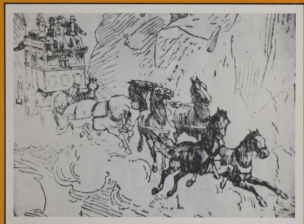


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## PART THREE TALES OF EARLY LEADVILLE



BY  
RENE L. COQUOZ

1876 COLO. CENTENNIAL EDITION 1976

Price \$1.75

PART THREE  
TALES OF  
EARLY LEADVILLE

By RENE L. COQUOZ

JOHNSON PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Boulder, Colorado

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
BERTHA J. COQUOZ  
AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

PART THREE—TALES OF EARLY LEADVILLE

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A thank you to the many persons who have written to me regarding other booklets for their kind words, for giving me the inspiration to write booklets concerning some Leadville history.

Also a thank you to the Western Historical Library for some of the photos that appear in the booklet.

THANK YOU

AUTHOR



## THE LEGEND OF THOMAS WALSH, EVALYN AND THE HOPE DIAMOND

### FOREWORD

In 1959, the first booklet, titled, TALES OF EARLY LEADVILLE was written, followed in 1964 by Part Two, NEW TALES OF EARLY LEADVILLE. This booklet, Part Three, is similar, but contains new stories of the historical past of Leadville and early day Colorado. Part One is presently in its fifth printing and Part Two is in its second printing.

Some of the stories were published in the Leadville Herald Democrat. Of interest is the Legend of Thomas Walsh and Evalyn Walsh McLean and the Hope Diamond.

The Underground Banquet, 1,000 feet below the surface of the Wolfstone Mine in 1911, is also a unique story of the past.

By Stage - By Wagons - By Foot - this story depicts the early day life in a tough and tumble early day mining day town. Some made fortunes in one day - only to be found dead broke the next day. There were no nights in Leadville - or were there?

On the humorous side, the editor of the Leadville newspaper answers a reader who wrote and wanted to know, "What is a Burro?"

For those who like ghost stories, I have included The Ghost on Front Street and A Spooky Tale.

### AUTHOR

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Colorado has had many colorful legends, and Tom Walsh was no exception. His discovery of the fabulous Camp Bird Mine, near Ouray, was not handed to him on a silver platter. With his pack burro and provisions, as well as prospecting equipment, he walked many miles around the hills of Boulder, Central City, Leadville, Silverton and other localities. At a young age, Walsh was afflicted with a respiratory ailment, but a strong determination kept him in the hills searching for the precious gold mineral. Some years after his death, Evalyn Walsh McLean became the proud owner of the much publicized Hope Diamond.

### Migrated From Ireland

Thomas F. Walsh was born in Ireland on April 2, 1851. To help his father make a living, he left school at an early age to become an apprentice in the carpenter trade. At the age of 19, Tom left Ireland for America, along with his father and sister. His brother had left from Ireland about two years prior to his family. When the trio reached New York, they learned that Michael, Tom's brother, had joined the U. S. Cavalry and was sent west to help maintain peace with the Indian tribes, which at the time were causing considerable trouble to the settlers.

Tom and his father and sister remained in New York for two years, but Tom grew restless and wanted to move on—so he set out for the west. In due time he arrived at Deadwood, South Dakota, in the Black Hills area. There he was hired out as a carpenter, as there were a number of homes and buildings under construction. He spent all of his spare time in the hills prospecting for gold. There was no question that Tom was struck with "gold fever." It was in 1873 that he left Deadwood for Colorado. He arrived in Del Norte and was employed there again as a carpenter.

### Leadville Bound

In early 1877, having heard of the rich carbonate of lead discoveries in Leadville, Tom Walsh left Del Norte in the spring and set out for the city in the clouds (10,150 feet elevation). He was there but a short time when he became well acquainted with Jerry Daly and Felix Leavich. The three men pooled their money and purchased





*Evalyn Walsh McLean, wearing the Hope Diamond and the Star of the East Diamond.*



*Edward B. McLean, husband of Evalyn.*



*The Walsh family with daughter Evalyn and son Vinson.*



*Walsh's million dollar home in Washington, D.C.*

the City Hotel on Chestnut Street—the main thoroughfare of the mining camp.

With Walsh's knowledge of the carpentry trade, the hotel was renovated and an extra floor was added to the building. Also added was a first class dining room, one of the finest in that period of the century. The hotel was re-opened under the name of the Grand Hotel.

Two years later, Tom Walsh bought out his two partners and became the sole owner. From 1878 and for several years, all roads, trails and paths led to Leadville. People came by the hundreds—by stage coach, buggy, horseback, donkey and by foot. The population in 1877 was about 500—by 1880 it had reached an estimated 30 to 40 thousand persons. It became the second largest city in Colorado, and for a brief period, it was the largest city in the State, exceeding the population of Denver, "The Queen City Of The Plains."

Even though the Grand Hotel had been enlarged, it turned people away by the hundreds as they were unable to take care of all the people coming to the new camp. Two persons were placed in each of the rooms, even though both were complete strangers. Some of the hotels at the time were rudely constructed and still had dirt floors. The rooms were only separated by a canvas in place of walls. The confusion that existed was far beyond comprehension. The women were always given the best quarters, but most of the early settlers were men.

The greatest turmoil occurred in 1879—Chestnut Street was lined from curb to curb. It stretched for more than two miles in length with rude cabins, crudely constructed homes and tents. The nights were illuminated by candles, lamps, lanterns and bon-fires for the stage lines and freighters that were arriving day and night. The supplies were unloaded in the street and were under armed guard day and night.

### Riff-Raffs

Worst of all were the riff-raffs who came seeking an easy dollar by robbing, even killing for a few dollars if they had to. There were con men, bunko shysters, saloons, dance halls, theatres and so on. There were girls of every nationality, dressed in fancy clothes, garbed with a variety of colored feathers. And let's not forget the vigilantes who handed out justice at the end of a rope.

In early 1879, the Leadville Gas Plant was completed and the saloons, dance halls, etc. were brilliantly illuminated by the gas



*Grand Hotel*

lamps, as were also the streets. Two men were hired by the gas company, each with a small ladder and a large box of matches. It was their job to light the street lamps. Strangely enough though, when the moon was bright, the two men were ordered to forget about lighting the street lamps.

Teamsters in the streets were shouting profane language at their horses or mules, whatever they were driving. There was much more noise than at a country fairgrounds. The women, in their fancy dresses, would lure the men to drinks, gambling, etc., and they were paid on a commission basis. It was the survival of the fittest. Men paid to be able to sleep in sheds, livery stables, saloons and any other sheltered place. Yet, there was no night in Leadville—every establishment was open 24 hours a day. The Grand Hotel was also equipped with gas lights and Tom Walsh was a proud man.

### Love and Marriage

In the fall of 1878, Tom Walsh met Carrie B. Reed, and the romance led to a wedding on February 20, 1879. As time went on, Mrs. Walsh managed the affairs of the hotel and this gave her husband plenty of time for prospecting. For some time he prospected in the Sugar Loaf area, about 5 miles west of Leadville. Later he tried his luck at St. Kevin (Sowbelly Gulch). In this venture, he formed a partnership with Amos Henderson.

From 1878 and on there were many mining organizations established, all of them with eastern capital. Many became millionaires, others were not so fortunate.

The Walshes' first child was born in 1882, but the infant survived only for a few days. Their second child, Evalyn, was born in 1886. Their son, Vinson, was born in 1888. The exact date of when the family left Leadville is unknown to this writer, as research has failed to turn up any information as to their departure, however, it was believed to have been about 1888. From Leadville the Walsh family moved to Denver. Tom spent a great deal of time prospecting in the Boulder area. It was while he was there that he became familiar with tellurium minerals. From there he prospected the Gilpin and Clear Creek counties.

### Enters Into Smelting Works

In 1892, Walsh and a group of men formed the Summit Smelting Company. They contracted the smelter in Kokomo, Colorado, about 18 miles north of Leadville. They operated the smelter for a short time and then sold it to an eastern concern.

From there, Walsh went to Silverton and constructed another smelting works there. This venture failed and Walsh went back to prospecting. His health began to fail—a respiratory ailment became worse. He was advised to keep away from the hills and, most important, he was told not to sleep on the ground. He then went back east to try and regain his health, but was unsuccessful. He returned to Colorado and the family moved to Ouray. Against his Doctor's orders, he returned to the hills and his love for prospecting.

One day, along with his small daughter Evalyn, Walsh decided to look over the Camp Bird mine dumps. He gathered some samples from the dumps and with his blow-pipe outfit, which he always had with him, found that when he applied the acid test, rich tellurium minerals were present. The famous Camp Bird mine was first opened in 1877 by William Weston and several partners. They had dug a number of shafts and several tunnels, however, it was evident that the men knew little about tellurium ores, as they merely dumped it over the side. At the time, they were searching for silver and lead minerals.

### Riches

Walsh knew that the tellurium minerals were in the mine somewhere and decided to go into the tunnel and investigate. He told

his daughter to wait for him outside the opening while he entered the mine. Going several hundred feet into the tunnel, he found several veins starting at about 100 feet in the tunnel. When Walsh came out, he told his daughter, "We struck it rich."

The next day, Walsh went to the Treasurers office at Ouray to get the name of the owners of the Camp Bird Mine. The owners sold the mine to Walsh, and he also purchased all the adjoining ground. He then sent a letter to John Benson in Leadville. Benson had been his smelter and mine foreman on several occasions. Benson finally arrived in Ouray and was met by Walsh. The two men mapped out plans to open the mine, which was to be in charge of John Benson. They also agreed to hire a number of miners. However, before the opening of the mine, Walsh took sick again and his doctor ordered him confined to bed. This, incidentally, happened at a critical time, as Mrs. Walsh had been called to Denver where a member of her family was seriously ill. This happened about four days prior to her husbands illness. Evalyn and Vinson were left at home with their father.

After a few days, Walsh felt worse than he had for some time and he feared his life was short on earth. This caused him great concern, as he had not told his wife of the mine as she was already gone when he made his discovery. One evening, he called his young daughter into the room and he asked her if she remembered where he had gone into the mine while she waited for him. She replied that she did as he was so excited when he told her that they had struck it rich. He then told her that if something happened to him, she was to tell her mother about the mine and its location, and to give her all the deeds and other papers that he kept in a small tin box in the closet.

### "We Are the Only Ones That Know"

Walsh told his daughter that they were the only ones that knew of the location of the tunnel at the mine. He told Evalyn that Benson had returned to Leadville for his belongings, and when he returned to take him to the mine and show him the location. For a 13 year old girl, she held quite a responsibility on her shoulders. But she was proud that her father had confided in her and assured him that she would take care of everything. Perhaps some of his sickness was also the result of over-excitement about his rich discovery of the mine.

But Tom's Irish luck held out, and it was not yet his time to leave

this earth. In a few days he started feeling better. Mrs. Walsh returned home on the same day that Walsh had given his daughter the instructions about the mine.

John Benson returned to Ouray and in a short time, the two men started work on the mine dump to recover tellurium ores. An assay that was made indicated that the mineral was worth \$3,000 a ton. Tom Walsh was on his way to riches far beyond comprehension, amounting to millions of dollars. When work was started on a full scale basis, the production netted Walsh more than \$5,000 per day, and this was just the start. The Camp Bird mine was so fantastic in production that it astonished the entire world.

As the months went by, Walsh again became ill and was advised by his doctors to seek a lower climate. After Walsh had talked the matter over with Benson, the two agreed that Benson would take over the management of the mine and he was to receive a share of the receipts from the mineral. The Walsh family then moved to Denver and purchased a home on Capitol Hill.

The name of Tom Walsh became a household word in Colorado—whether in the halls of the Capitol Building, among the financial leaders of the State, or in a lonely prospector's cabin in the hills. His love for Colorado and his loyalty won for him "Colorado's Unofficial Ambassador" title in Washington. In 1900, he and his family went to the World's Fair in Paris as United States Commission representative.

While he was there, he met King Leopold of Belgium, and he became interested in the development of the mineral land in the Congo Free State.

He was one of the organizers of the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress. He was also connected with the irrigation progress throughout the west. He was a strong advocate and tireless worker for good roads. Colorado had been good to Thomas Walsh and he loved the State.

### Washington Bound

In 1898, the Walsh family moved to Washington, D.C. There, he leased one of the most beautiful homes in the Capitol City. After the family returned home from the World's Fair in Paris in 1900, he constructed a beautiful million dollar home, four stories high. There were 23 servants and maids on the staff. The family entertained many dignitaries from many quarters of Europe as well as Congressmen and President's of the United States. He also con-

structed a large office building and named it after his State, Colorado Building. He also constructed another building, named in honor of where the Camp Bird Mine was located, Ouray.

### Camp Bird Mine Sold

In 1902, Walsh met with representatives of an English syndicate who were interested in purchasing the Camp Bird Mine, and he was made a very generous offer which was more than he expected. He told the men he would consider the offer and advise them in a few days. Mrs. Walsh, however, was opposed to selling the mine, but her husband felt that it would be better, considering his present state of health. He felt that if something were to happen to him, the burden of operating the mine would fall upon his wife's shoulders and the responsibility would be too great for her to handle. After thinking it over, Mrs. Walsh consented, agreeing that it would be too great a burden for her and all others concerned.

Thomas Walsh did not receive an education, he educated himself, and he was gifted with great ability in business matters. He received the sum of \$5,200,000, plus 100,000 shares of stock in the sale of the Camp Bird Mine. The dividends that were paid to him on the stock he owned amounted to more than a half million dollars per year.

### A Tragic Day

August 19, 1905, was a tragic day for the Walsh family. Their son, Vinson, and daughter, Evalyn, along with friends and their chauffeur, attended a clam bake near Washington and everyone was in a happy and joyous mood, having a wonderful time. When the time came to return to their homes, Vinson asked the chauffeur if he could drive the car back to their home. The chauffeur saw nothing wrong with this request, as Vinson had driven the car before. They had gone a short distance when they came to a down grade and the speed was moderate. Then it happened—a back tire blew out and Vinson lost control of the car which swerved from one side of the road to the other, picking up speed. The car plunged down the side and landed at the bottom of a gully. Other members of the party saw the crash and several raced down to the car. It was a horrible scene indeed. Vinson was killed, Evalyn was badly bruised and had a broken hip and the chauffeur lay nearby unconscious and was bleeding badly. A member of the party rushed to Washington

for a doctor and an ambulance, which at the time was a horse-drawn vehicle.

Needless to say, this was a serious shock to the parents. Evalyn lay in a hospital bed for seven months, her injuries requiring several operations. In the end, she had taken so much medication that she became addicted to the drugs. After many months and a hard struggle, she managed to fight off the craving for drugs. As the result of the accident, the broken hip left one leg shorter than the other and she had to have specially built shoes.

### Back To Colorado

Prior to the accident, Evalyn had been on a number of dates with Edward B. McLean, son of John R. McLean, wealthy publisher of the Washington Post and the Cincinnati Enquirer. Better known as Ned, he visited Evalyn on many occasions while she lay in the hospital. He proved to be a great inspiration to Evalyn, who at times prayed to die. It was Ned who gave her the desire to live, as he always displayed deep affection for her.

The tragic accident that happened in Washington prompted the Walsh family to move back to Colorado. They purchased the Wolhurst country home of the late Senator Wolcott, which was built in the latter part of 1896. They rented their home at 2020 Massachusetts Avenue in Washington. The Wolhurst home and 500 acres of land cost Walsh \$150,000.

### Evalyn and Ned Marry

Ned McLean spent several weeks at the Walsh home in Littleton in 1907. This was also the same year that Tom Walsh and his good friend, John Benson, were on their way to Hartsel in the South Park area to look over some mining claims and the train was derailed. Walsh received a bruise on the chest that, with time, did not prove beneficial for his ailing lungs.

The following year, Ned McLean again came to visit the Walsh family. He was there but a short time when he asked Evalyn to marry him and she accepted. The engagement was announced in many of the newspapers throughout the country, as both families were very well known. Both Evalyn and Ned agreed that they did not want a large wedding. It was shortly after the announcement that they were married in Denver. They spent their honeymoon in Colorado Springs, where they registered at the Antler's Hotel.

## Fabulous Wedding Gifts

Evalyn received \$100,000 from her parents and Ned received the same amount from his parents. This prompted them to go to Europe and have a real honeymoon. After all, \$200,000 was a lot of money. Arriving there, they both decided to go on a spending spree, and they did so in a lavish fashion. They spent the money so fast that they themselves did not know what had happened to it all. They took in the gambling clubs, theatres, drank champagne, bought fabulous clothing, as well as a new Mercedes automobile. There was nothing too good nor too expensive.

## More Money Needed

They soon found that their funds were dangerously low and they sent home for more money. Ned's father refused to send any, however, Walsh sent a sizeable amount to his daughter. They had purchased a total of five new cars, each time trading one in for a new one. They soon realized that they were spending too much money and decided to return home.

Ned received \$1,000 per month to help his father manage the newspaper's and that was all he would allow. On the other hand, Walsh was more generous. For instance, in 1909 and 1910, Walsh gave his daughter \$67,000.

In 1910, the Walsh family entertained President William H. Taft at the Wolhurst country home near Littleton. The President enjoyed his stay with the Walsh family immensely, as the hospitality was in true, authentic western style. According to Evalyn Walsh McLean's book, "Father Struck It Rich," published in 1936, the pictures taken at that time indicated that her father was slowly dying.

The McLeans' first baby was born seven months before Tom Walsh passed away. Because of the wealth of both Walsh and McLean, the baby was referred to as "the million dollar baby."

The Walsh family moved back to Washington, D.C. the first part of December in 1909. Thomas Walsh passed away on April 8, 1910. Evalyn and Ned continued to live with her mother after the death of her husband. Walsh's estate was valued at more than one hundred million dollars. The estate was divided in half between Mrs. Walsh and daughter, Evalyn. The will instructed that the estate be placed in a trust fund for ten years with a joint survivor arrangement.

## Off On Another Spree

After the death of Tom Walsh, his widow remained in her room and wanted to see no one. She lost all interest in living. Evalyn made many attempts to cheer her mother. She would invite friends over to see her mother, but it seemed hopeless. One day she discussed it with Ned and both agreed that perhaps if they took another European tour and left the responsibility of caring for their child to Mrs. Walsh, it might help to restore her interest in life. When Evalyn told her mother of their plans, her face took on a new radiant look as she once again felt that she was needed. There was no better medication she could have received.

## Another European Trip

Once again they were in Paris, France. One evening, they went to a French casino and Evalyn sat down at the gambling table. By this time Ned was becoming an alcoholic and Evalyn was not too far behind him in drinking. In front of Evalyn was \$70,000 that she had won at the roulette wheel. A well dressed man had been standing right next to her for some time. She decided to go and find Ned. She asked the gentleman if he would watch her chips and he replied that he would be happy to. Evalyn found Ned at the bar, well intoxicated. She told him of her winnings, but he was not interested.

She took him by the hand and returned to the table. The gentleman, the money—all gone. After looking around for some time, she finally found him. He came to her and introduced himself as Angosture Bitters, the owner of the casino. He told her the money was safe in his office and she could pick it up any time she wanted it.

## The Hope Diamond

Several days later, Pierre Cartier called on the McLean's, at their Bristol Hotel suite. He was a dealer in diamonds and jewels. He also operated a branch in New York City and was well known in Paris. He was also well acquainted with Evalyn, having sold her some diamonds in the past. Under his arm he held a small package sealed with wax. He told her he was carrying a blue diamond, but first he would give her a brief history of the gem.

It first appeared in Europe when Louis XIV was King of France. A gentleman had brought the stone from India. His name was Jean

Tavenier and he sold it to King Louis. Marie Antoinette wore the blue diamond and it was listed with the French crown jewels. Later, the Revolutionists seized all of the French jewels and Marie Antoinette was beheaded by the guillotine.

Then, along with all the other important items of the royal regalia, it disappeared and was listed as stolen by the French government. While he kept Evalyn in suspense telling her the history, she felt at times that she wanted to grab the box and rip it open and look at the gem.

### Devoured By Wild Dogs

Cartier told her that the diamond was believed stolen from a Hindu God in India. Some time later, it was reported that Jean Tavenier was attacked by a pack of wild dogs and devoured by the pack.

In 1830, a blue diamond was offered for sale by Daniel—this diamond weighed 44½ carats. The original diamond weighed 67¼ carats, however, the diamond was listed as stolen from the French government, so it had to be cut into two stones. Then, in 1874, another diamond appeared on the market, which was listed as the Brunswick Diamond. It was therefore believed that both of the stones was the original stone that Tavenier sold to King Louis XIV. The larger diamond was purchased by Henry Thomas Hope, a London banker, and that is how it derived its name, the Hope Diamond. Everyone believed that it was cursed and brought its owners nothing but bad luck. Mr. Hope passed away shortly after he purchased the stone. A short time later, his wife passed away and the stone was left to her grandson. He squandered his money away, and according to his grandmother's will, he could not sell the diamond. Therefore, it ended up in a pawn shop in New York and was sold to Pierre Cartier.

### Could Not Vouch It Was Cursed

After talking to Mrs. McLean for some time, Cartier told her that he could not vouch that it was cursed and brought its owners nothing but tragedy. When he did open the box, Evalyn was so entranced by the diamond, that she could not resist the temptation to try it on. Ned took the diamond and he looked it over as if he were studying just how much it was worth. Evalyn could not understand what he was doing as he always let her pay, after all, she was the one that

had the money. This perturbed her and she told Cartier that she did not want it, to take it away. This was not easy for her, because what Evalyn wanted, Evalyn got—regardless of price, but she was angry with her husband, as she felt that he had embarrassed her in front of Mr. Cartier.

### Return Home

Ned and Evalyn returned to their home in Washington, D.C. Several months had gone by and it appeared that she had forgotten about the precious diamond. She often times spoke to her friends about the stone which she described as a mysterious, bluish color. In November, she received a letter from Mr. Cartier's business firm in New York that he had arrived in New York with the documents concerning the Hope Diamond. The following morning, Mr. Cartier visited Evalyn at her home and presented her with the titles of the gem. This time she could not resist. The purchase price was \$154,000, which could be paid in payments over a period of 3 years.

The McLean family was pretty well upset when they heard of the transaction as they had read of the terrible omens and the curse of the diamond.

### Curse Or Coincidence

The following year, several members of the family passed away. Ned and Evalyn's young son, Vinson (named after her brother who was killed in an automobile accident in 1905), died as the result of an accident. One day while the nursemaid was taking the boy for his daily stroll, he ran in front of a car and was knocked down. It was believed that there were no serious injuries, however, he was still examined by a doctor. A few days later, the little boy became violently ill and passed away. It was believed that the boy died from internal complications from the accident. Needless to say, the death of the boy was a great shock to all. Ned's mother passed away, followed by the death later of Evalyn's mother, Ned's father and several relatives. By this time, Evalyn was pretty well shaken up. She soon began to show the strain on her face. Also, Ned had failing health, mostly from the effects of alcohol. And, of course, his mind also became affected. He was then placed in a mental institution. He was never released and he passed away while there. Evalyn, however, did everything possible to restore his health, money was no object.

## Became Desperate

One day she was talking to a dear friend of hers, Margaret Bugby, and she asked her if it would be possible to have the stone blessed, hoping that this could remove the 'curse,' if it indeed was cursed as reported. Together they went to see Monsignor Russel at his rectory and consulted with him regarding the gem. He told Mrs. McLean that he did not believe in curses, but if it would make her feel better, he would be happy to bless it. He put on his robes, placed the diamond on a small cushion and went into the church. Suddenly, from no where, an electrical storm came up that shook the entire church. There was lightning and flashing all around, then the lights went out for a few seconds. Evalyn and Margaret were so frightened that they both turned pale. However, it did not bother Monsignor Russel and he continued with the blessing of the gem. The strange Latin words that he spoke brought her comfort and peace of mind.

Mrs. McLean also owned another diamond, the Star of the East. The sum of \$80,000 was paid for this gem. When entertaining at her home, or somewhere else, she always wore both diamonds.

In 1936, she wrote a book which was published under the title of "Father Struck It Rich." In her story she revealed many happy times as well as many tragic times. As the family was so well known throughout the country, including Europe, the book proved to be a good seller. Today, it is a collector's item. It is known that some individuals that had copies of the book sold them for large amounts of money. In the entire book, she spoke of no ill feeling towards anyone. She loved her family and she was "Daddy's Girl."

## Generous Person

Evalyn Walsh McLean was a generous person and she donated large sums of money to charitable organizations throughout the years. In Colorado, her home State, she made frequent trips to Denver, Colorado Springs, Ouray, Leadville and other locations. She still has a number of relatives living in Colorado.

A picture of her appears in her book, taken about 1934 or '35, and she was an attractive person. In another photo we have seen, taken a few years before her death, she was beginning to show her age. Her face was heavily drawn and she was thin, however, she was still attractive.

Evalyn Walsh McLean passed away in 1947. She was 61 years of age at the time. Although she was once worth millions of dollars,

her estate was valued at only a little more than \$600,000. There were times when she spent that much writing her name on a check.

At the time of her death, she left the Hope Diamond to her grandchildren, with instructions that the diamond and her other possessions remain in storage for 20 years. The heirs gave the Hope Diamond to the Smithsonian Institute in 1958.

On December 13, 1967, Evalyn McLean, daughter of Mr. J. McLean, grand daughter of Evalyn Walsh McLean, was found dead in her home in Plano, Texas. She was 25 years of age.

In conclusion, it is up to the individual to determine whether the Hope Diamond brought bad luck and tragedy or was it just, possibly, coincidence.

## AN UNDERGROUND BANQUET

"Men found pleasure and delight in dining in many odd and peculiar places on the earth, in the earth and over the earth. They have feasted on the summit of the highest mountains and made merry in the interior of the earth. There have been banquets in balloons and on the roofs of the loftiest skyscraper's. . . . All nations, all climes and all countries have had their feasts that will long be remembered in song and story. But it remained for Leadville to give a banquet to her guests, that in a matter of sumptuous elegance, uniqueness of design and originality of conception which would have taxed the ingenuity of Aladdin and the Genie of the lamp."

That is what James M. Knight, reporter for the Herald Democrat, wrote after he had attended the underground banquet at the Wolfstone Mine on January 11, 1911. More than 250 persons throughout the State attended the big event.

Leadville is located in the high Colorado mountains, 10,150 feet in elevation. Leadville, a rich mining community, was founded in 1878. The purpose of the underground banquet was to announce another rich discovery, that being zinc oxide. The discovery eventually led to the construction of the Western Zinc Oxide Smelting Company.

The evening prior to the banquet, a meeting was held with officials of the Western Mining Company, the operators of the Wolfstone Mine. Samuel D. Nickolson, manager of the company, gave a brief summary of the events for the next day. He assured the group that even though the banquet was to be 1,000 feet below the surface,

there would be no cause for alarm, as every safety precaution was taken by the officials.

### The Big Day

The visitor's from throughout the State assembled at the Vendome Hotel (Tabor Grand Hotel) the day of the banquet. From there, they were to be transported to the banquet by sleigh drawn by horses adorned with sleigh bells. It was a cool winter day, partly overcast, with the sun making only brief appearances. Following the route up Carbonate Hill, sleigh after sleigh saw some of the richest mine's in the country. The various mines displayed large American flags and mine whistles saluted the visitors as they drove by.

Hosts for the occasion were Samuel D. Nickolson, Arthur Dalrymple, Malcolm Nickolson, J. R. Dewar and B. Stewart—all of the personnel department, with the exception of Mr. Nickolson, who was the manager of the Company. All were instrumental in making the banquet arrangements.

### Only Six at a Time

After a forty-five minute drive from town, the visitors reached the Wolfstone Mine. They were greeted by members of the personnel department, who were acting as hosts and guides. The visitors were taken on a tour of the mine and visited the offices, blacksmith shop and the hoist house, which operated the cage down the shaft.

For safety purposes, only six persons at a time were allowed in the cage for a ride down to the 1,000 foot level. They first passed the pump house where they saw a group of smiling miners who stood ready to assist the guests and to assure them safe conduct.

After a short time, the 1,000 foot level was reached and a group of men waited to assist the visitors along the 75 foot dirt hallway to a special room. It was well lighted, with electric fixtures all the way. The room was located in a solid wall of rock, winding through lime and porphyry, with either quartz or silicate of zinc producing a beautiful glare. The lighting had been in charge of Al Miller and Milton Bell. Both men were highly complimented by the guests for their work.

### A Beautiful Sight

As the visitors made their way to the banquet room, the passage widened and soon they entered a huge room, some 110 feet in length,

25 feet wide and 10 feet in height. Colored bulbs made beautiful hues on the rock and dirt walls. Two long tables, 100 feet in length, were decorated in various colors, including bouquets and arrangements of various flowers.

The gray colored dirt walls were draped with American flags. A total of 220 cubic feet of solid mineral was removed to make the large banquet room. The value—a fantastic \$150,000.

### A Real Surprise

For most of the guests, it was their first time underground, but to be there attending a banquet was something else. John Pennycock and William Stevens played some bag pipe music, quite popular at that time, and also, keeping with the tradition of the 152nd Anniversary of Bobbie Burns. The visitors were so amazed that many felt that they were in another world. Also, present for the dinner, was a six piece orchestra. The acoustical sound effects of soft dinner music and gaiety 1,000 feet underground was one of the greatest thrills experienced by the guests. The dirt floor was heavily sprinkled with a layer of saw-dust for ease and comfort.

Al Miller and Milton Bell also had charge of maintaining the hot plates to keep the food warm. The dinner was prepared by Millers Bakery and Catering Service, then located in the 100 block on East 6th Street.

### The Press

Speaking to more than 250 guests at the banquet, President J. Alderson, Colorado School of Mines, stated in part: "The discovery of zinc minerals will mean at least an extensive demand from the collectors of the thousands of museums over the country. Not a museum in the world contains a specimen of the mineral. These museums and thousands of private collectors will want samples, so herein, lies a new world wide demand on Leadville."

Representing the press were the following: James M. Knight, The Herald Democrat; Edward Keating, Managing Editor of the Denver News; Arthur Coop, The Associated Press; H. C. Parmalee, Western Editor of the Metallurgical and Chemical Journal; Walter A. Koch, The Denver Times; Elizabeth Kelly, The Denver Post; James W. Kelly, President of The Denver Press Club.



## Lack of Air Not True

Over the years, there have been rumors that many of the visitors had to be taken to the surface due to lack of oxygen. This was not true, as no such mention was made in the Herald Democrat at any time. According to the news reports, the ventilation was perfect in every respect.

## Banquet Held at Elks Home

That evening, a huge banquet was given by the Western Mining Company at the B.P.O. Elks (#236) home in the Tabor Opera House building. More than 250 persons attended the gala affair. Music was furnished by the bagpipers and the Curcio Orchestra. The talk of the evening was concentrated on the fabulous underground dinner in the interior of the earth at the Wolfstone Mine. Everyone present praised the event and the manner in which the dinner luncheon was held. Many stated that it was the thrill of a life time and its memories would linger on for years to come.



*Tabor Opera House. Note passage way from Clarendon Hotel to opera house 1882*

## Open to the Public

Mr. Nickolson announced that the huge banquet room at the Wolfstone Mine would remain open to the citizens for several days. Hundreds of persons visited the huge room and all were amazed at its size. The Sisters of Charity from St. Vincent's Hospital and St. Mary's School and the school teachers were the guests of Mr. Nickolson and all were given a tour of the underground banquet room. Many children of the various schools also visited the much talked about and publicized banquet room, 1,000 feet below the surface. On January 29, the decorations were removed and the mine resumed normal operations. To many, it was one of their most treasured memories.

## Press Comments

The huge affair at the Wolfstone Mine received much publicity in various newspapers, and following are some of the comments by writers, in part.

Walter A. Koch, The Denver Times: "A number of business blocks in Denver, Colorado Springs, even in New York, Paris, Chicago and London, have their reason of the bounties of this wonderful camp. Industrial enterprise of many varieties and in many localities have been made possible through her magnificent yield of mineral wealth—railroads have ultimately been born to the dreams of her prospectors and even other mining camps look up to her as a mother for mining men schooled in the intricate and precarious processes of extracting mineral wealth from her treasure vaults—all have been influential factors in the development of other camps, applying successfully the knowledge and skill obtained."

Margaret Keating: "Leadville people have demonstrated to me today that they are not only the best folks on top of the ground, but also the best under the earth. To be wined and dined, as I was today a thousand feet under the snowy peaks of the Rockies, to the inspiring lilt of Scotch music is an experience of a life time. The luncheon, over which Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Nickolson presided in a subterranean dining hall, lighted by electricity and decorated with American flags and pictures of Bobbie Burns, whose natal day we celebrate in conjunction with the renaissance of Leadville, explains many things. It explains why Denver had found it necessary to draw upon Leadville not only for much wealth, but it also explains how Leadville gave Denver society its start."

Arthur W. Coop, Associated Press: "Rather, let him tell what was shown today behind the wealth of the Leadville mines; that is the clear-eyed, indomitable, never-say-die spirit of the men who have made this possible, the coming together, shoulder to shoulder of the fighting men that have made Leadville famous and the State rich, and who are going to make the nation richer."

Elizabeth Kelly, The Denver Post: "To those of us to whom Leadville was but a name—a magic one we'll concede—actual contact with the splendid people who built the community and with the friendly old hills which have yielded of their wealth for the up-building of the entire State, meant the birth of a new feeling of nearness to the camp which would have made Colorado if there had never been a Denver, the beautiful."

Evelyn Kelly, Denver News: "Great has been the joy of this great perfect winter's day and I say winter is no winter at all when one does not feel the nip of frost in the air when it's the season of Santa Claus weather. Denver town has been supremely pleased with the jingle of money this great camp has sent down through all its prosperous years but how grossly material is the sound compared with the tinkling of the sleigh bells of the teams that took the visitors through the crisp winter air to the shaft of the Wolfstone."

Joseph K. Kelly, Denver Press Club: "In 1860, when the mining districts in Clear Creek and Gilpin counties reported diminished production, Leadville sent from California Gulch the glad tidings; that ten millions of glittering gold was waiting to revive the hopes of those who doubted that Colorado's mountains had treasures without end. In 1893, when India mints were closed to silver and this State was draped in mourning, Leadville sounded the bugle calls to the despondent that the Gold Belt and Little Jonny began hoisting their golden stores up to daylight; and now—in the latter years of misgivings over things mineral—when Colorado began to be only a glorious memory—Leadville sets the State aflame with tidings of a new and greater discovery than she had ever before."

It was truly another year that Leadville added another new mineral along with her other numerous discoveries since 1860. Thus, another exciting chapter is added to the fabulous history.

In 1918, molybdenum was discovered, one of the largest discoveries of all times. Climax has throughout the years to the present time produced millions of tons of molybdenum. Who knows what other minerals wait to be discovered?

## A SPOOKY TALE

On February 6, 1892, during the construction of the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel about six miles west of Leadville, John Roache, a foreman, was caught by a falling rock and was fatally injured.

It was on March 8, nearly a month later, that a workman at the tunnel came to town one evening with a group of co-workers and ended up at a saloon on West Second Street. After they were there for a short time, the group asked Dan if he wanted to go along with them to another saloon just up the street. Dan replied that he would just remain there and wait till they returned. He went over and sat at the bar. After several drinks, it appeared to the bartender that his actions were rather strange. His thoughts seemed to revert to something that was bothering him—at least it appeared that way. The man behind the bar asked Dan if there was something that was bothering him and if he would like to talk about it. "I'll be glad to help you in any way I can, if possible, what ever your problem is," said the bartender.

After staring at the interior of the saloon for a few moments, Dan said, "If I can have your solemn promise that what I tell you will be kept a secret, I will tell you one of the strangest stories that happened nearly a month ago—yet, I have been unable to talk about it, even to my closest friends." The bartender promised to keep the secret.

## A Strange Story

"First of all, as I've told you, I have not divulged the story to no one, you will be the first person to be told of this weird story, and I swear it is true and it really did happen to me. You remember about a month ago, a foreman at the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel, whom we called Corkie, was killed in an accident. I was working under him and it was my duty to see that all of the pumps at the west end were in good running order. The night following the accident, only a few of us were at work, as the other men had taken off in respect of their dead comrade. The only men at work were the night watchman and myself. My job was to keep a close watch on the pumps so that the water level in the tunnel would not get too high."

"It was about one o'clock in the morning when I took a lantern and entered the long cavity in the earth. I walked blindly to the pump near the lower breast of the tunnel and found that all was well. I stood leaning against the pump and when I glanced up-

wards, my eyes caught sight of what appeared to be several shadows approaching from the heading. I was fascinated at first, but at the same time, I felt a nervous cold sweat running from my forehead. As I tried to move from the pump, I found that I was unable to move—a strange force held me against the pump. As the shadows approached, they appeared in the shape of a funeral cortege, preceded by a man of the cloth, attired in the robes of his profession and holding before him an open Bible."

### Stranger Than Fiction

"When the procession approached me, I could feel the cold shivers tingling down my spine and my nerves were starting to twist some. There were six shadowy forms carrying between them a phantom casket, walking with a slow pace, passing within a few inches of me. One of the spirits, however, relinquished its grasp on the coffin and stepping to one side passed between me and the pump against which I was leaning. How this was done, I do not know, but I swear that it was as I've told you. When the funeral procession had passed, the form resumed its place at the casket. I walked to the center of the tunnel, watching the strange visitors and saw them go through the mouth of the tunnel, walk across the dump and disappear from sight."

### Became a Legend

"An instant later, I met the watchman and I asked him if he had seen anything strange at anytime. Noticing how pale I was and seeing the drops of sweat rolling down my face, he asked if there was something wrong, but I evaded the question."

As Dan left the saloon, the bartender looked at him and he wondered if it was some kind of a joke—or did it really happen? Only Dan knew the answer. He swore it was the truth, and the man had no reason to lie about it.

Some time later, Dan left Leadville for parts unknown. Somehow the story leaked out and became known. Dan Heller was a respected man and was not known to go around and tell strange stories. As the year went by, the railroad men of the Colorado Midland R.R. called the story "The Legend of the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel"

The Midland railroad was discontinued in 1919 and even though the tunnel is partially caved in, it still brings water through the bore from the west side of the portal to the east side which flows into Turquoise Lake.

## WHAT IS A BURRO?

The burro is referred to as a burro, donkey or jackass. This animal is not the smartest in the world nor can he be classified as the dumbest in the animal world. To the early day prospectors, he was a lovable cuss and a companion for the early day gold seekers in the hills of Colorado, but when he chose, he could really be an onery and stubborn animal.

In 1883, the Leadville Daily Chronicle (now the Herald Democrat) received a letter from a Denver citizen, Fred L. Mason. Having lived in Denver for just a short time, Mason asked, "Can a burro be harnessed, saddled and what loads can he carry?" Mason's opinion was that some one should write a book about burros; describing their size, where they came from and some of their historical background.

The editor wrote, "Just why your Denver friends have referred you to me, unless they intended to be what Artemus Ward called 'sarkastikul,' is difficult to explain, but to impart information is a duty from which no conscientious newspaper man shrinks, and you shall therefore be enlightened as far as possible. Unfortunately, there is no work extant for the kind you wish for but a liberal experience with the breed of animal in question will go far toward furnishing the facts which would be published in such a book, had one ever been written. The thought that the following data may possibly inspire an abler mind to undertake the composition of a book on the burro makes the task in hand light and a pleasant one."

"The burro is usually larger than a goat, and his hide has the consistency of a door mat. In color, the animal varies, he is a mouse brown, black, etc. Just as the whim takes him, and when the burro takes whim into his head—that settles it. The origin of the species is a mystery. He is probably descended from the ass, a beast whose fame stretches back to the remote ages and is often mentioned in ancient writings and the Bible, which may be the reason that certain biblical terms are used in driving burros."

"In disposition, the burro is a lovable, but a firm, creature. His manner is decided, particularly when he has made up his mind which road to take, and it is needless to say, usually selects the wrong one. It isn't worth while to argue with a burro upon the inaccuracy of his conviction. Just tie him to a tree and give him a lecture until he sees fit to retrace his steps, and when you have persuaded him, keep out of the way of his heels."

## Unpredictable

"The burro can carry a good load, but he won't do it if there is any way to dodge the job. Mr. Mason, you never can appreciate how much a burro dislikes carrying loads until you have spent time, a good deal of time, loading one up with a camp outfit and see him lie down when you are finished, or had him squeeze between two trees about fifteen inches apart as soon as you start on a days march. To indulge in such pleasantries, as the last mentioned, the burro usually selects a steep hillside, and after he has wiped off all of his load against the trees and has seen you start bareheaded down the hill on the dead run after frying pans, bottles and the like, he calmly turns to browse on luscious grass, cropping between mouthfuls of which he looks down at you and lets a smile play about his lips. This is one of the times when he can draw a longer and more emphatic line of cuss words from the average prospector than any other known cause. The burro is some times saddled, but at such times, it is safer to walk a little ways ahead and lead him by a rope."

"There is one thing about a burro that mustn't be forgotten, and that is his voice. Once heard, it isn't apt to ever be erased from the mind of any person. It is hard to say whether it belongs among the tenors or the bass's, the compass being quite extensive. The burro has been compared to that of a canary in regards to his voice. The one that sings most like a burro is the bull frog, but even his voice hasn't got the same timbre. The burro's carol is not brilliant, but pathetic, and when he lifts his voice in song, his auditories weep. His lay begins with the preparatory staccato note way down in the bass clef and slides down from that 'til he fetches up against an obstacle in about the middle register. Then, he stops suddenly, as though he wanted to fool people and heaves a sigh. As a singer, he is a success, for he can carry people away when he wants to. His voice excels in power, rather than sweetness. A man living near a corral can testify to this. He moved his lodgings to a second story of a boiler shop and said he preferred it, it was much quieter."

"A word about the burro's diet. His appetite is hearty and not over delicate. He likes grass and grain, and fattens up on empty vegetable cans, boulders of any age, old nails, etc. Still, he ought to be given something nutritious now and then, such as old newspapers or a well worn rubber boot."

"The burro could fill a book easily and there ought to be one written about him. The above facts are cheerfully tendered but are too hastily thrown together to be complete. It would be a pleasure

to do more for you, Mr. Mason, but until some philanthropist devotes a few years of study to the eccentricities of the burro, it is feared that he will never be understood."

## THE GHOST ON FRONT STREET

From the files of the Leadville Herald Democrat, dated April, 1907, came a strange story of a ghost visitor at a cabin at 145 Front Street. The cabin was owned by John Wagner, who had rented the cabin to two Italian miners, Tony Kanto and Benjie Bruno.

The two men told of a ghostly visitor that they had in their cabin. The ghost would wander around the cabin at any time of the day or night. The visitor would go and wash his hands, sit at the table, then go to bed—only there never was anyone in the bed and the blankets were never disturbed. While Tony said that the ghost did not have a face, Benjie always insisted that there was a face, but it was badly scarred up and appeared in the same manner as an over-exposed photograph. It was known that some years prior, a miner was killed, his face badly disfigured with a knife, in a struggle that had occurred in the cabin. However, people were not interested as to whether the ghost had a face or not, the stories told by the men kept them intrigued and held them in suspense.

## Self Appointed Detective

Billy Kase, a high school student, and a girl companion were in the vicinity one evening and Billy suggested that they investigate the mysterious cabin and see for themselves if there was any truth to the story concerning the ghost. The girl wanted no part in the adventure and asked to be taken home. After Billy brought the girl home, he returned to the site. The boy had seen the men go to work, the afternoon shift, so he knew that no one would be home. Cautiously, he approached the cabin window and looked in, it was dark and there was no sign of life. When he looked in the second time, there was a brilliant light—so bright that it turned him blind for a few moments. He had never before seen such brilliancy in his life. Reaching into his pocket, he took his thin handkerchief and placed it over his eyes, but peering in again, he saw nothing, as the cabin was dark again.

## Suddenly

In the stillness of the evening shadows, a white figure, running, came through the door, clad in a white sheer lace-like cloth, carrying a powerful light which gave off an offensive odor. Upon reaching Front Street, he dropped the light and disappeared in the darkness.

For a few moments, the boy stood bewildered, in a trance-like position. After regaining his composure, he went to see the bright light the figure was holding, but found nothing.

A reporter for the Leadville Herald Democrat questioned the boy afterwards regarding the strange incident of the boy. The reporter asked Billy if the weird figure had a head. Billy replied that he was much to scared to even look whether or not he had a face and further stated that the ghost, or what ever it was, was wearing a sheer white garment that appeared to flutter in the soft evening breeze. Also, he said that the figure seemed more to be floating than running. The reporter wrote while talking to the boy. The boys voice was quivering and his hands were still trembling from his experience. The reporter also said that the boy had witnessed something but would not vouch that it was a joke, however, he was not convinced that it was a hoax.

## Story Disappears

The reporter wrote the story and gave it to the night editor. After reading the story, the editor placed it on his desk and left his office for a few moments. When he returned, he found that the story was missing. He then asked the office staff if they had seen some one near the desk. The answer was no. The editor again asked the reporter to re-write the story.

The reporter gave the second story to the editor and this time, he made sure it went to the composing room for the morning edition. The story created a great deal of interest in the Cloud City, but soon it was forgotten. It has always remained a mystery.

## BY STAGE — BY WAGONS — BY FOOT THEY SWARMED IN BY THE THOUSANDS

Rich lead minerals were discovered in Leadville in the fall of 1876. This is a story of what life was like in a newly founded town—elevation, 10,150 feet.

C. C. Davis founded the Daily Chronicle in 1879. The first publication was on January 1. Later it became the Herald Democrat. In 1916, Davis published a book, "Olden Times In Colorado," and told of some experiences in the Cloud City.

He left Denver via the stage line through South Park in December, 1878. Davis wrote, "I confess a feeling of disappointment over my first sight of Leadville. It came after more than an ordinarily tedious forty hour journey from Denver—on the top of a Concord Coach most of the way, feet hanging over the boot, the mercury far below zero, and the frost-laden wind blowing such a gale that it was difficult to keep a blanket over one's knees."

"The road traversed the great South Park, a wide depression in the mountains—sixty miles in length, eight thousand feet elevation, but as level as a floor."

"On the first day out and at high noon, a terrific snow storm was encountered. The heavy, moisture-laden clouds came down on the earth, completely enveloping the coach and the passengers, and soon it was realized that the driver was lost. He stoutly denied the obvious, and jocularly implied that it was the horses that were lost. He finally conceded the fact and appealed to the eighteen men in the coach and on the hurricane deck to help him out."

"By ranging ourselves in a line and grasping each other's hand, we formed a human whiplash and thus disposed, we circled around the coach in all directions in the hope that one of us would locate the telephone poles stretched along the road. The device was finally effective, and soon we were once again headed in the right direction."

"Once again the coach was on its way, rolling like a vessel on a rough sea, lurching from side to side and bumping over boulders that at times felt like the stage would overturn. Over the torturous Mosquito Pass road, 13,000 feet elevation, in a blinding snowstorm—then came the sight of scattered blinking lights of Leadville."

## So This Is Leadville!

It was 11 p.m. when the stage rounded the corner on Chestnut Street, where it came to stop in front of Tom Walsh's Grand Hotel. (Some twenty years later, Tom became a multi-millionaire when he discovered the Camp Bird Mine in Ouray). Davis climbed down from the coach—it seemed that every bone in his body ached from the trip. He often would write about the stage trip from Denver to Leadville and each time he had a different story to tell. He described winter months as the worst to travel by coach. He gazed at the towering peaks of Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive in the distance to the west, noticing the hundreds of persons that were lined from curb to curb and in the street as well. There was hustle and bustle everywhere and you could hear the enticing music from the many saloons, gambling dens, theatres and dance halls.

He was taken to his room which he had to share with a complete stranger. But, there was nothing he could do about it as those were the rules due to the scarcity of rooms. Of course, he had the alternative of sleeping in the street, and that was out! The rooms were small, 10' by 10', with very little furniture. Not knowing who he was sharing the room with, he locked the door and went directly to the dining room. It was the first decent meal he had since leaving Denver. After the meal, he set out to investigate just what made the Cloud City tick, as they used to say in the wild and woolly days. Looking around him, he thought, "so this is to be my new home." He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head and proceeded on. But first he went to his room to clean up and change clothes.

## Man! Oh Man

Leaving his hotel, he walked across the street to what appeared to be a Fourth of July celebration. Looking around, it seemed like a magical make believe scene, maybe from another part of the world. From every part of town there were strains of music and laughter and gaiety from the saloons and other establishments. In reality, it was a city of sin—robberies, killings, prostitution—you name it, it was all there!

For some two miles in length, Chestnut Street was lined with crude shacks, cabins and tents. Candles, lamps, lanterns and bon-fires illuminated the town.

A large number of the men had just migrated to this country from Europe some years prior. They came to Leadville seeking work be-

fore bringing their families. There were French, German, Slovak, Italian, Greek, to name a few nationalities. To make matters even worse, most of them couldn't speak English, nor understand it either. Because of this, it was very hard to get by.

## "Make Room, Here We Come"

Fritz Hass migrated from Germany about 1850. He was a talented piano player and wrote many songs, but never bothered to have them published. He played in theatres in the east, then later in various mining towns. He went to Leadville in the early part of 1878. The mountains reminded him of his native land. He was so impressed that he sought employment at the various theatres. He was given a job as piano player at the Imperial Theatre.

He was amazed at the hundreds of persons coming to the Cloud City and he composed a song, suitably titled, "Make Room, Here We Come." It was a peppy tune and before each performance at the theatre he played and sang the tune. He even asked the audience to join and sing along with him. The tune became most popular.

At each hour, a Concord Coach arrived with 18 to 20 persons aboard. They came via South Park and from the Arkansas Valley. While the pleasure seekers were cheering it up in the saloons, mule skinners were shouting profane language at the horses and mules pulling wagons, stages and so on. Some of the drivers could crack a whip so loud that often it sounded like pistol shots. Down Chestnut Street, people were busy building homes and buildings for business houses. Bon-fires were started to give light—twenty four hours a day a person could hear the pounding of nails, sawing of lumber, etc.

From each dark building lurked the dangerous element of the riff-raff class of people, not all were honest and sincere, and one had to be on guard at all times.

Davis entered Pap Wyman's combination dance hall and gambling den. Behind the bar was a monstrous clock. Written on its face was, "Please Do Not Swear." At the end of the bar, laying on a table in a slanted position, was a large Bible and upon examination, it appeared that it was used frequently for consolation.

## What Beautiful Girls

There were nearly 100 girls of all nationalities and all ages, all dressed in a fantastic garb of lace with various colors of feathers

around their head and body. It proved to be the downfall of many a miner. The girls were paid on a percentage basis—so much for a dance, so much for liquor, etc. It was quite common for them to get a man drunk, then lead him to an alley or a room and rob him of whatever he had of value. Such was the early days of the new silver mining town of Leadville and also all of the new mining towns of the early years.

Men gathered around the more than 50 gambling tables, gambling for high stakes—many losing 'the shirt off their back.' Davis wrote, "Neither Monte Carlo, nor Garland, Saratoga or Hot Springs ever developed millionaires and paupers with the pace set at Leadville in the first few years of existence. Sign posts that beckoned some men to affluence and the life of luxury, betrayed others into quagmires of poverty, misery and death. Some men dug fortunes from the earth in a week or even days—others lost their savings of a life time in an hour. The men who swept the wealth of Croesus from far tables on a Monday found a resting place in Potter's Field on a Tuesday."

### State Street

In the early part of 1879, construction of many business establishments began along Harrison Avenue. First, it was necessary to remove the trees and shrubs. H. A. W. Tabor began construction of the Tabor Opera House. William Bush was constructing the Clarendon Hotel. The May Company was next door to the Opera House and at the time, it was a tent store. So swift was the construction that business buildings extended to 5th Street by the early 1880's. By 1882, business houses extended for an entire ten blocks on Harrison Avenue.

Second Street became the street of ill-repute, and the cribs extended for two blocks. The Pioneer Bar was one of the first to be constructed. Across the street from the Pioneer, Thomas Kemp, who was reportedly a one-time Mayor of New York City, began construction of the Grand Central Theatre, and for some years, it was the largest theatre this side of the Mississippi.

The seating capacity was 2,500. It was 75' in width and 135 feet in length. It had a total of 240 gas lights to illuminate the huge building. Also, located on the ground floor were two saloons and a club room where high stakes were always placed on the tables. There were eight parlors with uniformed maids for the customers and a total of 50 lodging apartments.



*Corner 5th and Harrison Ave. East 1885*

It was at this theatre that Eddie Foy began his career, long before he was married. Due to its location, it was not too successful. It burned to the ground in 1885. State Street was also where the notorious "French Row" was located.

### Unsanitary Conditions

In the first years of Leadville, sanitary conditions were far from good. There was yet no water, gas for illumination, etc. The first item before constructing a home or a business establishment was to build an "Outhouse," or according to the dictionary, a privy. There were all size and styles. A business house, such as a saloon or hotel, consisted of a privy with 12 or more seats. We have never been able to gather information as to whether there was a separate privy for "His" and "Hers." Leadville had no utilities. Water was sold in barrels for fifty cents and if the customer had no barrel he had to put down a deposit at least five times what the barrel would cost.

Sewer, gas and other utilities were all in the planning stage. Electricity did not come to Leadville until 1884. Tabor had moved back

to the corner of Harrison Avenue and Chestnut from Oro City. It was not only a general store, but also the first Post Office in town. It was considered a Fourth-Class Post Office and his salary was paid according to the amount of postage used and parcels handled, both incoming and outgoing. Tabor was, of course, the first Postmaster of Leadville. The mail volume was so enormous that Tabor employed a staff of 20 clerks to sort the mail. Long before the Post Office would open, a line, two blocks long, would be formed, waiting to be served.

### High Cost of Living

Due to the high tariff placed on the freighters, all commodities were sky high and much beyond the reach of a person. A glass of beer was 25¢, meals were \$1 each, and that was the cheapest you could buy. Eggs sold for \$1 a dozen and butter was a dollar a pound, when you could get it.

By 1880, there were ten smelters employing hundreds of men and by 1882, there were close to twenty smelters. The stage lines, freighters and schooners employed 7,000 men. Wages ranged from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per 12 hours. Due to the high costs of freight, all low grade ores were set aside. This was not shipped until the railroads came to Leadville.

### What Confusion!

There was perhaps no other city or town anywhere that grew with such rapidity as did Leadville in its first two years of existence following the discovery of silver and lead. Actually, William Stevens first discovered these ores in 1876, but it was kept a secret until early in 1878. Not even the prospectors knew what Stevens was looking for and all thought he had 'flipped his lid', a phrase used by the prospectors. When he announced what it was, men swarmed to the hills like ants on an ant hill. There was confusion beyond comprehension as hundreds of people arrived daily in the Cloud City.

In 1879, the State Legislature divided Lake County into fourteen counties. The size of the city in Leadville and the county was 26 miles in length and 15 miles in width. It is rather hard to imagine an estimated 40,000 persons in such a small area. Was it any wonder that there was such mass confusion? It was noted that many people died of pneumonia, the number unknown, because of the lack of lodgings and shelters and many had to sleep outside in the bitter, freezing cold winter nights.

### Cloud City

Some folks often times wonder just how Leadville was given the name of Cloud City, a name still used today in reference to Leadville. There were a great number of people that had never witnessed clouds enveloping the mountain tops and would occasionally engulf the entire mountain. The Leadville area seems to abound in this phenomenon—thus, it acquired the name of the Cloud City. There were times, and even today, the clouds over-take the city. Back in the early days, some thought this to be a bad omen.

### Traffic Around the Clock

There were so many freighters arriving in Leadville around the clock with supplies and such that it could not all be stored in warehouses. Many of the goods were unloaded in the streets and armed guards stood watch day and night in order to prevent looting. The demand for household goods was so great that it was not possible to purchase all that was needed.

With the coming of more than 20 giant Concord coaches each day, there was great difficulty for passengers locating their friends or relatives. There were no street signs and even if there had been, the situation would not have been helped much. Men's wives and families which were arriving confused the poor Leadville husband, as he did not know when or where or how they would arrive. This, of course, added to the multitudinous confusion already existing in Leadville. Not only the Leadville "kin" were having troubles, worse, the riff-raff found wives and families easy prey when arriving in Leadville.

### Not All True

Not all of the stories that appeared in the Leadville newspapers were true in the early days. Many articles were merely "day-dreams." Most imaginative of the writers were Orth Stein. He came to Leadville in 1880 and was employed by the Daily Chronicle. C. C. Davis, the publisher, was happy with Stein because he boosted the circulation to new peaks. The stories he wrote were really 'whoppers'. Stein remained in Leadville until 1883. Then, he returned to his home town, Kansas City. There he fell into a life of crime. In the end, he even robbed his own mother of her life's savings. In 1885, Stein took his own life.

Although historical societies usually accept newspaper articles,



there are those members who are trained to weed out the fiction and the non-fiction. Some of the stories of the early years in Leadville were as follows:

Frank and Jesse James and other members of their gang did some prospecting near Soda Springs, 3 miles west of Leadville.

A Spanish ship was found imbedded in an underground rock pile near Red Cliff.

There was a beautiful girl who lived with a prospector in Iowa Gulch. Everyone knew the girl, as she could play some type of a string instrument so beautifully that it was almost unbelievable. Everyone knew the couple and where they lived, but one day upon examination, the cabin was found empty and it appeared that no one had ever lived there.

A mother and baby on their way to Twin Lakes were attacked by a pack of wolves and completely devoured.

A petrified body was found on Mt. Sherman, 3 miles east of Leadville.

A discovery of an underground cavern was made near Leadville. The inside of the cave sparkled with diamonds, worth millions of dollars.

Being suspicious of an old woman that came into the newspaper office asking for back issues dealing with the assassination of President Garfield, Stein followed the old woman home. After intensive questioning, he learned that she was the ex-wife of Guitau who shot the President. The old woman produced her marriage and divorce papers.

In 1910, a giant space ship hovered over Capitol Hill and turned on a brilliant light—never before seen upon this earth. Regarding this story, one wonders if there might have been UFO's in the early 1900's.

### Some Truth

Of course, it would be unfair to say that Stein did not write some factual stories, because he did, and they made interesting reading for all ages.

Stein wrote the story of President Grant's visit to Leadville in 1880. At the time, the railroad (Rio Grande) had only about four miles more to go to reach Leadville. Stein wrote of the journey from the end of the line in the back of the old AVSKR Company. The buggies and wagons traveled along West 3rd Street, thence over Pine to Chestnut, thence to the Clarendon Hotel, where he made

his headquarters. Along the route, hundreds of children were waving small American flags and shouting, "Welcome, Mr. President." So well written were these stories of the Presidents visit to the Cloud City, that only after an hour following publication, the extra issues were all sold out.

He wrote about the terrible strike by the miners in 1880. He pulled no punches, and attacked both sides when they were not right or fair. He did not make many friends, yet he was somehow feared, as no one wanted their name to appear in the paper—if it might be harmful to them. Mooney, who was the head of the union during the strike, blasted Stein, and every word was printed in the paper.

Stein also bombarded the gangsters of that time in the columns of the Chronicle and stated that they should be taken to the city limits and ordered to keep going or else face jail terms. He also printed names of card cheats, crooked dealers and others who robbed the poor miners.

### THE TABOR GRAND HOTEL

Leadville was founded in 1878 and was given its name by eighteen of the citizens in a blacksmith shop on Chestnut Street. The best hotel accommodations to be found in the Cloud City was the Clarendon Hotel, next to the Tabor Opera House. The hotel, however, was hastily constructed in early 1879 and lacked modern conveniences of the large city hotels. The rooms were small and rather stuffy and all of the rooms had only small heaters. Washing facilities were composed of a wash basin and a pitcher of water. The hotel was described by some out-of-town visitors as a "fire trap."

### Lamps — Candles — Gas

Rooms were illuminated by coal-oil lamps before the construction of the gas plant—in some rooms there were only candles. In Denver, travelers were informed that Leadville did not have good or adequate hotel accommodations and they should steer clear of the Cloud City. Consequently, there were literally hundreds who stayed away from Leadville's glory because of this reason.

In the 1880's, Leadville ranked second largest city in Colorado, boasting a population estimated to close to 40,000 persons. At the

time, there was some talk of Leadville becoming the State Capitol, but again, this was just rumors and talk. However, even with all the splendor, the stories circulated around about the bad hotel accommodations and the town merchants were deeply concerned.

### Hotel Company Founded

In 1883, the Leadville Hotel Company was organized by a group of Leadville businessmen. These men, however, met many obstacles. There was litigation over some of the property, but worse of all the company's funds became exhausted. For almost a year, there was nothing done as far as construction was concerned. The land dispute that had gone to court had cost the men almost all of their construction capital.

The men in the Leadville Hotel Company were all well known and many had their own businesses in Leadville. The Company consisted of: R. L. Hatten, Frank DeMaineville, Henry Brisbane, W. F. Sprague, S. F. Bruckman and W. F. Callaway. Mr. Hatten had constructed the Hatten Building at the corner of 7th and Harrison Avenue. DeMaineville had built the one on the corner of 6th and Harrison. This was also the location of the Post Office for some



*Vendome in 1897 (Tabor Grand Hotel)*

twenty years. Callaway constructed the Delaware Building in 1885. Sprague built the Sprague Building at the corner of 6th and Poplar Street.

### Tabor Joins Company

H. A. W. Tabor, at the time, was still a wealthy man. The men of the Hotel Company contacted Mr. Tabor as a last resort for aid and asked him to become a partner in the Company. At first he was not too anxious to join, but was reminded that Leadville most certainly needed a more modern hotel. Tabor finally consented to join with them, and purchased 51 per cent of the stock. With this new capital, the litigation was cleared up and construction started. George E. Knight and Co., noted architects, and the Robert Murdock Construction Co. were engaged by the company to build the new hotel. New and different plans were drawn by the architects, and during construction there as an early day "gallery" of local townspeople that watched in amazement as the hotel took shape. There was no shortage of "sidewalk superintendents" on the job.

### Hotel Leased

By June of 1885, the construction of the hotel was drawing to an end. Given the name of the Tabor Grand Hotel, it was leased to Mrs. J. C. Hutchinson, who had operated the old Clarandon Hotel under its most difficult conditions. She later announced that she had engaged James H. Cragg as the manager of the new hotel. At that time, she also told the press that the hotel would be ready by July 1st.

### Grand Opening

The date of the opening of the Tabor Grand Hotel was July 17, 1885. There was a total of 117 rooms and each was fully furnished in a luxurious fashion for the opening. The office was located on the main floor and was elegantly done. It was as large as any of the modern hotels in the country. Also, there was a large ladies waiting room, a large reading library, very neatly carpeted floors, desks, easy chairs and divans in the lobby and a number of telephones also in the lobby. Telephones were still quite new at that time. Overall, the rooms were quite spacious. The dining room was large enough to seat a few hundred persons.

The large kitchen was a marvel of neatness. Employed was a chef, a second cook, a fry cook, a dish washer, pot washer and a handy

man. There were also a number of steam tables. Over the stove was placed a huge variety of cooking utensils. The room was decorated in white. The steam heating system consisted of a 60 horse power boiler which furnished the hot water and steam heat for the hotel. Fire hydrants were located on each of the floors in the hallways in case of emergencies.

Two wide stairways led to the second, third and fourth floors, one was on the south side of the building and one was on the north. This meant easy ascent to the upper floors. There were no elevators until 1895. The new hotel also had a large public parlor which was opened to the people and guests. It was designed in exquisite style. Many beautiful paintings adorned the walls. Easy chairs, sofas and divans were tastefully placed in the parlor. Also located in the hotel was a billiard room and a rather large cocktail lounge. It was not necessary to go to the bar room, as the lounge furnished a large number of tables.

Hundreds of persons attended evening meals, served between 5 and 9 p.m. The menu boasted many imported foods from Europe. Each person attending dinner was given a menu on which was a photograph of the Tabor Grand Hotel. There are, no doubt, a few of these menus still around Leadville and are now considered a collector's item. Some spent the evening dancing in the large ballroom of the hotel. The Great Western Orchestra, under the direction of Professor Henry Simon, furnished the music. Many guests were extravagantly attired and women showed off beautiful diamonds of all description.

### Construction Cost A Tidy Sum

The reported cost of the new hotel was \$100,000, a tidy sum in the year of 1885. Many of the nations newspapers and magazines carried articles of the Tabor Grand Hotel in Leadville.

Some of the VIP type guests at the hotel were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Boettcher, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Davis, Charles Wenzell, Harry Tomkins, John Harvey, Dr. John Law, C. L. Nelson, A. Heller, A. V. Bohn and their wives.

### Hotel Kitchen

In 1887, the hotel was leased to the Kitchen Brothers and was then given the name of the family, Hotel Kitchen. The new management served delicious foods and catered parties. The French

cuisine hosted many parties for mining men, organizations, private parties and theatrical groups that were playing engagements at the Tabor Opera House in Leadville.

### Record Room

In 1960, I was given permission to go through the record room, located in the basement of the hotel. At that time, Clifford Lessard was owner and manager. I noted names of persons from every part of the world. The records were well preserved, considering that some of them at the time were more than 75 years past.

Nearly all of the theatrical groups playing at the Opera House made their headquarters at the modern day hotel. One can find more than several thousand theatrical companies that were registered there. Some had as many as 100 persons in the cast. On December 27, 1885, the McIntyre and Heath Minstrels, with a cast of 45 members, were registered. There was to be parade on Harrison Avenue at 11:45 a.m. A notation appeared at the bottom of the registration page, "Wake all members of the cast at 6:30 a.m." From Leadville this particular group went to Canon City for an engagement. Incidentally, the night clerk must have spent quite a lot of time "doodling" on the register book, and some of his drawings were quite good.

### Became the Vendome in 1891

In early 1891, the hotel was sold to the Phillips Investment Company. W. H. Brisbane was listed as manager of the hotel and it was re-named the Vendome Hotel. It maintained that name until about 1970.

### Rumors of Closing

In early 1908, rumors were prevalent that the Vendome Hotel was about ready to close its doors. Henry Butler, publisher of the Herald Democrat, sent a reporter to the hotel to check the rumor. C. C. Cooper, manager, spoke out bluntly, denying positively that the hotel was about to close. "We will continue to run the Vendome if we have but one man to feed in our dining room and if we have but one guest upstairs," said Cooper. A check of the register revealed that the hotel was far from having one guest upstairs or in the dining room. Cooper stated further, "The owners of the hotel, who live in Kansas City, have the utmost confidence in the future and

prosperity of Leadville. They have instructed me to prepare for a long season of active business. I coincide with their idea as to the city's future and I am acting according to their instructions."

Fred L. Henson purchased the hotel about 1920. Clifford Lessard, who started as a bellhop in his early years, purchased the Vendome on July 1, 1946. He operated the hotel until 1965, at which time it was purchased by Rex Hayes. Mr. Hayes, prior to his hotel venture, purchased the old telephone building on East 5th Street and converted it into an apartment building.

Throughout the years, the Leadville hotel has consistently gone through renovation and changes. To our knowledge, the hotel was never closed, not even for a single day, since its construction.

Since 1971, the owners and management have changed several times. In that year, the original name was restored, The Tabor Grand Hotel.



*Chestnut Street 1882*