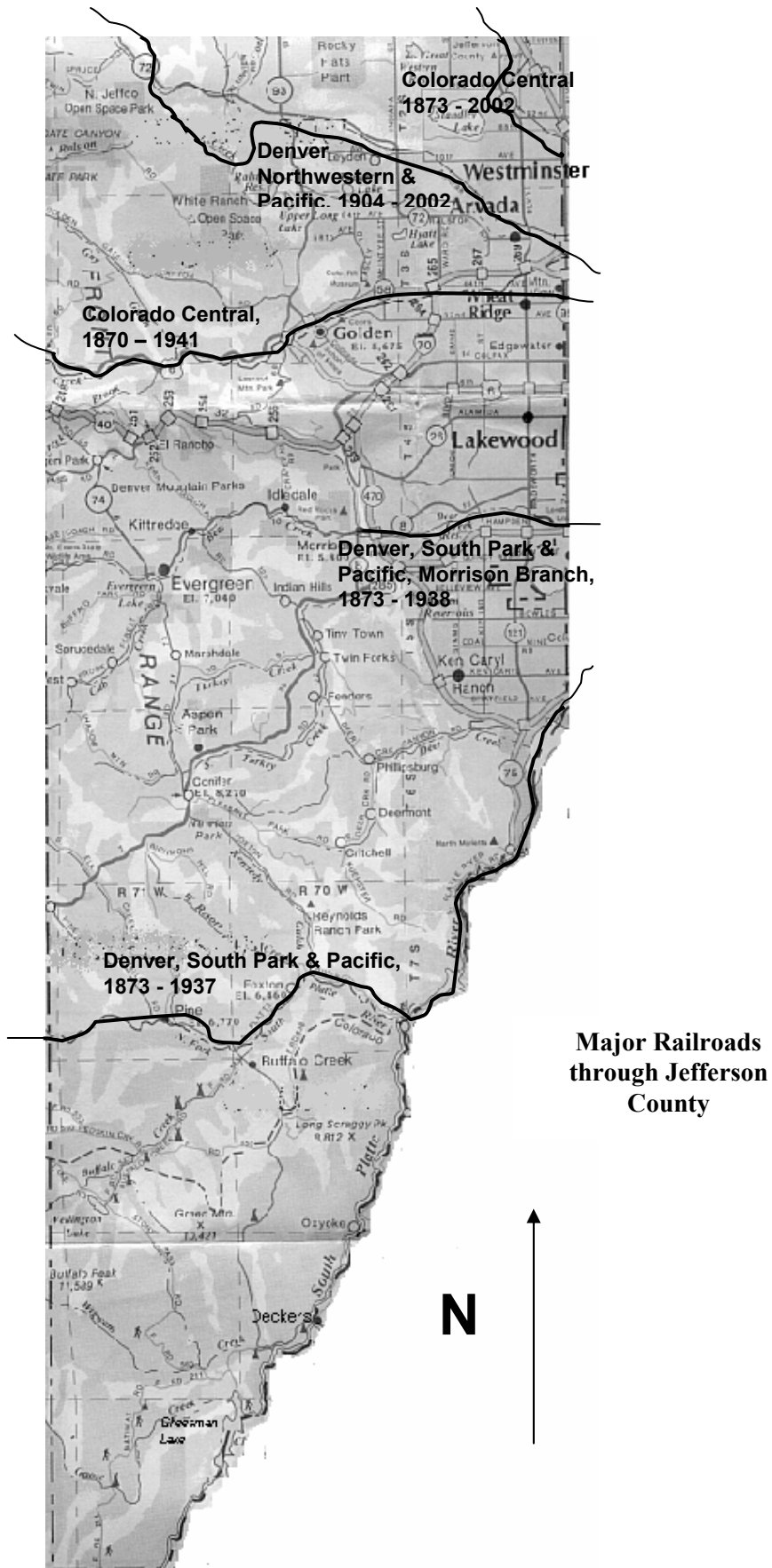
²⁵ *Upper Side of the Pie Crust*, 174 - 181.

Jefferson County Stage Stops, Inns, and Stations, Gone*		
Property		Location
Bergen Ranch	Two-story hotel built and operated by Thomas C. Bergen around 1860.	Bergen Park
Church Ranch	Stage station on the Denver to Cheyenne road.	104th and Olde Wadsworth Blvd.
Cresswell House	Inn, resort.	West of Bergen Park
Guy House	Built in 1860 by John Guy and Clear Creek Canyon Road (verify in Ramstetter).	Golden Gate Canyon
Eight Mile House	Two-story inn, contained a dance hall on upper floor.	Golden Gate Canyon
Ellis House	Hotel with 25 rooms, built during the mineral rush at Ellistown.	U.S. 285, vicinity of Green Valley Ranch subdivision
Ohio House	Inn.	South Turkey Creek Canyon at junction with Bradford Hill
Junction House	Stage station and inn.	Upper Golden Gate Canyon vicinity
Junction House Hotel	Built by Colonel McNasser, who owned ranch at Bradford Junction.	Bradford Junction, Conifer
McCleery's Ranch	Wayside inn "good hotel accommodations."	Between Church Ranch Golden Gate Canyon on St. Vrain, Golden City, and Colorado Wagon Road
Michigan House	Stage station and inn – served as stage station while Guy House was rebuilt after fire.	Upper Golden Gate Canyon vicinity
Spruce Lodge/Spruce Hall	Built as private residence, provided traveler lodging, and also served as community hall.	South Turkey Creek Canyon below Tiny Town
Twelve-Mile House	A twelve-room stage inn, built by George Henry Church for the Wells Fargo Stage line.	104th and present-day Wadsworth Boulevard
Name unknown	Golden City.	

***Note:** Not an exhaustive list



“Pioneer Railroad Map,” reprinted with permission from *Historical Atlas of Colorado*, Thomas J. Noel, Paul F. Mahoney, and Richard E. Stevens.



Railroads

Colorado's railroad era began in 1870 with completion of two lines into Denver. The Denver Pacific ran south from Cheyenne to connect Denver with the trans-continental Union Pacific (UP). The Kansas Pacific came west from St. Louis. That same year, Golden was connected to the two railroads when the Colorado Central was built to a junction with the Denver Pacific and Kansas Pacific at Denver.

Initial completion of the railroads accelerated territorial settlement as the number of immigrants swelled. Railroads stimulated growth and development by transporting building materials, household goods, foodstuffs, and other merchandise and freight to urban centers and rural townsites. As local railroads were built into the mountains, they propelled the mining industries by shipping ore to mills and smelters in lower-lying cities and by bringing supplies and mining equipment into the remote mining districts.

Railroad building peaked during the 1880s and 1890s, motivated by silver and gold mining. Railroad development involved massive levels of investment capital to purchase railroad ties, rail steel and rolling stock, and to fund payrolls. Hundreds of corporations formed, but a majority of them remained "paper railroads," never constructed. Even the most successful railroad companies experienced financial setbacks, especially during the national economic recessions of 1873 and 1893. By the turn of the century, the industry underwent a series of consolidations of smaller lines into large networks. The decline in mining that began in the 1890s forced many railroads to close, while others were absorbed into larger networks, such as the Colorado & Southern (C&S) and Denver & Rio Grande (D&RG) lines.

Three major lines operated west out of Denver, each crossing Jefferson County into the mountains. Headquartered in Golden, the Colorado Central served the gold and silver mining districts on Clear Creek in Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. The Denver, South Park & Pacific supported mining at Fairplay, Leadville, and Gunnison. The Denver, Northwestern & Pacific accessed coal and timber in northwestern Colorado.

Colorado Central Railroad, 1870 – 1941

The Colorado Central Railroad was initiated by William A. H. Loveland, Edward L. Berthoud, and Charles C. Welch, Golden founders who hoped to establish that city as the territory's major railroad center. In 1864, the legislature granted Loveland a charter to incorporate the Colorado Central Railroad west from Golden to Empire and east to join the Union Pacific or Kansas Pacific. As with most railroads, actual construction failed to meet original intentions. Loveland attempted to persuade the UP to build a line through the mountains west from Golden, but his ambitions were not realized. The Denver Pacific Railway was completed from Cheyenne in 1870, making Denver the regional railroad hub.²⁶

The Colorado Central began with the eight-mile-long, standard gauge track built from Golden to Denver in 1870. Construction of a narrow gauge line up Clear Creek Canyon began two years later. Track was completed to Black Hawk in 1872, the first section of any railroad to penetrate the Colorado mountains. The financial recession of 1873 and other factors delayed construction until 1877, when the line was extended from Floyd Hill past Idaho Springs to Georgetown. The Black Hawk and Central City segment was completed the following year.²⁷

²⁶ Smiley, 583.

²⁷ Tivis E. Wilkins, *Colorado Railroads*, Chronological Development, Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1974, 7 – 15.

Meanwhile, Loveland, Berthoud, and Welch pushed the Colorado Central north to eastern Boulder County in 1873, where the line served the coal fields. In 1877, the line was completed north through Fort Collins, connecting with the Union Pacific just west of Cheyenne. This segment never achieved profitability, as most freight traveled over the competitor, Denver Pacific line, to Denver. The Colorado Central abandoned the line north of Fort Collins in 1882, but continued other operations in northeastern Colorado. This line initially extended along the east side of North Table Mountain, but in 1878 it was relocated along the west side, giving Golden more direct access to the route.

The Colorado Central Railroad advanced the state's mining industry and bolstered Golden's economy. The line transported ore from the Clear Creek mining districts to processing mills and smelters at Golden and Denver. This rail transport allowed deeper mines and greater quantities of ore to be mined. The line strengthened Golden's role as a transportation hub and industrial center. The Colorado Central was headquartered in the city with roundhouses, repair shops, business offices, and other facilities. The railroad furthered Golden industries, transporting coal, stone, brick, fire clay, lime, and beer to Denver markets and Clear Creek mining camps. It supplied Golden's mills and smelters with ore and shipped agricultural products from the Golden vicinity urban and mountain markets.



**Railroad in Clear Creek Canyon, ca 1900.
Photo by L. C. McClure, Denver Public Library.**

In 1890, the Colorado Central was acquired by the Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf Railroad and became part of the Colorado and Southern (C&S) in 1898. It ran to Idaho Springs and Black Hawk until 1941. The line was replaced by U.S. 6, constructed above the railbed through the canyon. A segment of the C&S ran through the northeastern corner of the county. The line was absorbed into the Burlington Northern in 1982.

Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad, 1873 - 1937

The DSP&P was initiated by John Evans and several other investors who had completed the Denver Pacific Railroad. Regarded as a man "who early realized the enormous potentiality of the development of railroads in the country," Evans had been instrumental in constructing one of the first rail lines in Illinois before coming West and serving as Colorado's territorial governor (1862 - 1864). He considered several rail routes into the mountains, one of them the Denver, Georgetown & Utah Railroad that would have ascended Bear Creek Canyon past his ranch in Jefferson and Clear Creek counties. Completion of the Colorado Central through Clear Creek Canyon discouraged this scheme.²⁸

²⁸ Smiley, 587.

The DSP&P was intended to connect Denver with the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado, where silver mining had just begun. The line was incorporated in 1872 by Evans, Charles B. Kountze, David H. Moffatt, Jr., Walter S. Cheesman, Bela M. Hughes, and other prominent Denver businessmen. After considering a route up Bear Creek Canyon, the route selected for the narrow gauge line followed the South Platte River south from Denver to ascend Waterton Canyon and run along the North Fork into Park County. The line then scaled Kenosha Pass and crossed South Park to Fairplay. Construction began in 1873.

The line was first built to Morrison, reflecting early intentions of a route up Bear Creek Canyon. Track was laid south from Denver along the South Platte then west along Bear Creek from Sheridan Junction. The DSP&P exerted a major impact on the small quarry town. It boosted the quarry industry by shipping stone to Denver and other markets. It also nurtured tourism by bringing tourists and sightseers to Morrison. Hotels were built to provide overnight lodging. Evergreen's hospitality business was enhanced as well, as visitors could travel from Morrison up Bear Creek Canyon by horse-drawn stage. Morrison became the terminus for the Spotswood and McClellan stage line to Fairplay and points west, so that mail, express freight, and passenger travel flowed through Morrison on to Colorado's central mountains.

After corporate reorganization, construction of the DSP&P resumed in 1876. According to railroad historian M. C. Poor, the tremendous mining boom at Leadville motivated the change in route from the San Juan silver districts to "Cloud City." Rail track was laid up Waterton Canyon and along the North Fork of the South Platte, and the railroad reached Buffalo in 1878. Buffalo Creek served as a watering station and Pine, four miles northwest, as a coaling station. The DSP&P reached Fairplay in 1881, and extended with a branch that crossed Boreas Pass into Breckenridge in 1882. In 1884, the line was finally completed to Leadville from Breckenridge, through Ten-Mile Canyon (along present-day Interstate 70), and over Fremont Pass. That same year, a branch to Gunnison and Pitkin was blasted through Alpine Tunnel southwest of Buena Vista. In total, the line crossed five mountain passes and encompassed a total of 335 miles of track, including its Leadville and Gunnison branches.²⁹

In 1880, the Union Pacific line acquired a controlling interest in the DSP&P. It was renamed the Denver, Leadville & Gunnison Railway (DL&G) and operated for a decade as the South Park Division of the UP. The decline of silver mining with the 1893 Silver Panic curtailed ore freight, but the DSP&P continued operating between Denver and Leadville for several more decades. In 1898, the C&S formed, acquiring the DL&G, Colorado Central, and several other lines, comprising 400 miles of narrow gauge track and 762 miles of standard gauge.³⁰

The DSP&P was important to resource extraction in southern Jefferson County. According to railroad historian M. C. Poor, the line "opened the South Platte timber belt," fueling the logging boom at Buffalo Creek and Pine from the late 1870s until the early 1890s. Railroad construction itself was a huge consumer of native timber, requiring 2,800 railroad ties per mile of track.³¹ The DSP&P shipped various natural resources to Denver and east

²⁹ M. C. Poor *Denver, South Park and Pacific, Memorial Edition*, Denver: Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, 1976, 111-115, 264.

³⁰ Kindig, R. H., E. F. Haley, and M. C. Poor, *Pictorial Supplement to Denver, South Park & Pacific*. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1985, 20.

³¹ Poor, 137.

Transportation

Jefferson County: lumber products from the 11 sawmills operating at Buffalo and Pine Grove; stone from various quarries on the North Fork and mainstem of the South Platte River, used in commercial buildings and residences; and ice harvested from mountain ponds and lakes, used in iceboxes in Denver households and grocery stores. In 1902 and 1903, the line facilitated construction of Cheesman Dam ten miles south of Buffalo Creek. It hauled stone from South Fork and North Fork quarries, and freighted cement, dynamite, and other construction materials from Denver.

The railroad's major impact on Jefferson County was stimulating tourism along the North Fork. As early as 1880, rustic hotels, rental cabins, and summer homes were built at river resorts, including South Platte, Long View, Dome Rock, Foxton, Ferndale, Buffalo Creek, Pine, and Crystal Valley. Tourists and summer residents arrived by rail for lengthy stays. Into the 1930s, the railroad was a familiar part of the summer scene, and meeting the train was a daily ritual to most local folks, who came to the train stop to greet new arrivals or pick up or drop off mail. The railroad boosted passenger service by attracting tourists and sight seers, advertising the scenic views and "joys of fishing" along the North Fork. The Fish Train special dropped off fishermen anywhere they wished and picked them up later in the day. Visitors enjoyed sight seeing, hiking, picnicking, and picking wild flowers at various points along the river.

Nevertheless, passenger travel and freight declined steadily. During the 1920s, the DSP&P, by then part of the C&S network, began a "vigorous effort" to abandon all trackage between Waterton and Leadville, backed by Denver Water Board officials who wished to dam the North Fork at South Platte and inundate the canyon up to Buffalo Creek. In 1937, the entire line from the North Fork to Leadville was finally abandoned. The line between South Platte and Chatfield closed in 1942. The branch from Sheridan Junction to Morrison had been abandoned in 1933.



Summer pastimes on the North Fork: picnic excursion at Dome Rock (left) and resting on the cabin porch at Ferndale (below). Photos courtesy Denver Public Library.



Spurs

The DSP&P had several spurs serving quarries and mines. Two operated at Morrison from 1887 to 1919. The Soda Salts spur accessed sodium deposits one-quarter mile southeast of Morrison. The second spur extended three miles north-northeast of Morrison to haul limestone from the Garfield Quarry and coal from the Satanic mine on Coal Ridge east of the Dakota hogback.³² A branch was built southwest from South Platte, intended as the beginning of a line that would follow the South Fork into Park County and on to the Cripple Creek Mining District. Only 4.3 miles of the Night Hawk branch were built and it became a spur serving South Fork quarries that provided building stone for Cheesman Dam. The track was abandoned in 1916. About three miles west of Pine, the DSP&P had a short spur at Pine Valley Ranch for ice harvest and another spur at Saxonia served the mining and milling activity.

Denver & Northwestern, 1901 – 1950

The D&NW was incorporated by Samuel M. Perry, William G. Smith, Francis A. Perry, Charles J. Hughes, Jr., Gerald Hughes, Clyde Trumbull, and Albert Smith on June 6, 1901.³³ It was built as an adjunct to the Denver Tramway Company (DTC) for the express purpose of hauling coal from Leyden mines to the DTC power generating station near Lakeside on the west side of Denver. Electric-powered engines pulled coal trains along the 28-mile track. The developers also envisioned an electric line over Rollins Pass and on to Hot Sulphur Springs, but this concept instead materialized as the DNW&P (described below). A third rail was added to the D&NW track to accommodate movement of standard gauge cars between Arvada and Leyden. The D&NW also accommodated electric streetcars and became the north branch of the “Wishbone Route” that originated in Denver with one line into Golden and the other to Leyden.³⁴

Denver Northwestern & Pacific, 1904 - 1950

The DNW&P was built to provide a direct railroad connection from Denver to the Pacific coast via Salt Lake City. It would also haul coal mined from the 5.9-million ton deposits in northwestern Colorado and ship some of the 90,000 head of cattle grazing in Grand and Routt counties. It was incorporated in 1902 by David H. Moffat, Walter S. Cheesman, William G. Evans (son of John Evans), Charles J. Hughes, Jr., George Ross-Lewin, Samuel M. Perry, and Frank P. Gibson. Construction began the following year.

Moffat, who had extensive dealings in mining and railroads throughout the state, financed construction from his personal fortune. By 1904, track was completed from the mouth of Coal Creek Canyon over the Continental Divide at Rollins Pass (elevation 11,660), becoming the highest standard gauge railroad point in the country. The line was planned to pass through Craig and end at Salt Lake City. Construction proved difficult and expensive. The line required blasting of 56 tunnels and Moffat failed to secure financing to drive a long tunnel through Rollins Pass. The line reached Hot Sulphur Springs in 1905 and Steamboat Springs in 1908. David Moffat died in New York City in 1911 while trying to raise capital to

³² Poor, 131.

³³ P. R. “Bob” Griswold, *David Moffat’s Denver Northwestern and Pacific*, Denver: Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, 1995, 50.

³⁴ Robert A. LeMassena, *Colorado’s Mountain Railroads*, Denver: Sundance Books, 1982, 114.

build the line's longest tunnel, later completed as Moffatt Tunnel. After a short receivership, the line was sold to a new company in 1913, the Denver & Salt Lake Railroad (D&SL).³⁵

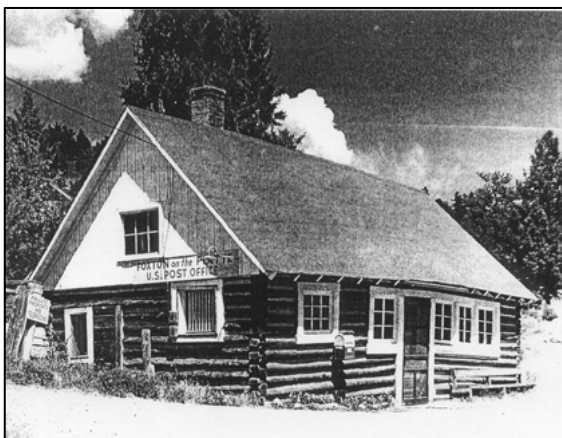
Short Lines and Spurs 1870 – 1941

Several small, short-lived rail lines and spurs served mining and stone quarrying in Jefferson County. The Golden City and South Platte Railway and Telegraph Company was chartered in 1871 with intentions to connect with the D&RG near Littleton. The line was built several years later as a 1.7-mile spur line south of Golden.³⁶ It accessed the limestone quarry on the Dakota hogback east of Mount Vernon Canyon, shipping limestone to ore mills and smelters at Golden. In 1878, the Golden & Ralston line was built from the Colorado Central track two miles west to Murphy Coal Mine near Ralston Creek. The line was abandoned the following year. In 1884, the 8.4-mile Denver & Middle Park line was built from Golden to the Glencoe Quarry, which now lies beneath the waters of the Ralston Reservoir.³⁷

The Denver, Lakewood & Golden Railroad (DL&G) was organized by Loveland and Welch in 1889. Track was completed between Denver and Golden in 1891. The standard gauge line ran along what is now West 13th Avenue. It provided freight and passenger service between the two cities, and it passed through the residential subdivision of Lakewood platted in 1889 by Loveland and Welch west of Sheridan Boulevard. In 1894, an extension was built north from Golden to the small coal mining community of Tindale at Ralston Creek to provide for additional freight traffic. Flooding washed out segments of the Tindale spur in July 1896, terminating important freight revenue, and the railroad went into receivership later that year. In 1904, the line was converted to an electric street car line, the Denver & Intermountain (D&IM). (See **Interurban Streetcar Lines** in this section).

Cultural Resource Types

Railroad bed, bridge abutment, bridge, coal chute, engine house, freight house, loading dock, passenger station, railroad depot, section house, signal tower, tunnel, water tank.



The 1907 log building at Foxton served as a post office and general store. It is one of the few remaining historic properties associated with the railroad that ran along the North Fork.

³⁵ LeMassena, 115, Griswold, 53.

³⁶ Glenn Scott, *Historic Trail Map of Denver*.

³⁷ Smiley, 621.

Physical Sites

There are few intact properties associated with Jefferson County's railroad industry. Most of the pre-1950 railroad beds have been converted to auto roads or bike trails. Sections of the Colorado Central bed in Clear Creek Canyon were paved as U.S. 6 in the late 1940s. The DSP&P railbed from the Waterton Canyon entrance to Strontia Springs is now a bike trail; from South Platte to Buffalo Creek it is County Road 96/Platte River Road. Of several train stations and dozens of passenger depots, none remain. Nothing remains of the Colorado Central engine houses, roundhouses, train station, passenger depot, and offices at Golden. Train stations at Morrison, Pine, and Buffalo Creek are also gone, as are dozens of small passenger depots that were once scattered along the Colorado Central and DSP&P lines.

The few remaining sites associated with railroads include the stone bridge abutments at Buffalo Creek. Another site is the granite Westall Monument (5JF382) erected in 1899 west of Dome Rock in the North Fork river plain near the site of a August 28, 1898 train wreck. The monument honors engineer Billy Westall, who managed to stop the train when a rock slide blocked the train track. All the passengers and crew were saved, but Westall died. Two commercial buildings associated with the DSP&P remain. The Post Office at Foxton is a chinked-log building built around 1907 as a store and post office. It functioned as a general store until 1964 and as post office until 1990. The Green's Mercantile store at Buffalo Creek served as a ticket office and also received and shipped mail by rail. The most enduring physical evidence of the railroad's importance consists of the summer resorts of Long View, Dome Rock, Foxton, Ferndale, Buffalo Creek, Pine, Glenelk, and others built along the DSP&P. (See **Railroad Tourism** section of this report).

Interurban Streetcar Lines, 1901 – 1950

Two electric, interurban streetcar lines connected Golden to Denver. The Denver & Northwestern (D&NW) begun in 1901, had a southern branch into Golden and a northern branch to Leyden. The northern branch was built to transport coal from Leyden, west of Highway 93 at approximately Leyden Road (West 82nd Avenue), to the DTC power plant near West 44th and Tennyson on the west edge of Denver. In addition to hauling coal, the railroad operated as a streetcar line. The southern line ran into Golden along present-day West 44th Avenue. D&NW brochures promised "scenes of unsurpassed beauty of a nature unexpected even in the multi-colored West" and "an intelligent, gentlemanly guide." Sights included the western mountains, orchards in the Ralston and Clear Creek Valleys, coal mines at Leyden, and a gold dredge east of Golden at Clear Creek.³⁸ In 1950, the Denver Tramway Company converted to buses, shut down the Leyden Coal Mine, and closed the rail line. (The D&NW and Leyden are also discussed in the **Railroad** and **Mining** sections of this report.)

Jefferson County's other streetcar line began in 1890 as the Denver, Lakewood & Golden railroad, a 15-mile-long line built by William Loveland and Charles Welch along present-day West 13th Avenue. The line provided freight and passenger service between Denver and Golden. Its developers also intended it to encourage development of their Lakewood townsite platted in 1889 west of Sheridan Boulevard. The DL&G went into receivership in 1896.³⁹ The company re-organized in 1904 as the Denver & Intermountain Railway (D&IM), developing an electric streetcar line that provided passenger service until

³⁸ "The Wishbone Route," Denver: The Denver Lithograph Company, circa 1910.

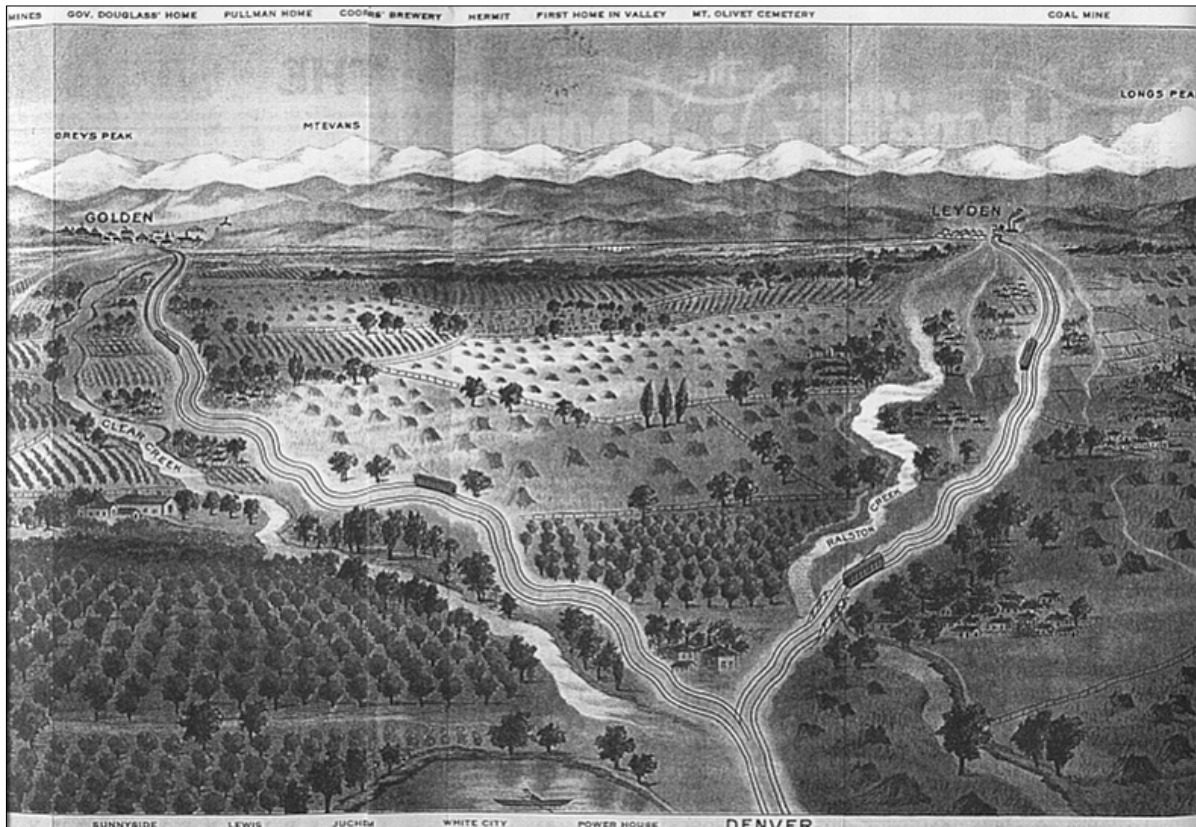
³⁹ This Lakewood subdivision remained sparsely developed until the mid 1900s and was incorporated in 1969 as part of the City of Lakewood.

Transportation

1951. The D&IM streetcar encouraged some residential construction between Golden and Lakewood, allowing people to commute from rural residences to city jobs. The line also brought sightseers from Denver to Golden. (The DL&G is also discussed in the **Railroad** section of this report.)

Cultural Resource Types

Railroad bed, passenger station



Physical Sites

Remaining sites include the rail bed of the D&IM streetcar line along West Thirteenth Avenue through Lakewood, portions of abandoned rail bed from the Wishbone Route at Leyden, and former station locations with their passenger waiting areas of soil, gravel or cinders. Two passenger stations from the D&IM remain: the Camp George West station remains south of South Golden Road, and the Wide Acres station, which has been moved to the Lakewood Heritage Center.

Funicular Railways, 1909 – 1919

In the early 1900s, funicular railways — small, cable-drawn tourist lines that carried tourists up steep inclines — gained enormous popularity. Jefferson County was the site of three of these lines at Mount Morrison, Lookout Mountain, and South Table Mountain. Other Colorado funiculars included the Manitou Incline and Red Mountain Incline at Manitou Springs and the Royal Gorge Incline in Fremont County.

The county's three funiculars provided an affordable mountain excursion for working and middle class people. They complemented burro transportation that carried visitors up steep mountain paths at the turn-of-the-century. They also boosted the railroads' passenger service on the DSP&P Railroad to Morrison and the interurban lines to Golden by bringing city dwellers and tourists into the foothills. The onset of World War I and a broader range of mountain destinations accessible in personal automobiles in the 1920s contributed to the demise of this short-lived tourist transportation mode.

Denver entrepreneur and real estate magnate John Brisben (also Brisbane) Walker built the Mount Morrison Cable Incline. He opened it in 1909, soliciting riders from visitors to his Garden of the Titans, today Red Rocks Park. The line operated until around 1914. The City of Denver acquired the park from Walker in 1927 and later dismantled the track.⁴⁰

The Lookout Mountain Park Development Company, launched by Rees C. Vidler in the 1890s, built the Lookout Mountain Funicular that helped market mountain property to passengers. The line, capitalized August, 1909 at \$500,000, opened in 1912. It had two cars, each with a capacity of 100 riders, and ran until 1919. The rail was dismantled in the 1930s.⁴¹

The Castle Rock Scenic Railway was built by Golden investor Charles F. Quaintance to scale picturesque Castle Rock on the northwest side of South Table Mountain. It began operation in 1913. Twenty-passenger cars carried riders to a dance pavilion and casino at the summit. This funicular operated until around 1918. The dance hall was used in the 1920s for meetings of the Ku Klux Klan. It burned down in 1927.⁴²

Physical Sites

The funicular routes are still visible as vertical scars on South Table Mountain, Lookout Mountain, and Mount Morrison. The concrete steps from the Castle Rock Scenic Railway dance pavilion remain on South Table Mountain.



The Lookout Mountain Funicular ran from 1912 to 1919. Circa 1915 photo, courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.

⁴⁰ Brown, 212 – 214; Scott, 34.

⁴¹ Brown, 224; Scott, 33, 34; Dan Abbott, "A Tour of Golden's Railroads"; *Historically Jeffco*, Golden: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Winter 1991, Vol. 4, No. 2, 9-14.

⁴² Brown, 197; Abbott, 12-13; Scott, 31.

Automobile Roads and Highways, 1913 – 1950

Efficient transportation was essential to economic development in rural Jefferson County. Although railroads remained a dominant transportation mode throughout the state into the early 1900s, roads remained vital for travel and transport. Roads supported the local farm economy and provided a crucial link for rural residents with the urban centers. Nevertheless, much of the county remained sparsely populated until the 1920s, with some places in the western mountains a half day's travel by horse-drawn wagon from Golden, Littleton or Denver.

In Jefferson County, as elsewhere in the country, the invention and popularity of the automobile was a tremendous factor in road improvements. The first horseless carriage arrived in Colorado in the 1890s. As auto ownership spread, people clamored for better roads. The Good Roads movement, a national alliance of bicycle and automobile organizations, lobbied for government funding for road construction and repairs. The Colorado Good Roads Club was established in 1905. Colorado began using convicts from the state prison to work on roads around the state circa 1905. Prison labor improved several Jeffco roads, including those in Bear Creek and Golden Gate canyons. County government began assuming responsibility for some roads, such as taking over the Mount Vernon Canyon Road in the 1880s.



Convict road improvement project, unnamed location. Photograph from *Sunlight Magazine*, February 1914.

The Denver Motor Club (DMC) became especially influential in promoting and improving roads in Jefferson County. Organized in 1908 for the “betterment of the highway,” the group put up road signs on roads into Denver and published maps, route guides, and motorist magazines. These publications often featured Jefferson County routes and scenic destinations. The DMC rented a hotel in Morrison from John Brisbane Walker as their “country” clubhouse and became strong supporters of better roads into the mountains. In 1912, the DMC joined with the Denver Real Estate Exchange and Denver Chamber of Commerce to promote the idea of a system of mountain parks and scenic roads west of Denver.

The Denver Mountain Park system provided a major impetus for better roads in Jefferson County. The park concept was first proposed to Denver officials and businessmen by John Brisbane Walker on September 1910. Walker attempted to interest the city in buying a large land parcel that he owned surrounding the town of Morrison and including Red Rocks Park, Mount Morrison, and Mount Falcon. The DMC, Denver Chamber of Commerce, and Denver Real Estate Exchange declined the purchase but embraced the idea. Recognizing the commercial potential in meeting the growing demand for leisure driving, they envisioned a system of alpine parks and scenic points linked by auto parkways. A parks committee from membership of the three organizations settled many cross-jurisdictional issues and hired

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to develop a landscape design plan. On May 21, 1912, Denver voters approved a bond election to raise funds for land acquisition and park development. (Auto tourism and Denver Mountain Parks are also discussed in **Tourism**.)

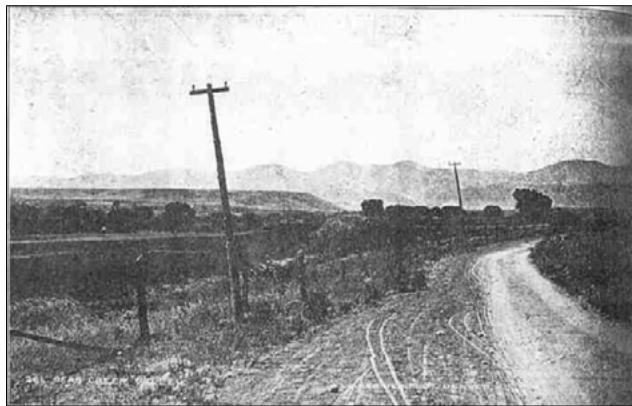
Development of the parks coincided with the first road paved in unincorporated Jefferson County, the Lariat Trail up Mount Zion and Lookout Mountain. Initiated to bring motorists through Golden, the Lariat Trail was constructed by William “Cement Bill” Williams. It was funded by \$7,500 each from Jefferson County and the Denver Park Commission and \$15,000 from the State Highway Commission. Williams provided \$10,000 himself, and also solicited donations from Golden merchants, including \$1,000 from Adolph Coors.



Building the Lariat Trail *Municipal Facts*, 1913.

The first auto traveled up the Lariat Trail on August 10, 1913. Genesee Park, the first Denver Mountain Park, opened days later. The road ran along the route proposed in a 1890 landscape plan developed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and passed through Genesee Park. Williams continued his road paving project through Bergen Park and west over Big Hill (Floyd Hill) to Idaho Springs, then operated a fleet of Stanley Steamer touring cars on the road.⁴³

In 1916, the Federal Highway Act was established, approving 50% in federal monies to match state and local funds. This encouraged several road projects from Denver to the mountains. West Colfax Avenue was paved that year, and the Colfax Viaduct was finished the following year. Colfax Avenue became part of the Midland Trail auto route between Salt Lake City and Denver and a segment of one of the first trans-continental highways. A Midland Trail “shortcut” also traveled along former wagon roads from Buena Vista through Fairplay, Bailey, and Conifer to Morrison. In 1916, the old stage road from Denver to Morrison Road also was paved, a road that had been derided by the DMC’s Sunlight magazine as the Morrison “Dough” Road.



The Morrison “Dough” Road, before it was paved. *Municipal Facts*, 1913.

⁴³ “Denver’s Mountain Parks,” *Denver Municipal Facts*, Denver: City of Denver, Volume I, No. 21, August 9, 1913; Brown 128 - 131.

Soon, other routes linked Denver to the mountains. West 44th Avenue (originally the North Golden wagon road) was improved and Golden businessmen published promotional brochures touting the road as an “excellent automobile boulevard.”⁴⁴ In the 1920s, West Alameda Avenue was paved and became an alternate route to the Denver Mountain Parks.

As auto travel increased, so did road improvements. Automobile ownership rose dramatically during the 1920s, as the car came within the reach of middle class households thanks to the mass production techniques introduced by Henry Ford. The auto opened new opportunities of leisure and recreation, and Denver and Golden business interests recognized the potential growth of trade and commerce in attracting auto tourists to Colorado. During the 1920s, the City of Denver published driving maps and promotional literature that trumpeted the scenic drives and visitor attractions accessible from Denver. Mountain tourism peaked during the 1920s, with dozens of subdivisions platted in the Jefferson County mountains and built up with summer cabins and cottages. The DMC continued promoting auto touring and road enhancements. The club moved in 1917 from its Morrison quarters to a large, elaborate stone clubhouse on 70 acres along Bear Creek at Joy Town (later Starbucks, then Idledale), where many DMC members built summer cottages. For awhile, the road in lower Bear Creek Canyon was even called Denver Motor Club Road.

During the 1930s, the Great Depression slowed leisure travel considerably, but road improvements continued. Many projects were part of the Federal Government work relief programs. For example, Works Progress Administration (WPA) efforts improved roads through Bear Creek, Turkey Creek, and Golden Gate canyons. — each of which had experienced extensive flooding — by raising roadbeds above the creek. Meanwhile, coast-to-coast highways were being enhanced. Colfax Avenue, as a segment of the U.S. 40 transcontinental highway, was extended west in 1937 through Mount Vernon Canyon and on through Bergen Park to Idaho Springs. Construction in the canyon was done by WPA workers.

Roads in and through Jefferson County served local travel and transport as well as tourism, especially after the DSP&P ceased operation in 1937 and the Colorado Central in 1941. Truck freight included agricultural products, mineral commodities, timber products, building materials, and commercial goods. Maintenance and improvement to state and county



The rock benching and a stone retaining wall built by WPA workers raised the roadbed to above Bear Creek to prevent flooding.

⁴⁴ Brown, 201.

Transportation

roads in Jefferson County assisted local transportation and encouraged modest growth in outlying areas during the thirties.

By 1940, America was anticipating entry into World War II, and transportation of war materiel motivated federal funding for road improvements in some parts of the country. The Remington Arms plant was built in 1940 at West 6th Avenue and Kipling Street to aid the war effort, and the following year the enormous Denver Ordnance Plant (DOP) was constructed at that site. To accommodate transportation to the plant, in 1942 West Sixth Avenue was aligned, widened to four lanes, and paved from West Denver to the DOP.

After the war, highways provided efficient travel that accelerated residential development in the Jeffco mountains. Better roads allowed year-round residents to commute to jobs in the city. The postwar period saw three major federal highways built through the county. West Sixth Avenue was extended past Kipling Street as U.S. 6, continuing along the south edge of Golden and up Clear Creek, a project that raised the roadbed and blasted several tunnels through the granite-walled canyon in the late 1940s. U.S. 285 was improved through lower Turkey Creek Canyon and rerouted to by-pass South Turkey Creek Canyon in the early 1950s. In 1969, development of Interstate 70 (I-70) put a four-lane highway through Mount Vernon Canyon. This construction project ran through the Ralston, Elmgreen, and other ranch properties, removing ranch houses, barns, and other structures.

Cultural Resource Types

Highway, bridge, tunnel, guard rail, pre-1951 filling station, visitor rest area, road sign, billboard.

Former filling station built by John Mathews near the entrance to Mount Vernon Canyon.



Tunnel on U.S. 6 in Clear Creek Canyon.

Physical Sites

The roadways are the principal features associated with auto roads and highways:

- U.S. 6 in Clear Creek Canyon still retains the original roadbed, tunnels, and some bridges that reflect mid-twentieth century engineering and road building technologies.
- U.S. 40 follows its original roadbed through Mount Vernon Canyon, paralleling I-70 to the canyon head. The segment west of Genesee retains several intact concrete bridges.
- A circa 1920 stone outbuilding on the Mount Vernon House property is the only intact pre-1951 filling station found in unincorporated Jefferson County.
- Since the mid-twentieth century, highway widening and relocation have drastically altered U.S. 285 between the Turkey Creek Canyon entrance and Conifer. Planned conversion to four lanes will substantially alter the road between Conifer and Pine Junction.

Agriculture

Settlement of Colorado was motivated by the 1858 - 1859 discovery of gold in what was then the western end of Kansas Territory. Settlers soon realized the opportunity for profit in supplying food to the mountain mining districts. By the mid-1860s, most land in eastern Jefferson County was settled by homestead claims or Civil War patents. Cultivation was difficult because of lack of water and rainfall. The area from the 98th meridian west to the Rocky Mountains had been regarded as the “Great American Desert” since Stephen Long’s expedition labeled it thus in 1820. The Great Plains presented an arid environment far different from the fertile, humid East and South. However, the expense of transporting food items by wagon into the mining region from Utah or Midwestern states made raising crops, and livestock profitable.

Fortunately, government land policy promoted agricultural settlement in Jefferson County and elsewhere in the arid West. The 1862 Homestead Act encouraged settlement in the Colorado Territory and throughout the American West. Individuals staked claim to 160-acre homesteads, paying a registration fee of \$24 to \$36. Homesteaders acquired title to the land after living on and cultivating the property for five years. The 1873 Timber Culture Act and 1877 Desert Land Act induced further settlement of the empty lands.⁴⁵ In 1909, the “Enlarged Homestead Act” revised the basic homestead unit from 160 acres to 320 acres.

Jefferson County’s agricultural promise was heralded from earliest settlement. “The section between Golden and Denver is fast becoming the Garden Lands of Colorado... The farming, meadow, and garden lands of Jefferson County are becoming very valuable on account of their vicinity to the Capital of the State,” proclaimed William E. Pabor, editor of *Colorado Farmer* newspaper, in 1882. Lands near Clear Creek, Bear Creek, and the South Platte River proved especially fertile, and over 600 miles of canals and ditches watered alfalfa, fruit orchards, and vegetable crops. Farming remained an important business into the first decades of the twentieth century. On January 7, 1905, the *Golden Globe* reported: “The fine county of Jefferson lying just west of Denver represents the fancy fruit belt of Colorado.” Farming slowed by 1920, as the increasing efficiency of rail and truck freight brought farm products to Colorado markets from outside the state.

Open range ranching began in Colorado Territory in the 1860s with cattle raised on the prairie grasses that had once sustained buffalo herds. Agricultural historian Alvin T. Steinel, reported “the grazing value of the new country was made by the wagon train bosses” who turned their oxen free in the fall of 1858 and discovered that the livestock had grown fat during the winter on native pasture.



Kolin homestead cabin in Golden Gate Canyon vicinity.

⁴⁵ Steven F. Mehls, *Colorado Plains Historic Context*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1984, I-63 - I-64. Applicable themes included “Early High Plains Irrigation and Farming to 1900” and “Open Range Days, 1865 – 1890.”

John Wesley Iliff, along the South Platte, and Charles Goodnight and John Wesley Prowers, in the Arkansas Valley, assembled immense cattle ranches. In 1866, Samuel Hartzel brought the first herd of shorthorn Herefords into South Park, where he developed an extensive ranch. The cattle industry flourished during the 1870s and early 1880s, financed in large part by English capital investment. The open range ranches declined after the 1885 introduction of a federal law that prohibited fencing public lands and disastrous winters in 1887 and 1888. Cattle ranching continued on a smaller scale throughout Colorado. Some of the largest cattle ranches in Jefferson County were the Evans Ranch, Church Ranch, Ken Caryl Ranch, and Berrien Ranch, described later in this section.⁴⁶

By the late 1860s, most of east Jefferson County was settled. Cultivation occurred first in the fertile creek valleys where grain fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards were cultivated and dairy cattle raised. Irrigation expanded arable acreage as farmers and ranchers formed irrigation companies to build ditches, canals, and reservoirs that diverted and stored water for crops and livestock. Through the first decades of the twentieth century, fruits, vegetables, cereal grains, poultry, and dairy products from eastern Jefferson County were sold to markets in mountain mining towns and the Denver area. Several large cattle ranches lie on the eastern plains: the Church and Churches ranches west and northwest of present-day Arvada and the Ken Caryl Ranch near the Dakota hogback ten miles west of Littleton.

Agricultural settlement occurred more slowly in the county's western mountains, because cultivation was hampered by the steep and rocky terrain, lack of water, shorter growing season, and colder temperatures. Mountain meadows and creek valleys proved ideal for cattle grazing, but many ranchers also had to clear their property of trees to raise hay. Many homesteads were relinquished and re-homesteaded.

Mountain agriculture consisted primarily of livestock raising, although most ranches carried on other activities to supplement ranch income, such as selling hay, growing root vegetables, raising dairy products, and logging. Into the early 1900s, ranches prospered along the wagon routes, raising hay for livestock and providing horses, mules, and oxen needed for transportation. In the early 1900s, some ranchers expanded their mountain operations by leasing grazing rights on public lands from federal and state agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, on adjacent lands. In Jefferson County, homesteading continued in the western mountains into the 1940s.

Agriculture in Jefferson County declined during the twentieth century. As railroad and truck transportation brought produce to local markets, Jefferson County farms competed with out-of-state operations in more lucrative regions, such as California and the Midwest. Residential development in the Jefferson County cities began expanding onto the bordering agricultural lands. With the post World War II boom, numerous farms in eastern Jefferson County became suburban subdivisions as an acute housing shortage propelled construction of permanent housing for soldiers, military personnel, and defense industry workers. Since mid-century, road improvements and population growth in the Denver metro area have created bedroom communities out of rural mountain communities, with subdivisions developed on former ranch land. The trend continues today.

Long-time family ownership of ranches and farms has been uncommon in Jefferson County. Of the hundreds of farms and ranches that once operated throughout the county, five

⁴⁶ Mehls, I-70 – I-75; Thomas J. Noel, Paul F. Mahoney, and Richard E. Stevens, *Historical Atlas of Colorado*, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993, 20.

have been designated as Centennial Farms by the Colorado Historical Society, reflecting ownership by the same family for more than 100 years. These are:

- Rooney Ranch (5JF196, NR) at 1540 South Rooney Road
- Church Ranch (5JF971) at 10500 –10560 Old Wadsworth
- Baughman Ranch (5JF970) at 29499 Golden Gate Canyon Road
- Hogan Farm (5JF2113) at 11919 Highway 93
- Schnell Farm (5JF1030) at 3118 South Wadsworth (in Lakewood)

In contrast to traditional agriculture, recreational livestock raising has increased in Jefferson County since the mid-1900s. Horseback riding has gained strong popularity with individual horse properties and commercial stables common in most of the unincorporated county. (Horseback riding is described in **Outdoor Recreation** of this report).

The red clay tile silos are a feature of several ranches in northeastern Jefferson County. Photo of the Tucker Farm on Old Wadsworth.



Eastern Jefferson County – Farming and Ranching, 1859 – 1950

The rolling plains and creek valleys in east Jefferson County provided a suitable environment for farming and ranching. The fertile soil and irrigable land along the Ralston, Clear, and Bear creeks and the South Platte River sustained wheat fields, vegetable crops, fruit orchards, and dairy farms. Prairie grasses in the northeastern and southeastern plains provided cattle rangeland.

Northern Plains

Northeastern Jefferson County primarily consisted of range land. Irrigation ditches provided water for livestock and for cultivating hay fields. In the early 1950s, ranch acreage belonging to the Lindsay and Church families was condemned for development of the nuclear weapons manufacturing facility at Rocky Flats (this facility is further described in the **Defense Industry** section). One of the character-defining features of farms and ranches in the northeastern plains are the silos constructed of hollow structural clay tile, typically used in the 1920s and 1930s.

Tucker Home and Farm (5JF520)

Located at 10850 Old Wadsworth Boulevard, the property consists of a vacant dwelling and an outbuilding, barn, and silo.

Church Ranch (5JF971, Centennial Farm)

The Church Ranch was begun by George Henry Church and Sarah Foote Church, who came west in 1861. They prospected unsuccessfully in Idaho Springs, then tried dairy farming at the mouth of Mount Vernon Canyon. In 1862, the Church family acquired the 160-acre homestead near present-day Old Wadsworth Boulevard and West 100th Avenue. In the mid-1860s, their ranch served as a stage stop for the Denver – Cheyenne stage line.



The Church Ranch was the largest cattle ranch in northern Jefferson County.

They acquired additional acreage, and Church built irrigation ditches and reservoirs, beginning with the Upper Church Ditch that diverted

water from Coal Creek. The Church family holdings eventually expanded to 1,500 irrigated acres plus 6,500 acres of pastureland on and near Rocky Flats. They acquired 2,700 acres of grazing land in Middle Park near Granby, and, in summer, herded their cattle up Coal Creek Canyon and over the Continental Divide into this highlands basin. The Church Ranch “home ranch” consists of two residences and a barn located at 10500 Old Wadsworth. The west end of the ranch was condemned by the federal government in the late 1940s as the site of the Rocky Flats plant. Portions of the ranch between Standley Lake and Rocky Flats are now owned by family heir Charles McKay, who resides on the farmstead at 9600 Indiana Street.⁴⁷

Churches Ranch (5JF1042, NR)

The Churches Ranch at 17999 West 60th Avenue was homesteaded by John C. and Mary Ann Churches in 1863. The Boulder City Road passed across the Churches’ homestead, and a ranch structure was used as a stage station for travelers⁴⁸. Reflecting the diversity common to most Jefferson County ranches, the Churches raised horses, dairy cattle, beef cattle, hogs, and poultry. The beef was sold at the Churches’ butcher shop in Golden. They also cultivated oats, wheat, potatoes, apples, cherries, plums, and grapes. John Churches organized a ditch company and built a ditch and reservoir using 26 head of oxen, a plow, and dynamite. John and Mary Churches helped organize the Colorado Grange in the early 1870s and were founding members of Enterprise Grange No. 25. The 13 buildings on the Churches Ranch include the main residence, a buggy shed/stable, pump house, two barns, a granary, silo, and several smaller outbuildings. The City of Arvada Open Space Department acquired the property as a historic park.⁴⁹

Golden Vicinity

⁴⁷ Len Ackland, *Making a Real Killing – Rocky Flats and the Nuclear West*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999, 7 – 14.

⁴⁸ Golden Landmarks Association, www.goldenlandmarks.com

⁴⁹ Lutz, *More Than Gold*, 23; Simmons, Laurie, Tom Simmons and Judith E. Broeker, *Survey Report - Historic Resources Survey, Churches Ranch, Jefferson County, Colorado*, Denver: Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 1996, Simmons and Broeker, 10-20, 28.

The choice bottom lands along Clear and Ralston Creek valleys had been “taken up” by the early 1860s, many by settlers who had first tried their hand at gold mining. Edward Berthoud in his 1880 history of the county identifies prominent pioneer ranching families, including: the Allens, Baughs Lees, Miles, Perrins, Wannamakers, and Wolfs on Clear Creek; and the Rands, Stropes, Swadleys, and others on Ralston Creek. In the south part of the county, the Arnett, Bergen, Harrington, Hodgson, Lehow, Mowry, and Mills families developed farms and ranches.⁵⁰ Few agricultural properties remained in the same family for multiple generations. The most successful operations bought the surrounding, smaller properties.

By mid-century, cities began expanding onto former farms and ranches in eastern Jefferson County. Today, the patchwork of unincorporated area between Golden, Arvada, Wheat Ridge, and Lakewood retains a number of agricultural properties, although most are diminished in size, and most buildings have been altered by renovations or removed by demolition.

This enduring pattern of agricultural use reflects the early nature of the cities of Arvada, Wheat Ridge, and Lakewood. Arvada began as a farming community platted in 1870 near the railroad that runs along the townsite’s southern edge. Regarded as one of Colorado’s richest truck-gardening regions, Arvada also cultivated wheat, corn, oats and barley. The city became the agricultural hub of northeastern Jefferson County with the Arvada Flour Mill processing grains from surrounding farms. Production of apples, cherries, grapes, and berries warranted organization of the Jefferson County Fruit Growers in 1892. Vegetable crops included peas, potatoes, cabbage, corn, celery, and tomatoes. Dairy farms supplied a variety of products and sustained a cheese factory. Crops of clover and alfalfa fed livestock and supported bee hives and honey production.

Arvada was incorporated in 1904 to meet residents’ demands for improved civic services such as a waterworks, a sewer system, paved roads, and sidewalks. By mid-century, the city had shifted from an agricultural base to become a suburban community. In 1951, Arvada’s first suburban neighborhood, the Vetting Addition, was developed upon a former celery farm. Since then, the city has continued to expand through additions and annexations. The nearby Rocky Flats plant served as a major economic factor in this residential growth.

Wheat Ridge, located between Arvada and Lakewood, was settled in 1860 along the Prospect Trail to Golden (now West 38th Avenue). In the 1860s and 1870s, it was the largest wheat producing section of the state.⁵¹ Fruits and vegetable crops also contributed to the town’s economy, in particular, Pascal Celery, a specialty type of celery. Wheat Ridge was renowned for its carnation nurseries and was a leading producer of these flowers. Through the 1900s, various nurseries and greenhouses characterized the town. Wheat Ridge was not formally incorporated until 1969.

Lakewood also had agricultural origins. Until the 1940s, it was a sparsely populated rural community of poultry operations, dairy farms, truck gardens, and fruit orchards. Commercial activity centered on West Colfax Avenue, which became part of the U.S. 40 coast-to-coast highway in the 1920s. The Remington Arms/Denver Ordnance Plant fueled growth during World War II, and the ensuing postwar boom created dozens of suburban

⁵⁰ Edward L. Berthoud, “History of Jefferson County *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valley*, Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co, 1880, Berthoud., 366, 372.

⁵¹ Pabor, William E. *Farmer’s Guide to Northern Colorado. A Manual Intended for Settlers*. Denver: Colorado Farmer Print, 1882, 23.

subdivisions. Lakewood was finally incorporated in 1969 and has become Colorado's fourth largest city.

George B. Allen Farm

In the 1860s, George B. Allen cultivated a 99-acre farm northeast of Golden on Clear Creek, at the north edge of the pioneer settlement of Arapahoe City. Crops included wheat, oats, corn, buckwheat, potatoes, and garden produce. His 1868 stone farmhouse still stands at 15000 West 44th Avenue. The two-story, eight-room dwelling has a hipped roof and entrance facing West 44th Avenue; the cupola, used as an Indian lookout, has been removed.⁵² Like many others, Allen turned to farming and stockraising after ventures in mining and running a saw mill. The property was later acquired by Ed C. Schreiner, who developed the adjoining Schreiner's Resub subdivision in 1946. Today, the Allen house contains a commercial business. All associated outbuildings appear to be gone.

William M. Allen Farm

The brother of George Allen, William M. Allen filed claim to a 160-acre homestead seven miles northeast of Golden on Ralston Creek, and in 1867 bought another 160-acre farm on Ralston Creek west of Arvada. William M. and Miriam C. (Reno) Allen were very prominent pioneers in Arvada. Allen was employed by Green Russell in mining ventures, and later purchased 240 acres of farm land in Jefferson Territory, Arvada. Another large portion of his property was in Olde Town Arvada. He was successful in getting a second sugar beet dump started alongside the Colorado and Southern Railroad tracks on Grandview Avenue, west of Wadsworth By-pass. This was a profitable enterprise from 1917 until the 1940s. The Republicans in his district elected William M. Allen as Jefferson County Commissioner in 1867, a position which he held for six years.⁵³

Easley Orchard Home

Elwood Easley operated one of Fairmount's largest farms, Orchard Home, near West 44th Avenue and Easley Road. Easley had an apple orchard and also produced grapes, pears, raspberries, strawberries, peaches, and plums.⁵⁴

⁵² Brown, *The Shining Mountains*, 150 - 151.

⁵³ *Jefferson County Place Names Database*, "William Allen."

⁵⁴ Joyce A. Manley, *Arapahoe City to Fairmount – From a Ghost Town to a Community*, Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1989, 46 – 49.

Wannamaker Farm

Jonas F. Wannamaker farmed 160 acres in 1861 two miles east of Golden along West 44th Avenue. Enlarged three years later by an additional 200 acres, Wannamaker's operation included wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, and a dairy farm. Wannamaker developed Wannamaker ditch in 1859, the first taken from Clear Creek. He also built "the first farm house with a board floor and shingle roof." In 1873, he built a large brick house, and remained on his ranch until he died in 1909.⁵⁵



The Wannaker farmhouse.

Other Fairmount Farms

Parts of Fairmount were platted as agricultural subdivisions in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Arvada Fruit Gardens, Wheat Ridge Gardens, Fairview Fruit Gardens, and New Hampshire Gardens originated as five- to ten-acre parcels intended for farm use. Despite access to irrigation, cultivation was hampered by the stony terrain and clay soil. Although considerably developed with post-1950 residential infill, these subdivisions still contain farmsteads and farmhouses, a few of which are still intact.

Graves Farm

Oliver and Lucy Graves farmed 160 acres west of the confluence of Ralston and Clear creeks at present-day 5478 Marshall Street near Clear Creek. The Graves Farm acreage was developed as the Graves Subdivision, and the farmhouse has been substantially altered.

Golden Peaks Dairy

The Golden Peaks dairy farms located on Highway 93 north of West 58th Avenue operated into the early 1990s. The property consists of a dwelling and several dairy barns.

Hayden Ranch

The 6,300-acre Hayden cattle ranch stretched from Garrison Street west to Rooney Road and from West Sixth Avenue to Alameda Avenue and Alameda Parkway. A pillar from the east entrance of this massive operation remains on Garrison Street at West Fourth Avenue. The ranch began as "Down Dale," owned by Major Jacob Downing. Downing, a noted lawyer and judge, acquired a 2,000-acre parcel east of Green Mountain in the late 1860s, which he fenced, irrigated, and cultivated. Downing planted fruit trees and sugar beets, and he is credited with introducing the first alfalfa, quail and Hereford cattle to Colorado. He also built a race track on his ranch, for his prized thoroughbred Arabian horses. A portion of the ranch was developed as the Denver Ordnance Depot in 1941.

⁵⁵ Berthoud, 547 – 600, Steinel, 187, Brown 145.

Rooney Ranch (5JF196, Centennial Farm, NR)

Alexander Rooney developed Rooney Ranch at 1721 South Rooney Road in the early 1860s, south of Alameda Parkway between Lakewood and Morrison. Rooney cultivated hay, alfalfa, and corn. He also raised Galloway cattle imported from Scotland and Morgan horses sold to military cavalry units. Through various land acquisitions, Rooney expanded his homestead into a 4,500-acre property, one of the largest cattle and horse ranches in the county. However, the Rooney family lost a great deal of their holdings in the nationwide economic depression of 1893.

The Rooney Ranch complex consists of the 1862 – 1865 main house, 1890 barn, 1930 granary, and 1940 blacksmith shop, all with local sandstone.⁵⁶ The ranch is located east of the Dakota hogback known as “Dinosaur Ridge” for its extensive fossil deposits. Just north of the ranch is the Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center on West Alameda Parkway, housed in a barn and house that were originally part of the Rooney Ranch complex.



Rooney Ranch

Bear Creek Farms

Dairy farms and cattle ranches, such as the Van Gordon Dairy Farm and the Peterson Farm, were located in Bear Creek Valley at Lakewood’s southwestern edge. These were vacated in 1982 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed Bear Creek. The Bear Creek Lake reservoir and its surrounding area now form a park owned and maintained by the City of Lakewood. The Peterson House (5JF2659, NR) was preserved by moving it to Lakewood Heritage Center at 797 South Wadsworth Boulevard.

Southeastern Jefferson County

Farming and ranching in southeastern Jefferson County included farms along Deer Creek and the South Platte River, as well as several turkey farms and cattle ranches.

Hildebrand Farm (5JF188, NR)

The Hildebrand Ranch at 8500 Deer Creek Canyon Road is the only remaining agricultural property in the Chatfield Basin. Frank Hildebrand, a German immigrant, established a 160-acre cattle ranch in the late 1860s, also cultivating oats, barley, corn, wheat, and alfalfa. Hildebrand’s sons, Francis and Albert, enlarged the ranch and operated it into the mid-1900s. Owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the property is leased to the Denver Botanical Gardens, which operates it as a museum and the Chatfield Nature Preserve.

⁵⁶ *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Rooney Ranch*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1974.

The complex consists of the 1860s farmhouse, a bunkhouse, several barns, and outbuildings.⁵⁷

Bax Ranch

Located at 15000 West Belleview Avenue, Bax Ranch was originally part of Willow Springs, a large turkey farm, then a dairy farm. In 1948, L. D. Bax acquired the property and raised horses and polled Herefords. It is now owned by his daughter Miriam Bax Corbett. Most of the ranch acreage has been sold and the original ranch house west of the property is now gone. The property contains a main residence that originated as a herdsman's house, a secondary dwelling, two large barns, and several outbuildings.⁵⁸

Ken Caryl Ranch

The Ken Caryl (also spelled Ken-Caryl) Ranch lies between the hogbacks and the foothills near Dutch Creek. The north portion of the ranch originated as the Bradford Ranch, which was established by Major Robert B. Bradford. John C. Shaffer, owner of the Rocky Mountain News, acquired the property in 1914 and expanded it into a 10,000-acre property. According to Helen Waters in *Mountain Memories*, the ranch was one of the properties that comprised the 230,000-acre Hartzel Ranch Company. He built the large Colonial Revival “manor house” on the property and named the ranch after his two sons, Kent and Carroll.⁵⁹

From the 1930s through the 1960s, the ranch passed through a series of owners and became one of the county's largest ranching operations. It was acquired by Johns-Manville and developed with the Ken-Caryl residential subdivision and the Johns-Manville corporate headquarters building in the 1970s. The Johns-Manville building, located at the base of Ken Caryl Valley, was later acquired by Martin Marietta/Lockheed-Martin.⁶⁰ The remaining ranch buildings include: the Shaffer residence, now operated as the Manor House restaurant and events center; the Ken Caryl Equestrian Center at 14422 Ken Caryl Avenue; and the Bradford Perley house. This collection of buildings is associated with ranching activity and consists of: two very large gambrel-roofed barns, one frame and the other with stone walls; one large gabled, frame stable; the “Dakota Lodge” outbuilding; and a Bungalow Craftsman dwelling, likely a caretaker's house. The ruins of the Bradford residence remain at the north end of Ken Caryl valley.

Cultural Resource Types

Ranch complex, farmhouse, farmstead, barn, silo, windmill, fence line, outbuilding, orchard, tree nursery, produce stands

⁵⁷ *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Hildebrand Ranch*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1973.

⁵⁸ Interview with Miriam Bax Corbett, 03/11/02.

⁵⁹ Helen E. Waters, “The Ken Caryl,” *Canyon Courier*, Nov. 4, 1971, 20; State Inventory Data Form, CHS, Feb. 28, 1974.

⁶⁰ “Ken Caryl Ranch,” Denver: Ambrose-Williams & Company, and Land and Cattle Management Corporation, circa 1975.

Irrigation, 1859 – 1950

Irrigation allowed cultivation in various parts of what is now Colorado. Settlers in the San Luis Valley were the first to use irrigation, employing Spanish irrigation techniques in the 1850s. David K. Wall of Golden introduced irrigation to Colorado's Front Range in 1859. Wall, who had learned the technique raising food during the California gold rush, cultivated barley at his farm near present-day Golden, watering his crops with a ditch built from Clear Creek.

Irrigation was crucial to farms and ranches on Colorado's eastern plains. Large-scale irrigation on the Front Range and eastern plains was first accomplished in Colorado Territory at the Greeley Colony in the early 1870s. Colorado's first farmers were challenged by an arid environment far different than the humid climate in the Midwest and East. Farms and ranches survived by diverting water from creeks and rivers flowing from the mountains. Water legislation, developed in the 1870s, decreed that "water of every natural stream" was the property of the public, rather than belonging to the land owner over whose property the stream flowed. Prior appropriation legally entitled continued usage to whoever first legally claimed the water rights. Water claims were filed, similar to mineral claims, and those who filed first received first right of use. It also gave primacy to water used for agriculture over water used for industrial purposes.⁶¹ The doctrine of prior appropriation introduced in Colorado became the legal precedent for water rights throughout the rest of Colorado and the American West.⁶²

Jefferson County farmers and ranchers formed ditch companies and constructed ditches and canals, the earliest built with an ox-drawn plow and dynamite. Ditches from Coal, Ralston, Clear, Bear, Turkey, Deer, and lesser creeks watered grazing pasture, hay meadows, grain fields, fruit, orchards, and vegetable crops. Beginning in 1890, land owners and ditch companies began building small reservoirs, to store and divert water for agricultural purposes. In 1901, the state authorized land owners to form irrigation districts. Within a decade, irrigation had nearly quadrupled the number of farms in the state and established the basic canal system east of the Front Range.⁶³ In the mountains, irrigation was less common, although some ranchers built small creek reservoirs to water livestock.

The tree-lined Agricultural Ditch, built when this property was the Down Dale ranch owned by Jacob Downing, is the only remnant of the original agricultural use of the property now occupied by the Denver Federal Center, at Kipling and Sixth Avenue in Lakewood.



⁶¹ Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and David McComb, *Colorado – A History of the Centennial State, Revised Edition*, Niwot: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982, 163.

⁶² Mehls, I-63.

⁶³ Abbott, Leonard, and McComb, 164.

The Jefferson County Place Names Directory identified 101 ditches, located in the foothills and eastern plains. North of Clear Creek, major ditches include Dry Creek Valley Ditch, Equity Ditch, Boulder Diversion Canal (5JF516), McKay Ditch (5JF513.2), Church Ditch (5JF267), Upper Church Ditch (5JF512.1), Niver Canal, Croke Canal (5JF337), Juchem Ditch, Farmer's High Line Canal, Mower Ditch (5JF134), and Reno Ditch. South of Clear Creek, major ditches include the Ward Ditch, Pioneer Union Ditch, Warrior Canal, Rocky Mountain Ditch, Smart Ditch (5JF514.3), Harriman Canal, and the Agricultural Ditch that flows south from Clear Creek for 20 miles to near South Federal Blvd. and West Yale Avenue.⁶⁴

Numerous canals, ditches, and reservoirs remain intact in eastern Jefferson County. Ditches are frequently the only remaining physical evidence of agricultural activity. Curving along the contours of the land and edged by trees and underbrush, these are important cultural landscape features. They also serve as corridors for wildlife migration.

Resource Types

Canal, ditch, reservoir, headgate

Mountain Ranching, 1860s – 1950

Agriculture in Jefferson County's western mountains differed from the eastern plains. Cultivation was limited by a shorter growing season and colder temperatures than at lower elevations. Cattle ranching was a prime industry. Hay was the leading crop by the 1900s, providing feed for freight animals and beef and dairy cattle. Crops were limited to cool-weather and root vegetables, such as potatoes, turnips, lettuce, spinach, and peas. The opportunity to acquire land at a minimal cost induced homesteaders to farm and ranch the steep, rocky land. Typically, mountain ranching was marginally profitable, and income often supplemented from other sources.

The Evergreen area supported a number of ranching operations in creek valleys and mountain meadows, and a few ranches flourished along the North Fork of the South Platte River. Edward Berthoud reported in 1880 that the narrow elevated valleys along Elk, Cub, Deer, Bear, and Beaver creeks had "numerous farms where the hardier vegetables, potatoes, oats, wheat and barley thrived to perfection."⁶⁵ Raising garden crops was hampered by browsing wildlife, including elk after the 1917 introduction of elk from Wyoming in the Mount Evans area.⁶⁶ Ranching in Golden Gate, Coal Creek, South Turkey, and Deer Creek canyons was more difficult due to the steep and rocky terrain and often a lack of water.

Mountain agriculture consisted primarily of cattle ranching. Open range extended from Mount Evans south to Pikes Peak.⁶⁷ Ranching required expansive land holdings, because 35 – 40 acres was needed to raise a single cow. Creek valleys and high-country meadows proved ideal for cattle grazing, but many ranchers also had to clear their property of trees to raise hay. Many ranchers increased their grazing acreage by leasing land from the railroads and the federal government. Cattle were driven to markets in Denver and Littleton, or transported by rail, then truck, in the 1900s.

⁶⁴ Jefferson County, Colorado County Map Series (Topographic) Sheet 1 of 2. *United States Geological Survey, 1976.*

⁶⁵ Berthoud, 353.

⁶⁶ Sternberg, 64.

⁶⁷ Margaret V. Bentley, *The Upper Side of the Pie Crust, Evergreen*: Jefferson County Historical Society, 1990, (first edition 1977), 269.

Ranchers often supplemented their income with diverse activities, including raising hay, growing vegetables, and selling dairy products. Into the early 1900s, ranchers in Golden Gate and South Turkey Creek canyons ran stage stops and inns to supplement their income. A few ranches rented out visitors' cabins to sustain operations. Many ranches harvested timber sold as railroad ties, fence posts, mine support timbers, and fuel wood. Harvesting Christmas trees and firewood also augmented ranch incomes. Some ranchers worked off the ranch, employed by the county road crew, Denver Mountain Parks, or at businesses in nearby mountain communities.

Transporting agricultural products to market occurred several ways. Cattle were herded to Littleton, Denver, or Idaho Springs. In 1917, a livestock chute was installed at Buffalo, providing railroad freight for cattle. Ranchers hauled vegetables by wagons or truck to the warehouse district near Union Station in Denver and sold produce at rented market booths and stalls. They also sold produce and dairy products in Idaho Springs and at hotels in Evergreen and Buffalo. Some ranchers delivered dairy products to nearby residents.

Many ranchers in western Jefferson County were immigrants from Scandinavian countries and Canada. For example, the Anderson, Christenson, Elmgreen, Erikson, Kerr, and Johnson families were among Swedish immigrants who farmed or ranched in the Evergreen area. The prevalence of Swedish settlers between Kittredge and Bergen Park earned this area the name of Swede Gulch. Several Swedish immigrants settled along North Turkey Creek. The county's late 1800s logging industry attracted immigrants from Canada, Sweden, and Norway, who remained to homestead and ranch. Agricultural practices in these cold, northern countries perhaps adapted readily to ranching and farming in the Jefferson County mountains.

Jefferson County Open Space has acquired acreage from some early ranches. These include: Meyer Ranch on U.S. 285 northeast of Conifer; Dedisse Ranch, of which a portion was dammed to create Evergreen Lake; Reynolds Ranch on Foxtan Road; Pine Valley Ranch on the North Fork west of Pine; and the White Ranch northwest of Golden. Golden Gate Canyon State Park, established in 1960, now encompasses nearly 60 former homesteads; nearly all ranch buildings have been removed from these properties.

North Mountains

The steep, rocky terrain hindered homesteading in Coal Creek Canyon and Golden Gate Canyon, although Crawford Gulch, Robinson Hill, and other higher lying areas sustained agricultural activity. Settlers in the Ralston Buttes vicinity grazed cattle and grew root vegetables sold at markets in the Central City – Black Hawk mining district. Completion of the Colorado Central Railroad to the mining district in the 1870s reduced the demand for local produce, beef, and dairy products. Ranching and farming declined. Today, very few ranch properties remain intact. Most are gone or have been altered for modern use.

Phillips/Tallman Ranch (5J1004, NR)

The circa 1880 Tallman Ranch straddles the Jefferson-Gilpin County line at 3873 Golden Gate Canyon Road in Golden Gate Canyon State Park. The property is associated with the heavy concentration of Swedish-American settlers who established homesteads and developed a successful ranching community in Golden Gate Canyon in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The property was acquired by William F. Phillips in the 1920s, who constructed a log house, log stable, two storage buildings, and a corral. His attempts at starting a wood

harvesting business were unsuccessful. The family remained on the ranch until they abandoned it in the 1950s.⁶⁸

Skaukee-Gruchy Ranch

The Skaukee Ranch, located at 34787 Gap Road, is the most intact ranch property in the northern mountains. It was homesteaded around 1875 by the Skaukee family. The Nelson family acquired the property in 1943, and it is owned today by Florence Nelson Gruchy and her husband David Gruchy. The 500-acre property contains a 1900 dwelling built after the original homestead cabin burned. The ranch includes a range of outbuildings, including a large gabled horse barn, calving barn with attached chicken barn, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, spring house, and a roadside, pre-1950 woodframe auto garage. It was operated as a cattle ranch into the late 1990s, and the Gruchy's still raise a few head of cattle today.

Stable and barns at Skaukee-Gruchy Ranch.



Centennial Ranch

Daniel Booten built the Centennial House in Golden Gate Canyon in 1876 as a stage inn. The property was purchased by Ernest S. Koch in 1895 and owned for several decades by the Koch family. Jeanette Koch, a founder of the Columbine Ladies' Club, used the Centennial bunk house as a club house.

Baughman Ranch (5JF999, Centennial Farm)

The Baughman Ranch at 29487 Golden Gate Canyon is a Centennial Farm. Homesteaded in 1886, the property consists of a dwelling and several outbuildings.

Kolin Ranch

Charles and Mary Kolin homesteaded a ranch in 1901 on the southwest slope of Douglas Mountain west of 33729 Robinson Hill Road. The property consists of a vacant 1.5-story homestead cabin of chinked log, gabled barn, corrals, and several outbuildings.

Pearce Ranch

The Pearce Ranch at 26883 Belcher Hill Road consists of a 1920s ranch house, barn, and several outbuildings. It is owned by descendants of early rancher Thomas Pearce.

White Ranch

One of the more profitable farms was that of Frank and James Bond, who sowed ten acres on White Ranch north of Golden Gate Canyon in the 1880s. The Bonds grew potatoes,

⁶⁸ Historic Building Inventory Record 5JF1004, 1997, Colorado Historical Society.

beans, and corn that they sold to markets in Central City.⁶⁹ The property was bought in 1913 by Paul White, who married Anna Davenport of Arvada three years later. The Whites expanded the property to a 3,000-acre ranch, raising Hereford cattle, but eventually they gave up ranching. In the 1980s, Mrs. White donated 1,500 acres to Jefferson County Open Space after her husband's death.

Other Ranches

Other ranch properties in the Golden Gate Canyon vicinity include the Ramstetter Ranch, "C Lazy 3", in Crawford Gulch, which has an altered ranch house and several outbuildings. The Green Ranch on Robinson Hill contains several intact buildings, but owner permission is needed to access the property.⁷⁰

Evergreen Vicinity

With broad mountain meadows and numerous creeks, the Evergreen area sustained many farms and ranches. Buffalo Park, west of the town, contained several ranches, and others developed along the creeks, including Bear, Blue, North Turkey, and Little Cub creeks. The broad summit and south-facing slopes of Bear Mountain also sustained cattle ranches.

**Cattle drive at Evergreen,
circa 1900.
Photo courtesy of
Colorado Historical
Society**



Note: The Hiwan Homestead Museum maintains a list of ranch properties that may warrant further investigation. These include the Cherry Ranch, Beaver Brook Ranch, Pierson Ranch, Mean's Barn, Hangen Ranch, Flying J Ranch, Stransky Ranch, and Al Hager Ranch in Kerr Gulch. The reconnaissance fieldwork and context research did not produce information on the location, history, or status of these properties.

Thomas Bergen Ranch/Johnson Ranch

The earliest operation was the Thomas Bergen Ranch. In 1860, Thomas C. Bergen established the Bergen District, following the method used to establish self-governing mining districts elsewhere in the territory.⁷¹ Bergen raised cattle and hay, and his ranch house served as a way station on the Denver, Auraria and Colorado Wagon Road. The Bergen property was acquired in the early 1900s by the Johnson brothers, who held extensive property southeast of Bergen Park. George, Oscar and Ted Johnson raised poultry, dairy products,

⁶⁹ Robert F. Bond, "The Land Persists: The History of White Ranch Park," *Historically Jeffco*, Golden: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Summer 1990, Vol. 3, No.1, 4.

⁷⁰ Interview with Milly Roeder, 04/22/02.

⁷¹ Betty Moynihan, "What's the Law, Anyway? Early Government in Colorado, *From Scratch*, 2-5.

Agriculture

hay, and produce. The Johnson brothers also built the octagonal barn (5JF288) that remains intact near the Bergen ranch house. In 1943, Darst Buchanan acquired the property as part of his Hiwan Ranch. Today, much of the Johnson Ranch is part of Elk Meadows Park, a Jefferson County Open Space park.

Strain Ranch

Robert Strain homesteaded at Bergen Park near the Cresswell stage station in the early 1860s and expanded the property to a 1,000-acre ranch. He also sold several hundred acres to the Johnson Brothers and in 1904 sold the rest of the ranch to C. S. Burkins, representing the Idaho Springs Lumber Company, which planned to log the stands of virgin timber.⁷²

Blackmer Ranch

The Blackmer family ranched west of Bergen Park on a property occupied in the 1860s by a stage station, destroyed by fire then rebuilt. Called Cresswell, it was referred to in 1860s guidebooks as a health resort for people suffering from hay fever, asthma and catarrh. It also contained a building, no longer extant, that served as a tavern, post office, stage station and express station. In 1873, the place was deserted since stagecoaches no longer traveled that route, due to completion of Colorado Central Railroad through Clear Creek Canyon.⁷³

Beaver Brook Ranch

The Beaver Brook Ranch today consists of a circa 1915 ranch house and outbuilding located at 33180 U.S. 40.

Evans-Elbert Ranch

At the terminus in Upper Bear Creek Road, straddling the Jefferson-Clear Creek County line, lays the expansive Evans Ranch. John Evans, Colorado's second territorial governor, developed the Evans Ranch northwest of Evergreen beginning in the 1870s. The ranch served as the family's summer retreat, but also produced cattle, barley, oats, and potatoes. The ranch also sustained considerable logging, with timber hauled by wagon to Idaho Springs and Morrison. John Evans built the Bear Creek Wagon Road from Evergreen to Morrison to transport logs for railroad ties when building the DSP&P railroad.

Evans and his son-in-law Sam Elbert developed the Evans-Elbert Ranch, 7,000 acres extending north into Gilpin County.⁷⁴ The Jefferson County School District acquired the ranch buildings for use as an educational facility for school children. Parcels of the ranch were gradually sold to family members and private owners during the late 1900s. In 1998, the Colorado Open Lands and the Mountain Area Land Trust coordinated conservation of the remaining 3,243 acres of the historic Evans Ranch by subdividing the large holding into five large conservation parcels, each with a forty-acre home site.⁷⁵

Camp Neosho/Hiwan Homestead (5JF195, NR)

The Hiwan Homestead complex, at 4208 Timbervale Drive

⁷² *Golden Globe*, February 13, 1904.

⁷³ Hamilton, 27.

⁷⁴ "The Mountain Home Colony in Picturesque Denver, March 1919, 6-8.

⁷⁵ Kathlene Sutton, "Evans Ranch acquisition page 7B.



Hiwan Homestead Museum

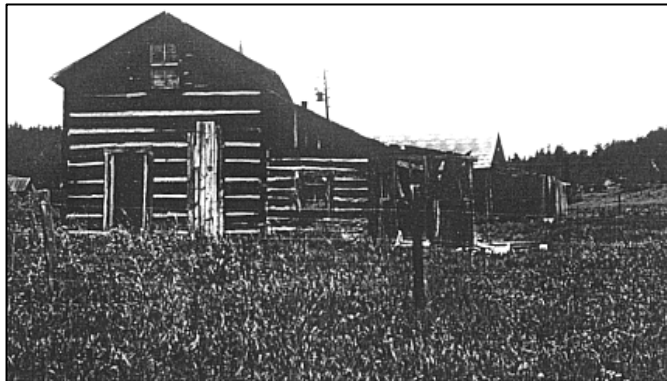
in Evergreen, served as a headquarters for the Hiwan Ranch, developed by Darst and Ruth Buchanan in the mid-1900s. The rustic log farmhouse and numerous outbuildings originally were built by Mrs. Mary Neosho Williams, her daughter Dr. Josepha Williams Douglas, and son-in-law Reverend Charles Winfred Douglas. Mrs. Williams acquired 1,280 acres in 1886 and hired local carpenter Jock Spence to construct the series of buildings that today comprises the Hiwan Homestead. The property, known as Camp Neosho, served as a summer retreat rather than a commercial ranch until it was purchased in 1938 by the Buchanans, oil investors from Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Buchanans named the property Hiwan, a Scottish word that means “a unit of land that can be handled by one man and one ox to provide for a family.” They accumulated acreage extending into Clear Creek and Gilpin counties as a prize cattle operation with as many as 750 breeding cows.⁷⁶ The Buchanans built the Show Barn on Meadow Drive to exhibit their prize winning stock. The Hiwan Ranch evolved into the Hiwan Development Company and most of the ranch was developed as residential subdivisions between Evergreen and Bergen Park. The Hiwan Homestead property is owned by Jefferson County Open Space and operated as a museum.

Berrien Ranch

The Berriens (also spelled Berrians) were a prominent ranch family in the Evergreen vicinity. George and Lucinda Berrien acquired a 580-acre property at Buffalo Park in 1887. George died the following year, but Lucinda and their 12 children continued the operation, supplementing ranch income by making charcoal, cutting posts, raising vegetables, and selling milk and other dairy products. The Berrien Ranch expanded with various acquisitions, eventually reaching North Turkey Creek. The wagon road along North Turkey Creek crossed the ranch property. The Holders Hotel, a stage stop inn built by previous owners, stood near the road; this building is apparently no longer extant. Many of the Berrien children established their own ranches. According to records at the Hiwan Homestead there were Berrien Ranches on both sides of County Highway 73 on the way to Conifer, along North Turkey Creek, in Sawmill Gulch south of Berrien Mountain, by Black Mountain, and on Blue Creek, as well as the original property at the end of Buffalo Park Road. In 1947, Dan Berrien sold the ranch property at 7531 County Highway 73 to Mrs. Jacqueline Stewart, who developed it as the Centaur Ranch. Today, this property contains a large horse stable and outbuildings, circa 1950, and a 1950 Ranch style house built by Mrs. Stewart.⁷⁷

Everhardt/Herzman Ranch (5JF183, NR)

The Everhardt/Herzman Ranch is located at 5898 Lone Peak Drive, southeast of Evergreen. It was developed by Johnny Everhardt in the early 1860s, who raised cattle, cut hay, and grew grain or vegetables. Gus and Marie Herzman, who owned property adjacent to Everhardt, acquired the ranch and worked it until 1949. Later, the Herzmans leased it to Enos Wilson for grazing dairy cattle. The Everhardt/Herzman



**Everhardt-Herzman Ranch, in 1974, photo
courtesy of Courtesy Jefferson County
Historical Society, Evergreen**

⁷⁶ Sternberg, 208-211.

⁷⁷ Jennifer Karber, “Berrien family left mark c
Description of Evergreen area ranches, “Ra
Homestead, Evergreen.

Agriculture

Ranch complex consists of the 1867 barn and the two-story log farmhouse built by Everhardt and several outbuildings. The historic buildings have been vacant since around 1950.⁷⁸

Schneider Ranch

The Blue Creek Valley was farmed by members of the Schneider family, who still own some property there today. German immigrant John Schneider raised potatoes, oats, barley, and a little wheat on a 45-acre property. He also raised hay, had a small blacksmith shop, and ran a sawmill on his property. His father, Joseph Schneider, immigrated from Germany and acquired 105 acres in Blue Creek Valley. The Schneider ranches produced beef, eggs, and butter that were sold at Idaho Springs, and lumber that was cut and milled on the ranch. When Joseph died in 1890, his widow, Margaret, married Ernst Livonius, who later homesteaded two 80-acre parcels in the valley. At peak agricultural production, around 200 acres were cultivated, with a good deal of land cleared with axe, saw, and hand-operated stump puller. The Schneider Ranch at 7530 Blue Creek Road today consists of a post-1950 residence and ranch buildings.⁷⁹

Corbin Ranch

Harvey and Lucinda Corbin homesteaded the Corbin Ranch near Pleasant Park southeast of Conifer in 1870. The ranch grew from 300 to 4,000 acres, and later was owned by Tom Butterfield. The original Corbin home burned in 1910, and was replaced by a woodframe farm house built around the fireplace of the original house.

Roy Ranch/Broce Ranch

The Roy Ranch five miles west of Evergreen at the end of Buffalo Park Road was developed by French Canadian Antoine Roy in 1868. The property includes an early 1900s frame house, an old log cabin, where Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford honeymooned, and an 1895 barn. In the late 1900s, it became the Broce Pony Ranch.

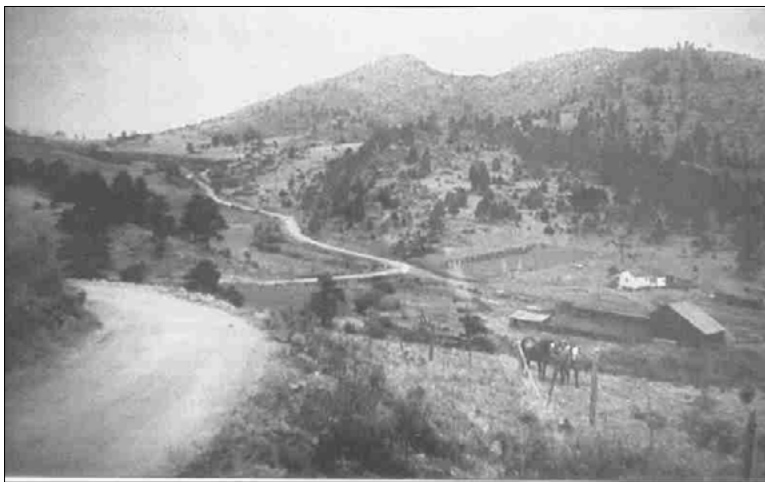
I-70 Corridor

Kinnikinick Ranch/Hazel Humphrey House (5JF184, NR)

The Kinnikinick Ranch served as a year-round residence for the Humphrey family at 620 South Soda Creek Road northeast of Bergen Park. The 1878 log ranch house was built by J. J. Clark, who homesteaded the property. The Humphreys expanded the dwelling with several historic additions and built a guest cabin, garage, and gazebo. It is now a small, privately operated museum.

Elmgreen Ranch

The Elmgreen Ranch along present-day I-70 near the Jefferson-Clear Creek County line was homesteaded by Swedish immigrants Gus and Nellie Elmgreen around 1890. Gus first mined at the Lamartine Mine above Idaho Springs to acquire the 480-acre property that



Elmgreen Ranch was skirted by “Big Hill” road that connected Bergen Park to Idaho Springs. The ranch was split by U.S. 40 and I-70 and the buildings were removed during the 1969 construction of I-70. Photo circa 1900 courtesy of Elmgreen Family.

extended from Soda Creek Road to the base of Saddleback Mountain. The ranch was expanded when Elmgreen's son, Arthur, married Hilda Hopper in 1917 and purchased an adjacent 440 acres on the upper bench of Clear Creek Canyon. The Elmgreen Ranch produced cash crops of hay, milk and cream. In its early years, it served as a stage stop on the Big Hill Road. The Elmgreens also operated a toll gate for the road up Beaver Brook to Squaw Pass Road, which was located on their property.⁸⁰

Ralston Ranch

The most prominent rancher in Mount Vernon Canyon was Lucian M. Ralston, whose father, Captain Lucian Hunter Ralston, established a ranch and general store in 1887 in the upper canyon where I-70 now runs between Exits 254 and 256. During the 1890s, Captain Ralston raised hay, ranched cattle, and ran the general store. He also freighted lumber and railroad ties to Idaho Springs, Georgetown, and Central City. When Captain Ralston died in 1894, his son, Lucian Ralston, managed the family ranch and store, freighted lumber to Idaho Springs, raised potatoes, and harvested hay.

Lucian Ralston was an active leader of the ranching community in Mount Vernon Canyon. He served on the Rockland School Board for 35 years, most often as president, and helped convince county officials to construct the 1939 Rockland School. Lucian was a founding member of the Genesee Grange in 1913. He filed a plat for summer cabins in 1912, donated adjacent land for Genesee Park, and worked for 14 years for Denver Mountain Parks. Lucian also leased land to the Denver Ski Club, which built a ski jump on the north down-slope of Genesee Ridge. Members of the Ralston family operated a fur farm at Genesee, later selling the land to Al Cohen and Saul Davidson in 1964 as part of the Genesee Associate's planned community. Construction of I-70 and the Genesee subdivision removed all historic ranch structures. The only remaining buildings associated with the Ralston pioneer family is the Ralston Pioneer Store at 24969 U.S. 40. Built in the 1930s when an earlier Ralston Store was demolished during construction of U.S. 40, this property is somewhat altered and today houses medical arts offices.⁸¹

Gifford/Thiede Ranch

The Gifford/Thiede Ranch (5JF995, NR) is associated with settlement and agricultural development of Mount Vernon Canyon and is the best surviving example of an original Mount Vernon Canyon ranch complex. The complex consists of an 1875 squared-log ranch house and several historic, dilapidated outbuildings. A small log room was added in 1932 to house the local schoolteacher. Electricity was added to the ranch house two years ago, but water still comes from a well. Jacob Blum and Anna Thiede Blum purchased the property in 1906 and it still remains in the Thiede family.

Blum Ranch

Nearby, at the junction of Grapevine and Shingle Creek roads, is the Blum Ranch, a 200-acre property purchased by Anna Thiede Blum. The property retains Mrs. Blum's log cabin built in 1920 after the frame ranch house burned down. Most of the ranch acreage has been subdivided.

⁸⁰ Carole S. Lomond, *City and Mountain Views*, Golden: View Publishing Company, Spring 2002, 24 - 25.

⁸¹ "Lucian M. 'Grandad' Ralston, 1872 - 1957," *City and Mountain Views*, Oct. - Nov. 1997, 18; "The Ralstons - Part I," *City and Mountain Views*, March, 1995, 16 - 17.

Bear Creek Corridor

Narrow Bear Creek Canyon was ill suited for agriculture, although ranching occurred at the present townsites of Kittredge and Idledale.

Anderson Ranch

Andrew Anderson homesteaded in the Swede Gulch area around 1893. The Andersons sold their property in the 1940s.⁸²

Pinedale/Rudin/Vezina Ranch

The Pinedale Ranch in upper Kerr Gulch was homesteaded by Nels Rudin. The property consists of a ranch house, secondary dwelling, and outbuilding.

Luther Ranch

The area now occupied by the townsite of Kittredge was first homesteaded by John and Amanda Myers, who sold the property in 1870 to Martin and Roxilena Luther. Luther was apparently one of the organizers of the Bear Creek Grange. It is believed that he and his wife lived in the house at 26690 SH 74 before moving to Evergreen in 1882.⁸³

U.S. 285 Corridor

The area now crossed by U.S. 285 sustained several ranches. Ranching was also concentrated southeast of Conifer at Pleasant Park, which was originally known as Hay Claim Park.

Herzman-Erickson Ranch

The Herzman-Erickson Ranch at 21633 North Turkey Creek was begun by August Herzman, a Swedish immigrant who acquired the 1877 ranch house and 320 acres in 1896. The Herzmans donated land for and helped build the Hodgson School in 1914, now the Wild Rose Grange. The two-story, chinked log ranch house and several outbuildings stand in a meadow clearing on the north side of the creek, accessed by a bridge. It was owned by their daughter Anna Herzman Erickson until she died in the late 1900s.⁸⁴

Sanger Ranch (5JF302)

The Sanger Ranch was begun when Ed and Mary Sanger purchased 480 acres in 1911. Enlarged to 1,008 acres by several acquisitions, the property was a potato farm and cattle ranch. The Sangers butchered beef cattle and delivered meat to Evergreen, Troutdale, Kittredge, and Morrison. They operated the Highwood Farm Dairy and delivered milk and eggs to customers at Indian Hills and Morrison. They also cut and sold Christmas trees. Forty acres of the ranch was condemned for the 1947 construction of U.S. 285. Beginning around 1980, the property was developed as The Homestead subdivision. Several historic barns were moved near Evergreen in the late 1990s, to accommodate widening of U.S. 285.⁸⁵

⁸² Narrative description of Evergreen area ranches, "Ranches" vertical file at the research library at Hiwan Homestead in Evergreen.

⁸³ Bush and Dittman, 15 – 17.

⁸⁴ Tracy Salcedo, "Anna Erikson, remains belle of the mountains at 80," *Canyon Courier*, August 13, 1986, 9.

⁸⁵ Sharla Bond, "Homestead barns moving to Evergreen," *Times*, ca. 1998, (undated, uncited newspaper article in Ranches file at Hiwan Homestead.) Betty Moynihan and Helen E. Waters, ed. *Mountain Memories: From Coffee Pot Hill to Medlen Town. – History of the Inter-Canyon area of Southwest Jefferson County*, Lakewood, Colorado: Limited Publications, 1981, 33-34.

Light Ranch

The property at 26756 Light Lane was homesteaded by Celestine and Dixie Vinette. It was acquired by Millar and Sheila Light. The property is located at the head of a creek valley on the north slope of Legault Mountain and accessed off U.S. 285. Today it consists of a ranch house considerably altered by siding and additions, an octagonal log barn, a large gabled barn, and a stuccoed dairy barn converted as a rental house.

Meyer Ranch, (5JF303, NR)

The Meyer Ranch, lying east of Aspen Park at 9345 U.S. 285, was homesteaded by John McIntyre in 1869. His brother, Duncan McIntyre, and his sons added to this with their homesteads during the first half of the 1870s. Louis Ramboz bought 480 acres from Daniel W. McIntyre in 1883.⁸⁶ The two-story, gabled farmhouse was built in 1889 from lumber cut on the property. At one time, it served as the “Midway House”, an inn accommodating travelers between Fairplay and Denver. The property was divided when Duncan D. McIntyre sold his 160 acres to John Lubin. In November 1912, the ranch was sold to R.W. Kirkpatrick, who owned it until his death in the early 1940s. The ranch then passed through several hands until Norman F. Meyer acquired it in 1950. He bought 140 acres of the Lubin property from Martin Blakeslee in 1959. Other portions had been sold and developed as residential properties by the Conifer Heights Development Company in 1956. Jefferson County Open Space acquired a portion of the Meyer Ranch in 1990.



Yellow Barn at Conifer Junction

small stores at the junction.⁸⁸ John J. Mullen purchased the Junction Ranch property in 1917 from Frederick Buechner. The only intact structure dating from the early crossroads origins is the 1914 Bradford Ranch barn, called the “Yellow Barn” (5JF307).

Legault Ranch

The oldest ranch in continuous family operation is the Legault Ranch, established by Canadian Joseph Legault around 1875. Today, it consists of a weathered, vernacular farmhouse surrounded by various historic outbuildings.⁸⁹

Bradford Ranch

Major Robert Bradford established a ranch in the late 1800s, located at the junction of two wagon roads from Denver to Leadville. The only structure associated with the ranch at Bradford Junction is the well, which dates to the 1860s. The Junction House, built here in 1860, burned down in 1878. It had been a convenient stopping place for travelers enroute to Park County, as well as a popular “watering place” for tourists.⁸⁷ It was replaced by another inn, the Junction House Hotel, which burned down in winter 1914. There were also a few

⁸⁶ Bentley, 64,86,87,89,90

⁸⁷ “Colonel McNasser’s Place at Bradford Junction Destroyed by Fire,” *Denver Daily Times*, Sept. 27, 1878.

⁸⁸ Bentley, 231.

⁸⁹ Bentley, 95-100, 111-112, 122-125.

Oehlmann Ranch

Another Pleasant Park ranch, this property is located at 23615 Oehlmann Park Road. The property consists of a 1.5-story, gabled-L dwelling with a large porch enclosed by glass windows. Today named the Tandem Ranch, it is one of the most intact ranch dwellings in Pleasant Park.

Reynolds Ranch

John Reynolds homesteaded 640 acres in 1919 and expanded it with further acquisitions. From 1913 to 1942, the ranch operated as the Idyll-ease Dude Ranch, consisting of the main ranch house and 14 cabins, four of which Reynolds built and the others remaining from an early Mormon settlement located on the property.⁹⁰ The ranch has been operated as Jefferson County Open Space for nearly two decades. The property consists of the late 1800s ranch house, expanded with several additions and now sided in manufactured log, and two side-gabled cabins remaining from the dude ranch.⁹¹

Elk Falls Ranch

The Elk Falls Ranch, on South Elk Creek Road two miles above Shaffer's Crossing, originated as a 320-acre ranch homesteaded by the Brown family. The ranch was purchased by John C. Jensen, who operated the McCoy & Jensen nursery on Morrison Road. Expanded into a 2,200-acre property, it later became a dude ranch, recreation area for large groups, and a boys and girls camp for the Denver Athletic Club. The large lodge burned down in 1956.⁹²

Intercanyon

In southern Jefferson County, several ranches were homesteaded along Deer Creek, Turkey Creek, and their drainages. Ranches along South Turkey Creek provided hay and livestock for wagons and stagecoaches into the early 1900s. Ranching was especially difficult, prompting one long-time resident to recall: "This place was an Appalachia, people had to scratch out a living any way they could."⁹³

Bowman Ranch

The 360-acre Bowman Ranch adjacent to Tiny Town raised hay in the early 1900s. Near the ranch was located the Spruce Lodge, built in 1902 by Agnes and A. W. Ralph as a private home, then operated as an inn. Spruce Lodge served as a community gathering place and was the location for the first organizational meetings of the Wild Rose Grange in 1906. The lodge building stood empty for several years, before it was dismantled in the late 1900s. The Bowman Ranch was purchased in the 1920s by William Burkhardt, who built a stone chalet-style summer house on the property.⁹⁴

Kuehster Ranch (5JF378)

On Green Ridge, at the southernmost end of Kuehster Road, Frederick and Caroline Strehlke Kuehster homesteaded the Kuehster Ranch in the 1870s. They built the homestead house in 1877. The Kuehsters raised cattle and grew potatoes, head lettuce, and peas. In the early 1900s, their cattle herds grazed in the Pike National Forest around Buffalo Creek and

⁹⁰ Bentley, 151 - 152. The dates of dude ranch operation precedes the homesteading dates given by Bentley and should be researched to confirm and clarify.

⁹¹ Bentley, 151-153.

⁹² Mary Helen Crane, "Elk Falls Ranch," *Canyon Courier*, July 8, 1971, 19.

⁹³ Moynihan and Waters, 70.

⁹⁴ Moynihan and Waters, 20-21.

Wellington Lake. The cattle were taken to the Denver stockyards on four-day cattle drives. Later, cattle were shipped from a railhead in Waterton Canyon. The Kuehsters helped establish the one-room Lamb School to educate children on area ranches, and they were active in the nearby Pleasant Park Grange.⁹⁵

Lamb/Johnson Ranch

The former Lamb Ranch is located along Kuehster Road. Originally homesteaded by the Lamb family, the ranch now consists of two circa-1920, one-story dwellings of chinked log — one with a shed-roofed addition — and a hillside log barn on an elevated stone foundation. The original homestead cabin no longer exists. The Lamb family was instrumental in construction of the Lamb schoolhouse, first a log cabin in 1886 followed by the one-room frame schoolhouse in 1922.⁹⁶ Harold and Mary Johnson acquired the 450-acre Lamb Ranch property in 1946.⁹⁷

Double Crosson Ranch

Located at 12334 Kuehster Road at the junction with Deer Creek Canyon Road, this property consists of a 1.5-story log ranch house, several log and frame outbuildings, and corrals. The ranch extends up the gulch, with small reservoirs for watering livestock.

Arnett Homestead

Charles and Cinderella Arnett homesteaded a mile north of Critchell in 1907. They built a one-room cabin with a loft, in a saddle between two low peaks. They also ran a small sawmill at Bear Wallow on their property.⁹⁸ From 1913 to 1925 the cabin was used as a summer home, and from 1925 to 1942 the Arnetts rented the property to lumberjacks who cut pine boughs, Christmas trees, mine support timbers, and corral poles.

Shield M. Ranch

Lester K. “Mac” McKinney purchased the Shield M. Ranch in Deer Creek Canyon in the 1940s and ran it as a “Christmas tree ranch” for several decades. McKinney logged extensively, operating sawmills at Deer Creek Mesa, Wellington Lake, Arnet’s Ranch at Critchell, Huebner Ranch at Pleasant Park, Black Mountain, and Ken Caryl.⁹⁹

Glen Plym

Glen Plym was developed by Englishman John Williamson, who arrived as a tuberculosis invalid in 1872. After regaining his health, he irrigated wheat, corn, hay, and a vegetable garden, and built a “grout” farmhouse at Deer Creek Mesa. John and Annie Williamson named their farmstead “Glen Plym” after their hometown, Plymouth, England. In the 1880s, they erected several tent houses on their property as lodging for tuberculosis invalids. In 1917, the Williamsons sold 27½ acres to the Denver Mountain Parks Department.¹⁰⁰ The Glen Plym ranch house still remains at 12393 Buckhorn.

North Fork

Several ranches operated in the North Fork vicinity.

⁹⁵ Moynihan and Waters, 108-110.

⁹⁶ Lamb School is now owned and maintained by the Sampson Community Club.

⁹⁷ Bentley, 149.

⁹⁸ Moynihan and Waters, 102.

⁹⁹ Moynihan and Waters, 69-70.

¹⁰⁰ Moynihan and Waters, 76-77.

Corbin/Butterfield Ranch

The Butterfield Ranch at 23202 Resort Creek Road is located at the heads of Last Resort and West Resort creeks. The ranch began as the homestead of Harvey L. Corbin, who built a ranch house in 1910, now gone, and expanded the ranch by acquiring several adjacent homesteads. The present ranch house was made from a log schoolhouse and another cabin; a second schoolhouse possibly remains on the property. The Butterfields purchased the ranch around the 1940s and raised trout in the ponds above Sphinx Park from 1947 to 1953; this hatchery operation was move to Elk Creek when a water shortage developed. In 1962, the Camp Fire Girls purchased 320 acres from the Butterfields, at 22511 Resort Creek, east of the ranch, using it as “Camp Kotami.”¹⁰¹ Now privately owned and renamed Resort Creek Ranch, it appears to have no historic buildings.

Swan Hereford Ranch (5JF189.6, in North Fork NRHD)

The Swan Hereford Ranch lies along the North Fork between Buffalo Creek and Pine. It was homesteaded in the 1870s by Englishman Jonathon Higginson and his wife Ida.¹⁰² In the early 1900s, the ranch was owned by Kennedy and Callison, who sold it to D. D. Lewis about 1922. Lewis built the large barn close to present-day County Road 126. From 1925 to 1932, Lewis ran about 300 cows on the adjacent National Forest lands and raised American Saddle Breed horses. The ranch had a contract to sell milk to the (Civilian Conservation Corps) CCC camp at Buffalo Creek. Val Swan of Denver bought the ranch in 1947. Around 1977, the property sold to Mr. Windegard. In the 1980s, it was acquired by a group of Denver businessmen and is preserved today by private ownership. Hay is grown and harvested, and horses are raised in the picturesque river valley.

Pine Valley Ranch (5JF383, SR)

Pine Valley Ranch west of present-day Pine was homesteaded in the 1880s by H. W. Hildebrand and Thomas Busher. Hildebrand and Busher ran cattle, cut timber, and harvested ice. In 1925, Chicago millionaire W. A. Baehr acquired the property and built a stone lodge designed by noted Denver architect Jacques J. B. Benedict. This property was acquired by Jefferson County Open Space in 1986.

Green Mountain Ranch (5JF193, NR)

Green Mountain Ranch southwest of Buffalo Creek was homesteaded circa 1871. In 1895, Edwin Eugene Culver established a timber pre-emption nearby and built a ranch house, outbuildings, and corrals. The Culver family raised cattle on the open range in the Pike National Forest. The ranch remained in the family, operated by Culver’s daughter, Ethel Culver Meyers, until her death in the 1890s. The 1895 ranch house and carriage barn are the only two original buildings remaining on the property. Many of the original outbuildings were razed during construction of County Road 126.¹⁰³

Cultural Resource Types

Ranch complex, farmhouse, barn, windmill, outbuilding, corral, feedlot, stock pond, stock trail, fence row

¹⁰¹ Bentley, 155 – 161.

¹⁰² Lombard, 21.

¹⁰³ Jefferson County Place Names Directory, “Green Mountain/Culver Ranch.”

Granges

Granges were an integral part of ranching and farming throughout Jefferson County and elsewhere in the United States. In 1867, eastern American farmers established the Order of Patrons of Husbandry to improve economic factors that hindered profitable agriculture. Commonly known as granges, local sections of this organization encouraged co-operative efforts among farmers and ranchers.

Through collective bargaining, granges could purchase agricultural tools, implements, and commodities in volume. Some granges agreed upon fixed sales prices for agricultural goods. For example, the Clear Creek Valley Grange entered into an agreement with the Littleton and Lower Boulder Granges not to sell wheat for less than two and a half cents per pound or beef for under three cents per pound.

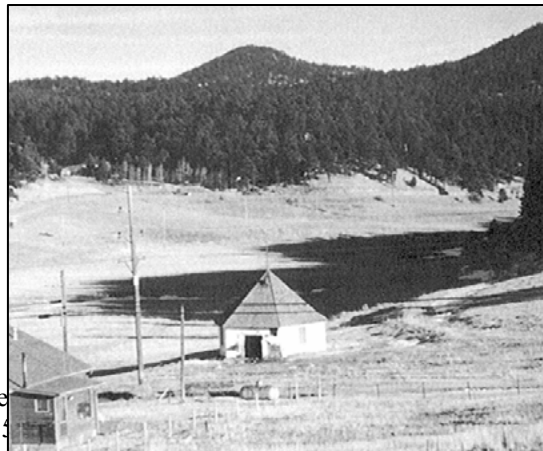
Colorado's granges originated first as Farmers' Clubs. Ten were established in 1872 and 1873: Greeley, Clear Creek Valley, Bear Creek, Wheat Ridge, Denver, Lower Boulder, Bergen Park, Ralston, Littleton, and Cherry Creek. These Farmers' Clubs became the state's first granges, applying for grange charters in 1873. Within one year, 32 more granges had been organized and the Colorado Territorial Grange (today the Colorado State Grange) created.¹⁰⁴

Granges played an important role in improving the farm economy and farm life. Concerned with education of farmers' children, the Colorado State Grange lobbied to improve farm-to-market roads and to establish and fund a state agricultural college at Fort Collins. Grange members served on the State Board of Agriculture, established by the Colorado legislature in 1877. Granges helped establish mail delivery in rural areas and organized mutual fire insurance and auto insurance companies for their members. They also provided an important outlet for socialization to rural farmers and ranchers, and grange halls became community centers hosting dances, meetings, and gatherings.

Grange memberships and influence fluctuated through the 1900s. The number of members peaked at 11,919 in 1919 and again at 12,000 after World War II. As agricultural activity declined in the state, many granges closed, while others became community associations. A total of 492 granges were formed during the first century of the Colorado State Grange (1874 – 1974). Today, most of these are dormant.¹⁰⁵

Jefferson County granges demonstrate the importance of agriculture to the local economy. A number of granges still operate in the twenty-first century, serving as community organizations. Several grange buildings remain today in Jefferson County cities and in the unincorporated county.

Urmston Grange at Shaffer's Crossing on U.S. 285. Now vacant, the hexagon-form building also once served as a school. Photo by Milly Roeder.



1874 - 1975. Denver: The Grange, ca. 1975. *State Grange History*, 22

, 366-381. *History, prado*

Cultural Resource Types

Grange buildings

Grange	Address	Status
Applewood Grange	North of Applewood subdivision	Private residence
Clear Creek Valley Grange, #4	5665 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada	Contains a theater
Enterprise Grange #25, (5JF1713, SR)	7203 Simms, Arvada	Still functioning
* Rockland School/Genesee Grange #219	24100 U.S. 40, Golden	Owned by Jeffco R-1 District and leased to Genesee Grange since 1955. Serves as a community center
* Golden Gate Grange #4	Golden Gate Canyon Road, Golden	Still functioning, serves as a community center
* Lochmond Grange/Fairmount Grade School	16600 West 50th, Golden	Now a Lutheran Church
Maple Grove Grange, #154	3130 Youngfield, Wheat Ridge	Still functioning, serves as a community center
* Pleasant Park Grange, #156, (5JF972, SR)	22551 Pleasant Park Road, Conifer	Still functioning, occupies Genesee School. Now serves as a community center
* Urmston Grange	U.S. 285, Shaffer's Crossing	Vacant
Westminster Grange #184	3935 West 73rd, Westminster	Status unknown
Wheat Ridge Grange, #155	3850 High Court, Wheat Ridge	Status unknown
* Wild Rose Grange #160	N. Turkey Creek, Conifer vicinity	Still functioning, occupies Hodgson School. Now serves as a community center

***located in unincorporated Jefferson County**

Extractive Industries

Jefferson County's natural resources supported a variety of industries, but unlike bordering counties, only small amounts of precious metals were found. Instead, primary and secondary mineral commodities have been coal, claystone, quarry rock, and sand and gravel. These were produced from plutonic, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks and their weathering products. Placer gold, copper, feldspar, and zeolites have been produced in minor quantities, and uranium to a greater extent.

Vast forests of pine, fir, and spruce created a thriving logging industry in the central and southwestern mountains of Colorado. Completion of railroads through Jefferson County, timber harvesting in the National Forests, and twentieth-century construction of summer residences and tourist cabins extended the logging industry into the mid-1900s. Forest depletion finally curtailed this activity.

Mining and Quarrying, 1860s – 1950

Coal mining was an important Golden area industry into the 1950s. The northern two-thirds of the Foothills District of the Denver Basin Coal Region is located in Jefferson County.¹⁰⁶ Local coal heated homes, fueled railroads, and powered ore processing mills built at Golden on Clear Creek. Coal was first discovered in 1859, near Coal Creek 14 miles north of Golden. Murphy Mine on Ralston Creek was an early operation. The White Ash, Loveland, Boss, Pittsburgh, Black Diamond, and other mines operated at Golden in the 1880s. Northeast of Morrison, the Bluebird/Satanic Mine operated from 1872 into the 1930s, near the West Alameda Parkway overpass and C-470.

Coal mining occurred at Leyden from 1901 into the 1950s. Mining took place in the gulch that lies east-west along Leyden Road (West 82nd Avenue), east of Highway 93. Michael, Martin, and Patrick Leyden first discovered coal in this area in the late 1860s. The Leyden brothers developed a coal mine and delivered coal by oxen to Golden and Denver,



The townsite of Leyden is the most visible evidence of coal mining at Leyden. There also scattered remnants of coal mine tailings piles near former shafts and the remnant fill of the D&NW railroad.

selling it at three dollars a ton. In 1902, the Leyden Coal Mining Company was formed by Charles J. Hughes, Jr., Albert Smith, and Clyde Turnbull. The D&NW railroad shipped coal from Leyden to generate power for the Denver Tramway Company at the east edge of

¹⁰⁶ S. M. Del Rio, editor, *Colorado Mineral Resources Board - Mineral Resources of Colorado*, Denver: Publishers Press, 1960, 169.

Denver.¹⁰⁷ The mining company constructed the company town of Leyden, which today consists of a collection of small frame dwellings and the Leyden Community Hall.

A coal mine was developed at Tindale in 1891 to provide coal that was mined for the Denver, Lakewood & Golden Railroad. In 1892, the DL&G extended a spur to Tindale, which was located near Ralston Creek north of Golden. A flood washed out the railroad track in 1896, and it was never rebuilt.

Other mineral products of the area include minor quantities of copper, feldspar, mica, beryl, gypsum, quartz, and gold. Copper was produced at the Malachite mine, three miles west of Morrison, located on 80 acres along Bear Creek in the Mount Vernon Mining District. The mine had two tunnels 305 feet in length and a 150-foot shaft. It produced about \$35,000 in ore. According to the Jefferson County Place Names Directory, another copper operation was the FM&D Copper Mine, west of Idledale. The vein was discovered in 1866 and periodically worked until 1917. A deposit of gypsum near Morrison was used to make plaster of Paris. Some tin mining is believed to have taken place on the Lilly Karsch Ranch in the late 1800s and Shield M. Ranch in the early 1900s, both in Deer Creek Canyon.¹⁰⁸

Lode gold mining appears to have been minimal, although placer gold production was locally important along Clear Creek in the 1800s. Some gold prospecting and mining took place in 1899 and 1900 at Sampson in the Deer Creek Mining District. The expansive Deer Creek District included Critchell, Deer Creek, Centerville, Phillipsburg, Conifer, Lamb, Symes, Dawson, and other villages.¹⁰⁹

About six miles west of Pine, the Saxonia Milling, Smelting, and Refining works opened in 1880 and served a brief flurry of iron, copper, and lead mining. The mill site consisted of a crusher, stamp mills, roasting furnace and blast furnace, according to a map drawn in 1960 by present property owner Eleanor Colwell. Adjacent to Saxonia, Crossons consists of a main dwelling that served as the residence for the manager of the Saxonia operation and several one-room cabins. After the brief spurt of mining and processing activity ended, the buildings served as a fishing camp for sportsmen arriving on the DSP&P.

Uranium mining became an economical mineral commodity in the mid-1900s. For a short period, the Schwartzwalder Mine, northwest of Golden, was one of the most productive uranium deposits in the U.S. It was developed in the 1950s by Fred Schwartzwalder, and sold in the 1960s to Denver-Golden Corporation. Ore was processed by the Cotter Corporation in Canon City, Colorado and by Vitro Chemical Corporation in Salt Lake City, Utah. Located near the edge of present-day White Ranch Park, the mine was valued at \$13.65 million in 1985.¹¹⁰ Mine operation has been intermittent since then. Uranium was also mined near Kassler Creek west of Chatfield Reservoir and at a site midway up Golden Gate Canyon.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen Schoening Aiken, "The Leyden Mine Fire: Prelude, Disaster and Aftermath," *Historically Jeffco*, Golden: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Winter 1994, Vol. 7, No.2, 12-19.

¹⁰⁸ Moynihan and Waters, 69 - 70.

¹⁰⁹ Kaye R. Merrill, *Extracts from Rocky Mountain Reveille, Critchell, Jefferson County, Colorado, 1899 - 1900*. Lakewood: Foothills Genealogy Society of Colorado, Inc., 1989.

¹¹⁰ Jefferson County Place Names Directory, Schwartzwalder Mine. Robert F. Bond, "The Land Persists: The History of White Ranch Park," *Historically Jeffco*, Golden: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Summer 1990, Vol. 3, No.1, 3..

Extractive Industries

The first producing oil well in the county was Pallaoro No. 1 in the Soda Lake field east of Morrison. The Soda Lake field was the only active field in the county and had a cumulative production of 15,275 barrels by 1960.¹¹¹



**Loading structure for claystone extracted from the adjacent Leyden Ridge, just east of Highway 93 and north of Leyden Creek.
Photograph by Claire Lanier.**

Jefferson County has been an important producer of clay, sand, and gravel. Clay pits along the Dakota Hogbacks at Golden and Morrison have supported brick and ceramics production from the 1800s into the 2000s. Golden industries have used this material for manufacture of brick, fire-clay bricks, tile, ceramic porcelains, and architectural elements such as window lintels and sills. The Jefferson County Place Names Directory reports that the Flintlock clay mine forms the scar running the length of the east side of the large hogback ridge north of Golden. It is owned as School Trust property by the State of Colorado, and has been leased to various clay mining entities since the 1890s. During the 1990s, it was operated by the Robinson Brick Company. It is one of the county's longest operating mines. Claystone pits operated on other Jefferson County hogbacks into the mid 1900s.

Gravel and sand deposits have been exploited for many years especially from the valley floors of Bear and Clear creeks and from the South Platte River and its North Fork. Other deposits are located on Rocky Flats, a very large alluvial plain. A number of gravel quarries also have been developed in the Jefferson County mountains. These materials have served as road surfacing, concrete aggregates, riprap, and other industrial uses. Former gravel pits along Clear Creek and the South Platte River have been filled with water and are now used as reservoirs.

Stone quarrying was an important industry in Golden and Morrison in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Dakota Hogback that lies from north of Golden to south of Morrison contained substantial deposits of sandstone and limestone, some marble, and several adjacent clay beds. Local sandstone was used in several Morrison buildings. Limestone from Dakota Hogback quarries was used for both building and industrial purposes. The quarry stone went into several buildings, including the Central City Opera House and trim on the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. Golden smelters and ore mills consumed the material as lime. Granite quarries have operated in Clear Creek Canyon, Bear Creek Canyon, Mount Vernon Canyon, and other mountain locations.

Several stone quarries operated along the North Fork and South Fork. Red granite dimension stone, used in many buildings in Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska, was quarried from the Platte Canyon quarry near Buffalo Creek.¹¹² The Argyle Quarry below Buffalo Creek operated by Seerie and Gettis and the quarries on the South Platte accessed by the

¹¹¹ *Colorado Mineral Resources Board - Mineral Resources of Colorado*, 171.

¹¹² *Colorado Mineral Resources Board - Mineral Resources of Colorado*, 169 - 170.

Nighthawk Spur both provided materials for construction of Cheesman Dam.¹¹³ A quarry below Foxton, owned by Pete Bossie, provided stone blocks for the State Capitol building.¹¹⁴

There were several smaller quarries elsewhere in Jefferson County. A small quarry opened at Glencoe in 1884 on Ralston Creek and was served by a branch of Denver & Middle Park Railroad. The quarry was abandoned in 1920 and inundated by Ralston Reservoir. Sandstone from the quarry was used in building, and limestone used for making plaster and mortar.¹¹⁵ The pegmatite quarries near Swede and Kerr gulches produced white quartz, possibly used in construction of the Brook Forest Inn, houses at Stanley Park, and other buildings in the Evergreen and Kittredge area.

The Dakota hogback north of Morrison also yielded dinosaur fossils, excavated after initial discoveries in 1877 by Arthur Lakes, geology professor at Colorado School of Mines. The fossil deposits excited national interest and triggered the “dinosaur wars” between two noted, competitive paleontologists —Othniel Charles Marsh from Yale University and Edward Drinker Cope with the Hayden Survey.¹¹⁶ Most of the fossils were taken East and exhibited at Peabody Museum in Connecticut and other institutions. Today called Dinosaur Ridge, the hogback has been designated a National Natural Landmark (5JF951). It is owned by and maintained as Jefferson County Open Space.

Cultural Resource Types

Mineral exploration: hand-dug prospect pit, power-shovel trencher, bulldozer cut, drill hole

Mine development: mineshaft, headframe, hoist, shaft house, open pit, ore dump, power house, generator, blacksmith shop, assay laboratory, company store, company town

Mineral extraction: arrastra, smelter, mill, stamp mill, dredge, flume, quarry scar, quarry structure, quarry railroad spur, fossil bed

Gravel pit

Oil well

Physical Sites

The Jefferson County Place Names Directory identified 277 sites related to mineral extraction. These included 167 mines, 29 quarries, and 35 gravel or clay pits. Mine and quarry sites are difficult to identify or evaluate because many are on private land in remote locations. An important resource associated with mining is the company town of Leyden.

¹¹³ Dorothy Lombard, *Buffalo Beginnings and Through the Years, The People and Palace of Buffalo Creek Colorado*, self published, 1990, 9.

¹¹⁴ Bentley, 116.

¹¹⁵ Lutz, *More Than Gold*, 5; Ramstetter, 38.

¹¹⁶ Kohl, Micheal F. and John S. McIntosh, *Discovering Dinosaur Wars in the Old West, The Field Journals of Arthur Lakes*, Washington, DC.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997, 1, 2.

Logging, 1860s – 1950

Jefferson County's vast timber stands supported logging and lumber production, which became important industries until forest reserves were exhausted in the early 1900s. Town building along the Front Range created a demand for lumber products. Timber products included mine supports, railroad ties, telegraph poles, fence posts, and fuel wood. Timber was also burnt to produce charcoal. Logging in the Golden area sustained a paper mill, three saw mills, and a sash, door, and blind factory in that city in the 1860s and 1870s.¹¹⁷ Much of this came from the north slope of Genesee Mountain.

Logging consisted of sawing down trees and trimming them by hand. Logs were taken to market by eight-horse wagon or hauled to a saw mill. At one time or another, saw mills operated along most of the county's major creeks. Many mountain ranchers operated small saw mills. Early saw mills were operated in creek gulches with a round, saw-toothed blade powered by a water wheel. A few were steam-powered saws, which also relied upon water channeled from the creek and used in the boiler. In the 1920s, portable, gasoline-powered saw mills were introduced.

Railroad transportation greatly accelerated logging and lumber milling. The DSP&P opened up timber reserves in south Jefferson County, transporting logs and lumber products to Denver markets. During the 1880s, an average of 30 rail cars a day of lumber were shipped from Buffalo, until by 1890 almost all timber within 15 miles of the town had been removed.¹¹⁸ The Colorado Central Railroad also loaded logs and lumber at Beaver Brook in Clear Creek Canyon. Railroads were also important contributors to the logging industry, consuming enormous amounts of native timber in the form of railroad ties and bridge materials.

Several mountain towns relied upon the logging industry. Buffalo Creek flourished as a logging center on the North Fork. In 1878, the town had 1,500 residents, ten saw mills, several boarding houses, a blacksmith, mercantile shops, a meat market, saloons, and various single dwellings. Most of the residents were loggers. The Morrison Timber Company ran the Morrison Saw Mill, one of the largest operations in the area. John W. Green, who ran the mercantile store at Buffalo Creek, operated a saw mill that produced railroad ties for the Denver Tramway Company.

Logging at the Sirois residence in Buffalo Creek, circa 1920. Photograph from *Buffalo Beginnings*.



¹¹⁷ Dark, vii.

¹¹⁸ Poor, 419.

Evergreen's early growth stemmed from its location at the head of the Bear Creek Wagon Road, built to haul lumber from the Evans Ranch west of Evergreen downstream to Morrison. The 1887 Evergreen business directory listed five saw mills on Bear and Cub creeks and a population of 200. Pine also grew as a lumber town. Meanwhile, temporary camps also provided shelter for lumberjacks working in rural forest locations.

The abundance of lumber influenced settlement and development in western Jefferson County. Saw mills encouraged development by supplying materials for year-round residences, summer dwellings, tourist cabins, resort lodges, barns, and out-buildings. The mills also hastened the transition from log to woodframe construction in the late 1800s and early 1900s. From the 1880s into the early 1900s, local mills provided materials for residences and summer cottages built at Evergreen, Buffalo Creek, and Pine. Although logging had declined substantially by the 1920s, some local lumber also went into summer cabins and cottages built at Kittredge, Idledale, Sphinx Park, Wandcrest, Indian Hills, and around Evergreen.

Many mountain ranchers operated sawmills, clearing timber to create grazing land and to supplement ranch income. These included the Berrien ranches around Evergreen, the Granzella Ranch on South Turkey Creek, which provided building products for summer cabins at Indian Hills, and Jess Ray's sawmill at Wamblee Gulch. Rancher Charles Welch operated several charcoal kilns on his ranch on Shadow Mountain that produced charcoal from timbering on his property. The Tim Gill Mill operating on Wigwam Creek provided lumber for the 1915 construction of the lodge building at the Flying G Ranch located within the Pike National Forest. Sawmills also operated at Arnett's Ranch at Critchell, Black Mountain, Deer Creek Mesa, Eden Park at Indian Hills, Pleasant Park, and Wellington Lake.

Saw mills contributed to the county's early development by employing local workers and by contributing to ranching income. Colorado lumberjacks were often immigrants. Lumberjacks in the Jefferson County mountains included French Canadian, Swedish, and Norwegian immigrants. Many of them settled in the area. Logging and lumbering were also important elements of the agricultural economy. Ranchers and farmers often operated small saw mills to supplement agricultural income by selling lumber products. "Millwaste," the bark-covered outer layer removed from logs, became popular as an exterior siding for Rustic style residences.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) played an influential role in the county's logging and lumbering industry. This branch of the Department of Agriculture grew from public concern about the alarming depletion of the country's vast forests. The forests were dwindling through overcutting, overgrazing, mining, erosion, and fires. In 1871, a forest fire at Peshtigo, Wisconsin killed 1,500 people and burned nearly 1.3 million acres. This incident prompted the organization of the American Forestry Association. The 1891 Forest Reserve Act created public forests, including the White River Plateau Timberland Reserve in Colorado, now the White River National Forest, and set up the National Forest Commission to oversee them.¹¹⁹

In the early 1900s, the Forest Commission was replaced by the Division of Forestry in the U.S. Agriculture Department. It was funded to plant trees, conduct research in forestry and forest products, and fight fires. During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed thousands of youths to plant trees and to develop camping facilities and hiking trails. The 1934 Taylor Grazing Act attempted to prevent overgrazing and soil

¹¹⁹ Michael Frome. *The Forest Service*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1971, 11.

deterioration on public lands. In the mid-1900s, the Forest Service adopted a multiple-use approach to forest management that balances watershed and forest conservation, recreational use, wildlife management, and grazing, timber, and mineral leases to private entities. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 provided further guidance on managing the forests.

Logging in south Jefferson County was furthered through timber leases in the 1.1 million-acre Pike National Forest, which extends east, south and west from Jefferson County into Douglas, Teller, and Park counties. In 1892, Pikes Peak, Plum Creek and South Platte Timber reserves were added to the Pike National Forest. Logging in the county decreased drastically by the early 1900s, because most available forests had been clear-cut. The Forest Service was instrumental in planting trees in many over-cut areas, using CCC work crews. The Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service contained 16 National Forests and seven National Grasslands by the 1970s, totaling some 22 million acres.¹²⁰

By the early 1900s, the forests had been nearly depleted and the county's logging and lumbering industry was declining. Federal acquisition and conservation of forests limited logging activity. The 1937 closure of the DSP&P line along the North Fork hindered transportation of lumber products. Demand for lumber decreased during the 1930s and early 1940s, as construction dwindled during the Great Depression and World War II. Meanwhile, national improvements in transportation enabled wood products to be shipped into Colorado from other sources, such as the Pacific Northeast.

Cultural Resource Types

Logging road, cutting site, foundation or other remnant of saw mill

Physical Sites

Physical sites associated with milling and logging activity are few. Historic lumber roads are scattered throughout the western mountains. Many were abandoned long ago. Some have been converted to hiking trails, such as the road over Squaw Pass between Idaho Springs and the Evans Ranch. The USFS maintains a work camp at 18046 County Road 126 at Buffalo Creek. This facility dates to the 1930s and reflects the CCC activity in the area. The sawmill, which operated west of Buffalo Creek near the Park County line, burned in June 2000, in the Hi-Meadow forest fire. The mill has been put back into production with free-standing equipment and no building.

¹²⁰ Frome, 45; Ryan, 33; Freeman, Orville and Michael Frome, *The National Forests of America*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968, 175.

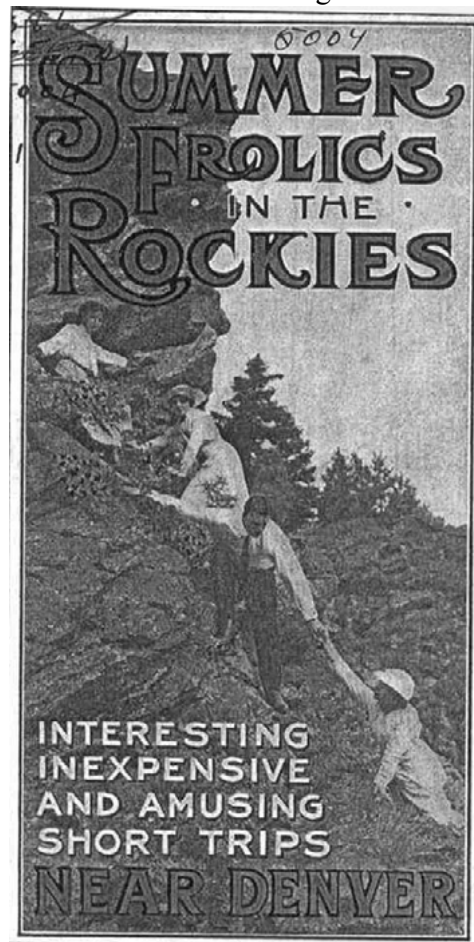
Tourism

Tourism has played an important role in the development of Colorado's mountain regions since the first days of settlement and exploration. Early reports by trappers, explorers, and adventurers stimulated interest in the area. The 1859 – 1861 gold rush created tremendous publicity for the region. Early travelers who ventured into the territory, such as Englishwoman Isabella Bird in 1873, camped in tents, or rented accommodations in boomtown hotels or at private residences and ranches. Westward expansion of railroads boosted the tourism potential of the American West. Railroads provided efficient transportation into the Rocky Mountains, and railroad companies aggressively advertised the region's scenic attractions. Increased accessibility encouraged towns to market their touristic appeal, and investors developed new resorts throughout the Colorado mountains.

The tourism potential of Jefferson County's western mountains was recognized from the time of settlement, although inefficient transportation discouraged visitors. Evergreen was one of the first tourist areas. Summer residents included the affluent Denverites occupying summer ranches, and visitors bunking in primitive tourist cabins. People reached Evergreen by several wagon or stagecoach routes: through Mount Vernon Canyon and Bergen Park; up Bear Creek Canyon; and by other lesser traveled roads. In the 1870s, construction of the Bear Creek Wagon Road from Morrison improved access, enabling visitors to travel by stage up the canyon from the Morrison railhead.

The DSP&P Railroad, built along the North Fork of the South Platte River in 1878, spurred development of several summer resorts. Summer residents built cabins and cottages, and arrived by railroad to stay for several days, weeks, or entire season. Day visitors also rode the railroad up the canyon to enjoy scenery, fishing, picnicking, taking photographs, and picking wildflowers.

The invention of the automobile accelerated development of the county's western mountains as a summer resort area in the twentieth century. Personal auto transportation allowed travelers to visit places previously accessible only by horse-drawn vehicles. People came from Denver and the Midwest seeking refuge from summer heat in the cool, forested mountains. "Colorado is essentially a touring state," William J. Barker, president of the Denver Motor Club, declared in 1916. Popularity of the automobile, together with road improvements and development of the Denver Mountain Parks, encouraged real estate sales and the mountain home boom that began



The Tourist Bureau for the City and County of Denver promoted the many scenic and man-made attractions in the nearby mountains.

in 1919. Hundreds of summer residences were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, ranging from elaborate stone lodges to log cabins and woodframe cottages.

During this time, Evergreen gained a national reputation as a summer resort. Commercial lodges, such as Troutdale-in-the-Pines, attracted wealthy vacationers and encouraged construction of summer cottages in the Evergreen vicinity. The town of Kittredge was developed during the 1920s downstream from Evergreen as a trout fishing resort on Bear Creek. Idledale, also on Bear Creek, began as a summer settlement and expanded as visitors camped beside the creek, patronized local businesses, and built summer cottages of their own. In the 1920s, construction of the Denver Motor Club's clubhouse in Idledale promoted auto travel through the Denver Mountain Parks area and spurred growth at Idledale. For a while, the road up Bear Creek Canyon was called "Motor Club Road."

Tourism in western Jefferson County peaked in the 1920s, after which several factors contributed to the industry's slow but steady decline. The Great Depression and World War II each curtailed pleasure travel. The invention of air conditioning made summer heat more tolerable for mid-western residents. After the war, air travel and construction of interstate highways allowed Coloradoans to vacation more easily outside the state. The ski industry that developed in the central mountains at mid-century attracted out-of-state visitors who had previously vacationed in mountain cabins. (Skiing is described in **Outdoor Recreation** in this report.)

As highway construction improved travel between the mountains and the Denver metropolitan area, a number of seasonal dwellings were converted for year-round use by residents commuting to jobs in the urban area.

This summer cabin at Sphinx Park is an example of hundreds that were built in western Jefferson County during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.



Railroad Tourism, 1878 – 1937

Operation of the DSP&P Railroad enhanced tourism in western Jefferson County. Completed to Buffalo Creek in 1878, the line encouraged growth of summer residential communities along the North Fork, including Pine, Glenelk, Buffalo Creek, Ferndale, Foxton, Long View, and Riverview. Several hotels accommodated summer visitors. The South Platte Hotel at South Platte, Blue Jay Inn, and Hudson Hotel in Buffalo Creek, and Prosser Hotel in Pine are the remaining lodgings formerly associated with railroad tourism. The DSP&P expanded its passenger service by offering day trips for Denver residents. The railroad ran wild flower and fishing excursions, which in turn encouraged mountain real estate sales. To entice riders, the railroad published promotional literature, hiring William Henry Jackson around 1890 to photograph views of Dome Rock and other scenic sites along the North Fork. (Also discussed in **Railroads** in this report.)

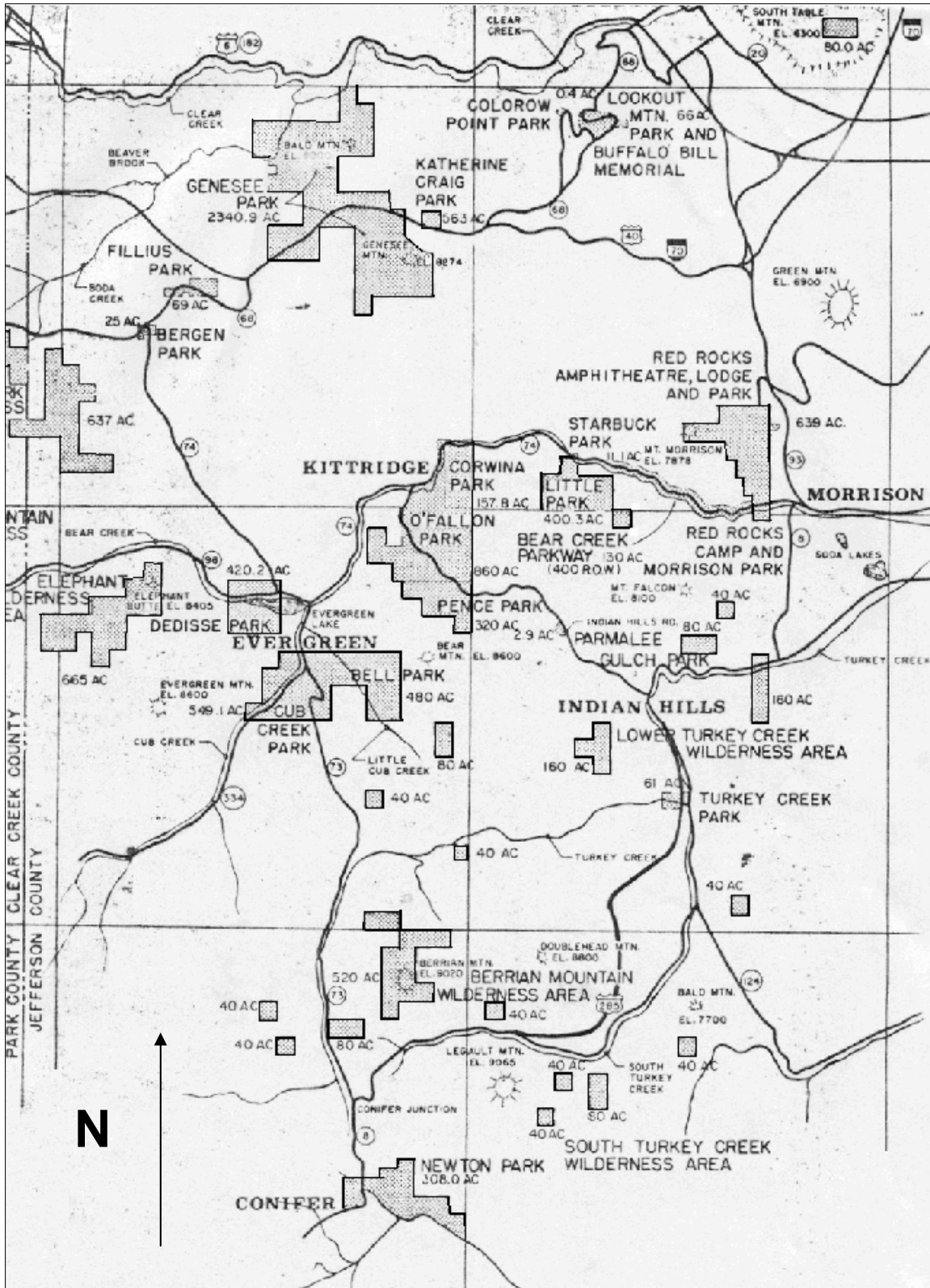
Railroads and interurban railways brought visitors to Jefferson County's foothill communities too. Denverites visited the Garden of the Titans Park, later renamed Red Rocks Park, north of Morrison, privately owned by John Brisben Walker in the early 1900s. People picnicked, fished, and rode the funicular railway to the summit of Mount Morrison. Visitors rode railroads and interurban streetcars to Golden for hiking, picnicking, and for dancing in the pavilion atop Castle Rock. They ascended Lookout Mountain and South Table Mountain, first on burro-back then aboard the Lookout Mountain Funicular and Castle Rock Scenic Railway that ran in the 1910s.

Cultural Resource Types

Summer residential dwelling, resort hotel, funicular railroad scar

Physical Sites

Pine, Glenelk, Buffalo Creek, Ferndale, Foxton, Long View, and Riverview
South Platte Hotel at South Platte, Blue Jay Hotel and Hudson Hotel at Buffalo
Creek, and Prosser Hotel in Pine
Pavilion site on Castle Rock, South Table Mountain



Denver Mountain Parks, Jefferson County Open Space Parks and U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Areas

Automobile Tourism, 1913 – 1950

The availability of the automobile as personal transportation in the early twentieth century greatly expanded mountain tourism in Jefferson County, Colorado, and elsewhere in the American West. People could drive to destinations formerly accessible only by horse-drawn conveyance. This substantially increased the places that could be marketed as scenic attractions, recreation sites, and visitor lodging. Initially, automobiles were owned primarily by affluent Americans. In the early 1910s, Denver's elite began motoring over the rough mountain roads to their summer ranches and lodges on upper Bear Creek. Within a decade, auto manufacturing efficiencies and the post World War I economic boom had brought automobile ownership within financial reach of middle-class travelers.

As automobile use increased, the demand for better roads grew. The Good Roads Association and other organizations lobbied the legislature for funding to improve roads around Colorado. Beginning around 1907, convict work crews from the State Prison in Canon City improved various state roads, including the Bear Creek Canyon road from Morrison to Evergreen. By 1916, the Denver Motor Club had "signboarded" the road from Conifer to Bailey and touted Elk Creek Falls north of Shaffer's Crossing as an ideal spot for a motor trip. With increased automobile accessibility, western Jefferson County became Denver's playground.

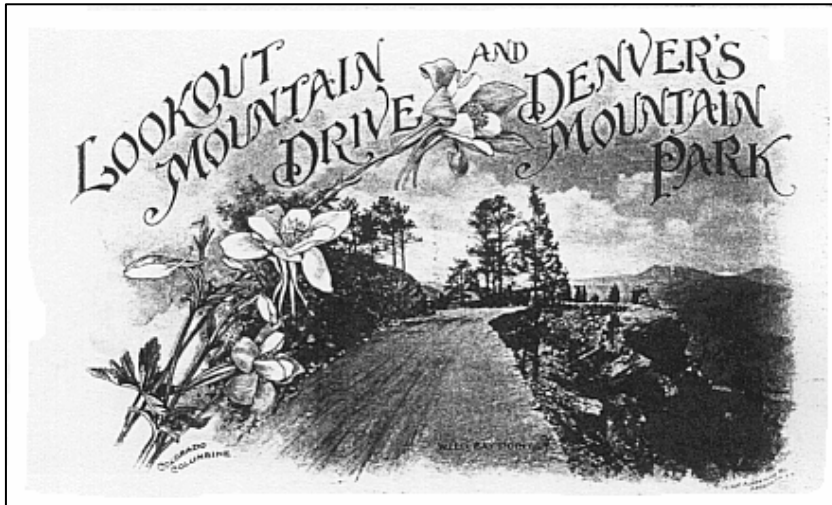
The Denver Mountain Parks (DMP) were both a medium and a manifestation of the tremendous increase in tourism made possible by the automobile. A mountain park system was first proposed to several Denver civic groups by entrepreneur John Brisben Walker in 1910. The mountain parks would conserve views and vistas, improve roads, increase visitors, and promote real estate sales in the mountains west of Denver. The Denver Chamber of Commerce and Denver Real Estate Exchange quickly recognized the potential civic benefit and commercial profit of the park proposal. They lobbied the City of Denver and the Colorado and U.S. legislatures for funds to acquire mountain properties for park development. In 1912, a charter amendment was submitted to the voters and passed. It provided for a one-half mill levy to acquire and improve mountain lands.¹²¹

The City hired Frederic Law Olmsted, Jr. in 1912, to provide initial planning for the proposed mountain parks. Olmsted's father, a renowned landscape architect, had designed New York City's Central Park and other city parks around the country. The idea of parks and parkways originated in the U.S. with Olmsted, Sr.'s, design of a Boston park system, "The Emerald Necklace." Olmsted, Jr. identified critical view sheds in the western Jefferson County mountains, and carefully planned roadways, aligned to maximize views. His plan also identified private and public properties for future acquisition and development as park land. Genesee Park opened on August 27, 1913 as the first mountain park, accessed by Lariat Trail up Lookout Mountain built that same year. The November 1913 issue of *Denver Municipal Facts* extolled the benefits of the proposed park system: "In connection with the Civic Center and its system of radiating boulevards, the mountain parks will form a climax of beauty and an opportunity for pleasure unequalled in the world." The Denver Mountain Park system expanded to 31 named parks and 16 unnamed parcels consisting of approximately 13,488 acres in Jefferson County (Winter Park ski area in Grand County and Echo Lake Park in Clear Creek County are also part of the DMP system). The park system was connected to Denver by West Colfax Avenue, Old Morrison Road, West 44th Avenue, and Alameda Parkway.

¹²¹ *Rocky Mountain Tourist News*, August 3, 1939.

Development of the parks coincided with the City Beautiful movement and other civic improvement impulses sweeping the country in the early twentieth century. The Progressive Movement began around 1900 and lasted until World War I. The movement was furthered by Theodore Roosevelt's election as president in 1901, bringing about change in politics, business, and social welfare. State and federal legislation addressed political corruption, business monopolies and corporate trusts, taxation, child labor and worker safety, living conditions in city tenements, women's rights, and temperance.

The City Beautiful movement was inspired by the classically designed buildings exhibited at the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago. The movement advocated planned civic centers with classically designed architecture, landscaped parks and parkways, street cleaning, and other efforts to improve the urban environment. Denver's Civic Center was designed and developed beginning around 1910. Denver city leaders embraced the notion that beautification should include establishing a network of parks in the mountains west of Denver as well. Progressivists applauded the spiritual and emotional refreshment that city dwellers received from natural and landscaped settings. The Denver Mountain Park system exemplified key principles in urban planning. The Mountain Park proposal also coincided with the National Park movement, and followed an unsuccessful attempt to establish Mount Evans and its foothills as a National Park.



The City of Denver promoted the Denver Mountain Parks with various brochures. (Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Collection).

The Denver Mountain Parks were developed through the energy and creativity of several other visionary individuals. Mayor Speer encouraged the parks as part of his City Beautiful vision for Denver. Saco R. DeBoer, landscape architect for the City of Denver from the 1910s through the 1950s, provided landscape design. Denver Motor Club members helped promote improvement of mountain roads and lower Bear Creek Road became known as "Motor Club Road" in the 1920s. The organization built an elaborate stone clubhouse at Idledale, which burned down in 1938.¹²² George Cranmer, who owned the Singin' River Ranch on upper Bear Creek, influenced the park system during his 1935 – 1947 tenure as head of the Denver Parks Department.¹²³ Burnham Hoyt designed the acclaimed Red Rocks

¹²² Carole Lomond and Caroline Braun, "Joytown to Starbuck to Idledale," *Mountain Views*. Golden: View Publishing Company, Inc., 1996.

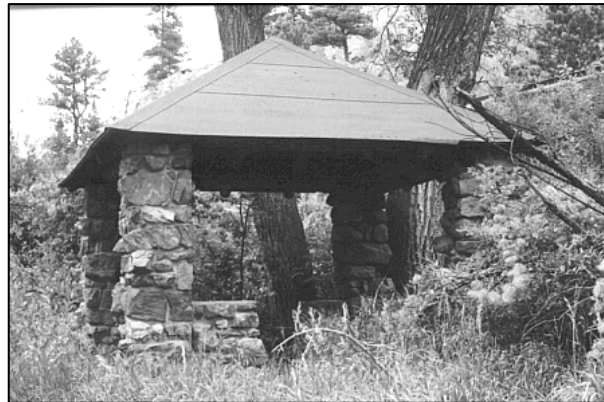
¹²³ Allen Young, "George Cranmer: Visionary Par Excellence," *Lakewood Sentinel City Edition*, October 24 – 31, 1984.

Amphitheater built in 1941. Denver's Tourist and Publicity Bureau extolled the city's proximity to the mountains and promoted the parks to tourists and travelers.

The Denver Mountain Parks brought hundreds of thousands of visitors to western Jefferson County. The City of Denver and its business community promoted the parks to serve conservation, recreation, and commercial objectives. Commercial touring companies offered four-hour rides in seven-passenger cars for \$4.00.¹²⁴ The parks spurred real estate sales and construction of summer homes in the adjacent area. Hundreds of summer residences were built from the 1910s and through the 1930s, ranging from one-room cabins to enormous private lodges.

Park visitors enjoyed scenic drives, picnicking, fishing, hiking, creek swimming, boating on Evergreen Lake, ice skating, and other mountain pleasures, just 45 minutes from Denver. The popular "Circle Tour," also called the Lariat Loop, scaled Lookout Mountain on Lariat Trail then proceeded through Genesee Park and Bergen Park to Evergreen. Motorists returned to Denver through lower Bear Creek Canyon (reference map at the beginning of this section). Travelers patronized local filling stations, lodging houses, restaurants, and commercial shops along the way.

Architect Jules Jacques Benois Benedict shaped the Denver Mountain Parks and the surrounding area through his design of rustic stone and log lodges and various other park structures and facilities. His designs included the Chief Hosa stone lodge, pavilion at Genesee Park, octagonal log lodge at Dedisse Park, and stone picnic shelters at Bergen Park, Dedisse Park, Filius Park, and Little Park (at Idledale). He also designed outside fireplaces, caretaker houses, pump houses, and pit latrines.



Rustic spring house in Starbucks Park at Idledale.

Benedict's influence extended into the Evergreen area, where he designed the Gates Chateau east of Kittredge and several private lodges on Upper Bear Creek. Benedict designed the two-story, octagonal log lodge at Echo Lake at the foot of Mount Evans in Clear Creek County. He also designed the Summer White House at Mount Falcon, which was never built. Benedict also designed many buildings outside of Jefferson County, including the stone St. Malo Chapel 20 miles south of Estes Park, the chapel at St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, and many private residences in Denver and Golden.

Through the 1930s, the Denver Mountain Parks provided employment in western Jefferson County. Park projects carried out through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided short-term jobs for over 1,000 people. Under the WPA, a New Deal program initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression, CCC workers made improvements in publicly owned parks across the country.

In the Denver Mountain Parks, workers built roads, picnic shelters, and fire pits, and they repaired the lower Bear Creek Canyon road following flooding. They rerouted the roadbed, built six stone retaining walls to raise the road above the creek, and constructed road cuts and pull-offs. CCC workers also constructed Red Rocks Amphitheater. Several CCC

¹²⁴ *Come Up to Colorado*, Denver: Denver Tourist & Publicity Bureau, circa 1920, 3-4.

work crews lodged at the complex on the west edge of Morrison (5JF442) and what is now Catherine Craig Park on U.S. 40 in Mount Vernon Canyon. The woodframe barracks, recreation hall with stage, kitchen, and garage became a Boy Scout Camp from 1943 to 1965, then was leased by the Girl Scouts from 1965 to 1995, and today is a Denver Mountain Park (5JF979).

Cultural Resource Types

Automobile court, pre-1950 filling station, rest stop, picnic shelter

Lodge, structure, and facilities in the Denver Mountain Parks

Roadside rest areas, water fountains, stone entrance gates and pillars,
stone guard rails

Physical Sites

Properties associated with automobile tourism in western Jefferson County include the Denver Mountain Parks, ruins of the Denver Motor Club, and the Questover Auto Court in Kittredge, a six-unit circa-1940 Pueblo Revival style auto court. The auto court has been rehabilitated as a commercial shopping complex with minimal alteration to the historic buildings.¹²⁵ The most significant properties associated with automobile tourism are the summer cabin subdivisions platted from 1900 through the 1930s, described later in this section.

**Former Questover Auto Court
in Kittredge, one of the most
intact pre-1951 tourist lodgings
in west Jeffco, now contains
small retail businesses.**



¹²⁵ “Questover Lodge” brochure, circa 1959.

Lodges, Resorts, and Ranches, 1870s – 1950

The Evergreen area was a favored location for large summer lodges, resorts, and ranches. These included both private residences and commercial properties. The area's accessibility and picturesque Bear Creek attracted visitors, summer home buyers, and investors.

Private Residences

Beginning in the late 1800s, individuals began building large summer homes near Evergreen. Upper Bear Creek, especially, became an enclave for wealthy Denver and Midwestern residents escaping the summer heat. Some people converted working cattle ranches to leisure use. Others hired architects to design elaborate dwellings.

Camp Neosho, now the Hiwan Homestead Museum, is one of the earliest private lodges in the Evergreen area (5JF195). Civil War widow Mary Neosho Williams and her daughter, Josepha, purchased the property in the 1880s. Mrs. Williams hired John "Jock" Spence, a local carpenter, to expand a log barn as her residence. Over the course of ten years, Spence enlarged the building into a 17-room Rustic style log dwelling. Josepha Williams studied medicine at Denver's Gross Medical College and graduated in 1889 as one of the state's first female doctors. "Dr. Jo" wed Charles Winfred Douglas, an Episcopalian canon and specialist in ecclesiastical music, in 1896. The Williams and Douglas families were instrumental in nurturing the spiritual and cultural life of the Evergreen community. Dr. and Mrs. Douglas also helped develop the Evergreen Music Conference Center complex (5JF177) on Bear Creek in Evergreen (discussed further in the **Evergreen Area** section of the *Reconnaissance Survey Report*).

When Dr. Jo died in 1938, Darst Buchanan bought the family residence and developed it as the Hiwan Ranch cattle operation. The Williams-Douglas residence and various other structures that Spence built on the property now make up the Hiwan Homestead, acquired by Jefferson County Open Space in 1974. The main residence is operated as a house museum.

Improved automobile access encouraged construction of several large private lodges on Upper Bear Creek above Evergreen in the early 1900s. By 1916, a Denver newspaper described the area as "fast becoming one of Denver's great show places."¹²⁶ Genevieve Phipps, the former wife of Senator Lawrence Phipps, constructed Greystone Lodge in 1916, designed by Maurice Briscoe and built by Jock Spence. The three-story stone manor occupied a 1,000-acre property and had a seven-bedroom servant house. The acreage was later subdivided. Paul and Margery Reed Mayo hired Benedict to design Rosedale Castle. George Cranmer and his wife Jean Chapell Cranmer built a summer home, Singin' River Ranch, operated as a guest ranch by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Poindexter in the 1950s.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ "Bear Creek Fast Becoming One of Denver's Great Show Places," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1916.

¹²⁷ Sternberg, 92, 102, 188.

The Bancroft and Gates families built summer homes along Bear Creek. In the 1870s, Dr. Frederick J. Bancroft bought 2,400 acres for a summer home and ranch. Bancroft was an early member of the Denver Medical Society and a president of the Colorado Historical Society. The Bancroft family donated their summer residence on Bear Creek in Evergreen to the Evergreen Conference Center in 1925.¹²⁸

**Bancroft Residence, donated
as part of the Evergreen
Conference Center.**



The large, Rustic style dwelling at 27630 State Highway 73 has log slab siding, placed at an angle on the porch wall, and a rustic stone chimney. The property is at the east edge of Evergreen above Bear Creek. The large lot features stone retaining walls.



27630 State Highway 73.

The Gates family built a summer residence on Bear Creek east of Kittredge. Designed by Benedict in English Tudor style, the large stone dwelling has steep cross gabling, half-timbered gable ends, and casement windows. The property is distinguished by its landscape design by Saco de Boer, landscape architect for the City of Denver, and his business partner Walter Pesman.¹²⁹ Two arched stone bridges cross the creek, which flows around the property in a horseshoe shape. Smaller stone dwellings were built as guest houses or as residences for the housekeeper, servant, and gardener.

¹²⁸ Sternberg, 48-49.

¹²⁹ Sternberg, 30.

Gates Chateau, east of Kittredge on Bear Creek, designed by Jacques J. B. Benedict.



The private lodges employed native stone and log and hand-crafted features. This design reflected the Arts and Crafts movement that swept the country in the early decades of the twentieth-century. This Rustic Style also was popularized by the National Park Service in mountain areas throughout the country. It is distinguished by the use of indigenous materials intended to blend in with the natural surroundings, reflecting the national mood of returning to nature that had begun in the late 1800s. Features include deep roof overhangs, prominent exterior stone chimneys, divided-light windows, and a stone foundation. Some dwellings also possess clipped gable ends and hand-crafted details — exposed rafter ends, purlins, wooden roof shingles, and peeled logs and branches that serve as poles and posts.

Builders included several Jefferson County residents, some of whom were also designers. Jock Spence designed and built Neosho/Hiwan Homestead. He also built the Clarence Phelps Dodge residence and the Genevieve Phipps residence, Greystone Lodge (architect Maurice Briscoe). Justus Roehling, a Kittredge resident who designed and built several large mountain residences, favored steep and sharply pointed gables. He constructed Crest House in 1940 - 1941, the summit lodge of Mount Evans designed by architect Edwin Francis. The building blew up in a propane explosion 1979. Other works of Justus Roehling include the 1942 Evergreen Catholic Church (gone), Foss Chapel at Indian Hills, several large dwellings on Upper Bear Creek Road and Troutdale Scenic Drive, and Roehling's own residence at 26257 Columbine in Kittredge. Al Rugg, Jr., was a builder active in Indian Hills, constructing HoChaNeeStea, also known as the Chief's Inn and the Trading Post, and possibly the Octagon House. Indian Hill stonemasons included Dan Critchfield, Jay Bunton and John Evans, who worked on the Daniel and Laura Baltes residence, Geneva Glen, and the Gilmore Chapel.¹³⁰

The Wagon Wheel Ranch at 32928 Bluebell Circle was homesteaded in 1907 by Edward Kaiser. During the 1920s and 1930s, it operated as a tavern and brothel. The Catholic Church acquired the property in 1947 and converted it into a girls' retreat, constructing a chapel and using it in the summer through 1975. Today, the forty-acre property contains structures that reflect its progression of diverse uses. The large, gabled log ranch house has been altered slightly by additions. Behind the ranch house is a root cellar with collapsed roof. Attached to the rear of the house is an elaborate, six-car auto garage apparently partially attached to the main dwelling, likely associated with the property's commercial use. The garage has swing-out doors with diamond-shaped windows. A circa 1960 chapel is a large A-frame building clad in stained wood siding with colored glass windows. There are three, circa 1930 cabins clad in log slab, one of which bears the name sign "The Little Monastery of St.

¹³⁰ Bush and Dittman, 48.

Peter.” A long, clapboard-clad building apparently served as a bunkhouse, and a large stable is now clad in metal siding. The present owners open the former church for private functions for nearby residents, such as Halloween, Christmas, and New Year’s parties.¹³¹

The 1927 Baehr Lodge (5JF383), also known as Pine Valley Lodge, is a well-preserved example of the Rustic style by noted architect Jacques J. B Benedict. The property is now owned by Jefferson County Open Space as part of Pine Valley Park west of Pine. Baehr Lodge is listed in the Colorado Register of Historic Properties.

Cultural Resource Types

Private lodge, ranch

Physical Sites

Notable private lodges and ranches include Hiwan Homestead, Aloha Lodge (Freddie Lincoln residence), Granite Glen (Winston Jones residence), Greystone Lodge, Gates Chalet, and Mayo Lodge/Rosedale, all in the Evergreen vicinity. The latter two were designed by Jacques J. B. Benedict. The Christmas Hill subdivision at Buffalo Creek contains three large summer lodges, including the John L. Jerome Summer Estate — La Hacienda (5JF190, NR) designed by Frederick J. Sterner and built on Hilltop Road around 1903. It is possible that Sterner designed the other two lodges. The Phelan residence on Lookout Mountain, was designed by Benedict.

Commercial Lodges and Ranches

Several commercial guest accommodations were built near Evergreen to meet the increase in tourism created by road improvements and aggressive marketing of the Denver Mountain Parks. These ranged from elaborate lodge resorts to small clusters of tourist cabins. A number of homesteads and ranches later became dude ranches, as well.

The largest and best known lodge was Troutdale-in-the-Pines in upper Bear Creek west of Evergreen, now demolished. It was built by pioneer automobile dealer H. E. Sidles and several Nebraska investors. The 100-room hotel opened on Memorial Day weekend in 1920. The four-story, rustic lodge had a stone and wood-shingled exterior. It featured a fine dining room, drug store, soda fountain, and the 500-capacity Rainbow Ballroom where nationally famous bands like the Tommy Dorsey, Lawrence Welk, and Lester Brown bands performed. Recreation included swimming, golfing, croquet, tennis, horse shoes, boating, and

Greystone Lodge from circa 1950 brochure in DPL - WHC.



rental cars. Guests arrived in their own automobile or rode in the hotel’s passenger cabs that met the trains at Denver’s Union Station. Troutdale suffered from the postwar decline in Evergreen tourism and stood vacant

¹³¹ Interview with property owner, John Lockamy, 10/24/01.

for several decades before being demolished in 1994. Troutdale influenced the development of the surrounding area by marketing summer home sites. The Troutdale Hotel and Land Sales Company developed 200 irregular-shaped lots, with prices starting at \$300, and cabins were built at a nominal cost.¹³²

Greystone Lodge, designed by Maurice Briscoe, was built as a private home by Genevieve Phipps. It became a commercial guest ranch in the mid-1900s. Brochures advertised accommodations for a “carefully selected clientele” and offered trail rides, hiking, fishing, and driving trips.¹³³

Brook Forest Inn, southwest of Evergreen on Cub Creek, was advertised as a “virtual village of towers and chalets set amid a forest of venerable pines.” The inn was developed by Viennese immigrant Edwin Welz and his Swiss wife Riggi, who acquired a relinquished homestead on upper Cub Creek in 1915 that was accessed by an old logging road. Welz continued his job as a pastry chef at Denver’s Bauer’s Confectionary, while the couple “proved up” on the homestead acreage. Circa 1919, they began construction of the two-story Chalet style inn that was built of logs and of white quartz, possibly quarried near Kerr Gulch. They expanded the property during the 1920s with several guest cottages and a riding stable. The 2.5-story “Tower” was built in 1935. It now serves as a private residence. Brook Forest Inn continued as a renowned restaurant into the early 1990s.¹³⁴

Marshdale Lodge was built in 1922 by Dr. Marsh, a dentist, on the road between Evergreen and Conifer. It consisted of a main lodge on 175 acres, surrounded by housekeeping cottages — furnished one- or two-room dwellings. From 1968 to 1986, the lodge served as the summer headquarters for the Colorado Philharmonic Orchestra. In the late 1990s it opened as a bed and breakfast inn.¹³⁵

In the mid-1900s, the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce touted the town’s outdoor recreation, including trail riding, rodeo, ice skating, and hiking. Resorts and small guest ranch hotels included the Black Mountain Guest Ranch, Highland Haven, Bauer’s Spruce Island Chalets, Marshdale Inn, and Forest Heights Lodge.

Rainbow Hills, at 30702 Rainbow Hills Drive north of I-70 and the El Rancho exit, is a Rustic style stone lodge. It was built in the 1920s as a private dwelling, and the owner built five cabins rented for summer residents.

¹³² *Troutdale in the Pines*. Evergreen: Troutdale Hotel & Realty Co, circa 1925; Anne Addison, “Troutdale stands as majestic reminder of the past,” *Canyon Courier*, April 10, 1991, 16.

¹³³ Sternberg, 95, 91; *For a Complete Vacation, Greystone Ranch; Luxurious Greystone*, circa 1950.

¹³⁴ “The Story of Brook Forest – A Bit of Switzerland in America,” as told to Helen McQuaid, vertical file, Colorado Historical Society.

¹³⁵ Sternberg, 96; *Evergreen Colorado – 45 minutes From Denver*, publisher unknown, circa 1925.

“Shadow Wild” in Indian Hills began as a homestead ranch but was run as a guest ranch for several years. Mrs. Horn acquired the 160-acre acreage and circa-1880 log ranch house in the early 1900s. She rented the ranch house to summer guests through the 1930s, moving each summer into the “Nutshell,” two-room, circa 1920 cabin on the property. In winter, she used the homestead cabin as her personal residence. During summer, Mrs. Horn cultivated an apple orchard and raised poultry and rabbits. Shadow Wild also includes a pre-1900 outbuilding used by Mrs. Horn for rabbits and poultry, and by a later owner as a tack house. Another small guest cabin, “Jack Straws,” was built by her grandson Jack as an Eagle Scout project in the 1930s.



“Shadow Wild,” the Mary Linn Horne Ranch at Indian Hills

Elk Falls Ranch on South Elk Creek Road north of Shaffer’s Crossing originated as a 320-acre homestead, and was expanded into a 2,200-acre dude ranch. The property became a recreation area for large groups, and a boys and girls camp for the Denver Athletic Club. The large lodge burned down in 1956.

Other guest ranches included the Idyll-ease Dude Ranch that operated from 1913 to 1942 on the Jeffco Open Space Reynolds Ranch property, and several in the Pike National Forest.

Cultural Resource Types

Commercial lodge, commercial guest ranch

Physical Sites

Described above

Cottage Resorts and Summer Subdivisions, 1914 – 1950

Note: The table at the end of this section lists the subdivisions, plat date, and description of intactness. The *Reconnaissance Survey Report* contains additional information on summer resorts, such as names of developers, and descriptions of properties.

By the 1920s, increasing affordability of the automobile and improved roads allowed easy access to formerly remote places. Development and marketing of the Denver Mountain Parks brought both Denverites and tourists into the western Jefferson County mountains, and real estate developers recognized the rising demand for a “mountain home.” Economic prosperity of the twenties created an expanding middle class that could afford a summer residence. People enduring the humid summers in the “sweat belt” in Midwestern states pined for a cabin in the cool Colorado Rockies.

Developers subdivided large land parcels into hundreds of one-tenth-acre home sites. Some subdivision plats disregarded natural features or steep slopes and contained many unbuildable lots. Most property owners bought several lots and built a single dwelling. From

1914 into the 1940s, hundreds of cabins and cottages were built — most clustered in summer resorts, others scattered through the mountains.

The Jefferson County’s summer subdivisions were shaped by location, amenities, nearby attractions, topography, and available building materials, as well as the investors’ intentions. Each differed slightly in type of construction, design, and landscape features.

Building materials and design features reflected the mountain setting and available resources. Many dwellings typify the Rustic style introduced in the Adirondack Mountain resorts and featuring native materials that blend with the natural setting. Chinked log cabins were constructed where native forests provided sufficient timber. Many dwellings were woodframe cottages, clad in board and batten, shiplap siding, or planks covered with “log slab” or “mill waste.” A few are covered with clapboards or trimmed in wood shingles. In the 1930s, manufactured log siding became available and was applied to new and existing dwellings. Porches are a common feature — open, screened, or windowed they provided views and extend living space. Where native stone was available, properties often have stone features, such as the foundation, fireplaces and chimneys, porch walls, corner piers, and basement stories.



“Mum’s Place,” Wandcrest Park.

Landscape features accentuated the natural setting and extended living space to the out of doors. In sloping locales, stone retaining walls created level building sites. Many dwellings have stone barbecues at the rear of the property. Most had outhouses, some still intact. A few properties have picnic shelters and gazebos. Fencing varied from stone to post and wire. Stone gate posts mark the entrances of a few properties. Another character-defining feature is an auto garage beneath the dwelling, beside it, or, in some cases, blasted out of the canyon wall.



Garages are a character defining feature in many mountain subdivisions.

A few subdivisions included recreational amenities to entice land sales. Mount Vernon Country Club Place included the Mount Vernon Country Club (today greatly expanded), a short-lived golf course, tennis courts, and riding stables. Indian Hills possessed a short-small NaTeSo Pueblo where Native American craft items were sold, and “colonies” were established for writers, artists, and dancers. At Evergreen, Denver Mountain Parks dammed Bear Creek to create the reservoir and developed the golf course that still functions today, enhancing Upper Bear Creek’s development as an affluent summer neighborhood.

Northern Mountains

A few summer cabins are scattered in Coal Creek Canyon and vicinity, most now year-round dwellings. The only platted summer subdivision is Twin Spruce Park, which still retains many intact dwellings.

Creekside cabin in Coal Creek Canyon.



Evergreen Vicinity

Evergreen promoted itself as a summer resort. A 1918 real estate brochure touted Evergreen as a village of “many attractive cottages nestling in the shade of the evergreen trees; an artistic little church, with belfry and linchgate; hotel and stores along the creek, with many more cottages on the slopes of the hills and the uplands.” By the 1930s over a dozen subdivisions had been platted. Summer subdivisions were platted south, east, and west of Evergreen, as well as along upper Bear Creek, along Cub Creek, and Little Cub Creek. The most intact collections include Stanley Park, Marshdale, Blue Spruce on Brook Forest Road, and portions of Mountain Home Park.



Summer homes in the Evergreen area range from large, Rustic style dwellings (Brook Forest Road) to tiny vernacular cabins (vacant cabin on Forest Hill Road).

I-70 Corridor

Several subdivisions were platted on Lookout Mountain and at Genesee Ridge, encouraged by development of the Denver Mountain Parks and ease of auto access. Mount Vernon Country Club became known as the “poor man’s club,” with middle class membership and reasonable annual dues. Many summer dwellings are greatly altered and expanded, however a few intact examples remain.

Lower Bear Creek Corridor

Bear Creek Canyon between Morrison and Evergreen became extremely popular because of its easy accessibility and its association with the Denver Motor Club. Charles Kittredge platted his namesake townsite as a fishing resort beside Bear Creek. Idledale originated as Starbucks, and was the “mountain home” for the DMC until their clubhouse burned in 1938. The towns were located on the “Circle Tour” that descended Bear Creek Canyon from Evergreen to Morrison. Both towns are now bedroom communities, with most summer cabins used as year-round residences and considerable construction of residential in-fill. A number of individual properties are architecturally intact and good examples of the Rustic style and the rise of automobile tourism.



A number of houses in Starbucks (now Idledale) were built by members of the Denver Motor Club. Many, such as this one at 21739 Highway 74 , have integrated garages.

U.S. 285/Conifer Vicinity

Platted in the 1920s by George Olinger at Parmalee Gulch, Indian Hills became the largest summer resort in Jefferson County. The name reflected the area’s pre-settlement use as a Ute camping round and exploited the national fascination with the West and with Native Americans during the 1920s. Olinger was a seasoned developer, having organized Associated Industries to develop Olinger Gardens at West 29th and Sheridan and Bonnie Brae subdivision east of University Boulevard and south of Exposition Avenue. Indian Hills was accessed from both Bear Creek Canyon and Turkey Creek Canyon. Olinger placed large billboards at each entrance and erected a model home/land sales office at Kittredge.



Indian Hills: Rustic style dwellings at Cherokee Road (left) and former Trading Post on Parmalee Gulch Road (right).

Indian Hills developed with five consecutive filings. Prospective buyers could select from one of five model cabins. The first cabins, on Seminole and Santa Clara roads, were built of logs brought from Granzella Ranch on South Turkey Creek. Olinger developed a clubhouse (burned down in the 1990s) and small golf course (gone since the 1930s), and offered free membership to members of the Denver Motor Club. A key attraction was the NaTeSo Pueblo (altered) built by Native American builders from New Mexico and featuring native crafts items. He ran tour buses that brought visitors and prospective land buyers from Denver. The first two filings consisting of Santa Clara Road and Seminole Road appear intact enough to warrant further survey and consideration as designated historic districts.

Several small subdivisions were platted in the Conifer vicinity. South of Pleasant Park, Oehlmann Park was platted by Denver Motor Club members who named the streets after themselves. Now surrounded by newer residential development, it contains a few intact one- and two-room cabins. Redwing Park, west of the junction of U.S. 285 and State Highway 74, contains an intact collection of chinked-log cabins, several with rustic twig and stick details, and most with garages. Nearly all appear vacant, and likely lack indoor plumbing, septic/sewer, and furnaces. Shadow Mountain subdivision platted along North Turkey Creek on Shadow Mountain Road contains many intact cabins and should be investigated as a potential district.

Wandcrest Park, which straddles the Jefferson-Park County line, is composed of three subdivisions platted in the 1920s. It contains many intact cabins, and parts of it could potentially compose historic districts.

Turkey and Deer Creek Canyons

Scattered individual cabins were built along South Turkey, North Turkey, and Deer creeks, and scattered in mountain locations. Real estate sales in the South Turkey Creek Canyon were boosted by Tiny Town, a miniature village developed as a tourist attraction by George E. Turner in the 1920s. The Tiny Town and Mountain Home Association subdivisions were platted in South Turkey Creek Canyon, and Homewood Park in Deer Creek Canyon. Of these, Mountain Home is the most intact, with eight or so two-room cabins clad in shiplap siding, several altered.

North Fork

Completion of the DSP&P along the North Fork motivated development of several summer resorts. By the 1920s, visitors arrived by auto and additional residences were built at Pine and Buffalo Creek. Sphinx Park, three miles above Pine on Elk Creek, was platted during the 1920s for access by automobile tourists and summer residents. Consisting of four consecutive subdivisions, Sphinx Park contains several dozen dwellings, most clad in log slab siding with stone foundations, chimneys, and porch features. Most properties appear intact. Sphinx Park may possess sufficient integrity for consideration as a National Register District, following intensive survey and evaluation.



Sphinx Park: the boulder formations and narrow Elk Creek Canyon provide dramatic cabin sites.

Cultural Resource Types

Residential district, single dwelling, model home, sales office, auto garage, outbuildings, community hall

Physical Sites

Described above.

Many summer cabins have been converted as year-round residences. Alterations have included building additions, enclosing porches, installing indoor plumbing, replacing windows, and applying synthetic siding. Some subdivisions have experienced a good deal of residential in-fill.

Summer Subdivisions

Name	Date platted	Location	Condition
NORTH MOUNTAINS			
Twin Spruce	06/08/27	South of Coal Creek Canyon	Most cabins appear intact
I-70 CORRIDOR			
Cody Park	1921	Lookout Mountain	Only two or three intact cabins, all others altered or now serve as outbuildings, good deal of infill.
Cold Springs Gulch	1923	East of El Rancho	About six pre-1950 properties, nearly all altered
Genesee Ridge	1923, 1927	East of Genesee Park	About ten larger dwellings, two or three intact
Lookout Mountain Park	1910, 1924	Lookout Mountain	Scattered pre-1950 dwellings interspersed with infill; two or three are intact
Panorama Heights	1921, 1922	Lookout Mountain	Ten or so pre-1950 dwellings, some intact. Two or three excellent examples of Rustic style
Rilliet Park	1924, 1928	Lookout Mountain	A dozen or so pre-1950 dwellings, some infill. Two or three relatively intact. Some properties were not evaluated as they were behind a security gate.
Moss Rock	1922	North of El Rancho and I-70	Few cabins remain intact
Mount Vernon Club Place	1923	Lookout Mountain	No intact properties
EVERGREEN			
Camel Heights	1928	Above Cub Creek	Eight or so cabins, two or three intact
Douglas Park	1937	North of commercial district	Most properties are altered.
Evergreen Heights	1937	SW of commercial district	Most properties are altered.
Glen Eyrie	1929	Upper Bear Creek	Most properties are altered.
Herzman Mesa	1946	South of Cub Creek Canyon	Post war summer houses and year-round dwellings, with contemporary infill.
Hy-Glenn Park	1920		Most properties are altered.
Marshdale Park	1923, 1926	Between Evergreen and Conifer	Very little infill, most cabins relatively intact; may constitute a district

Tourism

Name	Date platted	Location	Condition
Mountain Park Home	1914	South of commercial district	Many cabins intact, portions may constitute district
Spruce Dale Park	1920	SW of Evergreen along Cub Creek and Brook Forest Road	Many cabins intact, portions may constitute district
Wah Keeney Park	1922	North of Evergreen	Many properties altered, good deal of in-fill, two properties are strong candidates as individual landmarks
U.S. 285 CORRIDOR			
Apache Springs	1926	Conifer	Several intact cabins, undergoing infill
Oehlmann Park	Ca 1925	Conifer	Few intact one-room cabins
Red Wing Park	1934 – 1983	Conifer	About 10 chinked log cabins, all intact, possible district
Shadow Mountain	1924	Conifer	20 or so Rustic cabins along North Turkey Creek, most of them intact and perhaps constituting a potential district
Indian Hills, Filings 1 - 5	1923 - 1928	U.S. 285	First two filings, Santa Clara and Seminole Roads most intact, could constitute two districts.
Wandcrest Park	1920 - 1927	SW of Pine Junction	Four plats, most cabins appear intact, some portions may constitute a district(s)
PINE			
Buffalo Creek Park, Additions	1888 - 1892	North Fork	Within North Fork NRHD, most properties appear intact
Christmas Tree Hill	1903	North Fork	Within North Fork NRHD, most properties appear intact
Ferndale	1899	North Fork	Within North Fork NRHD, all properties intact
Pine	1886	North Fork	Within North Fork NRHD, most properties appear intact
Kincaid Springs	1945	North of Sphinx Park	Good example of post World War II mountain dwellings, most properties appear

Tourism

Name	Date platted	Location	Condition
Sphinx Park, Sphinx Lodge	1921, 1925, 1928	North of Pine along Elk Creek	intact Most properties appear intact, strong candidate as potential NRHD
DEER/TURKEY CREEK			
Homewood Park	1924	Deer Creek Canyon	Few properties appear intact
Mountain Homes Association Add	1930	South Turkey Creek Canyon	Most properties appear intact, could constitute a historic district
Tiny Town	1927	South Turkey Creek Canyon	Few properties appear intact

Outdoor Recreation, 1870s – 1950

The County's western mountains offered diverse recreation that attracted visitors and city-dwellers, and contributed to the local economy. Jefferson County is comprised of 72% mountains, an area nearly 560 square miles in size. Much of the county consists of public lands. Pike National Forest occupies nearly one-fourth of the county — 172 square miles on the southern end.¹³⁶ This public forest also extends into Douglas, Teller, and Park counties. Small parcels of Arapaho National Forest are scattered in the Mount Evans vicinity, and a small portion of Roosevelt National Forest extends into the county's northwestern corner. Golden Gate Canyon State Park was developed beginning in 1960. The 14,000 acre park extends west into Gilpin County. The Chatfield State Recreation Area was developed along the South Platte River in southeastern Jefferson after Chatfield Reservoir was built in 1977.

Jefferson County Open Space parcels lie throughout unincorporated Jefferson County, and the Denver Mountain Parks are concentrated in the central mountains. In 1972, Jefferson County voters approved a county .05% sales tax. In 1990s, the voters approved a bond issue of \$160 million to fund acquisition.¹³⁷ As of April 2002, a total of 49,730 acres have been acquired as open space lands. These public lands, together with many private properties, have provided a range of outdoor recreation that helped shape the county.

Camping

Camping was a popular recreation in the Rocky Mountains as early as the 1870s. Visitors enjoyed the rustic adventure of camping in canvas tents or sleeping under the stars. Several travelers described their experience in picturesque detail in publications such as *Camping in Colorado with Suggestions to Gold-Seekers, Tourists, and Invalids* and Isabella Bird's *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. Americans increasingly embraced the virtues of outdoor life, as a nostalgic connection to the pioneer past and as a brief escape from urban existence. Public campgrounds were developed in Pike National Forest during the early twentieth century, and at Golden Gate Canyon and Chatfield State Parks in the late 1900s.

Among the earliest campgrounds was the Denver Municipal Tent Campground at Chief Hosa, built in the 1920s. That facility featured twenty tent houses with concrete floors and running water. During the 1930s, CCC work crews improved campgrounds in the National Forests, building clustered campsites each with a level tent area, parking space, and fire pit. Most campgrounds also had outhouses, water pumps, and a designated site for a camp host. Communities near Pike National Forest benefited economically by selling goods and groceries to campers and to fishermen. Commercial and private campgrounds also accommodated campers, charging a daily or weekly fee for individual campsites. During the second half of the twentieth century, some campgrounds evolved to handle camp trailers and recreational vehicles. Several wilderness areas also accommodate backpacking, including the Lower Turkey Creek Wilderness Area, Berrian Mountain Wilderness Area, and South Turkey Creek Wilderness Area.

Jefferson County's proximity to the Denver metropolitan area encouraged numerous children's summer camps in the county's western mountains. These included camps run by the YMCA, Girl Scouts, and several different churches. The facilities typically had clusters of bunkhouses, with a centralized hall that provided shelter for serving meals and for group

¹³⁶ Jefferson County website: www.co.Jefferson.co.us/visitors.html.

¹³⁷ Thea Rock, Jefferson County Open Space Department, 04/02/02.

activities in the evening or during inclement weather. The Blue Jay Inn at Buffalo Creek served as the summer home for Episcopalian Girls Friendly Society for several decades. Parmalee Gulch/Indian Hills has several camps, including Geneva Glen, Messiah Mountain, St. Anne's in the Hills, Foss Park, and Camp Coy.

Fishing

Fishing has been a popular recreational sport, especially in Bear Creek, North Fork, and the county's various reservoirs. To lure sportsmen, the DSP&P Railroad company stocked North Fork trout, some raised at trout ponds on Resort Creek above Elk Creek.¹³⁸ The City of Denver stocked Bear Creek with 300,000 trout at a time, as early as 1918.¹³⁹ Evergreen Lake, completed in 1927 and stocked with trout by the Denver Mountain Parks Department, also offered sport fishing. Water bodies within the county's national forests and state parks have been stocked by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Commercial enterprises served the fishing tourist as well. These included Troutdale-in-the-Pines resort and Kittredge, developed by Charles Kittredge as a trout fishing resort in the 1920s. The Wigwam Club on the South Fork west of Deckers is one of several private fishing clubs in the county.



**Hikers on the Beaver Brook Trail on Lookout Mountain.
*Denver Municipal Facts, March 1919.***

Hiking

Hiking became another favorite past-time in the early 1900s. One of the county's first established hiking trails was the Beaver Brook Trail, a wildlife and Native American path on Lookout Mountain, improved by the Colorado Mountain Club in 1918. CCC work crews built trails in the National Forests in the 1930s. A more recent hiking facility is the 471-mile Colorado Trail, which begins at Waterton Canyon in southern Jefferson County and extends southwest to Durango. The trail follows the South Fork, crossing County Road 126 three miles south of Buffalo Creek. It was built in the 1970s by an all-volunteer organization, and is now funded by the Colorado Mountain Trail Foundation. Jefferson County Open Space has constructed numerous trails for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders since its creation in 1972. The two state parks have numerous trails as well.

¹³⁸ Bentley, 274.

¹³⁹ Vanita G. Cospers, "Tourism in Evergreen Where Have All the Tourists Gone?" *Historically Jeffco*, Golden: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Summer 1995, Vol. 8, No. 1, 10-11.

Rodeos and Horseback Riding

Horseback riding became a popular pastime during the twentieth century. Commercial stables, private riding clubs, and individual horse owners are located throughout the county. Rodeo was also a popular sport.

The popularity of rodeo reflects the county's ranching heritage. Rodeo grounds at Wah Keeney Park hosted rodeos on the national circuit in the 1920s and 1930s. Ralph Moody's memoir, *Little Britches*, describes the author's youthful experiences in ranching, round-ups, and rodeos in the Littleton area in the early 1900s. The book title became the namesake for the Little Britches Rodeos, a statewide circuit for juvenile riders from the mid to late 1900s. In the Evergreen vicinity, the Buffalo Bill Saddle Club Headquarters was founded in 1947 and sponsored National Rodeo Cowboy Association summer rodeos in Evergreen for a decade or so.¹⁴⁰ For decades, the Jefferson County Fair Grounds southeast of Golden has hosted annual rodeos, county fairs and 4-H fairs. Indian Hills also had a riding arena from the mid to late 1900s; it is now privately owned.

Several Evergreen area guest ranches and hotels offered horseback riding, including Troutdale-in-the-Pines, Greystone Ranch, and the Brook Forest Inn. The Brook Forest Stable remains in slightly deteriorating condition on Brook Forest Road near the inn.

**Trail ride in Evergreen, circa 1950.
Brochure from DPL – WHC.**



Several private riding clubs have operated in the county. On Lookout Mountain, the Mount Vernon Country Club offered horseback riding and the horse committee organized for the club's original 25 horses. "Cloudbusters" was a riding group for young people with annual summer shows with trophies and ribbons. Horse races were held between the Country Club and Mount Vernon Canyon. Parade from the Five Points intersection passed by the clubhouse with covered wagons and costumed riders.¹⁴¹

The Roundup Riders also organized on Lookout Mountain, were founded in 1948 for trail rides centered around Paradise Hills and Mt. Vernon Canyon. Club members rode to Central City for opera or lunch. Original members included Fred Craig of Cold Springs Ranch and Howard Lamb and Joe Dekker, partners in the Paradise Hills Horse Ranch, now developed with residences. The number of members was limited to 150 riders, and coordinated week-long trail rides into the 1990s.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Crane 45, 46.

¹⁴¹ Gina Brown, "The Mt. Vernon Story or Life in Utopia." Golden: self published, 1966., 18.

¹⁴² *City and Mountain Views*, July/August 1994.

Private riding clubs included the Arapaho Range Riders Club, which formed around the 1930s. The club's annual summer trail ride followed the South Platte and North Fork rivers from Littleton to Buffalo Creek.¹⁴³

In the Golden area, the Westernaires riding club began around the late 1940s and has functioned for nearly a half century. Bridle trails have been developed in several Jefferson County Open Space parks.

There have been numerous commercial stables in Jefferson County. Many are still operating in northeastern Jefferson County and the western edge of Arvada. One of the earliest was the commercial stable opened by Ray and Lena Goddard in 1938 at Twin Forks near Tiny Town. The Goddards expanded their operation in 1943 and erected a building for the get-togethers and steak fries that followed trail rides. In the mid-1950s, their stable accommodated groups of thirty schoolchildren from the YMCA in Littleton. The facility closed in the 1970s due to flooding.¹⁴⁴

The continued use of the Jefferson County Fairgrounds and Arena indicate the popularity of horseback riding in the county.



Skiing and Ice Skating

Skiing was a popular winter pastime in the Jefferson County mountains. The Denver Winter Sports Club formed in 1919, to develop a ski area on the northern slope of Genesee Mountain. This area was used for ski-jump tournaments from the 1920s to the 1950s. In the 1970s, artificial snow-making enabled two short-lived operations in the Golden area: Arapahoe East, a 15-acre area on the north-facing slope of Lininger Mountain east of Genesee in Mount Vernon Canyon, and a 1,100-foot run at Magic Mountain, a theme park that developed south of Golden and today is Heritage Square.¹⁴⁵ The development of ski resorts in the central Colorado Mountains beginning in the late 1940s curtailed this activity in the county's foothills and mountains.

Winter sports were popular in southern Jefferson County as well. In the 1930s, Homewood Park was developed off Deer Creek Canyon Road about one mile west from Phillipsburg. Andreas and Larsina Eriksen created the recreational area by damming a pond for ice and figure skating. The Eriksons also made a ski run and built a warming house. The warming house was rebuilt in the 1950s, a time when Homewood Park attracted 500 or more

¹⁴³ Lombard, 29.

¹⁴⁴ Moynihan and Waters, p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ John McMillin, "Mountains of Memories, Mountains of Dreams – A History of Skiing in Jefferson County," *Historically Jeffco*, Evergreen: Jefferson County Historical Commission, Vol. 10, Issue 18, 1997, 6-14.

people on the weekends, most of them from Denver. At Fun Valley, northwest of Phillipsburg in Deer Creek Canyon, Johnny and Horace Watson had a toboggan run and a warming house that doubled as a dance hall. This operated until World War II. Twin Forks, near the intersection of U.S. 285 and Turkey Creek, was the largest ski and toboggan facility near Denver. The ski run lay across the site of the present-day highway. Skiers enjoyed another run — a 150-foot slope located on the south end of Meyer Ranch, which straddled the present-day highway. Horses pulled skiers uphill.¹⁴⁶

Cultural Resource Types

Public campground, private or commercial campground, picnic ground

Hiking trail, National Forest maintenance facility

Riding trail, corrals, private stables, commercial stables, rodeo grounds

Fish hatchery, private fishing lodge

Ski slope, skating pond, warming house, toboggan run



Skaters at Evergreen Lake ca 1945. Ice skating was promoted by tourist brochures as one of several winter activities.

¹⁴⁶ Moynihan and Waters, 30, 51, 54-56, 90.

Outdoor Recreation

Physical Sites

The cultural resources associated with outdoor recreation are varied, depending upon the type of activity that they supported. The Reconnaissance Survey identified the following (**note:** not intended to be an exhaustive list):

Activity	Location	Approx. Date	Condition
<u>Hiking</u>			
Beaver Brook Trail	Lookout Mountain	1917	Still in use
<u>Ice skating</u>			
Evergreen Lake	Evergreen	1927	Still in use, warming house remains
<u>Skiing</u>			
Rilliet Park ski area	Lookout Mountain	1920s	Vacant, unused
Genesee Ski Jump	Genesee Mountain	1920s	Unused
Arapahoe East	Lininger Mountain	1970s	Unused
Magic Mountain	Apex	1970s	Unused
Homewood Park	Deer Creek Canyon	1930s	Unused, lodge house modernized
Fun Valley	Murphy Gulch, Deer Creek Canyon vicinity	1940s – 1950s	Unused, tow rope remains, ski runs visible
Turkshead Ski Run	Turkshead Peak, Kuester Ranch	1940s	Unused
<u>Summer Camps</u>			
Katherine Craig girls' camp	Mount Vernon Canyon, U.S. 40	1965 - 1995	Denver Mountain Park
YMCA Camp	Lookout Mountain	1920s	Converted to private residences
Camp Hosa	Genesee Park	1920s	Still in use
Filius Park (confirm)	Bergen Park	1920s	Picnic grounds
Camp Geneva	Indian Hills	1922	Still in use
Messiah Mountain	Indian Hills	1920s	Meeting hall
St. Anne's in the Hills	Indian Hills	1924	Unused since 1980s
Baptist Camp/Foss Chapel	Indian Hills	1920s	Still in use, dormitory, dining hall, chapel
Unnamed	22424 North Turkey Creek Road	ca 1930	Unused
Camp Newton boys' summer camp	Foxton Road & U.S. 285	1940s	Developed as Jeffco Open Space
Flying G Girl Scout Ranch	Wellington vicinity	1945	Still extant
Flying J Ranch	9499 Highway 73	ca 1920	Greatly expanded, Historic barn and several small cabins. Adjoins Jeffco Open Space
Silver Spruce Guest	20973 Wellington Road	1930s –	Now part of Windy

Outdoor Recreation

Activity	Location	Approx. Date	Condition
Ranch (5JF387, SR)		1950s	Peak, Jefferson County Outdoor Lab facility
<u>Fishing</u>			
Wigwam Club and former trout hatchery	CR 126	1920s	Still in use
Crystal Lake	29200 Crystal Lake Road	1902	Still in use, lodge modernized
Elk Creek trout hatchery			Unused since mid-1900s
<u>Rodeo/horseback riding</u>			
Jefferson County Stadium	U.S. 6	1940s	Still in use
Goddard Stables	Twin Forks (junction of North and South Turkey Creek roads)	1938	Unused since 1970s
Evergreen Rodeo Grounds	Evergreen	1930s – 1970s	Vacated
Indian Hills Arena	Indian Hills	1930s – 1980s	Vacated

Settlement and Town Building, 1859 – 1920s

Rural Jefferson County was settled by farming and ranching, as well as mountain logging, wagon and stage travel, and tourism. Early settlements provided food, supplies, and services to farmers and ranchers in the county's outlying areas, to travelers passing along the various wagon roads, and to logging camps.

By the 1870s, population centers consisted of Bergen Park, Bradford Junction (Conifer Junction, Conifer) Evergreen, Buffalo Creek, and Pine. The first three evolved as waystations on the Denver to Leadville wagon and stage roads. Evergreen also grew as a logging center. The DSP&P Railroad resulted in two towns platted along the North Forks: Buffalo Creek as a watering station and Pine Grove as a coaling station. Both towns also flourished as logging until timber stands were exhausted in the 1890s.

These communities first consisted of little more than a handful of houses, a mercantile store containing a post office, and typically, a tavern and blacksmith shop. Soon, a small schoolhouse was built, often serving also as a church and community center.

Less permanent settlements also sprang up along roadways and at mining and quarry sites. Short-lived settlements along South Turkey Creek included Herndon, Medlen, and Reeds Mill. Along present-day U.S. 285, Shaffer's Crossing served travelers and the mining boom town of Ellis flourished briefly during a mining rush at what is now the Green Valley Ranch subdivision. North of Golden, Glencoe served the quarry that operated at the present site of Ralston Reservoir, and Tindale was a coal mining community on Ralston Creek near present-day State Highway 93.

Beginning around 1913, the increase of automobile travel and subsequent road improvements hastened development in rural Jefferson County, particularly in the western mountains. As discussed in detail in the **Tourism** section of this report, this growth consisted almost entirely of summer homes. Conifer and Evergreen grew in patchwork fashion, propelled by development of summer home subdivisions. In the 1920s, Kittredge and Starbucks (Idledale) were platted in Bear Creek Canyon, and Indian Hills was platted between Bear Creek and Turkey Creek canyons.

Until the mid-twentieth century, year-round residents consisted mainly of ranchers. During World War II, the acute housing shortage prompted some war workers to convert mountain cabins as year-round residences at Idledale and on Lookout Mountain. After the war, the year-round population growth continued, especially as rerouting of U.S. 285 in 1950 and construction of I-70 in 1969 improved highway efficiency and allowed rural residents to commute to city jobs. Mountain towns became bedroom communities and numerous subdivisions developed upon former ranch properties.

From the 1950s through the 1980s, the cold war defense industry boosted growth in unincorporated Jefferson County as well as the cities. Rocky Flats Plant opened in 1951, encouraging development of year-round subdivisions in Coal Creek Canyon, as well as suburban subdivisions in Westminster, Arvada, and Lakewood. The Denver-Martin plant opened north of Waterton Canyon in 1957 and spurred residential construction in Deer Creek Canyon, and numerous subdivisions in southeastern Jefferson County and in Littleton.

Communities

Settlement and development of rural communities were affected by multiple factors, including the topography, natural resources, transportation modes, local industries, economic trends, and national events. This is reflected in the following community histories, organized chronologically.

Bergen Park (1859)

Bergen Park is named for Thomas C. Bergen who established his ranch in 1859 on the wagon route between Denver and Park County. Bergen's ranch provided overnight accommodations, meals, and fresh livestock to travelers making their way to the mining districts. When the DSP&P Railroad reached Fairplay in 1881, wagon traffic through Bergen Park dwindled considerably. It remained a tiny settlement for decades. George, Oscar, and Ted Johnson acquired the Bergen Ranch in 1903 and built the octagonal log barn (5JF288) at 1532 Bergen Parkway in 1927.

With development of the Filius and Bergen parks as part of the Denver Mountain Park system in 1915, a few tourist and traveler related businesses sprang up. In the 1930s, U.S. 40 route was built through Bergen Park, attracting travelers who pumped gas, stayed overnight in cottages and auto courts, rode horses at the stables, and bought souvenirs at the Trading Post that still stands on the corner of Bergen Parkway and Soda Creek Road. The Teepees restaurant and souvenir shop was built in the 1940s north of Bergen Park near present-day El Rancho.

Conifer (1860)

Conifer (8,270'), began as a crossroads settlement at the junction of two wagon roads from Denver to South Park — the South Turkey Creek Canyon and Bergen Park roads. The community experienced sporadic growth and at various times was called Junction Ho, Bradford Junction, Hutchinson, and Conifer Junction.

Major Robert Bradford developed the Junction Ranch one-half mile northwest of the present highway intersection of U.S. 285 and SH 73, building the two-story Junction House Hotel in 1860. The inn was a convenient stopping place for travelers enroute to Park County, as well as a popular "watering place" for tourists. Bradford sold the ranch to Colonel McNasser in 1873, then the property was acquired in 1883 by Evaline Hammer. The Junction House Hotel burned down in 1887 and was rebuilt. The second hotel burned the winter of 1914. Today, the only structure



Mullen Barn in Conifer, locally called The Yellow Barn.

associated with the original Junction Ranch is the well, which dates to the 1860s. A few small stores were located near the ranch property, but these were removed or burned down by the 1920s. John J. Mullen purchased the Junction Ranch property from Frederick Buechner in

Settlement and Town Building

1917. Mullen built the large barn with its distinctive pointed arch. The “Yellow Barn” (5JF307) is today a familiar local landmark.¹⁴⁷

The surrounding area was settled by homesteaders who raised livestock, hay, and a few vegetable crops. The area southeast of Conifer was originally called Hay Claim Park because of its abundant meadows. Later, it became known as Pleasant Park. The virgin forests sustained a good deal of logging. A few ranchers also built and rented tourist cabins on their property.

By the 1920s, the road through Conifer Junction had become a segment on the Fairplay Cut-off of the Midland Trail auto highway. Shadow Mountain Road was briefly considered as a southern route up Mount Evans. The summer subdivisions of Shadow Mountain, Red Wing Park, Apache Springs, and Oehlmann Park were platted in the vicinity. Of these, Red Wing Park and Shadow Mountain subdivisions remain sufficiently intact to be further considered for their potential as districts.

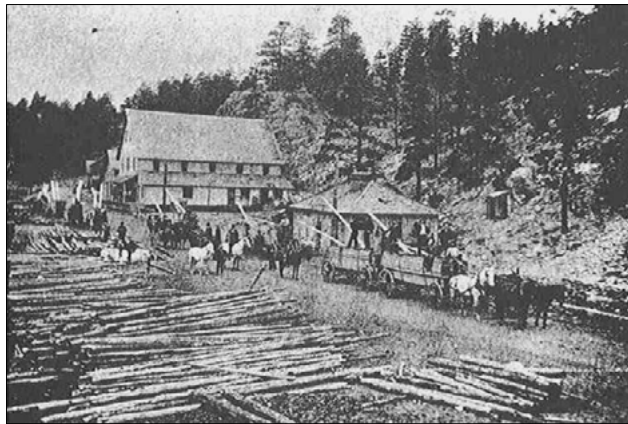
Conifer remained little more than a settlement until the mid twentieth century. The commercial needs of ranchers, travelers, and summer residents were met by Field’s Trading Post. The combination general store and gas station was built in 1930 near the present location of the large shopping center on U.S. 285. Children in the Conifer area attended school at either the Pleasant Park School or in the church built by Pastor John Kemp in the 1880s for his Mormon congregation. This schoolhouse was replaced in 1910 by the Conifer School built at 27051 Barkley Road (5JF308).

Evergreen (1875)

Evergreen began as a settlement where the wagon road between Bergen Park and Bradford Junction (present-day Conifer) crossed Bear Creek. First regarded as the southern end of Bergen Park, the community grew in 1877 with the trading post built by Amos F. Post, whose father-in-law Thomas C. Bergen had founded Bergen Park. Although its population barely exceeded 200, the settlement persisted as a transportation crossroads, hub for local logging and sawmill activity, and agricultural supply center.

The fertile mountain meadows and huge timber stands sustained early settlers and homesteaders. By the late 1800s, ranches and farms dotted the mountain meadows and spread along creek bottoms. Crops included hay, grains, and root vegetables, as well as beef and dairy cattle. Few ranches were profitable, and many ranchers supplemented income by logging and by renting cabins to summer visitors.

Logging was an important industry in Evergreen in the late 1800s. Photo from *Evergreen, Colorado*.



¹⁴⁷ Bentley, 22, 231, 242; “Colonel McNasser’s Place at Bradford Junction Destroyed by Fire,” *Denver Daily Times*, Sept. 27, 1878.

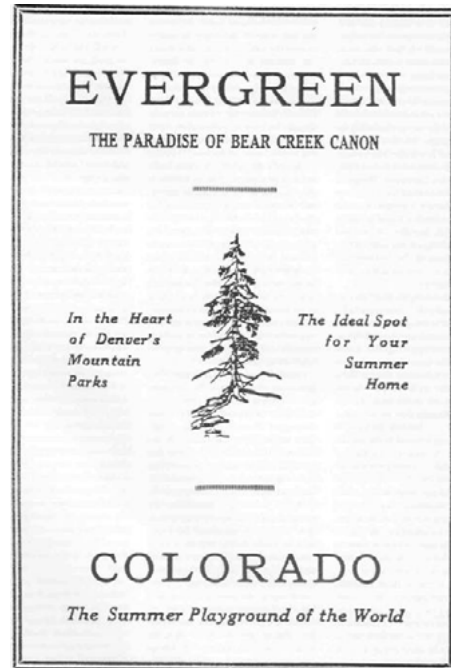
Logging was a prominent early industry. Sawmills first were operated by water wheels, then by creek water diverted and heated to produce steam power. The abundant coniferous forests surrounding Evergreen produced support timbers for the underground gold mines in Idaho Springs, railroad ties shipped to Morrison for the DSP&P line, and dimensional lumber and wood shingles for local construction of business buildings and cabins. By 1900, the mountains had been deforested and the logging industry had collapsed.

In addition to agriculture and logging, scenic beauty attracted people to the area. By the 1880s, several wealthy Denverites had purchased summer ranches at Evergreen. The most prominent ranch was Mary Neosha Williams's 1,280-acre property surrounding the tiny commercial center along Bear Creek. Other summer ranches included George Bancroft's 2,400-acre property between Evergreen and Kittredge and John Evans large ranch above Upper Bear Creek on the Jefferson-Clear Creek County line.

Completion of the DSP&P to Morrison stimulated tourism. By the 1890s, summer visitors traveled via horse-drawn stage up Bear Creek Canyon from Morrison for extended stays in Evergreen's small, rustic hotels. By 1920, development of the Denver Mountain Parks, improved mountain roads, and middle-class availability of the automobile helped Evergreen flourish as a summer cabin resort. Soon, several summer home subdivisions ringed the town's original center. Real estate investors recognized the profit potential in selling summer cabins, and developed plats with hundreds of 1/10-acre cabin lots.

Each summer subdivision was shaped by its location, topography, and the building materials at hand, as well as the investors' intentions. The earliest were developed close to downtown Evergreen — Mary N. Williams Estate, Douglas Park, Spence Addition, Forest Heights, Pearson Addition, Mountain Park Home, Hy-Glenn, and Wilmot Woods. Stanley Park and Marshdale Park developed further south, and Troutdale and Wah Keeny Park to the north. Marshdale and Marshdale Park lie midway between Evergreen and Conifer. Development also followed Cub Creek, including Sprucedale Park along Brook Forest Road. Summer cabin sales continued at a slower pace in the 1930s. During the early 1940s, development and tourism declined considerably in Evergreen and elsewhere in the county, because war rationing of gasoline and rubber tires discouraged auto travel.

Evergreen tourism dwindled after the war, as highway improvements gave travelers easy access to other Colorado destinations. Instead, the collection of summer subdivisions evolved into present-day Evergreen, emerging after World War II as a year-round bedroom community. The 1969 construction of I-70 encouraged further development of year-round subdivisions.



By 1920, the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce was actively promoting the town as a summer resort.

Buffalo Creek (1878)

The community of Buffalo (6,634) began in the late 1870s as a lumber camp and grew as a railroad stop west of where Buffalo Creek flows into the North Fork. By 1878, the DSP&P had reached Buffalo, which became a train stop and watering point. (The post office name was changed to “Buffalo Creek” to avoid confusion with another Colorado town named Buffalo). The Buffalo townsite was platted at the head of the North Fork river canyon in 1881 by John W. Smith of the South Park Construction Company. By 1882, Buffalo consisted of saloons, the Buffalo House inn, a boarding house, blacksmith shop, the Morrison lumber yard, and a few houses. Railroad transportation accelerated the local logging industry. A dozen or so sawmills operated in the Buffalo and Pine vicinity. During the heyday of the logging industry, Buffalo Creek had around 1,400 residents.

The DSP&P began selling land surrounding the Buffalo station for development as a summer resort. John A. Jamieson platted the four subdivisions that compose Buffalo Creek Park in 1888, 1889 and 1892. John J. Jerome bought the Buffalo Creek Park Company in 1902 and the following year he joined with F. C. Vickers and Robert F. Cassell to plat the Christmas Hill summer subdivision on the hill located between Buffalo Creek and the North Fork.

The logging industry dwindled during the late 1890s, and in 1897 a fire consumed the two-block commercial district. In 1898, the Green family rebuilt their Green’s Mercantile Store from native stone, but the commercial district never reached its earlier size. Local ranchers persuaded the railroad to install a cattle loading chute on the west side of Green’s Mercantile in 1911. Green’s Mercantile and the Granite Saloon were the only buildings that lasted past the 1920s. The Granite Saloon was torn down and replaced by a shrine at the corner of the St. Elizabeth Church property.

From the 1880s, through the 1930s, Buffalo Creek flourished as a summer resort with scenic vistas, cool temperatures, and abundant trout fishing that lured visitors arriving on the DSP&P. Summer folks enjoyed dancing in the pavilion atop Christmas Hill, moonlight climbs at Cathedral Spires, trout fishing, hiking, and horseback riding.

Two hotels served summer visitors. The Buffalo Park Hotel at 18051 County Road 126 was built by Jerome in 1886. In 1907, it was sold to the Girl’s Friendly Society sponsored by the Episcopal Church and renamed the Blue Jay Inn (5JF391, NR). It operated as a summer retreat for students, business girls, and church workers for 40 years. In 1947, it reverted to private owners, Mrs. Dan Davis and Mrs. Charles Davis, who operated it as a summer inn.¹⁴⁸ A second hotel was built by John Hudson around 1900 at 10806 Grove, with a grocery store and soda fountain on the ground floor. Known as the Hudson Hotel, then the Buffalo Park Hotel, the inn fell into disuse by the early 1930s and became housing for the CCC workers who labored in the Pike National Forest. It opened again as a hotel in the 1950s and 1960s, then became a facility for juveniles in the 1970s.

As Buffalo Creek grew, residents organized to construct a church and schoolhouse to meet the community’s religious and educational needs. A church was founded by the Episcopalian minister Frederick Oakes, who bought a small cottage in 1895 on Christmas Hill. Reverend Oakes conducted services at the hilltop dance pavilion until funds were raised to construct the Chapel in the Hills, which was dedicated in 1900. Local landholder John L.

¹⁴⁸ Ryan, Edna Sirois, *Narrative History of Buffalo Creek and Buffalo Park*, Denver, Clairidge Printing, 1960, 30. The assessor’s construction date for this building is 1875.

Settlement and Town Building

Jerome donated the land with the stipulation that it be nondenominational. Local carpenter John Quincy Adams Farthing constructed the church with the help of volunteer labor.¹⁴⁹ The chapel still holds Sunday services.

The Christmas Hill subdivision was platted in 1903 by the Buffalo Park Association, whose executives were F. C. Vickers, John L. Jerome, and Robert F. Cassell. Streets were given fanciful names like “Meander,” “The Scramble,” and “Chipmunk Climb.” It contains three large summer lodges, including the John L. Jerome Summer Estate — La Hacienda designed by Frederick J. Sterner and built on Hilltop Road (NR, 5JF190) around 1903. It is possible that Sterner designed the other two lodges.

Pine (1886)

Pine was platted by Charles Dake in 1886 as the summer resort of Pine Grove. Located in the North Fork river valley at 6,738' elevation, Pine Grove grew with a few year-round residences and businesses, and several dozen summer cottages. The DSP&P Railroad was the major factor in Pine's development with logging activity, railroad freight, and summer tourism sustaining the town during its first decades. The community expanded north in 1889 with the Park Addition, platted at the northern edge by Timothy S. Schlessinger.

By 1889, Pine peaked with around 300 residents and 30 businesses, many of them sawmills or wood shippers. Other businesses included Charles Dake's Cottage Hotel, Pine Grove House hotel and saloon, White Pine Hotel, a blacksmith and wagon maker, two grocery stores, meat market, hardware store, drugstore, shoemaker, music teacher, and barber.¹⁵⁰ Residents also worked at local sawmills or labored for the railroad loading coal and repairing tracks. By the 1890s, timber was depleted and the lumber and sawmill industry diminished.

Railroad tourism continued into the early twentieth century with visitors and summer dwellers traveling the two-and-one-half-hour train ride from the Denver station. The influx of summer visitors and residents helped sustain the hotels, Pine Mercantile and other local businesses. By 1920, a few visitors also began arriving by automobile, driving up U.S. 285 then down Elk Creek Road to Pine. The development of Sphinx Park in the 1920s attracted people to Elk Creek. Pine enjoyed a continued, modest popularity as a fishing resort. Several cabins were built during the 1930s and 1940s. Today, Pine has a population of 90 to 100



**View of “Pine Grove” from the west, circa 1900. Beside the river is the White Pines Hotel, no longer extant.
Photo by L. C. McClure, courtesy DPL – WHC.**

¹⁴⁹ Bentley, 253.

¹⁵⁰ *Colorado Business Directory*, as cited by Bentley, 311.

year-round residents with more people in the summer. Over half the dwellings are still occupied only in summer.

Leyden (1902)

The company town of Leyden was developed as a residence for coal miners at the east end of Leyden Creek valley near Leyden Road (West 82nd Avenue) and Quaker Street (see **Transportation** and **Mining** sections). The Leyden Creek valley was the site of coal mining activity from the 1860s through 1950. The D&NW Railroad established a major coal mine in 1901 to produce coal for its power-generating plant. The mining company platted the Leyden townsite and built several dozen small, woodframe dwellings. The town also had a saloon and grocery store. The Denver Tramway Company shut down the Leyden Coal Mine and closed its rail line in 1950. Today, Leyden consists of several dozen small houses and a community center.



Leyden Community Center.

Idledale (1906)

Idledale, originally called Joyland or Joy Town, was homesteaded beginning in 1886. Settlers raised hay, cattle, and potatoes, and planted an apple orchard along the creek bottom. Visitors arrived by a four-horse stage that ascended the canyon from Morrison. John Starbuck acquired the entire site in 1906, supposedly in an East Coast poker game. He named the town after himself and subdivided it into 100' x 25' cabin lots that sold for \$100. In 1911, road improvements by a convict work crew encouraged auto travel up Bear Creek Canyon, and Starbuck developed a ten-acre tent park along the creek to accommodate auto tourists. In 1916, he sold 65 acres on the north edge of the creek to the Denver Motor Club, which built a large stone clubhouse for a cost of \$65,000. The contractor and stone mason was Thomas Eckrom, an active local builder who also constructed stone buildings at Mother Cabrini Shrine (Mother Cabrini Shrine is discussed further in the **I-70 Corridor** section of the *Reconnaissance Survey Report*).



Stone walls from the Denver Motor Club building still remain in Idledale, on private property near Bear Creek.

Settlement and Town Building

During the 1920s, the town had five dance halls, a filling station, and several restaurants. Residents built the Idledale Elementary School at 21420 Highway 74 in 1921. The town was reputedly a haven for bootleggers and speakeasies during Prohibition. It experienced severe floods in 1935 and 1937. Grapevine Road was built north to Mount Vernon Canyon to provide an alternate route into and out of the town. A WPA road project improved the Bear Creek Canyon highway. The town also suffered several fires. The Denver Motor Club lodge burned down in 1938, but some of its stone walls still remain beside Bear Creek. Around this time, the town's name was changed from Starbuck to Idledale. During the early 1940s, the town population consisted of about 80 residents, many of whom worked at the Denver Ordnance Plant.¹⁵¹ Today, Idledale is entirely residential.

Indian Hills (1923)

The Parmalee Gulch/Indian Hills area followed a familiar pattern of agricultural settlement followed by 1920s tourism and summer homes. The area was homesteaded in the 1860s, with livestock ranching, potato farming, and lumbering being the major economic activities. Early settler John D. Parmalee, built the Turkey Creek Canyon road in 1866; he also constructed a wagon road from Parmalee Gulch up Bear Creek Canyon through Evergreen to Bergen Park.

The first summer residence was “Tennbrook” built by Denver physician Chauncey E. Tennant, Sr. noted for earliest use of the X-ray machine in the West.¹⁵² Tennant built a squared-log cabin with dovetail joints in 1917 on five acres at Parmalee Gulch and Giant Gulch roads, using material from an abandoned cabin on Mount Falcon. The Tennant family owned the property for over 35 years and also built several small cabins on the land. Dr. Tennant was a founder of the Mountain Protective Association in 1925.



Tennbrook.

By the early 1920s, road improvements gave Denverites easier access to western Jefferson County, encouraging auto excursions into the forested foothills and providing efficient travel for owners of summer homes. Advertised as “19.5 miles from Broadway and Colfax,” Indian Hills was the largest summer subdivision in the Jefferson County mountains.

The Indian Hills resort developed from south to north up Parmalee Gulch, from the entrance off Turkey Creek Canyon to the broad meadow at the head of the gulch, three miles south of Kittredge. It grew as five filings platted consecutively from south to north between 1923 and 1928, by George Olinger and by C. A. and Augusta Hedberg. Cabins were sold as summer homes for affluent Denverites. Billboards at Turkey Creek Canyon and in Kittredge advertised land sales. At the entrance from Kittredge, Olinger also built a model home that served as a real estate sales office, which remains at the junction of Myers Gulch Road and Highway 74.

¹⁵¹ Carole Lomond with Carolyn Braun, “Joytown to Starbuck to Idledale,” *Mountain Views*, 1996.

¹⁵² Brush and Dittman, 39.

Settlement and Town Building

Competing with summer resorts on Lookout Mountain and in Evergreen, Indian Hills offered recreational and cultural amenities, including a nine-hole golf course with Rustic style clubhouse in Eden Park (Filing Five). Nearby, an artist's colony, writer's colony, and theater and dance colony briefly flourished. To attract visitors and potential buyers, Olinger brought builders from New Mexico to construct the "authentic" NaTeSo Pueblo at Eden Park, named for the Navajo, Tesuque, and San Ildefonso tribes who built it. At the NaTeSo Pueblo, Native American craftsmen produced jewelry, woven goods, and pottery sold to Indian Hills visitors bused in from Denver.



Rustic style cabin on Cherokee Road.

Today, Indian Hills is a bedroom community with a few commercial businesses on lower Parmalee Gulch Road. Many of the summer cabins remain intact, with the greatest concentration in the first two filings that contain Seminole and Santa Clara roads. Several individual properties are also excellent examples of the Rustic style lodge. Residential infill has been curbed by the limited availability of water.

Kittredge (1925)

Kittredge occupies a long, narrow valley along Bear Creek. The area was first homesteaded by John and Amanda Myers, who sold the property in 1870 to Martin and Roxilena Luther. Luther was apparently one of the organizers of the Bear Creek Grange. It is believed that he and his wife lived in the house at 26690 SH 74 before moving to Evergreen in 1882.¹⁵³

The townsite of Kittredge was platted in 1925 as a trout fishing resort by Charles M. Kittredge, a Denver investor, who had developed the Montclair and Park Hill Heights neighborhoods in Denver and built the Kittredge Building at Sixteenth and Glenarm in Denver.

Kittredge bought the 300-acre Martin Luther Ranch, and organized the Kittredge Land Company. Kittredge promoted real estate sales and cottage construction, built several bridges across the creek, and developed the water system. Construction was aided by local carpenter and stone mason Justus Roehling, who designed and built



Town developer Charles Kittredge built his 1938 residence complete with four-car garage at 26388 South End Road.

¹⁵³ Bush and Dittman, 15 – 17.

Crest House at the Mount Evans summit and Barnes Castle near Idledale. Kittredge lived in the Luther residence, before building his own summer home.¹⁵⁴

Periodic summer floods destroyed several houses and nearly all the commercial buildings on the Bear Creek Road along the creek. In the 1930s, the road was rerouted and improved. Today, Kittredge is a bedroom community with a three-block commercial district running along SH 74. The original townsite lies on the south side of the creek, where a number of dwellings remain architecturally intact. New construction has occurred on the east edge of Kittredge and north of SH 74. Several are good examples of a modest version of Craftsman Bungalow.

At the east edge of town Myers Gulch Road branches south through Indian Hills and Parmalee Gulch to connect to U.S. 285. This served as the south entrance to Indian Hills.

Coal Creek Canyon (1920s)

Coal Creek Canyon remained sparsely populated until after World War II. Residents included ranchers and the owners of summer cabins. Twin Spruce was the only prewar summer subdivision, platted in the mid 1920s and built up with Rustic style cabins. The first postwar developments were the Hilltop and Ranch Elsie subdivisions, platted by Emrich Rudolph Kuhlman in the Y formed by SH 72 and Twin Spruce Road in a gently sloping mountain clearing with sunny southern exposure. Kuhlman family members platted other subdivisions in the vicinity: Kuhlman, his wife, Elsie, and their son-in-law, Lionel Brook, platted Georgian Woods and Sylvan Heights in 1952, Blue Mountain View, Lillis Lane, and Vonnie Claire Heights in 1953, and Coal Creek Heights in 1961.¹⁵⁵

Urban conveniences came late to Coal Creek Canyon. Electricity was installed by the Rural Electrification Association (REA) in 1947 and telephone service became available in 1950. The Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association (CCCIA) was organized in 1946 to help provide community services to the growing year-round population. The CCCIA building was completed in 1947, a hollow clay block and glass block building on SH 72, just north of the Jefferson-Boulder County line. A section was added two years later, built with money raised by the Coal Creek Women's Club. A volunteer fire department, organized in 1948, built a firehouse at the SH 72 and Crescent Road intersection. The roof of this building collapsed under a 5' accumulation of snow in 1957. It was replaced with a new firehouse in 1959, after local residents created a tax district to support fire protection. The district includes the canyon's three counties: Jefferson, Boulder, and Gilpin.

Population in the canyon increased to around 500 during the 1950s. This postwar growth was boosted by the 1951 opening of the nuclear weapons manufacturing plant at Rocky Flats, several miles northeast of the Coal Creek Canyon entrance. Road improvements encouraged residential expansion, allowing Coal Creek to serve as bedroom community. Construction of Gross Dam and Reservoir by the Denver Water Board in the early 1950s, ten miles north of the Jefferson-Boulder County line created a few jobs. Today, Coal Creek Canyon serves primarily as a bedroom community with around 1,500 residents, surrounded by large private holdings and properties held by Jefferson County Open Space, Golden Gate Canyon State Park, and Roosevelt National Forest.

¹⁵⁴ Mary Helen Crain, "The Town of Kittredge," *Canyon Courier*, May 28, circa 1975 (Vol. 5 No. 22).

¹⁵⁵ Jan Brescia, "Community History," *Northern Mountains Community Plan*, Golden: Jefferson County Planning & Zoning Department, 1991.

Commerce

A trading post or general store was the first commercial business in most settlements, providing food, animal feed, clothing, housewares, and other consumer goods. Often the store building also contained the post office, and served as a wayside inn. Settlements that evolved into towns expanded with additional businesses, such as a blacksmith shop, meat markets, saloons, and boarding houses.

The communities of Buffalo Creek and Pine had small business districts during their late 1800s logging heyday, later serving tourists and summer residents as the towns became resorts. Kittredge, Idledale, and Evergreen, developed small commercial districts by the 1920s. The commercial districts of each of these towns has been considerably altered, by modernization of buildings, new construction, and/or lost of buildings through fire and flooding. Indian Hills had commercial buildings that catered to tourists and summer dwellers: the Trading Post and NaTeSo Pueblo where Native American craft items were sold. The Trading Post is somewhat modified and the Pueblo has been substantially altered, in part by decay of the adobe structures.

Trading posts and small country stores also operated in other rural locations. From 1930 through 1960, George and Theresa Fields ran Fields Trading Post at Conifer, a stone filling station and small grocery store that met the commercial needs of local ranchers, summer residents, and travelers on U.S. 285. Green's Mercantile at Buffalo Creek has functioned as a general store and post office since it was built in 1898. In northeast Jefferson County, Pearce's General Store at 7851 Indiana served nearby ranchers.

In some places, consumer items were delivered to rural residents. Both on the plains and in the mountains, farmers and ranchers sold produce, dairy products and beef, delivering these to neighbors or to commercial businesses via horse-drawn wagon. Peddlers also marketed household items. For example, a Jewish peddler visited ranches and farms in Mount Vernon Canyon, traveling by one-horse wagon, then by truck.¹⁵⁶



Examples of rural country stores: Fields Trading Post at Conifer (1930 – 1978) and Pearce's Store at 7851 Indiana (5JF994).

¹⁵⁶ Brown, 60.

Public and Community Services

Rural residents required services typically provided by a municipality, utility company, or other organized entity. These services were provided in alternate ways in many unincorporated areas of the county. By the mid-twentieth century several special improvement districts had been created to provide water and sewer and fire protection.

Water, sewer. Early rural residents acquired water from wells, at first hand dug and in later years, mechanically drilled. To this day, water service is limited primarily to concentrated communities. In Evergreen, the Douglas family provided water and electricity around 1904 to the Episcopal Church properties on Lower Bear Creek and the few buildings on Main Street. The water supply was improved on the north side of Forest Hill with a water tank around 1903. A water system was installed in the Christmas Hill subdivision at Buffalo Creek from its 1903 origin. Many summer dwellings were served by wells. Some subdivisions, such as Wandcrest, had “summer water” systems. Water pipe was laid above ground and water turned on in late spring and off in the fall. Outhouses were common into the mid-1900s, until septic tanks were installed.

Electricity, telephone. In 1936, the Rural Electrification Act provided loans to rural areas. The Intermountain Rural Electrification Association (IREA) formed in 1938 to lobby the U.S. Congress for loans to construct a power line up the Platte Canyon that would provide power for southern Jefferson County.¹⁵⁷ By the 1950s, electricity had been installed throughout most of the western mountains. Telephone service reached outlying properties well into the 1900s, as property owners often had to help fund installation of utility lines to their properties.

Mail delivery. Residents typically received their mail at the nearby post office. Rural mail delivery was instituted in the Pine and Elk Creek vicinity, with letter carrier Joe Hill serving residents on horseback.

Education. Children of rural ranchers and farmers typically were educated in one-room schoolhouses. Typically, these buildings were erected as a cooperative effort by ranch families with volunteer labor and donated materials. The earliest schoolhouses were of log. Most were later replaced by frame buildings. Ranch life and the harsh mountain climate often necessitated an irregular school calendar. Some children attended classes from May through September, because it was difficult to travel in winter, and others began classes in November, after hay harvest was over.

The drastic increase in student enrollment after World War II, the improvement of rural roads, and the introduction of school buses contributed to consolidation of Jefferson County schools in 1950. As new school buildings were built, the county’s rural facilities closed. By 1965, all rural schoolhouses had been phased out. A number of schoolhouses were converted into grange halls, churches, or community centers. Some became private residences, and a few were moved to new locations, like the Guy Hill School now relocated to the Clear Creek History Park in Golden.

¹⁵⁷ Moynihan and Waters, 41.

Settlement and Town Building

*Extant School houses in Unincorporated Jefferson County	
Buffalo Creek School	Private residence
Deer Creek School	Moved to Hildebrand Ranch/Chatfield Nature Preserve
Evergreen School	Church
Fairmount School/Fairmount Grange Hall	Owned and occupied by a Methodist Church.
Guy Hill	Moved into Golden, now located in Clear Creek Park
Indian Hills School	Community center
Idledale School	Church
Lamb School	Community center
Kittredge School	Church
Mandalay School	Community center
Medlen School	Community center?
North Turkey Creek/Hodgson School	Owned and maintained by Wild Rose Grange
Pine Grove (Pine Junction) School	Private residence
Pine School	Private residence
Pleasant Park School	Owned and maintained by Pleasant Park Grange
Rockland School/Rockland Grange Hall	Leased to Rockland Grange since 1950.
Sampson School	Community center
*Not an exhaustive list	



**Sampson School, 2002.
Photograph by Cathleen Norman**

Spiritual worship. A few rural communities organized to build a church with volunteer labor and donated funds and material. Sometimes this structure also served as a schoolhouse and community hall. In other cases, worship services were held in private homes.

Medical services. Medical services were provided by country doctors. Rural residents needing hospitalization and long term health care went to facilities in eastern Jefferson County cities or in Denver.

Fire protection. Fire protection is especially important in the mountain areas because of the prominence of forests and threat of forest fires. Fires raged during the gold rush period. For example, a huge forest fire was reported in 1859 northeast of Golden, enroute to Black Hawk and Central City. It was set by camping parties and killed nearly 12 people.¹⁵⁸ Early accounts describe Ute tribes setting mountain fires to discourage settlers. Also, prospectors set fire to forests in the Golden Gate Canyon vicinity in order to reveal rock outcroppings by prospectors.

There was no organized fire department in rural Jefferson County until the 1940s. Until recent years, fire protection has been provided entirely by volunteer organizations. The Mountain Parks Protective Association was reorganized in 1925 to serve community needs of mountain residents. The Association assisted with volunteer fire prevention, along with police/theft prevention and forestry maintenance. One effort was sponsoring a WPA project in 1938 to control the mountain pine beetle, treating over 8,000 trees at a cost of \$50,000.¹⁵⁹

The Indian Hills Fire Department was organized in 1947, headquartered in the schoolhouse with a station wagon as the fire truck. Five “fire boxes” containing buckets, shovels, axes, and ropes were erected at the main intersections. The Evergreen Fire Department formed in 1954. A disastrous fire on the Chatfield Turkey Farm encouraged formation of the Inter-Canyon Fire Department at Fenders in 1954.¹⁶⁰ The Long family was instrumental in organizing the Elk Creek Fire Department, and a fire house was built in the early 1950s.



Chapel in the Hills, Buffalo Creek.

¹⁵⁸ Ramstetter, 24.

¹⁵⁹ Bush and Dittmer, 80.

¹⁶⁰ *Mountain Memories*, Edna Garrison, 39.

Cultural Resource Types

Single dwelling, multiple dwellings

School house, church, community center, fire house

Commercial building, commercial or residential district

Structure associated with municipal water facilities, fire protection, and other public services

Physical Sites

Described above.

The individual townsites reflect the nature of community development that occurred in Jefferson County. Individual rural schoolhouses, churches, and community centers are important reminders of the dispersed nature of communities in the rural areas. Structures associated with water service, fire protection, or other public services reflect how urban needs were met in rural areas.

Defense Industries, 1941 – 1990s

The defense industry that developed in Jefferson County during and after World War II had a significant impact on both the county's cities and on its unincorporated areas. The defense industry played a critical role in the county's postwar transition from a predominantly agrarian economy to an industry-based economy. The facilities contributed to the county's growth by creating thousands of jobs. The demand for worker housing was a major factor in suburban expansion throughout eastern Jefferson County from the 1940s into the late 1990s.

Denver Ordnance Depot

The 640-acre facility between Simms and Kipling streets and West Sixth Avenue and Alameda Avenue originated as a weapons-manufacturing plant in 1941. Although the plant was in operation for less than five years, it had a significant impact on the Denver metropolitan area and on Jefferson County. The facility stimulated the regional economy during the war years and ensured continuation of this growth through its 1950s conversion to the Denver Federal Center. It is also the major site in Jefferson County associated with World War II.¹⁶¹

The Denver Ordnance Depot was developed on a portion of the extensive Hayden Ranch, a 6,300-acre cattle property that stretched from Garrison Street to Rooney Road and from West Sixth Avenue to Alameda Avenue. The ranch began as "Down Dale," owned by Major Jacob Downing. Downing, a noted lawyer and judge, acquired a 2,000-acre parcel east of Green Mountain in the late 1860s, which he fenced, irrigated, and cultivated. Downing cultivated fruit trees, sugar beets, and alfalfa, and ran an extensive Hereford cattle ranch. He also built a race track on his ranch for his prized Arabian horses.

In 1874, the Agricultural Ditch Company was founded and water was diverted from Clear Creek near Golden to irrigate Downing's ranch and other lands. The masonry flume in the southeast quadrant of the present-day Federal Center is the oldest known structure on the property. Downing died in 1907, and his ranch was purchased by the Thomas S. Hayden Realty Company in 1913.

The United States' entry into World War II precipitated plans for constructing a large new munitions manufacturing and testing plant. The Denver Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, railroad interests and newspapers promoted Colorado as a potential site. The Federal Government selected the Hayden Ranch eight miles west of Denver as the location for the Denver Ordnance Plant in January 1941, and acquired 2,080 acres for \$181,077.¹⁶² The property was expanded to 3,650 acres, with acquisition of neighboring parcels. The Remington Arms plant was contracted to operate the facility.

Construction of the facility was completed in October 1941. The enormous project cost \$28 million and employed up to 8,000 workers, most of whom were local residents. The complex was designed by Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, a Detroit engineering firm, and built by Broderick and Gordon, a Denver construction firm. George Cranmer, Manager of

¹⁶¹ This section is summarized from: "Denver Federal Center Site Characterization Study," Lakewood: DFC, circa 1990; article by Christine Pfaff, historian at U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Lakewood: DFC, 1992; "Denver Federal Center" description by Al Green, General Services Administration (GSA), Buildings Services, Lakewood: DFC, circa 1995.

¹⁶² Pfaff, 2.

Denver's Park System, also assisted in site planning and development.¹⁶³ Buildings were identified by number and grouped according to function. Each of the manufacturing buildings had its own cafeteria. Other structures included guard quarters, a garage, fire station, police station, and salvage facility. The property was surrounded by a fence with guard towers.

The Denver Ordnance Plant was one of four gigantic factories around the country operated by the Remington Arms Company. The Denver plant manufactured four types of .30 caliber ammunition: ball, armor piercing, tracer, and incendiary rounds. Cartridges also were loaded into belts for machine guns at the plant. The facility employed 10,000 people, producing 4 million rounds of ammunition daily. Expansions in 1942 and 1943 resulted in nearly 200 buildings. The plant was served by a spur rail line south from the D&IM line that delivered manufacturing materials and transported the finished products to distribution points throughout the country.

At its peak, in summer 1943, the plant employed 19,500 workers, nearly half of them women, who worked three shifts around the clock to produce 6.25 million rounds daily. These workers lived in the Denver area as well as in new houses erected at Daniel Gardens west of 1300 – 1600 Simms Street and in the Garrison Street area. Workers also resided in former summer residences at Idledale and on Lookout Mountain.

In 1944, the Remington contract with the War Department expired. Kaiser Industries was awarded a contract to manufacture heavy artillery shells, to produce 8 inch and 155 millimeter shells. In addition, General Foods operated a C-ration assembly and packing facility. Manufacturing levels declined, leaving around 10,000 people working at the plant.

The surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945 brought the end of World War II. Weapons production halted immediately, and massive lay-offs began. By October 1945, only 600 workers remained at the plant. Early the following year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took over the facility. The Veterans' Administration and Bureau of Reclamation were the first federal agencies to move into the Denver Federal Center (DFC). In 1949, the General Service Administration (GSA) acquired responsibility for the property. Additional agencies moved into government offices and laboratories in converted manufacturing facilities. The DFC became the largest compound of Federal agencies outside of Washington, D.C.

In the late 1960s, several bomb shelters were constructed on the property, as shelter for vital federal officials in the event of threatened nuclear war attack.¹⁶⁴ Around 1970, acreage between Kipling and Garrison streets from U.S. 6/West 6th Avenue to Alameda Avenue was acquired by Jefferson County. The County constructed an athletic stadium, an elementary school, a junior high school, tennis courts, and a social services building along the east side of Kipling Street, between West 6th Avenue and West Alameda Avenue.

By 2000, the DFC contained over 25 federal agencies employing over 6,000 workers. Federal activity occupies all five of the large manufacturing units, the administration building and the ballistics building. These include the U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, National Archives and Records Administration (Rocky Mountain Region), Department of the Interior - Mineral Resources, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Enforcement Investigation Center for the Environmental Protection Agency. The DFC has also influenced location of the offices of various federal agencies nearby, including Western

¹⁶³ Volume 12, Issue 20. *Historically Jeffco*, 7-8.

¹⁶⁴ Karen Abbott, "Cold War-era bomb shelter earns historic status," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 12, 2000, 22.

Area Power Administration, Soil Conservation Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

In 1996, the firm of Louis and Berger surveyed historic structures at the DFC, and sixteen properties were recorded in the CHS-OAHP database (5JF1048.1 – 5JF1048.16). Most were constructed in 1941, and categorized as serving defense, manufacturing, storage, and/or business uses. In 1999, two of these properties were designated to the National Register: the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Operations Center (5JF1048.13) and Building 710, which contains the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency, Region 6 Operations Center (5JF1048.14).

Rocky Flats Plant

The Rocky Flats nuclear weapons manufacturing plant, located midway between Golden and Boulder in northern Jefferson County, has exerted a major economic impact on the county from the early 1950s into the twenty-first century. The federal operation strengthened the county economy through wages paid to local residents employed at the plant and through the plant's purchasing activities. The Rocky Flats facility also stimulated development in northern Jefferson County from the mid-1950s through the 1990s, including suburban neighborhoods in Arvada, Wheat Ridge, Lakewood, and Coal Creek. Additionally, the plant has curbed growth in the Standley Lake Basin and limited adjacent land use to industrial purposes, such as gravel quarrying.

Construction of this Cold War facility continued a pattern of construction of defense-related facilities in the American West. This trend began in the Denver area with the World War I construction of Fitzsimmons Army Hospital and the World War II development of Lowry Air Force Base, Buckley Air Force Base, and the Denver Ordnance Plant. In the late 1940s, the threat of nuclear attack by the U.S.S.R. motivated the federal government to fund development of nuclear weapons manufacturing facilities. U.S. Senator Edwin "Big Ed" Johnson of Colorado, at the time the chair of the Senate's Military Affairs Committee, helped influence the selection of Rocky Flats as the site for a \$45 million defense plant.

In 1950, the Atomic Energy Commission selected a 2,560-acre site 16 miles northwest of Denver, located on barren, wind-swept, rocky flats. Marcus Church and his mother, Katherine Church, owned 1,200 acres of the property. Ranchers George Lindsay and Frank Rodgers owned the balance of the acreage. The Federal Government offered the Church family \$18 per acre for their ranchland in 1951, and paid them \$69,323 for the property in 1955. The Churches had raised livestock, hay, winter wheat, and alfalfa on their property. Prior to the forced sale, Marcus Church had also irrigated some fields from Rocky Flats Reservoir at the south part of Rocky Flats, and had acquired the small waterbody as a private reservoir and fishing club.¹⁶⁵

The Rocky Flats plant was developed under management of the Dow Chemical Company. Construction by the Austin Company of Cleveland began in 1951. The construction work force peaked at 2,800 in July 1952. Processing of plutonium began in 1953; the plant consisted of 18 buildings and 1,081 workers. The plant was composed of four widely separated areas. Each performed a different manufacturing process: Plant A (Building 444) fabricated parts from depleted uranium; Plant B (Building 881) recovered enriched uranium and fabricated parts from it; Plant C (Building 771) contained the plutonium

¹⁶⁵ Ackland, 24, 64, 99.

operations; and Plant D (Building 991) was the assembly and shipping point. Other buildings contained support functions, including administration offices, a cafeteria, plant safety, medical emergency, health physics, garage and fire station, maintenance, production support, laundry, warehouse, storage, paper shredder shed, hazardous storage shed, and waste treatment plant.¹⁶⁶

In 1956-1957, changes in the design of the nuclear warhead triggers produced at Rocky Flats necessitated construction of seven new buildings and additions to three existing buildings. In 1965-66, eleven more buildings were constructed, including research and development laboratories, guard houses, and waste-water treatment facilities. This expansion was compelled, in part, by the plant becoming the country's sole producer of nuclear triggers when manufacturing, research, and development functions were transferred to Rocky Flats from Los Alamos, New Mexico and from Oak Ridge, Tennessee. By 1970, the plant employed 3,600 workers, with 1,050 living in Jefferson County.¹⁶⁷ In 1972, the Federal Government acquired 4,600 acres as a buffer zone surrounding the plant. During the 1970s, five more buildings were constructed, and during the 1980s and 1990s, numerous temporary trailers and several low-level and mixed hazardous waste tents were added.

Early on, the facility attracted public protest and citizen criticism. Several times during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, anti-war protestors demonstrated at the plant entrance, encircled the property, or tried to prevent vehicles and railcars from entering and exiting the facility. Residents in rural north Jeffco and the northwestern suburbs of Arvada became alarmed about the possibility of air-borne particulates and contamination of drinking water. In 1975, a state task force concluded that the location of a nuclear manufacturing plant so close to the metropolitan area posed a public health threat, due to the vast amount of plutonium at the site and the potential for nuclear accidents. A 1988 report submitted to the U.S. Congress indicated that the aging facilities, waste storage, and eventual clean up at Rocky Flats posed a major problem. In 1989, the U.S. Secretary of Energy, James Watts, closed the plant for correction of safety deficiencies, and Rocky Flats was put on the National Priorities list for remediation under the government's Super Fund program.

Meanwhile, the demand for nuclear weaponry declined. The Cold War waned with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and break up of the U.S.S.R. through dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991. President George H.W. Bush canceled several nuclear weapons programs that would have provided future work at Rocky Flats. The mission of the plant changed from defense manufacturing to environmental restoration and waste management.

The Rocky Flats industrial area consists of 384 acres in the center of the plant site, occupied by 436 structures. These structures consist of: approximately 150 permanent buildings, most of which are industrial and constructed of concrete, concrete block, or corrugated metal; 90 temporary trailers; and numerous smaller structures, temporary structures, or parts of larger buildings. Listed in 1996, the Rocky Flats Historic District (5JF1014, NR) contains 61 contributing buildings.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Ackland, 65, 76; *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Rocky Flats Plant*, Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1990, Section 7, 1.

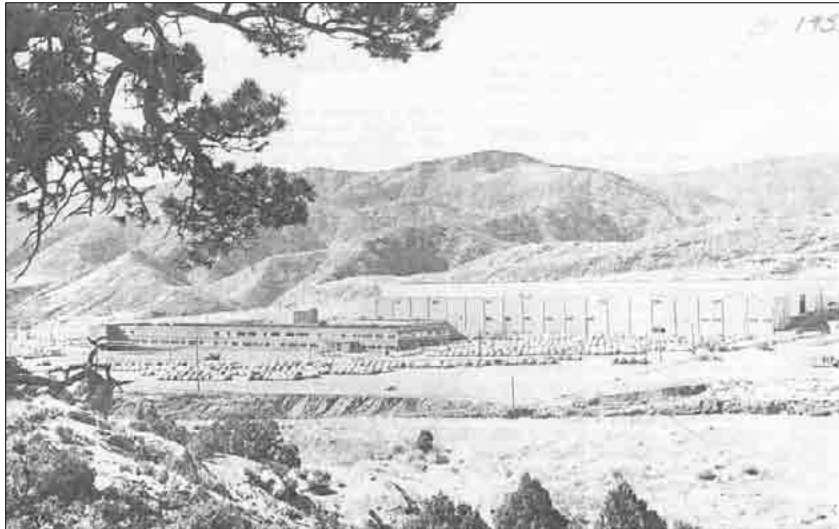
¹⁶⁷ "Nuclear Weapons Manufacturer – Rocky Flats Plant Major Area Employer," *The Sentinel, Lakewood Edition*, April 2, 1970, 24.

¹⁶⁸ *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Rocky Flats Plant*, Section 7, 1.

Federal legislation has been introduced to convert the entire Rocky Flats site into a National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Jefferson County is pursuing preservation and possible historic designation of the only remaining agricultural complex on the Rocky Flats site, the Lindsay Ranch. An architectural survey in the late 1980s reported that structures remaining on the Lindsay Ranch property consisted of a circa 1950 barn, a farm or ranch house, a collapsed building, and corrals and fences. An abandoned orchard marks the site of another former ranch called Antelope Springs (5JF483).

Martin Company/Martin Marietta/Martin-Lockheed Facility

Martin-Lockheed, the aerospace manufacturing complex in southern Jefferson County, reflects the continuing trend of post World War II defense manufacturing in Jefferson County. The plant originated in 1957 as the Martin Company facility. In 1955, the U. S. Air Force had launched a program to develop a second generation of guided missiles. The federal government selected the Glen L. Martin Company as the contractor to produce the Titan intercontinental ballistic missile. The Baltimore-based firm had previously developed the Martin Viking high altitude rocket at White Sands, New Mexico, the world's first all-aluminum space vehicle. (The firm's name was shortened to the Martin Company in 1957.)



**Recently completed Martin Company plant, 1957, in the Jefferson County foothills.
Photo from “The Martin Company” booklet, 1958.**

Ninety-three cities in 33 states competed for the site of the Titan manufacturing complex.¹⁶⁹ The Denver Chamber of Commerce and Jefferson County Board of Economic Development lobbied for the Front Range site eventually chosen, a 7,000-acre campus located 23 miles southwest of Denver, “nestled in a rocky hollow” just north of the entrance to Waterton Canyon.

¹⁶⁹ Peter B. Teets, “Martin Marietta Denver Aerospace – 30 Years of Progress,” Denver: Martin Marietta, 1986, 10.

Construction began February 6, 1956. Within one year, the administration-engineering building, factory, cafeteria, and personnel and security building had been completed. The Denver Chamber of Commerce heralded the “new breed of rocket men” designing and building the Titan missile, a 98’ tall rocket capable of carrying 3,800 pounds.¹⁷⁰ By 1957, the plant employed 5,000 workers.¹⁷¹ On February 6, 1959, the first Titan missile was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Production costs considerably exceeded original estimates of \$90 million per rocket.

By 1959, the Denver-Martin plant had expanded to a \$52.5 million complex of 22 major buildings with 1.3 million square feet in floor space. The integrated missile facility accommodated the entire manufacturing process, including design, fabrication and captive testing. The key missile test facilities included a hydrostatic test fixture, vertical test fixture, propulsion laboratory, and general purpose laboratory. The “home of the Titan” employed 8,800 workers that year.¹⁷²

Martin Marietta’s plant at Waterton, called the Denver-Martin plant, served the United States’ twin missions of space exploration and aerospace defense during the 1960s. In 1961, the Martin Company merged with American-Marietta, creating the firm of Martin Marietta with 56,000 employees nationwide.¹⁷³ The merger created a “mine to market” conglomerate with a range of assets that included concrete plants, aluminum mines, and factories of household cleaning products. In 1961, the Denver-Martin plant employed 14,000 workers.¹⁷⁴

In 1962, development began on the Titan II, the second in a family of missiles and boosters that eventually consisted of 16 space launch vehicles. That year, the Titan II was selected as the launch vehicle for the two-man Gemini space capsule, a key component in

America’s ambitious space exploration program that would put man on the moon. In 1962, Martin Marietta also opened a 6,777-acre campus at Orlando, Florida, where the Pershing missile was manufactured.



**Titan missile in static test stand at Martin Company plant in southern Jefferson County.
Photo courtesy DPL – WHC.**

¹⁷⁰ William B. Harwood, *Raising Heaven and Earth – The Story of Martin Marietta People and Their Pioneering Achievements*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993, 302.

¹⁷¹ “The Martin Company,” Baltimore, MD: The Martin Company, 1958, 8.

¹⁷² Don Herron, Manager, Information Services, Martin Denver, Fact Sheet “News About Martin Denver,” Littleton, Colorado, 1959.

¹⁷³ Harwood, 356.

¹⁷⁴ Warren Lowe, “Space Age Industries Boost Area Economy,” *Rocky Mountain News*, June 30, 1961, 105.

Martin Marietta expanded in the 1970s and 1980s through space exploration, space defense, an array of government service contracts, and its diverse aggregate industries. In 1970, the 7,000-acre Waterton plant had 80 buildings and employed 6,000 people.¹⁷⁵ During the 1980s, the Denver-Martin plant supported space exploration, producing fuel tanks for the Space Shuttle and manufacturing the Magellan spacecraft that explored the planet Venus. In the mid-1990s, the firm merged with a major competitor, Seattle-based Lockheed Corporation, to form Lockheed-Martin.

The manufacturing facility affected the economies of Arapahoe, Jefferson, and Douglas counties through payroll salaries and through subcontracts for provision of goods, supplies, and services. Martin Marietta/Lockheed-Martin also exerted a tremendous impact on residential construction by creating a huge demand for new homes for employee housing.

Cultural Resource Types

Manufacturing buildings, test facilities, administrative and support buildings, guard shacks and towers

Plant infrastructure, such as roadways, loading docks, railroad tracks and beds

Physical Sites

Denver Federal Center

Rocky Flats Plant

Martin-Lockheed plant at Waterton Canyon

¹⁷⁵ “Martin Company Vital to Space Exploration,” *The Sentinel, Lakewood Edition*, April 2, 1970, 43.

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