

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD (1862 – 1889)

In July of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act, which allowed for the construction of a transcontinental railroad from Council Bluffs, Iowa, located on the eastern shore of the Missouri River, to Sacramento, California. The Act authorized the issuance of 30-year government bonds and grants of land to railroad companies, specifically the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad (later renamed the Southern Pacific Railroad). The railroad companies were granted contiguous rights of way for their rail lines in addition to public lands within 200 feet on either side of the track. The Act also granted an additional ten square miles of public land for every mile of grade except where railroads ran through cities or crossed rivers, which equated to the railroad companies acquiring 6,400 acres for every mile of railroad track.

By 1871, the railroads controlled more than 175 million acres of public land, which is equivalent to an area larger than the State of Texas. The expansion of the railroad provided Americans access to federal lands available through the Homestead Act, which President Lincoln also signed in 1862. The Act allowed any U.S. citizen who had never borne arms against the United States government to file an application and lay claim to 160 acres of surveyed government land. The homesteader was required during the subsequent five years to live on the land and improve it by both building a dwelling measuring no smaller than 12' by 14' and growing crops. After the five years had passed, the homesteader could file for his patent or deed of title by submitting proof of residency and the associated required improvements to a local land office. Title could also be acquired following a six-month residency and minor improvements as long as the homesteader paid \$1.25 per acre to the government. The railroads benefited from the act by offering their excess land to homesteaders at inflated prices, especially adjacent to railway stations since farmers and ranchers considered this land most valuable.

The construction of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad, which ran through Cheyenne, Wyoming, was completed in May of 1869. The construction of the Denver Pacific Railroad was authorized by Congress earlier that year; the railroad would provide an important link from Denver to Cheyenne and the transcontinental railroad. In September of 1869, the laying of track started from Cheyenne, heading south towards Denver. Once reaching the South Platte River and confronting inclement weather in December, operations ceased until May of 1870 when a bridge across the river was completed, allowing work crews to proceed to the Mile High City. On the 17th of June, the track crossed 72nd Avenue, less than one mile west of present-day Derby.

Another railroad, the Kansas Pacific, provided a second southerly branch of the transcontinental railroad from Kansas City, reaching Denver by August of 1870. In 1880, the railroad was consolidated with the Union Pacific Railroad; this rail line is located less than four miles south of Derby.

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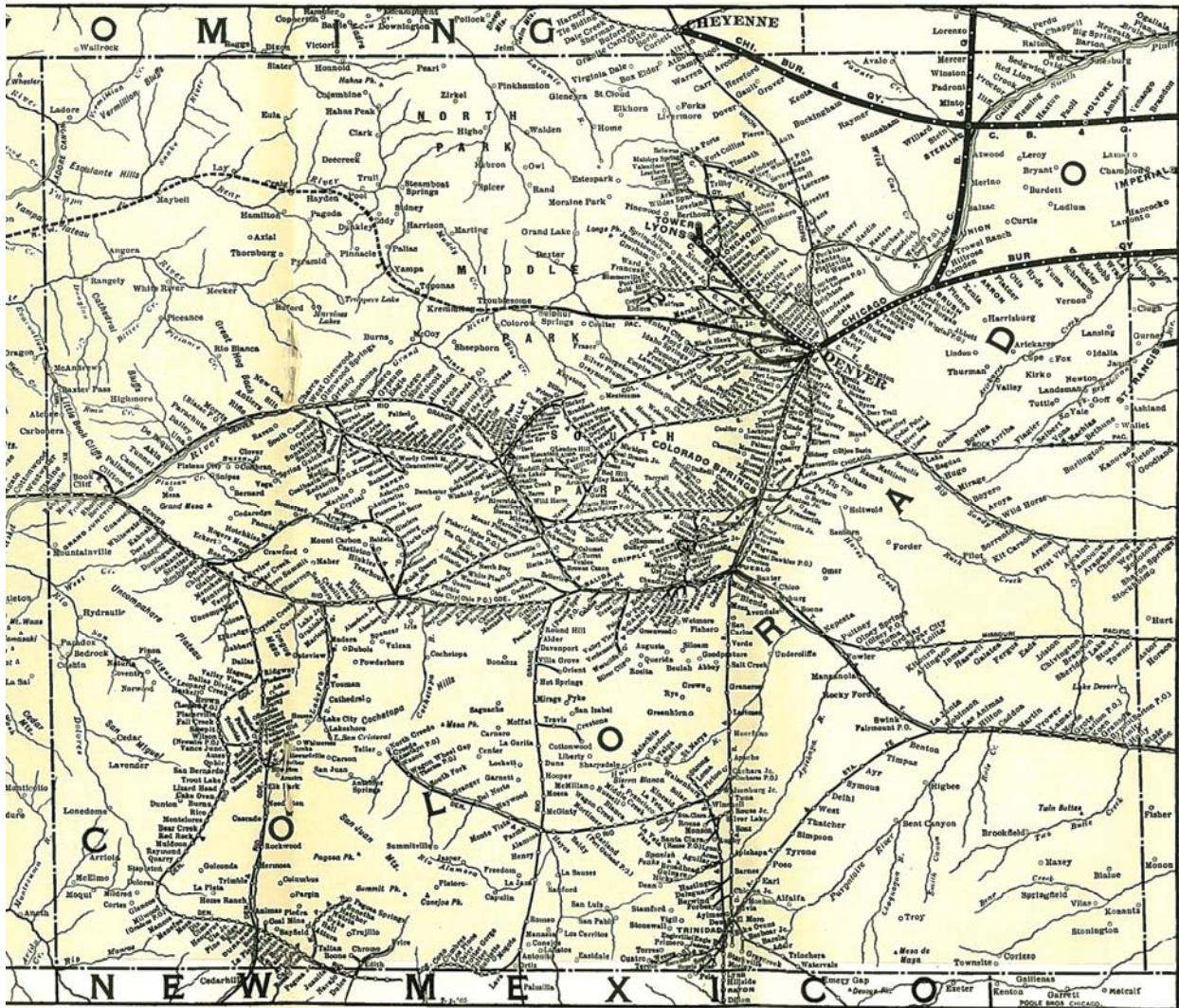


Figure IV-1.

Railroad routes were published by the Burlington Route in the "Colorado and Utah Handbook For Pleasure Seekers". This map excerpt of the State of Colorado is from the 1906 edition. Source: History Colorado, Stephen Hart Library.

The Burlington and Colorado railroad line was organized in 1881 as a subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad (CB & Q RR), which was chartered in Aurora, Illinois in 1849 as the Aurora Branch Railroad and then changed to the Chicago and Aurora Railroad in 1852. By 1864, the railroad had adopted a new name, the "Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company", after laying track from Chicago to Burlington, Iowa and then south to Quincy, Illinois on the Mississippi River. After crossing the Iowa border, the railroad was renamed the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad; although the first tracks were laid in 1856, the Civil War caused a delay in the railroad reaching the Missouri River along the western boundary of Iowa until 1870. The railroad functioned as a separate company, the "Burlington & Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska", as it continued westward, with the completion of tracks to Kearney, located in western

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Nebraska, laid in 1872. A continuation of this railroad line in northeastern Colorado began in March of 1881 by the Burlington & Colorado Railroad Company and was completed to Denver on May 29, 1882, thereby providing the first direct rail line from Chicago to Denver.

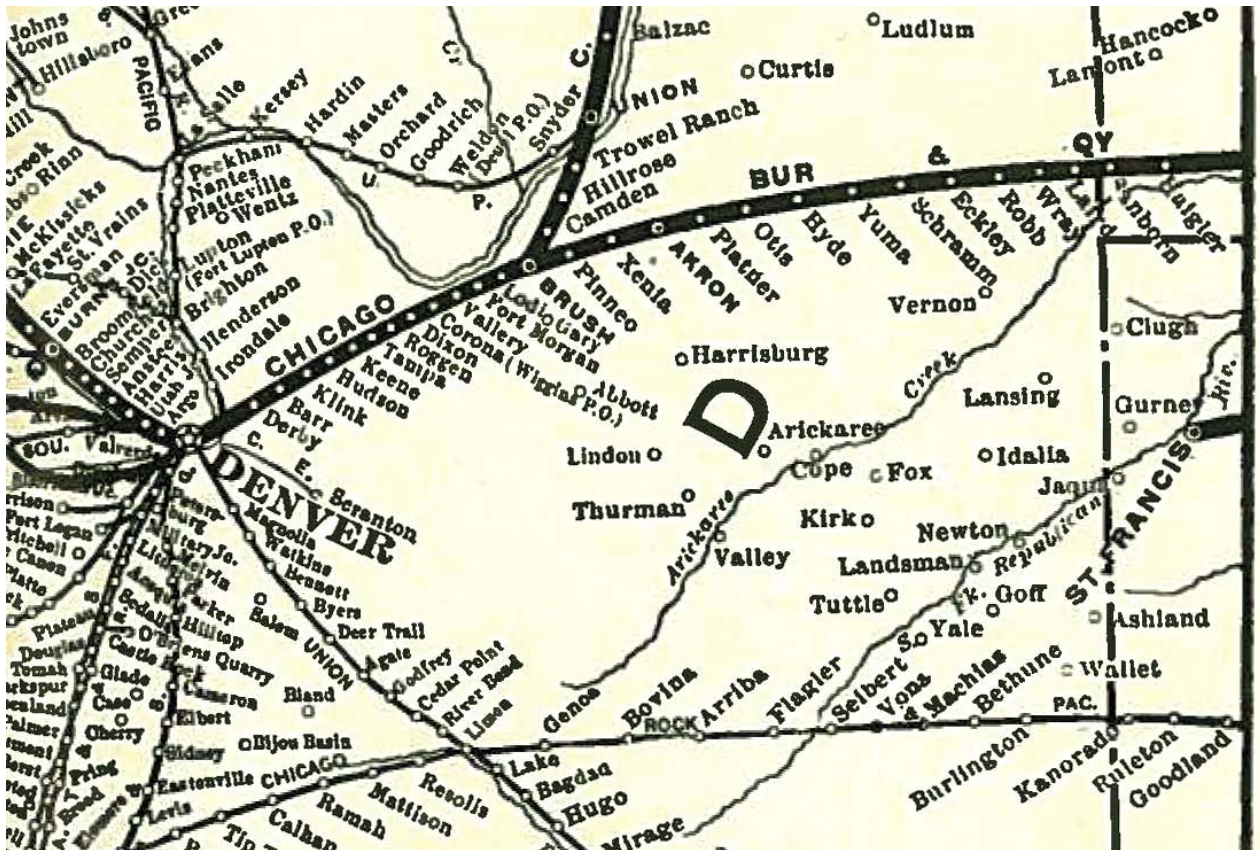


Figure IV-2.

Close-up view of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad route through Derby in "Colorado and Utah Handbook for Pleasure Seekers", 1906 edition. Towns founded by the Lincoln Land Company include Akron, Brush, Eckley, Fort Morgan, Otis, Pinneo, Sterling, Wray, and Yuma. Source: History Colorado, Stephen Hart Library (Map) and Nebraska State Historical Society Collection Record for RG3648.AM: Lincoln Land Company.

In order to attract settlers to the Midwest and West, Burlington representatives promoted crop and stock improvement as well as soil and irrigation conservation to farmers and ranchers. The railroad introduced the latest agricultural innovations to farmers through seed and soil exhibits, poultry specials, and livestock trains. Burlington often employed farmers during the winter months when their fields laid fallow. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad was known as a "Granger Railroad" because the transporting of products was essential to the railroad's success as a freight customer of farmers and ranchers. Grangers were members of local organizations of farmers, known as Granges (or Patrons of Husbandry), who sought improvements and changes in laws that favored the interests of the agricultural community. Following the Civil War, farmers began settling in the West and granges were organized that initially emphasized social activities, with both men and

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women as members, to reduce the isolation of farm life; they were similar to fraternal organizations, with rituals like those of the Masons and the Odd Fellows. The Granger Movement is responsible for the passing of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, which established the important regulatory agency, the Interstate Commerce Commission. Many farmers were concerned over the growing power and wealth of corporations, particularly railroads that had become the principal form of transportation for goods. The Act required that railroad rates be reasonable and just. It also stipulated that carriers publish their fares and give the public ten days' notice before changing fares.

THE FOUNDING OF DERBY (1889 – 1910)

The Town of Derby was surveyed in April of 1889 and recorded in Arapahoe County on November 15, 1889. The Lincoln Land Company, organized in the State of Nebraska and doing business in Colorado, and George McCullough of Arapahoe County owned the large parcel of land which encompassed the South Half (S½) of Section 32 Township 2 South (T2S) and the Northwest Quarter (NW¼) of Section 5 Township 3 South (T3S) all in Range 67 West (67W). The blocks measured 300 feet square, with typical lots measuring 25 feet wide by 150 feet long. Lots around the perimeter of the town were larger and of varying dimensions. (Refer to Figure IV-3.)

At the time of the platting of Derby, the town was located in Arapahoe County, which included the present-day counties of Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, and parts of Washington and Yuma Counties, with its east boundary at the Kansas state line. Organized in 1855 by the Kansas Territory and then reduced in size by the Colorado Territory in 1861, Arapahoe County's seat was Denver. In November of 1902, voters in Arapahoe County passed a constitutional amendment that approved the formation of the City and County of Denver; South Arapahoe County, now present-day Arapahoe County, encompassed a portion of land along the southern border and Adams County was created from the remaining land. Six months later, the residents of Adams County voted to de-annex the eastern end of the county; the General Assembly divided this area to create Washington and Yuma counties. Adams County was named for Alva A. Adams, a Governor of Colorado who served three terms from 1887 to 1889, 1897 to 1899, and briefly in 1905. Adams is credited in 1897 with sponsoring the creation of the State Board of Arbitration, which has successfully negotiated numerous labor conflicts in the State of Colorado.

The Lincoln Land Company (LLC) was incorporated on March 7, 1880 in Lincoln, Nebraska with the purpose of purchasing and selling real estate as well as platting towns in Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, Wyoming, Montana, and Colorado. The original incorporators were officers of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and they included H. B. Scott, President, and R. O. Phillips, Secretary. Towns were typically platted 7 to 10 miles apart so that farmers who owned land near the railroad's right-of-way were within a day's travel to a depot and trading center. Following the platting of a town, the railroad would typically dig a community well and build a depot.

On the third day of July in 1889, an agreement was prepared between George McCullough and the Lincoln Land Company that deeded to the Burlington & Colorado Railroad Company

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a right of way fifty (50) feet in width on each side of the centerline of the railroad track that had been laid through the Town of Derby. The agreement continued:

“AND WHEREAS the said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company have also deeded to the said Railroad Company, for a nominal consideration in money and in consideration of a depot building being maintained on depot grounds hereinafter described, for not less than five years by said Railroad Company, depot grounds on the premises hereinbefore described, to be two thousand (2,000) feet long, as shown by the official and recorded plat of the town of Derby;

AND WHEREAS the said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company are desirous of having a depot building erected on said depot grounds;

AND THEREFORE in consideration of the premises and the right of way and depot grounds deeded as aforesaid by said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company to said Railroad Company, following contract is entered into by and between the parties hereto:

...It is hereby mutually agreed that the said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company shall within six (6) months from date, erect and complete a depot building on the depot grounds of said Railroad Company located on the South one-half of section thirty-two (32) township two (2) South, range sixty-seven (67) West of the sixth (6th) Principal Meridian, in Arapahoe County, Colorado; the said building when completed to be turned over to said Railroad Company for use as a Railway Station building.

It is also hereby agreed by and between the parties hereto, that the site for said building on said grounds is to be agreed upon by the parties hereto; that said building shall not cost to exceed Twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2500.00) and that the plan of said depot building shall be agreed upon by and between the parties hereto.

It is also hereby agreed by and understood by and between the parties hereto, that said depot building shall in the first instance be paid for by the said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company, and that in consideration of this agreement the said Railroad Company will pay to the said George McCullough and the said Lincoln Land Company the actual cost of said depot building not exceeding the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars (\$2500.00) on or before the thirty-first (31st) day of December A.D. 1890...”

Deed Number 7282, which conveyed the depot grounds and railroad right-of-way through the Town of Derby, was received in the railroad’s R.O.W. office on January 4, 1890; the construction of the depot building was to be completed by this date. (Refer to Figure IV-9.)

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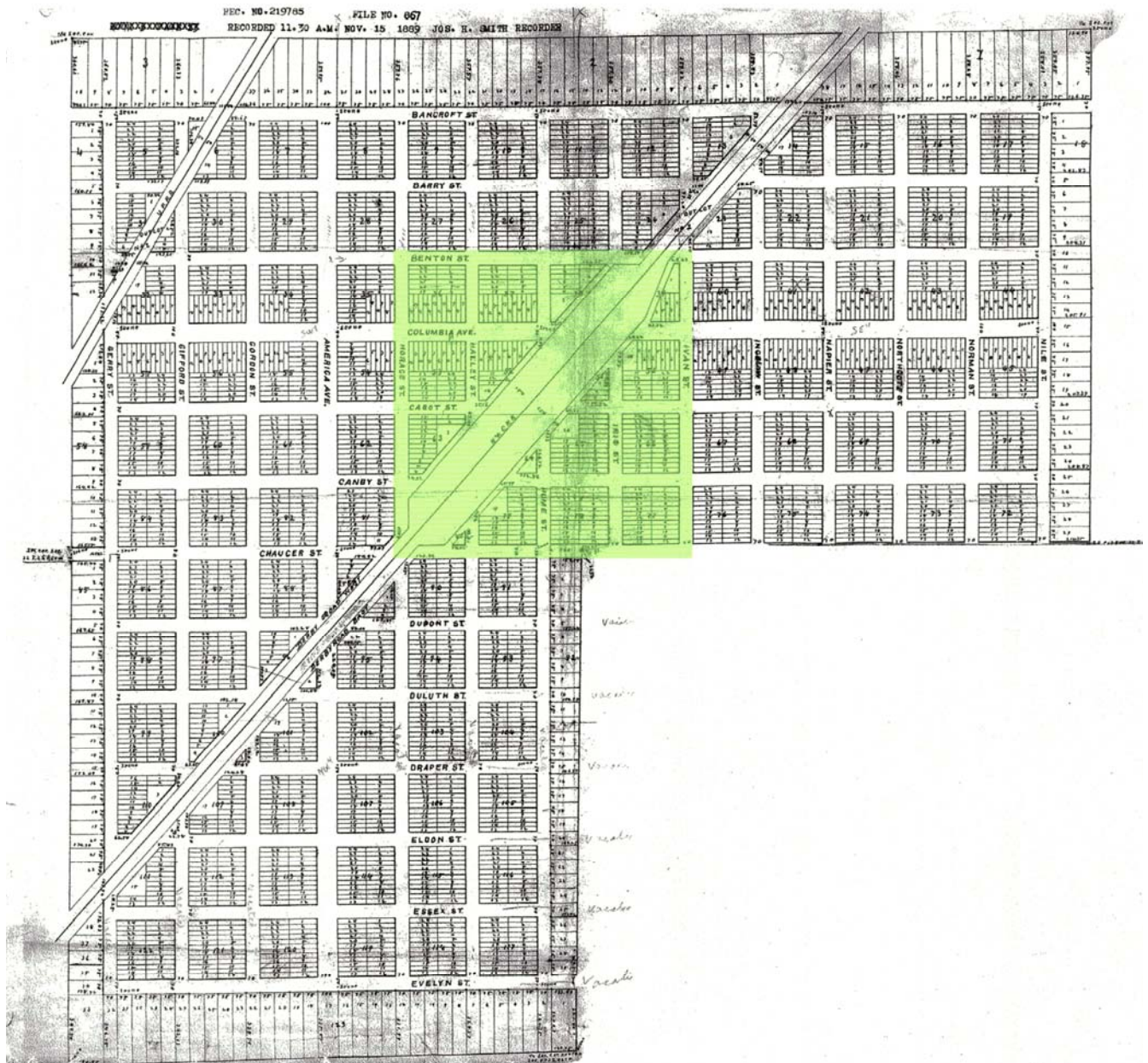


Figure IV-3.

The original plat of Derby encompassed the South Half (S½) of Section 32 Township 2 South (T2S) and the Northwest Quarter (NW¼) of Section 5 Township 3 South (T3S). The portion of the original plat that was retained two years later for the Town of Derby is shown shaded. Source: Adams County, CO Clerk & Recorder.

In February of 1891, the Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough petitioned the Board of County Commissioners of Arapahoe County for taxes assessed and levied against their property as erroneous. The petition contained a number of reasons for the incorrect

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assessment including that the petitioners (Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough) "...have endeavored to procure water on said lots and failing have been unable to dispose of a single lot at any price & none has been sold". Consequently, the Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough called for the survey and plat of several blocks and lots, together with their associated streets, avenues and alleys, to be vacated and of no effect. Blocks that remained as part of the Town of Derby included 36 through 39, 50 through 53, 63 through 66, and 77 through 80; the platted town was reduced in size with Horace Street (now Krameria Street) as the western boundary, Ivan Street (now Magnolia Street) as the eastern boundary, Benton Street (now E. 74th Avenue) serving as the northern boundary, and Chaucer Street (now E. 72nd Avenue) defining the southern boundary of Derby. (Refer to Figure IV-3.)

The President of the Lincoln Land Company, C. H. Morrill, was presented with a subscription paper in Denver in April of 1904, requesting donations totaling \$17,500 to be used for the boring of a well with a depth of 3,500 feet, located on land just east of the Derby town site. Morrill subscribed an amount of \$100 on behalf of the Lincoln Land Company with the provision that the entire subscription was to be void if the sum of \$8,000 was not paid to the International Trust Company on or before September 1, 1904 and also that the sum of \$17,500 was all subscribed. By December of 1911, a well had been bored on a 5 acre tract owned by the Lincoln Land Company, according to correspondence to the LLC by their real estate agent in Derby, D. W. Irwin. An undated contract was prepared for George McCullough and the Lincoln Land Company to construct a concrete tank at Derby. The reinforced concrete tank, measuring 16 feet square and 8 feet high with an interior plaster finish, suggests that it was used to store potable well water for distribution to the residents of Derby.

EARLY DERBY (1910 – 1941)

Derby is surrounded by rich agricultural land; farming was the primary occupation of the early settlers in the area. Individual farms varied in size from 160 to 300 acres with crops mostly consisting of wheat, alfalfa, and potatoes. A severe drought during 1891 and 1892, followed by the Silver Crash in 1893, caused farm prices to fall throughout the area and the economy to enter into a recession. Yet Germans, Scandinavians, Italians and Russians immigrated to the area and by 1900, 42 percent of the residents were foreign-born. Many German-Russians, known as "Volga Germans", came to provide farm labor for the sugar beet industry, which was thriving in nearby Brighton, Colorado.

The Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough platted a portion of the Original Town of Derby that had been vacated in 1891. Located at the east end of the Southeast Quarter (SE¼) of Section 32 in Township Two South (T2S), Range 67 West (R67W), the 80 acre parcel was subdivided and named "Derby Gardens". Prior to the platting of Derby Gardens, Anselmo B. Smith, a Denver surveyor who surveyed the Town of Derby in 1889, sent a letter to A. B. Miner, then Secretary and Treasurer of the Lincoln Land Company, on the 5th of November 1909:

"Enclosed is a clipping I have delayed in sending to you to indicate what is trying to be done near your Derby land. Geo. McC asked me to go to see these people to find out

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where the land was which I did and find it is the S ½ of 33 T2S R67W being just E of your S ½ of 32. Irwin is trying to sell the lone 80 and thinks he has a customer. Just the other day he was in to see McC to know if he would divide the 80 and McC in turn asked me. I told him I saw no objection to do so doing. Selling all on one side of R.R...I presume McC will keep watch of sales and if they can sell at their prices, Irwin should be able to get \$100 pr A in 20 A tracts..."

A. B. Miner replied to Amselmo B. Smith on November 16th, 1909:

"Yours of the 13th, with advertising matter of the Altura Company, is received and I am very much obliged to you.

I note what you say about prices for our land and I quite agree with you, that \$150 would be about the right price to start sales.

The Altura Company not only have an advantage of us in having water rights but they are also selling at unusually favorable terms to the purchaser which we could not very well meet; small payments being the particular objection.

The main thing in handling this property is to get it started and I hope Irwin will be able to make some sales..."

Derby Gardens was subdivided into five acre tracts, similar to Altura Farms Tract No. 3. (Refer to Figure IV-5.) Five and ten acre fruit or garden tracts were popular for truck farming; the development of farm-to-market roads became a high priority for state highway authorities by 1919. Altura Farms touted the benefits of the purchase of a farming tract: "Think of...getting a home on a plan that makes it pay for itself, with an assured income besides, close to one of the best markets in the world, in the best state, the finest and healthiest climate, with all the advantages of a city."

The plat for Derby Gardens was recorded on January 13, 1910. Individual five acre tracts along Napier Street (now Oneida) cost \$250 in 1920 while a fifteen acre tract facing Chaucer Street (now East 72nd Avenue) sold for \$1,125. The Brighton Blade reported in August of 1921 that "Mr. Irwin is very optimistic in regard to Derby as far as real estate is concerned. He thinks no better location can be found as close to Denver with the advantages possessed by this section – especially for parties desiring 5 and 10-acre tracts. And Derby proper has stores that are satisfied with a fair profit, a good live garage, good school and a lumber company that is surpassed by few in the large cities." Altura Farms included a "Want Ad" in one of their brochures for a farming tract east of Denver in Aurora, requesting a general store, lumber yard, blacksmith, hotel, drug store, hardware store, physician, implement store, meat market, and livery barn with "special inducement to any one building before July 1st, 1909". Both D. W. Irwin, real estate agent for the Lincoln Land Company, and the Altura Suburban Farms Company understood that in order to sell farming tracts, access to goods and services were required nearby. The LLC and George McCullough recognized that the platting of Derby Gardens would help spur more development in the Town of Derby.

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10
THE SUNDAY NEWS-TIMES: DENVER, COLO., OCTOBER 31, 1909.
SECTION ONE.

WHAT WILL YOU BE IN TEN YEARS?

Still a Wage-Earner, Working for Others, Not a Dollar Laid Up?

**Why Not
Be
Independent?**

PRICES

5-Acre Tract . . \$1,500
10-Acre Tract . . 2,750
20-Acre Tract . . 5,000

With perpetual water right of one acre foot of water with each acre. Compare these prices with that of similar tracts with the same water right.

TERMS

5 Acres . . . \$100 or More Down
10 Acres . . . 200 or More Down
20 Acres . . . 400 or More Down

And \$10 Per Month on the First Day of Each Calendar Month Until Paid

**Own
a Small
Truck
Farm!**

ALTURA FARMS TRACT NO. 3

64 Tracts of 5, 10 and 20 Acres Each

Three miles north of the city limits of Denver on Burlington railroad, station of Derby 100 rods from this ground. This land lies on the route of the survey of an electric interurban line, which is certain to be built within one year.
 If within sixty days of first payment you visit the land and say you are not thoroughly satisfied with your purchase, or find any of these statements incorrect, we will instantly refund your money.

SOLD ON EASY PAYMENT PLAN

MOST LIBERAL CONTRACT EVER WRITTEN



GENERAL VIEW OF DERBY RANCH.



FARM HOME BEING BUILT IN OUR DISTRICT.

Here Are Three of Scores of Pleased Purchasers:

Mr. William Burkhardt, Jr., Ill.
 I have purchased one of the 20-acre tracts and have already received the title. I am very pleased with the purchase and the terms offered. I have already received the title and am very pleased with the purchase and the terms offered. I have already received the title and am very pleased with the purchase and the terms offered.

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STATION OF DERBY ON BURLINGTON RAILWAY.



HOW INDUSTRIOUS 'SMALL FARMER' PROSPERS.

Every tract we offer for sale is under a ditch and well irrigated; our water rights are perpetual. With each acre sold we deliver one right, or an acre foot of water, which will cover all needs for all time and every kind of crop. An acre foot equals 325,851 gallons.
 We will plow and cultivate each tract this fall and next spring so that each tract will be in good condition to seed in any kind of crop next spring, or if preferred we will seed to alfalfa, so that each tract will be on a paying basis immediately, as there will be at least one good cutting the first year, and thereafter each year there will be three or four cuttings, which alone will pay for the land.

Returns From Your Farm

WHEAT, corn, clover, etc., pay high returns, with a small outlay for 50 per cent more, at the price, right at your door.

A very conservative estimate of the returns you can expect from each acre of one of these tracts is:

GRAIN	100	CABBAGE	400
ALFALFA	100	RASPBERRIES	400
SUGAR BEETS	100	ORCHARD	500
POTATOES	100	CHEERY	1,000
CANTALOUPE	100	APPLES	1,000
CHERRIES	100		

THE ALTURA SUBURBAN FARMS CO.

WM. BIERKAMP, JR., Manager
H. PIKE, Assistant Manager
J. C. COLLINS, Assistant Manager

PHONE MAIN 3773
210 IDEAL BUILDING, DENVER, COLORADO

A Boon to Farm Life

Irrigation, with its reduced farm unit, means more neighbors—a revolution in the social side of farm life. It makes it possible for the farmer to live in the small town. It means the farm village, lighted by electricity, furnished with domestic water through pipes. It means a union of the social feature of town and the healthful ones of country life—the disappearance of 'lonesomeness' without the worse evil of overcrowding.

Figure IV-4.

This advertisement appeared in The Sunday News-Times: Denver, Colorado on October 31, 1909. Photographs of a Derby ranch and the Derby railroad depot were included in the advertisement. The small tracts were touted as "A Boon to Farm Life". "Irrigation, with its reduced farm unit, means more neighbors – a revolution in the social side of farm life. It makes it possible for the farmer to live in the small town. It means the farm village, lighted by electricity, furnished with domestic water through pipes. It means a union of the social feature of town and the healthful ones of country life – the disappearance of 'lonesomeness' without the worse evil of overcrowding." Source: History Colorado, Stephen Hart Library.

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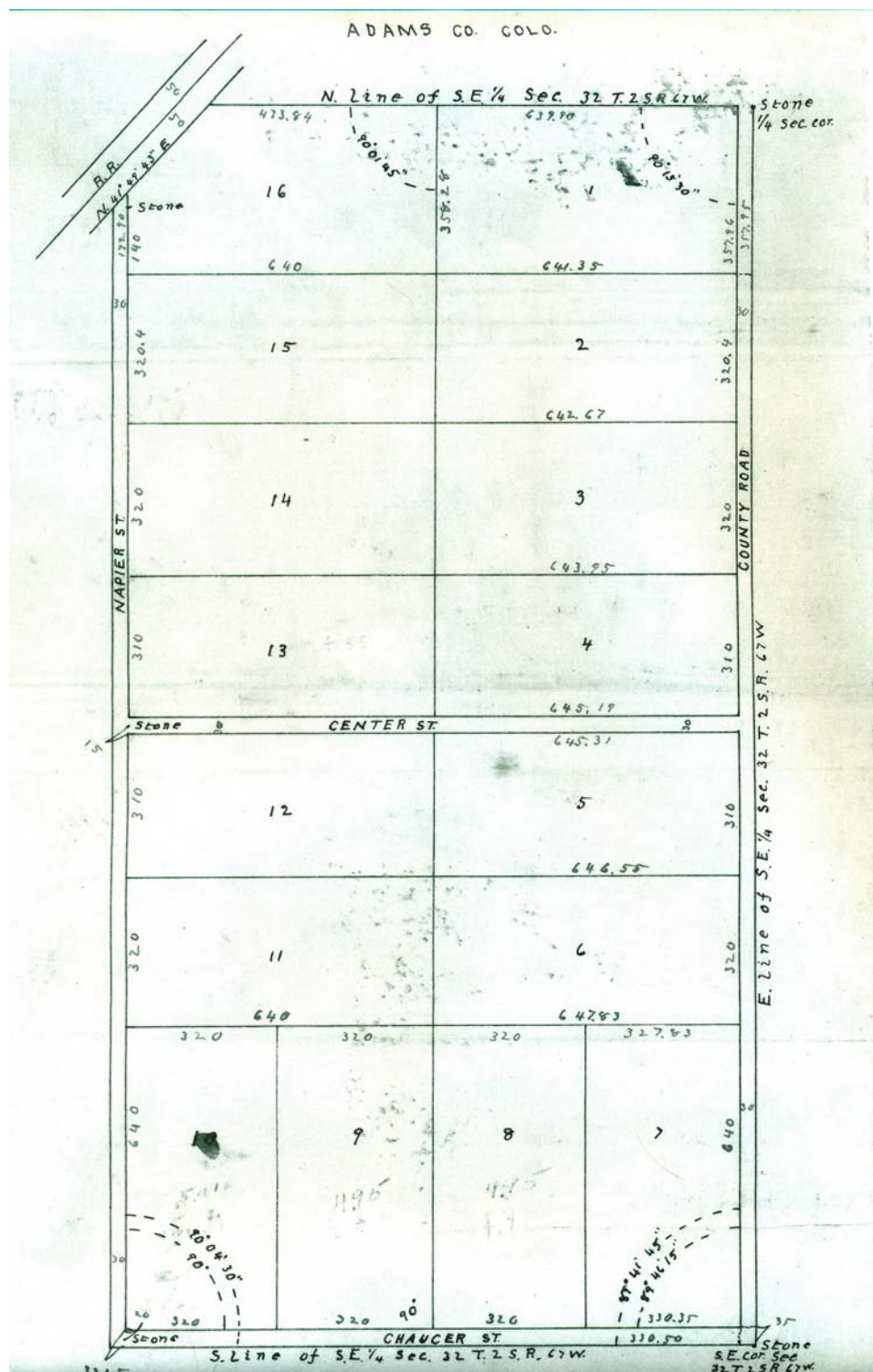


Figure IV-5.

The plat of Derby Gardens, surveyed in December of 1909 by Anselmo B. Smith, encompassed land east of the Town of Derby that had been vacated by the Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough in 1891. Source: Nebraska State Historical Society Collection Record for RG3648.AM: Lincoln Land Company.

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At the time of the platting of Derby Gardens, the Denver Suburban Irrigation District was formed in Adams County. The Antero reservoir, completed in 1909, stores water from the South Platte River watershed and was constructed to supply the High Line Canal, also referred to as the Old English Highline Canal. The reservoir furnished water for the newly-formed district, which comprised approximately 55,000 acres of land in Townships 1, 2, and 3 South and in Ranges 65, 66, and 67 West with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad forming the northwestern boundary of the district. Altura Farms had water rights to the High Line Canal and the Antero Reservoir. Given the \$250 price of a five acre tract in Derby Gardens, compared to \$1,500 at nearby Altura Farms, one may conclude that the Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough were unsuccessful in tying Derby Gardens into the High Line Canal. Individual property owners relied on wells for their water.



Figure IV-6.

The Burlington Ditch meanders through the landscape, west of Derby. It remains an integral part of one of the largest irrigation systems in Adams County and retains mostly unaltered since its completion in 1888.

By 1922, other farmers near the Town of Derby had access to another irrigation system, the Burlington Ditch, with its headworks located near Riverside Cemetery in Denver. (Refer to Figure IV-6.) The Burlington Ditch, Reservoir and Land Company was incorporated in 1885 and organized as a mutual stockholding corporation, similar to most

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ditch companies in Colorado during this time period. Farmers were able to buy shares and, in return, receive a right to a proportion of the company's water rights. Funds generated from the sale of company stock were used for the construction of the irrigation canal and reservoir system. Since the income generated from stock sales alone was not adequate to fund the irrigation system's construction, bonds were also sold. The Burlington Ditch is approximately twenty miles long and located entirely within Adams County. It was designed to initially tap the South Platte River at the headworks and then the Sand, First, Second, and Third Creeks for direct irrigation. The Sand Creek Lateral runs in a southeasterly direction and is approximately 2½ miles south of Derby.

Although Derby's railroad depot allowed residents to commute to jobs and provided farmers access to markets in Denver, the development of the town was slow to start. The Lincoln Land Company began selling lots in the Town of Derby circa 1910. The earliest business directory listing for Derby occurred in 1911 when the town had a population of 30. Listings included a railroad agent, a postmaster, a carpenter and contractor, and a justice of the peace; D.W. Irwin was listed as a real estate agent and representative of the Lincoln Land Company.

In March of 1913, the organization of a new school district was proposed, serving Section 5 in Township Three South (T3S), Range Sixty-Seven West (R67W) and all of Sections Thirty-two (32), Thirty-three (33), and Thirty-four (34) in Township Two South (T2S), Range Sixty-Seven West (R67W); the proposal reflected the growth in population of the area. A vote of the electors residing within the boundaries of the proposed school district was to occur at the real estate office of D. W. Irwin in Derby on April 4, 1913. In November of 1915, the Lincoln Land Company conveyed a tract of land 160 feet wide by 300 feet long in the northeast corner of the Northeast Quarter (NE¼) of the Northwest Quarter (NW¼) of Section 5 to newly-formed School District Number Seven. (This plat of land is located at the southwest corner of East 72nd Avenue and Monaco Street.) By 1914, the population had increased to 100 and the construction of a one-room concrete block school house occurred during this year. In 1922, a bond issue of \$6,000 was presented to the registered voters in District 7 for an addition to the school building; the proposal passed.

The first store in Derby was established by Tipton and Pearl Brewer in 1912. The retail business started in a small building; in 1918, the Brewers constructed a larger store to accommodate their growing business selling dry goods, groceries, ice cream, salt and fresh meats, hardware and automobile supplies. A lumber yard, owned by J. H. Peterson, was constructed in Derby in 1913 near the Brewer store and close to the railroad depot. In 1920, the business was sold and became known as the Derby Lumber Company, which sold farming implements, coal, cement, and building materials; the lumber company also provided construction services and was awarded the contract in 1921 to construct Waldo Kennels, a boarding and breeding facility located approximately one mile northwest of Derby along Brighton Road. (The lumber yard and Derby store remain today, now doing business as Younger Brothers Lumber & Hardware and Pawn Bank. The north end of Derby Liquors, now linked to Pawn Bank, is Tipton Brewer's former real estate office.)

The Midwest Packing Company constructed a large frame building near Derby for packing meat in 1921. The Duroc stock farm, a facility for raising hogs to later sell to individuals or packing houses in Denver, was located in Derby in 1922. The state's first fish hatchery, located approximately two miles north of Derby, was constructed circa 1882 following the creation of the Office of Fish Commissioner by the Colorado State Legislature. It was rebuilt in 1889 and then improved in 1922 with the addition of buildings and troughs; the hatchery had the largest capacity of any trout hatchery in the United States after the improvements were made. (The hatchery was closed in 1963; it now functions as a rifle range for the Division of Wildlife.)

"Considerable lumber is being loaded these days at the Adams City switch, consigned to the Derby Lumber Co. It signifies a building boom in this locality," the Brighton Blade reported on June 9, 1922. The Colorado Power Company installed electric lights in the community in 1923, which was "...a decided improvement". The population doubled from 100 in 1924 to 200 in 1925. (Refer to Figure IV-12 for the location of parcels sold between 1911 and 1926.) By 1930, the population had grown to 300 and new businesses had been established, including a garage, an auto filling station, a pool hall, and a marmalade company; the Community Church provided worship services to the residents.

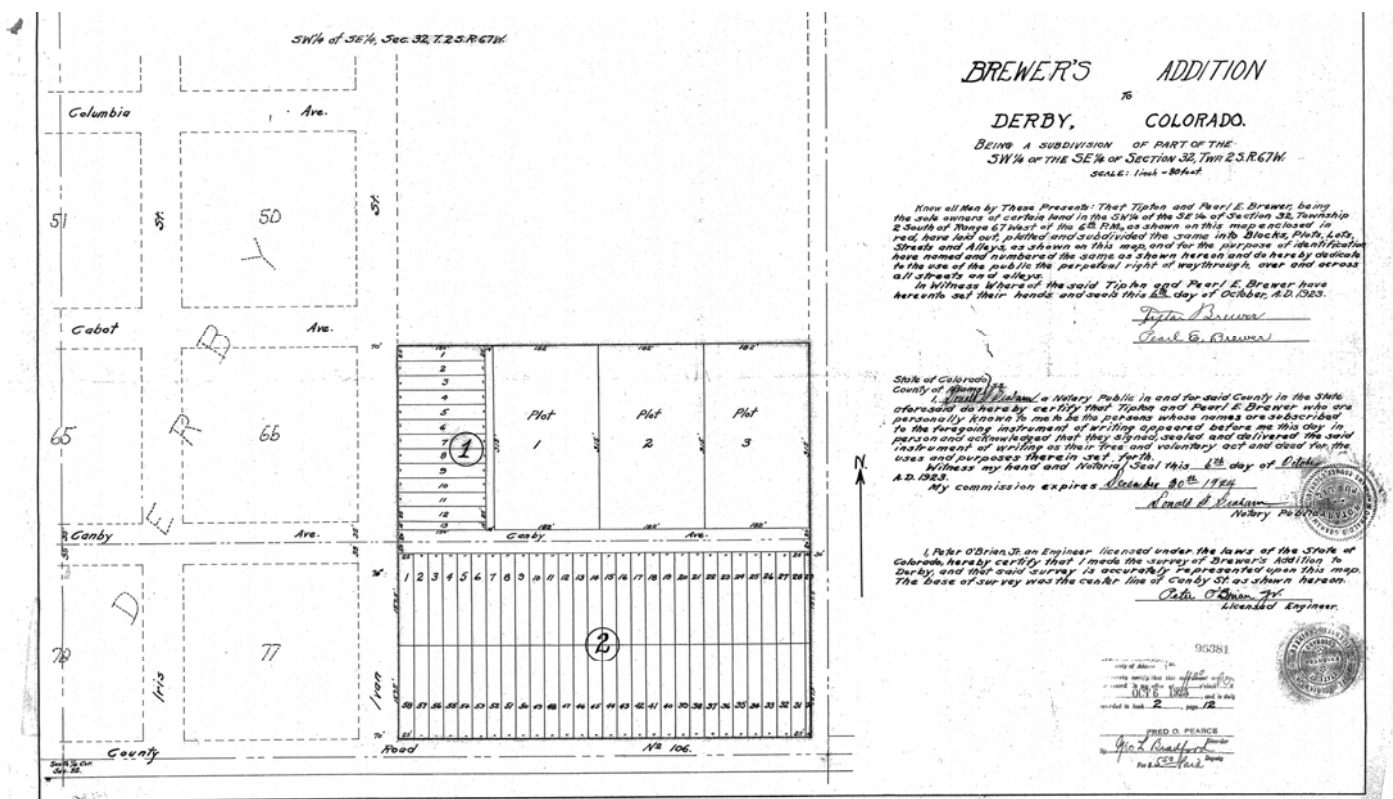


Figure IV-7.

Brewer's Addition to Derby, Colorado was recorded on October 6, 1923 in Adams County. Both lots for urban and agricultural development were provided with this plat. Source: Adams County, CO Clerk & Recorder.

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Tipton and Pearl Brewer not only operated a general store in Derby but also acquired land from the Lincoln Land Company and George McCullough to sell at their real estate business, which was established circa 1923. It was during this year on the 20th of February that the Brewers purchased previously-vacated blocks numbered 67 and 76 on the east side of Ivan Street (now Magnolia) and the adjacent two blocks to the east (68 and 75) along with the vacated street, which originally separated blocks 67 and 76 from blocks 68 and 75. The Brewers paid \$3,000 to the Lincoln Land Company for this parcel of land and named it "Brewers Addition to Derby, Colorado". The plat included lots measuring 25 feet wide by 150 feet (and 157.5 feet) deep as well as larger parcels containing over one acre of land. (Refer to Figures IV-7 and IV-12.) In May of 1926, the Brewers purchased another parcel from the Lincoln Land Company that had earlier been vacated; they paid \$2,000 for land lying north of Chaucer Street (now E. 72nd Avenue) and west of Horace Street (now Krameria Street), located west of the Town of Derby. They also acquired blocks 36, 37, 38, 53, and 63 from the LLC circa 1926; these blocks are located in the northwest corner of the Town of Derby on the opposite side of the railroad right-of-way. (Refer to Figure IV-3.)

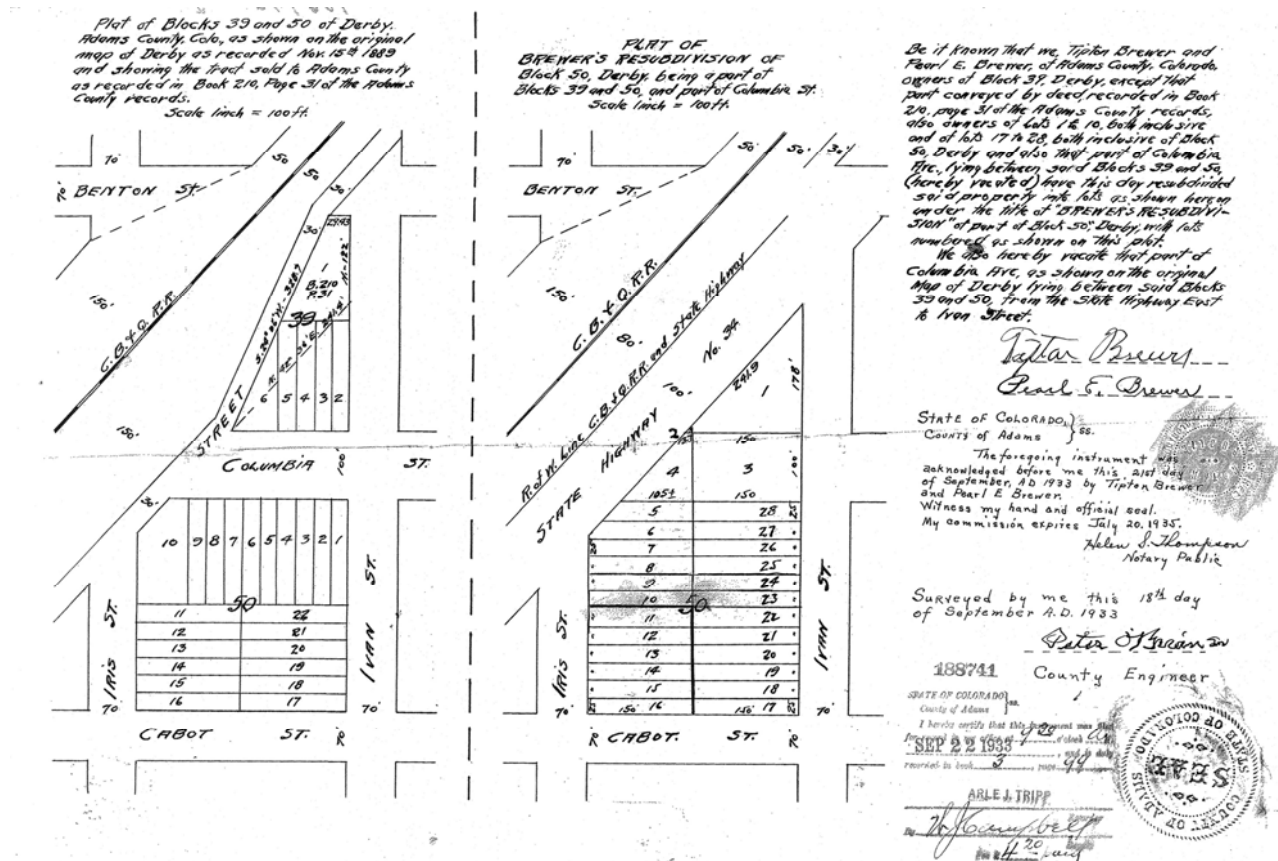


Figure IV-8.

"Brewer's Resubdivision of Block 50" was recorded on September 22, 1933 in Adams County. Source: Adams County, CO Clerk & Recorder.

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The Brewers purchased Block 39 and Lots 1 through 10 as well as Lots 17 through 22 in Block 50 circa 1933 in the Town of Derby. (Lots 11 through 16 in Block 50 were owned by George McCullough's daughters, Alice M. Hunt and Mary M. Tileston, following McCullough's death on December 30, 1927.) Refer to Figure IV-12.

A portion of Block 39 was earlier sold to Adams County, which provided a right-of-way width of 100 feet for State Highway 2. (Prior to this time, Derby Road East and Derby Road West were platted as 30 feet wide on both sides of the railroad right-of-way.) Columbia Avenue was vacated and the two blocks were combined to create "Brewer's Resubdivision of Block 50". (Refer to Figure IV-8.)



Figure IV-9.

The former railroad depot located adjacent to Highway 2 can be seen in this view of Derby circa 1943 looking southeast. Building construction was concentrated along Locust Street (then named Hume Street) and Highway 2 (originally known as "Derby Road".) Source: Stephen Hart Library, History Colorado.

The "Black Tuesday" stock market crash of 1929 marked the beginning of the Great Depression. The gross national product was reduced in half and unemployment reached 25%. The United States Department of Agriculture reported that Colorado farmers faced a gloomy outlook during the first half of 1930; decreased domestic and foreign demand was

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primarily responsible for this condition. Farmers were advised to follow a conservative production policy.

Drought and dust storms between 1932 and 1938 negatively affected the agricultural-based economy of Derby. The “Dust Bowl” encompassed the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma as well as areas of Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado. The drop in rainfall beginning in 1931 and high winds combined with intensive plowing on farms, which removed grass and topsoil, resulted in the “Dirty Thirties” with the sun often obscured from view. The Depression and the “Dirty Thirties” caused farming and ranching families to seek alternative employment. Federal relief programs including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided a source of employment during this time.



Figure IV-10.

The Continental Oil Refinery, located north of the Denver-Adams county line and southwest of Derby, provided employment during the Great Depression and the “Dirty Thirties”. The refinery was surrounded by farmland when this photograph was taken between 1930 and 1940. Source: Denver Public Library, Western History Photograph Collection, Call Number X-24471.

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Industrial development in Adams County beginning in 1930 helped the local economy overcome the negative impact of the Depression, drought, and dust storms. The Continental Oil Company refinery (now owned by Suncor Energy) was constructed north of Denver, east of the South Platte River. (Refer to Figure IV-10.) Oscar Malo worked with John K. Mullen at the Colorado Flour and Elevator Company before starting his own business and constructing large grain elevators in Adams County in 1937.

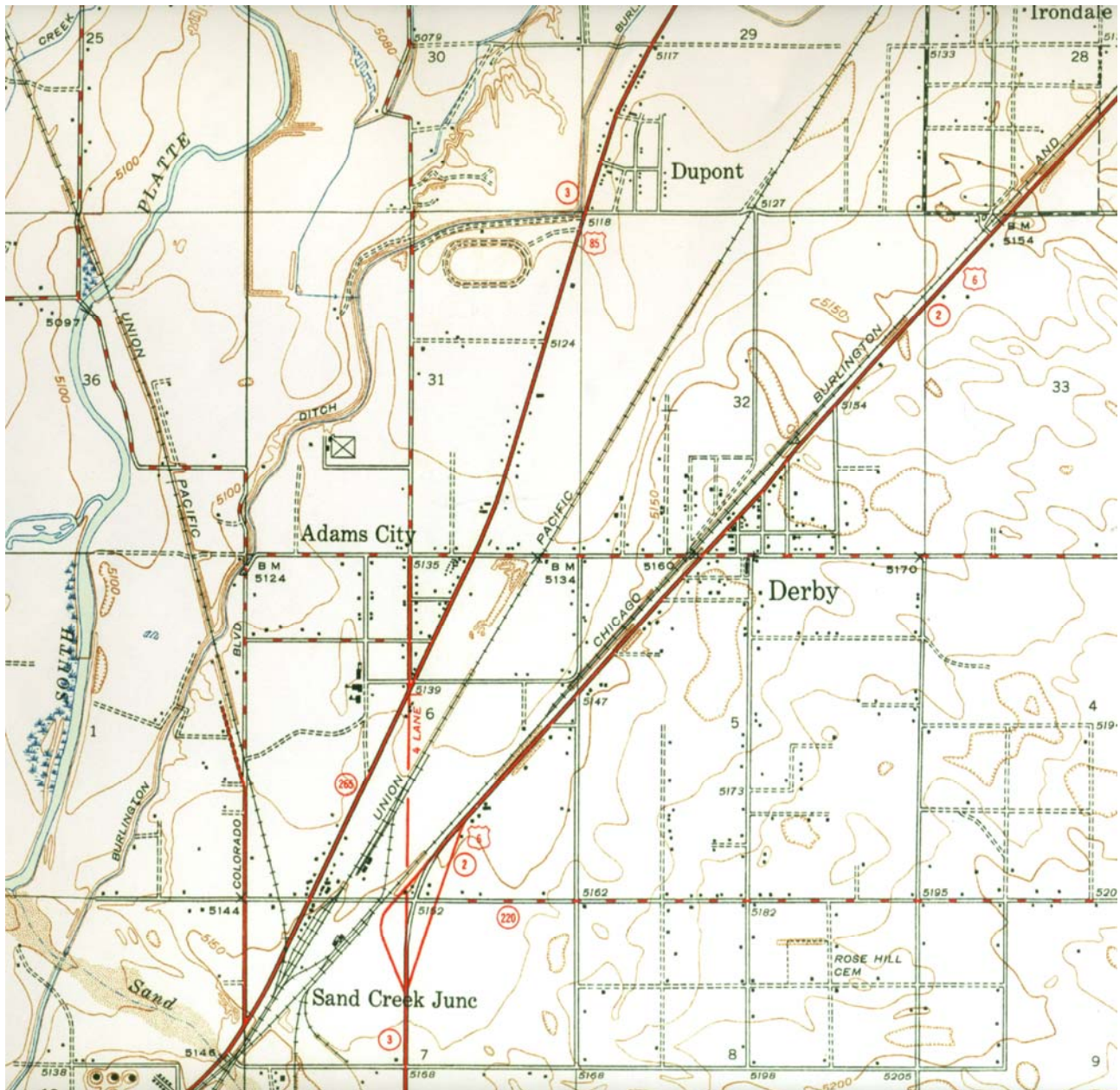


Figure IV-11.

Excerpt of USGS Map "Derby, Colorado", dated 1938. Approximately 25 structures existed in the Town of Derby, which had improved dirt roads, denoted by the solid parallel lines. Source: US Geological Survey Federal Center, Denver, Colorado.

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In 1934, the Colorado, Burlington and Quincy Railroad introduced the Pioneer Zephyr, which was the first diesel-powered streamlined passenger train in the United States. On May 26, 1934, the Pioneer Zephyr carried passengers on a 1,000 mile record-breaking, non-stop trip from Denver to the World's Fair in Chicago; it was considered one of the greatest transportation events of the Thirties and most likely attracted Derby spectators.

Approximately 25 structures were recorded in the Town of Derby in the first USGS map, published in 1938. (Refer to Figure IV-11.) The population increased from 300 in 1930 to 550 in 1938. The population in 1940 was recorded at 600; businesses included auto service stations, a garage, a drug company, restaurants, taverns, grocery and meat markets, a roller skating rink, a dance hall, a printing and publishing company, and poultry raisers. Three tourist and cottage camps were also located in Derby, reflecting the growing popularity of automobile tourism and the town's significant location adjacent to State Highway 2.

DERBY AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL (1942 – 1946)

The beginning of World War II spawned new industry in Colorado. Given its "interior" location in the United States, Colorado was considered less vulnerable to enemy attack than states along the east and west coastlines. Consequently, training camps as well as munitions production and storage were located in the Denver area, which made it the nation's second wartime capital outside Washington D.C. with its more than two hundred federal bureaus. Fitzsimons Army Hospital, located in Adams County at the intersection of East Colfax and Peoria Streets in Aurora, was established during World War I and expanded during World War II, becoming the largest military medical facility in the world.

A large tract of land encompassing 20,000 acres of farmland (or 27 square miles), located along the east side of Quebec Street and directly east of the Town of Derby, was chosen by the War Department for the construction of a chemical warfare plant. Construction of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal began on June 13, 1942 after approximately 200 families were forced to move off their property following condemnation proceedings. Buildings were moved from the former agricultural property, including 154 houses. The construction headquarters for the arsenal were established in Adams City, located west of Derby, with bus service provided for the construction workers. Plant production at the arsenal began in December of 1942 following six months of construction activity.

During World War II, the Arsenal employed approximately 3,000 civilian and military personnel for the manufacture of chemical, intermediate and toxic products as well as incendiary munitions. It also functioned as a prisoner of war camp for German and Italian prisoners and as the Western Chemical Warfare School. After the war ended in 1945, portions of the arsenal were leased to private industry, including the Shell Chemical Company, which manufactured various chemical pesticides.

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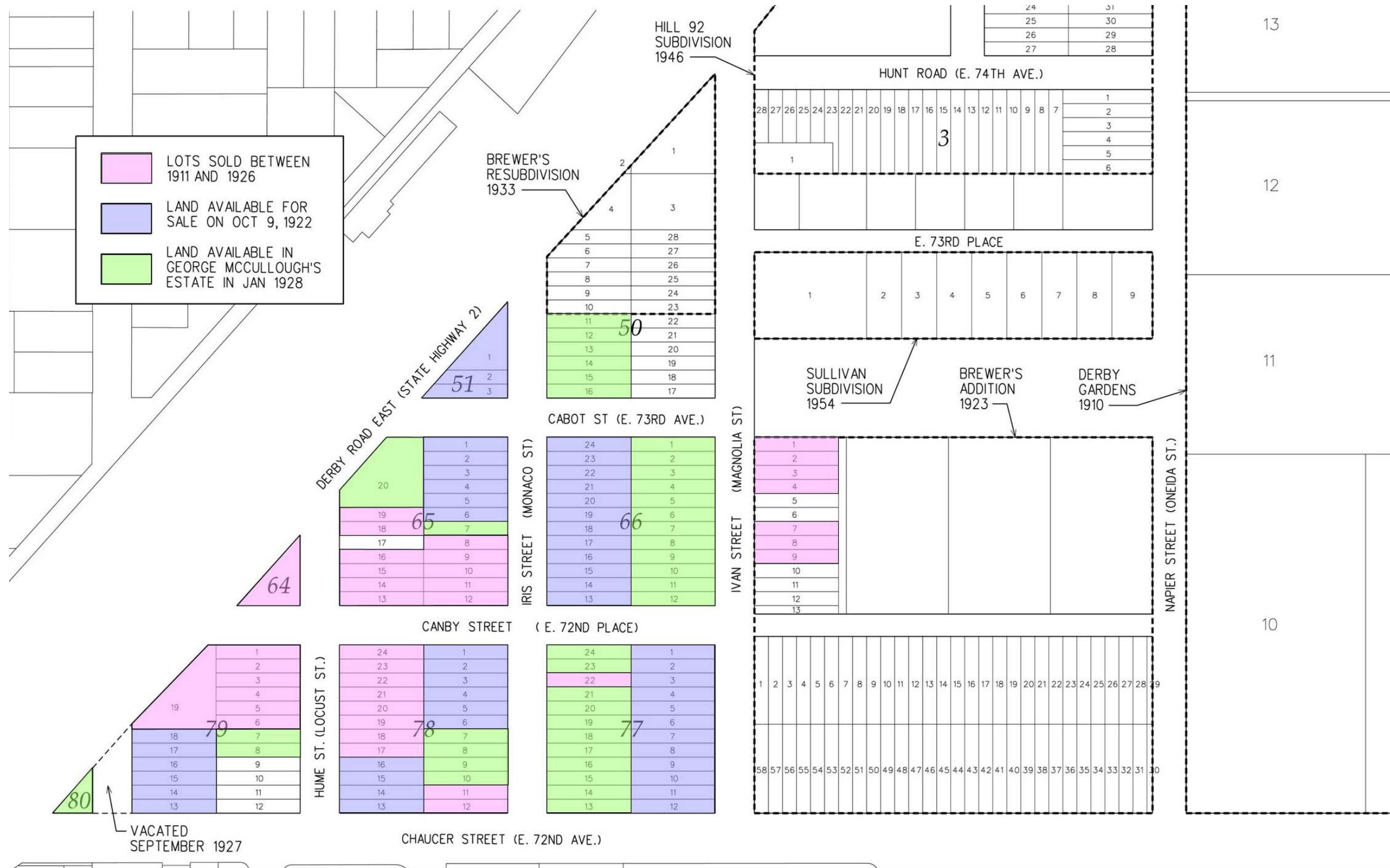


Figure IV-12.

The majority of the lots sold between 1911 and 1926 in the Town of Derby were concentrated along Derby Road East (now Highway 2). Derby Gardens was platted in 1910, followed by Brewer's Addition in 1923, Brewer's Resubdivision of Block 50 in 1933, Hill 92 Subdivision in 1946 (platted by George McCullough's daughter, Alice M. Hunt), and the Sullivan Subdivision in 1954. Derby Gardens is located directly east of Brewer's Addition.

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DERBY'S GROWTH FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II (1947 – 1975)

The National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which laid the groundwork for changes in the housing industry. Formed when approximately two million construction workers were unemployed during the Great Depression, the FHA initiated a program that insured a lending institution against loss of principal in case a borrower failed to meet the terms and conditions of the mortgage. The borrower paid an insurance premium of one-half of one percent on declining mortgage balances for the lender's protection and, in return, received a lower interest rate on the mortgage. Although lending institutions welcomed this assistance from the federal government, the Depression greatly reduced the impact of the program.

The subsequent enactment of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the "GI Bill", stimulated the economy with provisions that included access to low interest home loans with no required down payment. The return of millions of servicemen to civilian life at the end of World War II, coupled with government mechanisms for affordable financing in place, created an unprecedented demand for low-cost single-family housing beginning in the mid-1940s.

Automobile manufacturing plants that had been restructured for the production of military vehicles shifted back to automobile production following World War II. Former servicemen's need for affordable single-family houses to accommodate their growing families was coupled with their desire to own an automobile that provided them with mobility and allowed urban areas to expand outward. A national suburban culture developed as a result of these two trends, with builders purchasing land in outlying urban areas for the construction of new houses.

The Denver metropolitan area experienced a critical housing shortage following World War II. In September of 1946, the metropolitan area was listed in second place for being the most critical housing area in the country. An article about Denver's housing shortage appeared in *Collier's Magazine* in December of 1946. The article, titled "No Home in the West", criticized the city for being caught "with its foundations down". A local committee was appointed in 1947 to study veterans' housing needs and found that 15,000 to 20,000 additional dwelling units would be required over the next three years. The Rocky Mountain News reported on August 3, 1947 that 75 percent of Denver's married veterans were dissatisfied with their living quarters and were looking for another place to live.

The widespread use of the automobile also caused new business models to develop that were oriented towards this popular mode of transportation. As the population moved from the core of cities to the outlying suburbs, commerce and trade followed. The new suburbanite became dependent upon the car for work, shopping, obtaining services, and recreation. Consequently, the drive-in restaurant and convenience store were born. Newly-constructed shopping centers and grocery stores were surrounded by large parking lots to accommodate shoppers who arrived in their automobiles. (Refer to Figure IV-13.) Office buildings for medical professionals and small buildings for service-oriented businesses were constructed to serve the local residents of the suburban communities.

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Automobile-focused businesses, including gas stations and tire service centers, appeared on the suburban landscape.



Figure IV-13.

The former Hi-Lo Market, located at the southeast corner of East 73rd Avenue and Monaco Street, was constructed in 1953 in response to the growth in population following World War II. Large parking lots were provided adjacent to the grocery store. Source: City of Commerce City, Colorado.

Although Derby had been touted as a suburb of Denver in 1909, the former railroad town blossomed and truly became a bedroom community of Denver following World War II with its location less than five miles north of the Mile High City. Builders purchased land for single-family home developments near Derby. The Universal Investment Company, headed by Samuel L. Siegal, invested \$1.5 million in the construction of the Pattie Lea subdivision, located in the northwest corner of the Town of Derby. Approximately 183 houses were constructed within a nine month period beginning in June of 1955. The cost of the three-bedroom homes ranged from \$7,995 for the smallest unit to \$10,500 for a house containing 1,076 square feet with a required down payment of \$300 to \$500. Advertised features of the larger houses included oak floors, tile floors in the kitchen and bathroom, steel framed windows, fiberglass insulation, birch veneer doors, a utility room, and an outdoor storage space. (Refer to Figure IV-14.) Other nearby subdivisions developed during the same time period include Derby Heights and Pontiac Gardens, located north of Derby's central business district, and those built by the Derby Corporation southwest of

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town. Water lines were installed in Derby and the nearby subdivisions beginning circa 1953 when the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District was established. Sewer service followed circa 1957, which helped spur additional development in the area. However, the area surrounding Derby was not witness to large-scale housing development like other Denver suburbs due to the lack of large parcels of land already occupied by nearby Stapleton International Airport, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, and industrial uses.



Figure IV-14.

The development of the Pattie Lea subdivision began in June of 1955. The three-bedroom houses were built to accommodate former World War II servicemen and their families who lived near Derby.

Advocated by President Dwight Eisenhower, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 authorized the expenditure of \$25 billion over a twelve year period for the construction of a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. Derby had early been accessible by automobile due to its location adjacent to Derby Road East and Derby Road West, which were improved during the 1920's to become State Highway 34 and then renamed State Highway 2 with the entire roadway located on the eastern side of the railroad right-of-way. But the construction of interstate highways near Derby greatly improved its access. State Highway 2 terminates at its northern end at Interstate 76; the construction of Interstate 76 started in August 1958, with its completion near Derby in 1966.

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Interstate 270, which is located approximately two miles south of Derby, connects Interstate 76 to Interstate 70; its construction began in the late 1960's.

In 1951, the City and County of Denver expressed interest in annexing the business and industrial development adjacent to its shared border with Adams County, which alarmed many southern Adams County residents. Consequently, the concerned citizens organized a meeting to consider incorporation of the area and thereby prevent annexation by Denver. A group of approximately 300 residents voted in favor of the incorporation of "Commerce Town" in 1952. A movement to incorporate the Town of Derby occurred one year later. Thomas A. Hunt, a real estate broker and unofficial mayor of Derby, spearheaded the movement after unflattering stories appeared in the Denver Post about slums appearing north of Denver. The incorporation plan included stronger zoning and building regulations as well as greater police protection, which would require a 30-mill tax rate levy to finance the plan. The proposal was rejected by voters in 1954 by a margin of three to one. Eight years later in 1962, Commerce Town voted to annex the Town of Derby. As a result, the population of Commerce Town increased from 4,000 to over 16,000 residents and its name was changed to "Commerce City".

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal was reactivated with the outbreak of the Korean War. Another facility for the manufacture of a new toxic nerve agent was constructed between 1951 and 1953, with an additional workforce of 1,000 employees hired. Between 1959 and 1962, another manufacturing facility was built in collaboration with the Air Force for blending rocket fuels. The arsenal was later devoted to producing chemical weapons for the Vietnam War. The military installation offered postwar military and civil service jobs that provided employment for residents of the adjacent areas, including Derby. The population of Derby increased from 600 to 3,000 residents between 1942 and 1950, which reflects the Rocky Mountain Arsenal's positive impact on the area. Adams County's population rose from 22,481 in 1940 to 185,789 in 1970, representing an increase of over 800 percent. The majority of commercial buildings in the Town of Derby were constructed following World War II.

DERBY AFTER THE BUILDING BOOM (1976 – PRESENT)

Opposition to the Vietnam War, in combination with controversy over groundwater contamination due to the storage and disposal of poisonous gas and its effect on wildlife, caused the Rocky Mountain Arsenal to be the focus of controversy by 1969. Consequently, the demilitarization of chemical weapons became the Arsenal's primary mission after 1970. The incineration of mustard occurred in 1971 followed by the destruction of biological agents, the demilitarization of M34 cluster bombs, and the neutralization of stored nerve gas in 1973. When the local press later published reports of polluted wells near the Arsenal, the military facility explored ways to destroy the remaining chemical weapons off-site. In 1982, all production at the facility ended and the task of removing pollutants from buildings, equipment, soil, and water began. Employment opportunities were no longer available at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal.

The building boom that Derby experienced during its years following World War II ended when the Rocky Mountain Arsenal ceased its operations and new commercial development

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occurred south of the former railroad town. Many merchants moved out of the area, leaving buildings vacant. Consequently, the potential revitalization of Derby became a key concern with studies performed in 1976, 1985, and 2005. All of the studies recognized Derby's potential competitive advantage with other retail centers through strategic planning, physical improvements, and target marketing.



Figure IV-15.

This building located at 7220 Highway 2 is an example of a vacant and poorly maintained property in Derby that was addressed as a concern by the 1985 revitalization study team.

During the summer of 1985, Commerce City's Department of Community and Economic Development Office requested that the University of Colorado's College of Design and Planning in Denver assist them in developing a preliminary revitalization plan for the merchants and property owners located in the Derby Commercial District, which became Commerce City's core downtown area following its annexation. The primary deficiencies of the commercial district identified at this time included the need to develop a better identity for the area, especially along its perimeter where main entry points needed to be made more significant, and improving the continuity and linkages between the buildings within the district. Secondary issues included inconsistent façade, signage and canopy treatments, insufficient lighting at night, lack of uniform business hours, lack of city-

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provided trash removal service, lack of landscaping, inadequate parking, and safety of angled parking. There were vacant and dilapidated buildings that required improvement or removal; some of the vacant lots were not maintained. Most of these property types were located in Block 65, bounded by Highway 2, Locust Street on the west, and East 73rd Avenue on the north. (Refer to Figure IV-15.) In 1986, the study team made a number of recommendations, which were published in a preliminary revitalization plan and included the development of Architectural Design Standards with signage guidelines; the addition of awnings was recommended to establish a strong design theme and provide a consistent location between the awning and the roof line for the placement of business signs.

Because many of the recommendations of the 1986 study were not implemented, another major study of the revitalization of Derby occurred almost twenty years later. New housing and commercial developments in northern Adams County were drawing residents from Derby, leaving an increased number of vacant and rental properties in the area. The consultants, J. Kemper Will and Dana Crawford of Derby District LLC, found that Derby is ideally located to become a destination: Downtown Denver is a 12 minute drive from Derby while access to Denver International Airport requires only a 20 minute trip. The former Rocky Mountain Arsenal, now the Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge, and the Colorado Rapids' soccer stadium are nearby.

The consultants recommended that design guidelines be developed that incorporate the following goals:

1. Respond to the needs and findings of the community and the City as expressed in the 2006 Community Needs Survey.
2. Re-establish Derby as a destination through elegant and cohesive landscaping, a friendlier pedestrian environment, and 24/7 activity.
3. Give Derby greater visibility and identity by providing entry icons at strategic locations, a better definition of the edge or perimeter of Derby, a better defined core as the center and focus of Derby for a venue for open-air markets and fairs, and consistent and compatible signage, lighting and landscaping.
4. Use the 1950's era as a unifying architectural foundation for greater identity while still allowing the existing buildings to be an expression of their time, use, and function.
5. Revitalize Derby with greater building density, increased building heights, greater variety of land use, stimulation of a broader business market with a variety of uses and users 24/7, greater environmental awareness in planning and design, and encouragement of multi-functional use of individual spaces to ensure a variety of uses at different times of the day.
6. Become an environmental model; environmental design will result in long term benefits and economic efficiencies.
7. Transform Derby into a multi-modal traffic environment, while continuing to support the importance of the automobile, which may be accomplished through wider sidewalks near buildings, better pedestrian connections to community assets, street furniture, a bike friendly environment, a greater sense of safety and community, and planning for public transportation.

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8. Develop models for change by constructing early phases of revitalization to establish the pattern for Derby's long-term evolution.

A timeline for Derby's redevelopment was provided, beginning with the master plan study in 2005 and continuing through November 2007 with capital improvement projects.



Figure IV-16.

The Joe Reilly Park is located at the northeast corner of East 72nd Place and Locust Street. Amenities include benches and bicycle racks.

Since 2005, the City of Commerce City has implemented several programs, following the consultants' recommendations, to support the redevelopment of Derby including the revitalization of the Joe Reilly Park, located at the northeast corner of East 72nd Place and Locust Street, and investing \$1 million in intersection improvements at 72nd Place and Monaco Street. (Refer to Figure IV-16.) In 2007, design guidelines and standards were adopted for the Derby Sub-Area, which includes both commercial and residential structures. A commercial catalyst program is now available to encourage business and property owners to update building façades, signage and landscaping within the Derby District. The revitalization of the Town of Derby is now underway.

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