



# Town of Frisco Historic Resource Survey

2020

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Town of Frisco  
Cultural Resource Survey  
2020

Survey Report

Prepared for:  
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Figure 1 • View of Mt Royal along Main Street, c.1960s

## *Introduction*

The Town of Frisco located on the edge of the Blue River basin was created by prospectors, entrepreneurs, and homesteaders. Like its counterparts in the basin, the Town was formed by the economic instability of mineral extraction; the competing forces of capitalism; and a desire to make a home in a young Colorado.

Located just east of the confluence of Tenmile Creek and North Tenmile Creek, Frisco sits on the western edge of the Blue River basin which stretches out to the east where the Continental Divide separates the high mountain basin from the Central Plains of the

US. Located in the “mineral belt” of Colorado’s high country, Frisco benefited from its proximity to a wealth of precious metals in the hills running up the Tenmile Canyon to the headwaters of Tenmile Creek. But also, to its convenient location along the mountainous route from Georgetown on the Front Range to Leadville, just over Fremont Pass. Frisco’s founders recognized that a site along a footpath into mining country could be a town, central to the growing needs of the region.

The Town of Frisco has had a varied approach to historic preservation. Often when a historic building was threatened, the approach has been to take ownership of historic buildings to

allow private property owners to redevelop without the loss of the historic resource. Many of these building have been collected in the Frisco Historic Park & Museum, which has created a successful historic park located on Main Street in Frisco. Other buildings are owned by the town and have been used for employee housing or are just in storage awaiting a use. As the community saw the increasing loss of historic buildings, the Town developed an Historic Overlay program that has been in use for the past several years. This program allows for development benefits in exchange for the voluntary preservation of historic buildings. The program does not define what kinds of buildings are worthy of preservation, therefore the Town finds itself making decisions with little consistent basis. This survey effort is the first step to not only identify what actually remains, but what criteria should be used in making determinations about preservation.

The survey effort began with a reconnaissance survey, the review of public records and the review of a 2017 survey performed by the Frisco Historic Park & Museum in 2019. The intensive level survey was completed over the course of eighteen months and completed in late 2020.

Since no previous formal surveys had been conducted, the period of focus for the survey

was the early development of the community. The broader goal of this survey, and continuing efforts, is to provide the Frisco Town Council, the Community Development Department, and the community with documentation of the buildings and people who participated in Frisco's development. The resulting inventory of historic resources will raise awareness as to the particular history of the development of the community and its architectural heritage.

The survey was funded in part by State Historical Fund Grant #2019-M2-022 and was overseen by the town of Frisco Community Development Department. It was undertaken following the guidelines of the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation guidelines in the Colorado Cultural Resources Survey Manual, Revised 2007, and using the Architectural Inventory Form and Lexicon, revised July 2010.

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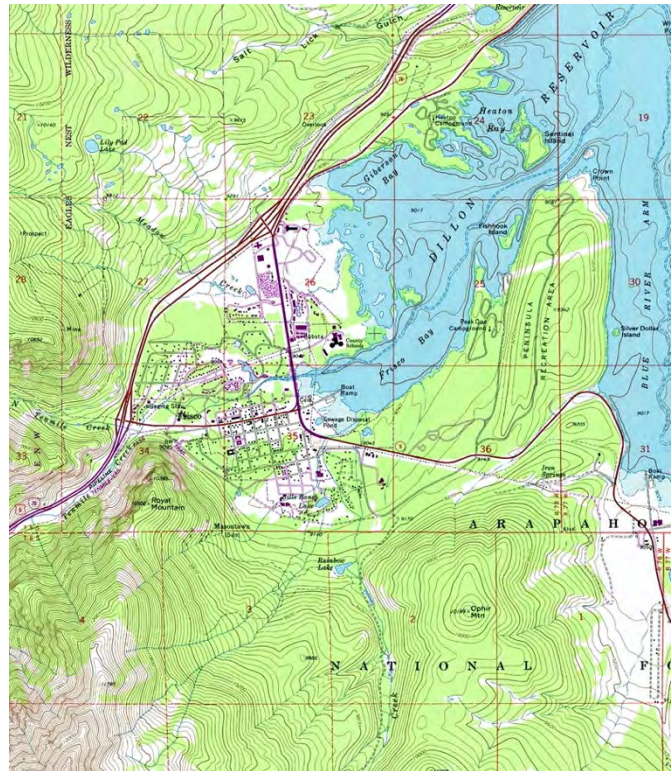
## Survey Design & Methodology

### Survey Area

The west end of the Town of Frisco is located at the confluence of the Tenmile and North Tenmile Creeks at the western edge of a wide basin created by the Blue River. The Tenmile range defines the west side of the town site, I-70 (along Tenmile Creek) defines the north side of town. The Dillon Reservoir, which began construction in 1960, creates a boundary on the east side of town. The town is surrounded by the lands of the White River National Forest.

Main Street runs from the foot of Mt Royal, (10,502 feet) to the shore of the Dillon Reservoir. High peaks are visible in all directions from the center of town. Before the Dillon Reservoir was constructed, the towns of Old Dillon, Dickey and several large ranches occupied the valley floor to the east. Colorado Route 9 runs from Frisco to Breckenridge, 9.3 miles to the south.

The Denver & Rio Grande and the Denver South Park & Pacific once operated narrow gauge rail lines along the valley floor connecting Leadville, Breckenridge, Dillon and Frisco along with many mining camps and ranches to the outside world.



The original townsite of Frisco sits at 9,097 feet above sea level and covered 158.44 acres when the initial survey was recorded in April of 1881. The town is laid out on a small grid, generally oriented to the cardinal points. The area of concentration of this survey is the original townsite and with emphasis on Main Street and nearby neighborhoods, where most early development occurred. The blocks beyond the center of town experienced little development until the mid-1900s.

In the last decades, new commercial development has taken place on Main Street and along CO Route 9 that runs to I-70. The undeveloped lots of the historic townsite have been filled with new single and multifamily



housing, with more suburban style development located north of Tenmile Creek. Much of the area around Frisco is designated National Forest, preventing additional sprawl. In the past ten years, new development in the Town seems to favor multifamily and higher density residential development.

The Town of Frisco Community Development Department working with the consultant determined the areas of focus for the survey. The consultant was then charged with the final selection of the individual sites within those areas. No formal survey had ever been completed in Frisco, but a list of “Buildings with Historical Interest” was compiled in the 1970s, with some historical information included. Another list “Town of Frisco, Historic Property Inventory” was compiled in 2017 by the staff of the Frisco Historic Park & Museum (FHP&M). Both these resources were used in the completion of this survey.

### ***Selection of the Sites***

Frisco is undergoing a substantial building boom. In consultation with the Town and the State, it was determined that the survey should focus on the areas of town that are under the most pressure for redevelopment, which is Main Street and adjacent areas, all within the historic townsite.

Three lists of sites were created. The first list was generated from the Summit County

Assessor’s Office database, based on recorded construction dates. All buildings constructed prior to 1950 were included. The second list was generated from the 2017 FHP&M inventory. The final list was created by undertaking a reconnaissance survey in the area of the historic townsite.

The reconnaissance survey was conducted in the spring of 2019. The reconnaissance survey covered an area eight blocks long and eight blocks wide in the greater historic townsite. This area is approximately 188 acres. A visual inspection of the buildings located in the bounds of the historic townsite, was completed. Each block was examined, and buildings were photographed and added to the list if they appeared to have been built before 1950. Any site that appeared to have historic characteristics was included, regardless of condition. This activity resulted in a list of approximately sixty buildings. Buildings not included on the lists were the Historic Park & Museum building collection (10 buildings), or buildings already designated to the State or National Register (3 buildings).

When combined with the Assessor’s office data, the reconnaissance survey list was reduced to 40 buildings.

The list was further reduced to focus on the oldest existing buildings and those closest to the core area. Finally, the list was verified against the 2017 FHP&M list (not including

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the park buildings) and the list of buildings owned by the Town of Frisco. These two groups were given priority for the intensive survey. This resulted in a final list of 27 buildings, regardless of condition.

The final list represents the oldest remaining buildings in Frisco; historic buildings owned by the town; and buildings that had previously been recognized by the community as historic.

### ***The Intensive Level Survey***

The intensive level survey was conducted in an area three blocks long and two blocks wide, with two outlying sites, in the greater historic townsite. This area covered 46 acres, not including the outlying sites. The survey area lies in Township 5S, Range 78W and Section 35 on the Frisco, CO USGS Quadrangle.

In preparation for the remainder of the survey work, the assessor's data was double checked to verify that the assumptions made in the field relative to date of construction were accurate. These dates were also checked against other available data and visual clues. In some cases, assessor's dates were modified, in some cases the FHP&M were modified. A spreadsheet was created, and all the data generated on the sites was entered. This included addresses, mapping data, date built, and photo references. These materials were used to develop the final forms.

Early in the survey work, two buildings on the list were demolished. Though work had started on these sites, the decision was made to remove them from the survey. Several other candidates for survey were investigated. Two sites that met the criteria for construction dates were so substantially altered, that they could not be never be considered for any type of designation. A significant barn was added to the list based on its community connections and its integrity. (The associated house was of 1970s construction). No other site that would positively contribute to the survey effort was found, reducing the total survey number to 26 sites.

### ***Field Work and Photography***

The field work began in Summer of, 2019. Using the information collected in the reconnaissance survey, a form was created that included the digital photo of the site, the address, and blank fields for indicating materials, form of additions, outbuildings, and other architectural description items, as well as the digital-based photo identification. This provided a framework (one page per building) for obtaining consistent information as well as verifying the address information in the field. All sites were photographed digitally a second time, this time focusing on recording the significant elevations and important details of the building. The digital images were then

edited to a 4x6 format and named with an address code for future reference. Digital image pages were created in Adobe InDesign, with the State ID number, image number, photo view direction, historic or current building name, county and date of image as recommended in the revised Survey Manual.

In some cases, where the other historic or early photos existed, these were included in the photo pages with the date and source indicated.

A PDF of the photo log was generated, which includes the building address, State ID number, image numbers and historic or current building names is included with all the digital files for the project.

At the same time the photographs were being taken, materials, additions, and other architectural features were noted for each building on the master sheets. These notes were combined with the other sources of photographic information to generate the architectural and landscape descriptions for the survey forms.

### ***Mapping***

UTM coordinates were obtained by using Geoplaner.com website and were checked against information also available on Google Earth. All coordinates were noted as per NAD87. Where decimals existed, the number was rounded to the nearest whole number.

The USGS quadrangle map was downloaded as a digital file, which was identical to the paper map. This map was imported, at scale, into Vectorworks (a CAD program), which facilitated the creation of each USGS site map.

The quarter section information was obtained by creating a grid on the digital USGS quad map in the CAD program. The USGS quad map name is Frisco Quadrangle, Colorado-Summit CO. Frisco, Colo., 1970, photo revised 1987. Scale 1:24,000.

The sketch maps were created using the Town's GIS database. The digital files were imported into Vectorworks and additional detailed information was added to complete the sketch maps. Each property was labeled with address, State ID number, and feature labels. In some cases, additional maps were created to show an original building location, or an important relationship, since many of Frisco's historic resources had been relocated around the historic townsite.

The assessor's office property cards were used to adjust or create dimensioned footprints when needed.

Additional maps for the survey report were generated from the same sources and annotated with information obtained through the context research.

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### **Research Design**

Research of the historic record of the area was severely impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. Most resources used for the research were online records. Fortunately, property research at the Summit County Assessor and Clerk & Recorder were carried out in the fall of 2019, before the closures. Summit County property records are computerized from 1970 forward. These are only available at the Clerk's office. Online records are available from 1990 forward only. Unfortunately, the property records before 1970 contained in Grantor/Grantee books revealed little additional information. The fact that many buildings have been relocated also presented a problem for tracing.

No Sanborn maps were available for Frisco, nor were any business directories that included specific address information.

The Frisco Historic Park & Museum staff was helpful with historic photos and information generated in the 2017 survey provided considerable information on historical associations as did the 1970 list.

Several online sources and printed materials served as the primary source of information for the survey. Several books provided narrative information on Frisco's history and the general history of the area.

The research included an exploration of:

- 1) The Federal Census documents for the years 1880 to 1940 and the 1885 Colorado Census provided considerable information on individuals and families in the area and provided the majority of the specific information contained this survey. Unfortunately, only the 1910 Federal Census identified a street name, but no house numbers. In general, Census lists included no location beyond Frisco, or Tenmile District (1880). In some cases, it was possible to track neighbors over decades, but no clear pattern for proximity was uncovered. These documents were accessed through Ancestry.com and Familytree.com.
- 2) Ancestry.com provided some additional information on marriages, draft registration, obituaries and other public records which were sometimes useful. In some cases, family trees had been prepared that provided additional valuable information, though always not completely accurate.
- 3) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Office Records, available online at [glorerecords.blm.gov](http://glorerecords.blm.gov) provided information on mine patents and homestead records for several of the people included in this survey. This also often led to other names of partners or other outlying properties.

- 4) Assessors Office paper cards provided photographic and written information on additions and alterations with dimensional information as well as recent ownership transactions;
- 3) Summit County Clerk & Records' Office Grantor/Grantee records and computerized records of recorded real estate transactions;
- 4) Newspapers, both current and from the period, the primary source of which was the Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection web archive, including *The Leadville Daily Herald*, *The Leadville Weekly Democrat*, *The Denver Daily Tribune*, *The Colorado Miner* and other regional papers;
- 5) Oral histories provided by local residents;
- 6) The Community Development Department's records;
- 8) Files and books in the collection of the Frisco Historic Park & Museum;
- 9) The Library of Congress, online archives;
- 10) Published books on Frisco, Summit County, railroads and mining camps.

It was anticipated that the survey would find a good, solid history of the early residents of the area due to the fact that many descendants of the original families are still living in the area. In addition, the compact area of town and the small number of individuals that were

instrumental to the development of the area would focus the research. This was in fact the case, though oral histories were at times inconsistent.

Actual results of the research found that a considerable amount had been recorded in written work by a few local authors, addressing both events and significant individuals. Connecting the individuals to properties was in some cases difficult since several properties were associated with the same group of people, and tax sales and vacancies often lead to inaccuracies.

Several factors contributed to the difficulty of tracking transactions. First, the grantor/grantee book only provided names, dates and book/page references. There was no way to determine which property was the subject of the transaction without looking up the actual book and page. The small number of names involved and the many transactions in Frisco resulted in an enormously inefficient method of research, providing little relevant information. Second, a significant number of buildings have been relocated at least once both within Frisco and from outside of town, leading to twice as many records to review. Finally, several properties were lost by their owners to default on taxes or loans. It was not possible to track sales through this method, once the property was in the ownership of a bank or the public trustee.

When information on more recent transactions was available on the Assessor's property cards or Clerk's computerized files that information was included on each property form.

The newspapers were very entertaining and a good source of information on individuals and daily life in Frisco. Unfortunately, the town was so small, advertising and references to business owners rarely list an address or, in some cases, even the nature of the business.

The combination of sources of information did serve to create a better picture of the whole, however there was also contradictory information provided by authors. Where these contradictions cannot be resolved this text is footnoted to identify the contradictory information.

Early in the survey, it was determined that there were no Sanborn insurance maps available for Frisco. This left a significant gap in the ability to connect buildings with owners and neighbors.

A file search was conducted at the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to identify any previously surveyed sites in the current study area. Several survey projects have been completed in the area. Primarily due to the requirements of highway construction and improvements. 32 total sites have been surveyed in the area. 10 sites were

located in Frisco, which include the Historic Park buildings and two National Register sites. Outside of the townsite, 22 surveys relate to the impacts and highway improvements and mining sites. This survey project included two previously surveyed, these were selected for resurvey, due to their original survey dates, and to include them in the overall picture of the historic town.

As part of this survey effort, the context report covers the pre-historic Native American uses of the area, followed by the exploration and settlement of Euro Americans with the ultimate American ownership of the land. A detailed historic context was developed addressing the time period from 1850s to 1950. These dates were selected to include the construction dates of the buildings selected for intensive survey and to provide important background events that led to the founding of Frisco. This included the mineral, agricultural, social, and economic components that contributed to the establishment of present-day Frisco and its surroundings as experienced in this 100-year period.

### ***Preparation of the Forms***

The forms were prepared by creating a master spreadsheet including all numeric data in order to limit errors in data entry. The spreadsheets included: all information for identification and

geographic information in fields 1 through 11 on the Architectural Inventory Form and fields 25 (date of construction) and 47 (photo ID numbers). Temporary ID numbers were assigned based on a code of the street address. State ID numbers were assigned in alphabetical order of address. This data was then merged into the master form, which already included the standard information consistent to all forms. While this process creates a delay in the preparation of the forms, since it requires all the information to be collected and verified, it reduces the number of errors created by transcription. This database was created in Excel then merged with the master survey form; #1403 - Architectural Inventory Form, provided by the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Throughout the process, each step was designed to include review of previously gathered information to verify accuracy.

Notes on specific fields:

Field 5: The consultant assigned a historic building name to individual sites based on two criteria. If a name had been assigned by a previous survey or members of the community that name was included. If evidence was found in the property records and census documents that placed a clear individual in

possession of the property during the time of construction, that name was used.

Field 6: The consultant assigned current building names based on occupancy. If the current owner could be confirmed as the primary resident, that name was used. If a different building name was in popular use in the community that name was used.

Field 22: Two sources were used to determine the appropriate lexicon terminology for architectural style or building type: The *Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture & Engineering*, published by the Colorado Historical Society, 2008; *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Virginia & Lee McAlester, published by Knopf, 1998. The consultant generally chose the top-level terminology from the lexicon for this field, unless a sub-category was clearly appropriate. Field 42 was used to be more specific about the appropriate styles and types.

Field 25: When conflicting construction dates were provided from different sources every effort was made to choose the date that was supported by ownership records and backed up by architectural style. When a conflict occurred, it was noted in the source of information line and discussed. In several cases construction dates were adjusted to reflect information developed on the historic trends present in the community.

Field 27: In several instances the anecdotal information would refer to a building “being built by...” Unless the consultant could determine that the actual person conducted the construction of the resource, this field was left as “unknown”, and the information was placed in field 28 instead (when supported by the property records). It is common parlance to refer to an owner as the person who built a house, when in fact they were just the owner.

Field 29: Information about construction history was obtained by comparing photographs on record at the County Assessor’s office, information recorded on Assessor’s cards, and historic photos where available. In some cases, owners provided specific information and in others the listed alterations and dates are based on the consultant’s professional opinion.

Field 35: Records at the County Clerk & Recorder’s office provided little information on sites prior to the records in the 1970s. Many of the buildings included in the Frisco Survey had been moved within the Townsite or from other areas of the valley. This made the grantor/grantee books ineffective. The Covid-19 virus restrictions also changed the availability of those records. Every effort was made to provide complete information surrounding the resource’s construction date

and to provide any other information that came from other reliable sources.

Field 43: Assessments of integrity used the standard seven aspects of integrity to discuss the specifics of the condition of the building. A conclusion was drawn based on integrity as to State and National Register eligibility. A conclusion as to potential local designation was also drawn to aid in local discussions going forward.

### ***The Participants***

Reid Architects, Inc. produced the materials in this survey project. Patrick Duffield provided the photographic services. Suzannah Reid was responsible for the design of the survey, the reconnaissance survey, the selection of the sites, the data management, and the preparation and assembly of the intensive-level forms. She also provided overall supervision of the work.

The surveyors would like to thank the following:

Joyce Algaier, formerly of the Town of Carbondale community development department for her early enthusiasm for the project. Susan Lee and William Gibson of the Frisco Community Development Department for providing information from Town



Development records. Katie Kent for providing digital map data.

The surveyors would also like to acknowledge Rose Gorrell, director of the Frisco Historic Park & Museum and local residents Mark Sabatini, Craig Peterson and Larry Feldman

Thanks also to the members of the community who participated in the startup public meeting over Zoom.

## *General Historical Context*

### *The Region*

Frisco sits in Summit County, centrally located in the high mountains of Colorado on the edge of a basin created by the Blue River.

It lies at the foot of Mt. Royal (10,502 feet) and Peak One (12,805 feet) on the Tenmile Range, which runs north to south along the west side of the Blue River basin. The basin is bounded on the east by the Continental Divide, on the north by Eagle's Nest Wilderness and on the south by the peaks at the head waters of the Blue River, all in the White River National Forest. The Blue River runs through the center of the basin, north to Kremmling where it joins the Colorado River.

The outlet to the west is by way of Tenmile Canyon which runs south along the west side of the Tenmile Range up into the high peaks of the continental divide. The valley splits at Wheeler's Junction (Copper Mountain) where the road goes north again to Vail Pass (10,603 feet) or continues south to the source of Tenmile Creek. Along the Creek the mining camps of Robinson, Kokomo and Recen lead up to Freemont Pass (11,318 feet), which runs



*Figure 2 • Main Street, Frisco, 1909*

down to Leadville at the head of the Arkansas River. The outlet to the east runs up to the Continental Divide at Loveland Pass (11,990 feet). Over Loveland Pass are the mining towns of Idaho Springs, Silver Plume, Georgetown and Denver at the base of the Rockies. To the north is Middle Park where the basin is wide and open. To the south is Breckenridge on the Blue River and Hoosier Pass (11,539 feet) that leads over the mountains to Alma and South Park. It is said that the upper Blue River was dominated by mining and the lower Blue was Ranching; Frisco has a foot in both.

The geography of the Blue River basin changed dramatically in the 1960s when the Blue River was dammed to create the Dillon Reservoir (completed in 1963). The lake captured the confluence of the Tenmile, Blue and North Fork of the Snake, all of which run

into branches of the reservoir. The Blue continues out at the north end and continues to Green Mountain Reservoir and the Colorado River. The confluence of the three rivers was an important landmark for early travelers to the basin. The Towns of Dillon (known as Old Dillon now) and Dickey along with the lands of several ranches were acquired for the 3,233 acre reservoir. The other most recent influential event in the basin was the arrival of Interstate 70. In the 1950s, the concept of an interstate highway through Colorado was conceived. US 6 already traversed the county but was a two-lane narrow road with winding roadways and high mountain passes. To create a four-lane highway, significant upgrades were required. The highway followed the established road from Denver, through Georgetown and up to the Divide. To avoid Loveland Pass itself required the construction of tunnels under the Continental Divide, which was the first significant engineering achievement; the Eisenhower and Johnson Tunnels. Construction began in 1968 and the two tunnels were completed in 1973 and 1979 respectively. This made the Blue River basin more accessible than it had ever been. The highway then followed Tenmile Creek just north of Frisco and continued over Vail Pass, down to the Gore Creek drainage, Glenwood Canyon and the Utah border. The Interstate took decades to complete due to the complexity of the mountain passes and

canyons on the route. The four-lane highway would not be complete until the Glenwood Canyon section was finished in 1992.

Before this large engineering project took place the basin of the Blue River was dotted with small towns and large ranches, accessible only by crossing a high mountain pass no matter which direction you arrived from. Early access points were Boreas Pass (11,481 ft) from Como at the top of South Park to present day Breckenridge, over Argentine Pass (13,207 ft) from the eastern slope and Georgetown into the Blue River basin through the mine camp of Montezuma. The Loveland Pass (11,990 ft.) road mostly replaced the Argentine Pass route in 1879. Early settlers arrived on foot or pack animal, once the mining economy exploded, wagons and stagecoaches brought investors, prospectors and goods in and valuable ores out. Transportation, mining and local economies were all interdependent and they grew or declined as each either advanced or retreated.

### ***The Ute Indians***

The first inhabitants of the central Rockies were the Ute Indians. The nomadic Utes lived in family groups who occupied a large area of the intermountain west, from central Utah to the area just east of Denver and Colorado Springs and from the Wyoming border to areas in the north of New Mexico. They lived off the land and the land provided everything

they needed for thousands of years.<sup>1</sup> Archeologists working on developing the I-70 corridor have found the remains of encampments dating back over 6,000 years.<sup>2</sup> The Blue River basin provided a wealth of fish and game, as well as desirable camping in the meadows near Frisco, where the tribes returned year after year.<sup>3</sup> This generally peaceful lifestyle continued until the arrival of Europeans in western North America. First it was the Spanish who made their way up from present day Mexico. As territories were being drawn, the Spanish Territory comprised most of present-day southwestern US. Encompassing the land of several indigenous peoples, including the Utes. Quickly, life would change dramatically for the Ute tribes.

“The complex cultural fabric of Indians and Spaniards along the ragged edges of colonial New Mexico has always defied a simple description. The Spanish had, in their two-century presence on the Southwest border land, murdered, captured, and enslaved thousands of Indians. Later they had also baptized, married into, and traded with these same tribes. The Utes, like other tribes, survived the Spaniards’ sporadic efforts to subjugate them and by 1750, both groups had arranged, out of necessity a peaceful existence, encouraged and sustained by a flourishing trade.”<sup>4</sup>

A delicate balance was struck between the Spanish explorers and the Ute tribes. The Spanish brought horses to the Utes and the Utes provided the beaded cloth and hides prized by the Spanish.<sup>5</sup> In fact, this alliance was fundamentally based on direct payments from Spain to the tribes, an agreement to limit further expansion into Ute lands, and commercial trade. When Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico was unable to maintain the economic balance with the Utes and the alliances deteriorated, leading to skirmishes and violence in the Ute territories. At the same time, the US government was encouraging commerce along the Santa Fe trail and the Ute’s new found horsemanship and skill in battle lead to conflicts along that route. The government realized that for the west to be settled and the value of resources realized, the Utes and other Tribes needed to be removed to reservation lands. By way of several treaties in 1863-1864 and finally in 1868 the Ute tribes were removed to the western 1/3 of the Colorado Territory, opening the mineral rich, high country of Colorado to unrestrained development. Thirteen years later, five years after Colorado statehood, the tribes were again

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<sup>1</sup> Utes Must Go, pg 14-15

<sup>2</sup> Frisco! Pg 3

<sup>3</sup> Frisco! Pg 3

<sup>4</sup> utes must go page 18

<sup>5</sup> Ibid Pg 19

moved to a small reservation on the southwest corner of the State and to Utah.

### ***Survey Parties & Trappers***

The 1800s are defined by the westward expansion of America. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase brought the lands up to the Rockies into American sights. Lewis & Clark first explored and documented the new acquisition as well as lands beyond, and first raised public interest in expansion. “Manifest Destiny” became the motto and justification for all that came next. In 1848, the western portion of Colorado was obtained by President James Polk from the Mexican cession.<sup>6</sup>

As early as 1811, trappers and explorers began to work their way into the high country, though many met with unknown fates. Stories of men disappearing or captured by Indians circulated, discouraging some, but not all. Thomas Jefferson Farnham, wrote of his first impression of the Blue River basin when he arrived in 1837 with a small party of explorers:

“The face of the country along the morning's trail was much the same as that passed over the day before; often beautiful, but more often sublime. Vast spherical swells covered with buffalo, and wild flowering glens echoing the voices of a thousand cascades, and the countless

number of lofty peaks crowding the sky, will perhaps give some idea of it.”<sup>7</sup>

Over the next few years other accounts of the Blue River basin would make their way back east. In 1843 John C. Fremont led a US government expedition to map and survey the west. His party included Kit Carson, William Gilpin and Thomas Fitzpatrick, who served as guides and Charles Pruess, the cartographer who later chronicled the expedition. 40 men accompanied Fremont as he entered the basin in 1844. In his journal Fremont described encounters with other groups of trappers and heard of their experiences with the Indian population. He also described using the buffalo trails into the high mountains to indicate the most accessible routes for his party. These and other game trails would become the basis for all entry into the basin.

As the high country began to open to exploration, life was still predominately nomadic and seasonal. Beaver pelts were the first commodity to attract the attention of ‘prospectors.’ Trappers entered into the Blue River basin to hunt for beaver. For the same reasons the Ute’s made camp in the Blue River basin, early trappers also found a wealth of fish, game and the most desirable beaver pelts. Winter pelts brought the highest prices, so trappers made camps to trap during the

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<sup>6</sup> Summit pg 7

<sup>7</sup> Summit page 8

winter months and returned to markets at lower elevations in the spring and summer. Pelts had been used in various ways for clothing for centuries and beaver pelts, in particular, were highly desirable and used as full pelts or processed into leather or felt. The beaver population in Europe and Asia had been hunted to practical extinction. At the same time trade routes to north America were opening, bringing some of the first Europeans to make inroads into indigenous peoples' territories in Canada and the Americas beginning in the 17th centuries. 1810 to 1840 were considered the fur trade years in North America.<sup>8</sup> In part due to the most familiar clothing item of the time, the gentleman's beaver felt top hat.

Indigenous peoples, trappers and other explorers had found gold in their travels.

“Fur trappers in search of Beaver began pushing into the Rocky Mountains toward the end of the 18th century, and their work in the cold remote waters led to gold discoveries. Perhaps the earliest evolved from the work of James Purcell, a trapper out of Saint Louis. Around 1800, he found gold in what is today South Park, in central Colorado, but fled the Rockies to escape hostile Indians. News of his discovery, reported to the explorer Zebulon Pike at Santa Fe in 1807, remained buried in Pike's journals, lost

until the mid-twentieth century, and so Purcell's discovery and probably that of others, had little, if any, direct impact on the rise of gold and silver mining.”<sup>9</sup>

Whether lost or kept secret for decades these finds didn't spark a rush. Trapping declined after 1840, when the popular hat style went out of fashion and the value of pelts no longer justified the effort. Rumors of conflicts with the indigenous population and the challenges of the Colorado high country slowed prospecting. Only as the number of prospectors began to overwhelm the area, did the rush begin.

### **Gold**

The California Gold Rush, in 1848/49 sparked an explosion in westward expansion and a lust for easy wealth. 300,000 people made their way west. Most prospectors and investors traveled west by foot, wagon and horseback to the front range of the Continental Divide. Instead of venturing into the mountains, they traveled up the front range to southern Wyoming to make their way to California, never entering the high mountains of Colorado. Many went to find fortune, few did. As the California rush waned, prospectors turned their attention to other places to apply their new found knowledge. Almost ten years later gold finds at Pikes Peak and Cherry

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<sup>8</sup> - Frisco! Pg 4

<sup>9</sup> Mining NR pg 2

Creek brought another rush of miners to the west.

The gold found at this time was known as placer gold. Placer is created by the erosion of the mountains over millennia, washing layers of rock, metals and minerals downstream. The eroded materials collected in the small valleys and creeks of river headwaters, then continued to flush downward into larger rivers and gravel beds. A man with a shovel could sift through gravel stream beds and separate gold from waste rock. Miners with experience could improve the odds of finding wealth by understanding the process by which the gold was deposited.

Early placer mining was a low-tech operation, aided by the nature of gold itself. Its weight and reluctance to bond with other minerals, allowed for the gold to be separated from the silts and gravels by a gradual sifting and washing process. A prospector only had to dig down in the riverbed and wash away the waste materials to find gold. The shovel and pan were all the tools needed to “strike it rich”. This geological process meant that very fine gold dust could be found in rivers at lower elevations, but larger more concentrated finds were to be found upriver nearer the source of the “parent vein”.

Placer gold is easy to recover but is also quickly exhausted. This was the case with the Pike’s Peak Rush and finds at Cherry Creek on the front range in 1857/58. The outcome of both of these strikes was not as much wealth as it was to send prospectors up into the mountains of the front range in search of the parent veins. In these years, prospecting was a seasonal activity, and 1859 and 1860 parties made their way on foot or by pack animal, up to the areas that would become Black Hawk, Central City, Georgetown and Idaho Springs from the Denver area: and up the Arkansas River through South Park toward Leadville. Both areas resulted in gold finds that drove more and more people to the area of the high country. By 1861/1862, new technologies emerged to attack the gold directly at the vein and hard rock mining overtook placer mining in terms of production.<sup>10</sup> Breckenridge, on the Blue River and Oro City, near Leadville got their starts with gold mining, but as the placer lodes were exhausted, the economics of gold mining changed. Hard rock mining required more tools, skilled labor, management and most critically, new technologies to separate the gold ores from the base rock. By the 1860s, gold mining shifted to an industrialized process, requiring specialized equipment and processing techniques. The Civil War reduced the amount of investment available to fund the

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<sup>10</sup> NR doc pg9 section E

industry and many mines ultimately could not meet the expectations of those potential investors. On top of the problems related to the war, lack of efficient transportation, lack of technology to extract the gold, and the Indian Wars in 1864, slowed the growth of the industry and in many places ground it to a halt.

### ***The Colorado Territory & Statehood***

Gold mining may not have lived up to the high expectations of its investors, but it did create the framework for everything that came next. Before the 1850s the area between the Mississippi river and the pacific coast was a generally unorganized region, various attempts to organize the territories which generally failed in Congress. The Utah Territory was an unorganized territory formed in 1850 and included western Colorado, the area to the east up to the Mississippi River was a vast unorganized territory. The Kansas Territory was carved out in 1861 but remained an unrecognized territory. The Colorado Territory was cut from both and became an organized and recognized territory in 1861.

One major impediment to statehood, was the impression that Colorado had no economic future. After the gold rush, the frontier towns

along the front range declined as the railways opening the west took easier east to west routes, by-passing the high mountains of Colorado. In order for Colorado to become a state, its boosters needed to prove to the Federal government that it had legitimate intentions. The Federal Government saw the Colorado Territory as a wild land, denying Statehood with statements such as:

“Only about 25,000 acres of which are cultivated as agricultural land and about 150,000 acres preempted -the only land in the Territory to which any of the inhabitants have a title- the rest is property of the United States. “A vast area lofty mountains deep valleys and healthy climate do not of themselves “constitute a State”- not even if the mountain sides are covered with prospectors for gold; something more substantial is required - a permanent population and a certain revenue neither of which has Colorado insufficient qualities to support a State Government”<sup>11</sup>

And

“There is not a single good reason for the admission of Colorado. Indeed, if it were not for the mines in that mountainous and forbidding region there would be no population there at all. The population, such as it is, is made up of a roving and unsettled horde of adventures, who have no settled homes there or elsewhere, and are there solely because the state of semi

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<sup>11</sup> [www.historycolorado.org](http://www.historycolorado.org); 11 things you didn't know about Colorado's path statehood, 7/20/2018



barbarism prevalent in that wild country suits their vagrant habits. There is something repulsive in the idea that a few handfuls of minors and reckless bushwhackers should have the same representation in the senate as Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York.”<sup>12</sup>

Denver was established in 1861 on the heels of the front range gold rush. But the decision by the transcontinental railway to take a northern route, avoiding the high Rockies, almost doomed Denver to failure. The Territorial Governor, John Evans, knew that Colorado unlikely to survive without a railway. The Denver Pacific Railway and Telegraph Company was incorporated November of 1867. Fundraising was slow, but by 1868 construction began. The Denver Pacific was in competition with William Austin Hamilton Loveland, who owned the Colorado Central Railway which chose Golden as its termination with the intent of making that the principal city of the Front Range. Two years later the connection to Cheyenne was complete, and two months after that the Kansas Pacific Railway arrived in Denver, cementing its future.<sup>13</sup> The arrival of rail in Denver also cemented the future for development of Colorado’s high county. Summit County was created as one of 17 original counites that defined the Colorado

Territory. The county included a vast area defined by the border with Utah Territory on the west, Wyoming Territory on the north and the Continental Divide on its east and south.

The Colorado Territory was finally granted statehood in 1876.

### ***Silver***

Prospectors working on gold placers, had found a “troublesome” black sand that clogged up the works and frustrated efforts to retrieve the gold. The decline of the camps in the 1860s had left tailings and ores unexplored. In 1876 a pair of miners, Alvinus B. Wood and William H. Stevens, both with a substantial history in Colorado mining, returned to the Upper Arkansas to rework some of the older mines. Still focused on gold, they started hydraulic mining to recover the remaining ores. They also encountered the “black sand” and thought to take samples to Alma to be assayed. The ore was found to contain high levels of silver-lead ore with iron, but the local smelters could not release the silver.

Undaunted, they began to acquire old claims and search for a means to process the ore. They found the St. Louis Company, whose processors could extract the ore, and created the infrastructure to transport ores to Missouri first by wagon teams over the mountains

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<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org); Denver Pacific Railway and Telegraph Company

meeting the railway on the front range. There was enough profit in the enterprise to encourage the construction of a smelter in the area of California Gulch, near Leadville where the ores could be smelted into bullion then transported to St. Louis for final processing. By 1877 prospectors flooded the region reworking old claims and tailings piles for new ores. By 1878 Leadville was the largest camp/town in Colorado with a population 18,000. Merchants, hotels, restaurants and saloons were constructed to support the early mostly tent town. As Leadville boomed, prospectors began to move out into the region to find new sources of ores. The mining camps of Robinson, Kokomo, and Recen, just over Fremont Pass from Leadville, at the head waters of Ten Mile Creek, exploded with activity and sent prospectors down the Tenmile Canyon in search of their own finds.

### ***Frisco***

Henry Recen (1848-1914) was a Swedish immigrant who had arrived in Central City to work as a stone mason. By the 1870s he had made a fortune at the Elephant Mine in Idaho Springs. By 1871 he arrived in the Tenmile Canyon to continue to prospect. In 1873, he built a cabin at the confluence of Tenmile Creek and North Tenmile Creek. This simple

log building is believed to be the first building in what would become Frisco.

In 1876, Recen returned to Sweden to bring his brothers, Daniel and Andrew back to the basin along with his new wife, Catherine Matson. In the next couple of years, Henry and his brothers were wildly successful at mining, Daniel at the Queen of the West Mine, Jacque Peak and Andrew at the Enterprise Lode. They also platted the town of Recen on the south side of Kokomo townsite, on their placer claim. When Kokomo burned in 1881 the 1,500 residents moved across the town boundary to Recen.<sup>14</sup>

In 1875, Captain Henry Learned arrived at the site of Recen's cabin and proceeded to carve the words "Frisco City" above the door. Learned (1817-1903), among other things, was a scout for the St Louis-San Francisco Railway Company. There are several explanations for his act; a joke referring to a famous Leadville red light parlor<sup>15</sup>; a conjunction of the name of the St.Louis-San Francisco Railway, taking the FR and IS from the terminus' and the CO from Colorado<sup>16</sup>; or the popular nickname for San Francisco itself, with the intent of predicting the success of the future town.<sup>17</sup> It should also be noted that the nickname of the railway was "The Frisco".

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<sup>14</sup> Frisco, page 6

<sup>15</sup> Frisco! Page 9

<sup>16</sup> Frisco and the Ten Mile page 17

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frisco,\\_Colorado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frisco,_Colorado)

Which seems to the author to be a simpler explanation.

The St. Louis – San Francisco Railway never made it to Colorado or San Francisco. It's westernmost terminus was Frisco, Texas.

Despite questions over the origin of the name, there is no doubt that Learned had in mind the potential for a town in this place and he understood that the railway was an essential part of the plan. Prospecting was not only reserved for miners; towns were also speculative endeavors. Entrepreneurs assembled teams of investors to make well-placed tracts of land into towns, that would make money through the sale of lots.

Henry Learned assembled a group of local men and investors from the region, as described in the Denver Tribune:

“Among the locators are some of the leading citizens of Colorado, together with parties representing capital and influence from other states. T.D. Thatcher, Major Thatcher, W. N. Kaleser, W. J. Patterson, and others, of Lawrence, Kansas; Captain Leonard [sic] of the San Juan country, W. A. H. Loveland, E. N. Berthoud, Captain P. S. Reed, C. C. Welch, of Golden; P. B. Groat of the Kansas Pacific Railroad; W. A. Rand, of Jefferson County; B. F. Knapp, of the Denver Pacific; W. H. Price, W. B. Murdock, and M. C. Jones, J. L. Bortwell, Frank Church, J. W. Horner, of Denver; D. C. Crawford and William

M. Clark, late of the State Department; Peter Leiner [sic] and E. N. Courier, Boulder; Dr. Pollock and James Berry, of Georgetown with others.”<sup>18</sup>

Most investors had interests in many other enterprises, such as railways. Investing in a townsite, might also improve the return on other related investments. With the backing of this group, Henry Learned established The Frisco Town Association in April of 1879. Charles Walker performed the survey, laying out a grid of seven streets with eight cross streets. Each block was then divided into 12 lots on either side of an alley. The named streets and alleys run east/west, with numbered streets running north/south. Each lot sold for \$5, with corner lots for \$10.<sup>19</sup>

First gold, then silver drove the development of camps throughout the high country, but transportation would determine their survival beyond mining. The nature of the high country presented challenges from the beginning and made easy routes difficult to accomplish.

As thousands of prospectors began to move into the Blue River basin, transportation became an economic opportunity. A man with a mule and wagon could make money ferrying men and equipment into the basin and ores out. In the 1860s there were two proven routes into the basin. The route over

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<sup>18</sup> Denver Daily Tribune, April 16, 1879

<sup>19</sup> Frisco and Tenmile, page 17

Argentine Pass from Georgetown to Leadville and the route from Denver to Breckenridge over Boreas Pass.<sup>20</sup> These likely began as game trails which evolved to foot trails then wagon roads and stagecoach routes. The goal of these routes was not Frisco or the Tenmile Canyon in the 1860s but Leadville.

William Austin Hamilton Loveland owned the Colorado Central Railway which in the 1870s, terminated in Georgetown. He envisioned a shorter link to Leadville, by way of what would become Loveland Pass, 70 miles shorter than existing route over Argentine Pass.<sup>21</sup> This new dirt track was complete in 1879. For the men who envisioned a future town at the site of Frisco City, which was the halfway mark, this endeavor provided a critical step toward the future. The sixty-mile journey from Georgetown to Leadville was still two days travel over rough road and an overnight was highly desirable.

Silas Nott established his stagecoach service the “High Line,” which connected the end of the railway line in Georgetown as far as Kokomo as soon as the Loveland pass road was complete in 1879. Passengers could leave the Georgetown depot on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and return from Kokomo on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

for a fare of \$7.00.<sup>22</sup> Mr. Nott received a contract to carry US Mail on his line, which guaranteed Frisco the second most important step toward becoming a town, a Post Office. The post office opened in August of 1879, The hotelier Peter Leyner was Frisco’s first postmaster.

“Nott’s business grew quickly and by the fall of 1879, “Had purchased and put to harness three double six-horse teams and a trio of brand-new Concorde coaches. The *Georgetown Courier* praised his drivers as “the best in the Rocky Mountains.” Neither raging winter storms, nor Loveland Pass avalanches, nor fetlock-deep spring mud deterred Silas Nott. When business boomed enough to run 100 horses and three or four High Line stages daily, Frisco became the layover point on a route extended to Leadville.”<sup>23</sup>

The new stage route sparked a construction boom in Frisco.

“The bustling town had quickly sold out 150 town lots... Town fathers reserved a lot for a future Summit County courthouse, a move brimming with the optimism of the day. A cacophony of sawing, hammering, squeaking freight wagon wheels and neighboring workhorse teams assaulted the ears of residents as construction racket accompanied the rise of building after building. Most splendid was Peter Leyner’s September, 1880 completed hotel, The Leyner House, large

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<sup>20</sup> Frisco, page 9

<sup>21</sup> Frisco page 9

<sup>22</sup> Frisco page 12

<sup>23</sup> Frisco page 12

enough for 50 guests...Frisco boasted two additional hotels, the Frisco House and the Stafford. Three general stores, erected during the town's first year, completed for residents needs in grocery and mining supplies. Charles F. Shedd launched his second business, a general store. His bonanza lumberyard already turned out a lucrative 10,000 feet of lumber per day in 1880. J. S. Scott opened a "first class" general merchandise store as did Doble & Stokes. Adolphus "Tip" Baliff, an 1879 stagecoach driver on "Nott's Highline," settled in Frisco to build a blacksmith shop. "<sup>24</sup>

Frisco saw itself as a town above the fray of the many mining camps, where lawlessness and unscrupulousness was rampant.

"Thus, a town was born, and one unique to Summit County's gold rush days growth. Breckenridge and Montezuma, Kokomo and Robinson... began in a bawdy squalor, with saloons in hastily thrown-up tents and cabins built smack in the middle of what would be Main Street. The neer-do-wells that followed in the prospector's wake - gamblers, pettifoggers, dance hall girls, shysters and quacks - created havoc over and above the choking dust, polluted waterways and "urban sprawl" spawned by the mushrooming mine camp.

Not so, Frisco! Community planners, backed by solid investment dollars, laid out an organized townsite, based on economic growth projections more solid than the glint of gold in a mountain streambed. ...Frisco, alone among Summit's communities, began as a new

town investment by nineteenth century American capitalists - not as a frenzied swarming camp, called into being by a prospector's exultant cry of "Gold."<sup>25</sup>

The population of Frisco in 1880 was recorded as 150 people. The Federal Census that year recorded 625 residents of the Tenmile District.<sup>26</sup> Of the residents, thirteen were women and 27 were children. Henry Recen, his wife and his brothers along with Henry Learned are among the counted. The majority of residents are listed as miners, a handful of engineers, carpenters and blacksmiths also appear. The region was a melting pot of nationalities. The countries of Sweden, England and Wales were well represented as was the Midwest and North East of the US and Canada. Colorado had only been a state for four years, so only the youngest children are listed as born in Colorado.

In September of 1880, the Town applied for a patent; in December the town applied for incorporation with the State of Colorado.

"Forty-nine Frisco residents voted unanimously for incorporation. Frisco had formed a town board of trustees in October 1880. J. S. Scott, John Garrison, John Doble and C.F. Shedd are listed as trustees in Frisco's beautifully scripted town records kept by Frisco recorder David Crowell. A 28-year old bachelor, B.

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<sup>24</sup> Frisco pg 11

<sup>25</sup> Frisco 13

<sup>26</sup> No towns were indicated

draft

B. Babcock, earlier a Keystone area miner, then served as mayor.”<sup>27</sup>

The town founders anticipated the arrival of the railway and voted to reserved rights-of-way in Frisco to ensure that they would come.



*Waiting for the DSP&P (Colorado Southern) in Frisco in the 1880s*

### ***Railways***

Countless railway companies had been created as a result of the 1862 & 1864 Pacific Railway Act, many railways remained on paper only, few actually reached the destinations originally envisioned. This “railway mania” led to many overlapping goals, competition for rights of way, joint operating agreements, and ultimately bankruptcies and consolidations.

Railway names and ownership were in constant flux, and the competition to get rails on the ground was fierce. It was typical for the railway to make use of established tracks.

Stage routes and wagon roadbeds were not only proven routes over difficult terrain, the roadbed itself led to faster construction. It was already cleared of trees and rocks and compacted by the horses and mules that drove the wagons. In addition, the amenities built for the stagecoaches and wagons such as rooming houses and saloons as well as shops for the sale of goods, were already in place. While the wealth of the mining camps focused the railways, nascent towns were eager to be important stops on the route. A railway could bring more people and more goods to support and grow the economy; a railway guaranteed longevity, at least that was the common expectation.

Two railroads serviced the Blue River basin. The Denver, South Park & Pacific (DSP&P) and the Denver & Rio Grande (DR&G).

The Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad was established in October of 1872, with great ambitions for serving much of the high-country mining region. The narrow-gauge railway arrived in Como, on the south side of Boreas Pass in 1878. The intent was to continue to Leadville by way of Buena Vista. Jay Gould, the owner of the Denver & Rio Grande, convinced the DSP&P to share the track to Leadville through Buena Vista but by

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<sup>27</sup> Summit, pg 103

1884 the DR&G had backed out of the agreement, leaving the DSP&P to find another way. It chose a spur that would travel over Boreas Pass, down to Breckenridge. Breckenridge was not the intended destination, Leadville was. The train arrived in Breckenridge in August of 1882, and followed the Blue River to Dickey, east of Old Dillon. The original plan included an extension of the track from Silver Plume over Loveland Pass and up the Tenmile to Leadville. The stop at Dickey would have joined that line to the line from Breckenridge. In the end, the rail went from Breckenridge to Dickey and turned left to Leadville, with a spur east to Dillon. The railway entered Frisco from the east and ran around the southside of the historic townsite over to the foot of the Tenmile range and Mt Royal, then up the Tenmile canyon. A small depot was located in Frisco marking the stop. The line also stopped at several points up the canyon to Fremont pass and into Leadville.<sup>28</sup>

The Denver & Rio Grande Railway was founded by William Jackson Palmer in 1870. The original plan was to travel between the destinations as stated in the name. Work started on the narrow-gauge line in Denver in 1871. Tracks were laid through Colorado Springs to Pueblo intending to continue south. But just as the DSP&P ran into right of way

issues in South Park, the D&RG ran into competition on the way to the Rio Grande. Since the D&RG had the right-of-way to Leadville, it was first to arrive in July of 1880. The camps on the Tenmile had prospered and the railway saw the potential for revenue despite the challenges of the terrain. The DR&G ran down the steep and narrow Tenmile Canyon to Frisco, running along the alley between Main Street and Galena Street.

“Awaiting the rails inchworm arrival, the town board had plenty of time to dive into a fracas over just where the D&RG would terminate. If Frisco became the rail line's terminus town, then Frisco should have the County seat. As the excitement reached a fever pitch, the town board ordered the town clerk to cease selling lots while Henry Learned, J. S. Scott and Judge Bennett negotiated with the D&RG, offering concessions to entice the railway to choose Frisco as the terminus of its Blue River branch.”<sup>29</sup>

Neither railway delivered what Frisco had hoped for, the terminus. The populous mining camps in the areas above Frisco and Dillon, resented the distance and time required to do business at the County Seat in Breckenridge. Sadly, for Frisco, Dillon won the terminus.

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<sup>28</sup> The line was purchased by the Union Pacific in 1880 but operated under its original name. The

line again went bankrupt in 1889 and was reorganized under the Denver & Southern.

<sup>29</sup> Frisco pg 22

draft

The D&RG arrived in Frisco in the summer of 1882. The DSP&P arrived a year later in July of 1883.

“Dashing Concorde coaches and lumbering ore wagons grinding up the Ten Mile Canyon Leadville became a thing of the past. The railroad stood ready to meet all transportation challenges. And challenges they were: the avalanche prone Tenmile Canyon regularly dumped on the railroad track, snarling train schedules and adding to the DSP&P railroad's nickname “Damned Slow Pulling & Pretty Rough Riding.” Spring runoff swelled streams and washed out bridges. Brakes failed on steep mountain passes descents causing runaway trains.<sup>30</sup>

The population of Frisco swelled to 250 after the railways arrived.<sup>31</sup> The economics of running a railway were based on the high prices they could charge for coal going to the mines and ores being transported out. Passengers and other goods and materials did not support the cost of these risky operations. The economics of mining were similar, as costs of equipment, men and processing rose, the profits of mines fell. The mining companies felt that the railway took too large a chunk out of their revenues. This provided the impetus to improve the technologies used by mine operators to reduce transportation costs, which in turn caused the railways to cut

service. Ultimately the silver crash in 1893, slowed operations in both the mines and the railways to a crawl.

### ***The County Seat***

The original county seat of Summit County was Parkville. The promoters of Breckenridge, however had other ideas. They “reportedly carried out a moonlight requisition of the county records in 1862. Perpetrators of the legendary heist hid the county documents in an isolated log cabin until outraged Parkville citizens regained some measure of calm.”<sup>32</sup> At that point, Breckenridge actively took over record keeping and proclaimed the honor for themselves.

Breckenridge got its start with placer gold and sustained placer mining well into the 20th century. But as one young miner described it in an 1860 letter:

“ ‘All is not gold that glitters’ is an old saying and every man who comes here does not go home rich is just as true. The most of the miners will be gone or going home in three weeks and not more than one in 50 will take home anymore after all expenses are paid then could have made at home. ...Nearly all who came up here never had any experience in mining or traveling the Plains and as a natural consequence made a great many blunders, bad bargains and with a little bad

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<sup>30</sup> Frisco, pg 21

<sup>31</sup> Summit pg 103

<sup>32</sup> Summit pg 33



management it is to be wondered that at that so many came out of the little end of the horn the first year. ... the winter here is long and dreary and there is no work to do and it is no use to stay here and do nothing and live on provisions at \$0.22 per pound for Flour, 35 cents for Bacon and everything else in proportion. Mining here will well with but a few exceptions (end) by the first of October and will not be resumed till the 1st of June.”<sup>33</sup>

Breckenridge had benefitted from its early gold strikes. A July 1861 report by William Byers, editor of the Rocky Mountain News, described Breckenridge as follows:

“Breckenridge is the first point of importance, reached by the traveler over this road, and until recently the most town-like of any settlement in the Blue River country. The population is probably between seventy-five and one hundred persons-embracing quite a number of families. There are several stores, hotels, meat markets, saloons and a U.S. Post Office - the only one west of the range.”<sup>34</sup>

In 1869 the town’s fortunes were declining, Samuel Bowles described it as “a village of only twenty or thirty cabins...scarcely habitable in winter.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1870 the total population of Summit County was 258. Ten years later the population was 5,459. In 1880, the majority of the prosperity of the County was centered on the mining camps, close to Frisco and Old Dillon. With

the arrival of the railways, the talk of moving the County seat increased. Breckenridge was still a day’s travel away, and any county business would require lost work time and an overnight stay with the related expenses. The residents of the Snake River mining camps; Decatur, Chihuahua and Montezuma pressed for a move to Dillon. While the residents of Kokomo, Recen, Robinson and the Tenmile camps pushed for a move to Frisco.

Undoubtedly the location of the County seat was a critical component of increasing land values and boosting the local economy. Any town that could gain the honor would benefit greatly.

In 1882 a petition was circulated to move the county seat from Breckenridge to Frisco. Speculation on the final destination of the railway seems to have called the results of the petition into question. The *Montezuma Mill Run* offered these two views on the subject in October of 1882:

“It is said, upon excellent authority that the Denver and Rio Grande will be at the crossing before the South Park reaches Dillon. It is certain that it will build down the Ten Mile and Blue River in a short time. This settles the final junction of the railroads in Summit county, and makes Dillon the predominant railroad center. It also settles the other question the location of the County seat. Whatever have been

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<sup>33</sup> Summit page 31-32

<sup>34</sup> Summit page 34

<sup>35</sup> Summit pg 34

may have been the chances of Frisco heretofore, she cannot now reasonably ask Ten Mile to vote for her. A vote for Frisco now would simply be a vote not to move the County seat at all. ....We should have rejoiced if Frisco had been the center of these roads, but she is not in that is in that settles it.”<sup>36</sup>

“The county seat question has by events somewhat unlooked for, assumed an entirely new phase since our last issue. We thought then and a majority of Robinson people thought that the best thing to do is to vote for a change of the county seat from Breckenridge. We think so yet. But the moment movement on the part of the railroads has so alienated eastern portion of the County from Frisco that her chances now we may be considered hopeless.”<sup>37</sup>

The Montezuma Mill Run ran the election notice on November 4th, 1882:

“Notice is hereby given that a special election will be held on the 7th day of November, 1882, in the several precincts of Summit County, Colorado, to vote upon the question of the removal of the County seat from Breckenridge to Frisco.”<sup>38</sup>

The vote was obviously split by the two interests and the County seat remained in Breckenridge.

While a major blow to the hopes of investors in Frisco, the town continued to benefit from its supporter’s commitment to preserving its

future. Founder, Henry Learned continued to be an active member of the Frisco community. He and his wife Hattie ran a “grocery and notions” store in town and he took on the role of postmaster in 1883, serving for six years. He took on the role again in 1900 to 1902.

“Besides managing his Kitty Innes Mine, Learned held office as 1885 mayor and justice of the peace. He had helped organized Frisco’s 1882-founded school as school district board secretary, and served many terms on the town board. Later in 1890-91 the 71- year old Learned became Summit County coroner.

During Frisco’s darkest years, the post-Silver Panic 1890s Henry Learned held onto the town government when other elected officials neglected their posts. A quarter-century of loyal leadership in the town he helped found secures Captain Henry Learned’s place as a Frisco pioneer.”<sup>39</sup>

After the loss of the County seat question, Frisco settled into life as the center of a bustling mining district.

Frisco established a school in 1882, serving the nine boys and eight girls who lived in the far-ranging district. The school operated until 1884 but was revived in 1887. It would be

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<sup>36</sup> Tenmile News published in mill run

<sup>37</sup> Robinson Tribune, published in mill run

<sup>38</sup> Montezuma mill run and summit page

<sup>39</sup> Frisco, pg 29

another two years before a permanent school building was purchased by the school board.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the school, Frisco also provided entertainment for the regions miners who spent most days below ground and whose daily accommodation might still be a tent camp with little entertainment.

“Frisco saw a chance to pad its own pocketbook by alliance licensing local vice. In March 1883, the town first required liquor licenses (fee \$50.00 for six months) to gain some control of local revelers. But the town's indulgent policy towards tipplers always looked the other way. The town also cracked a whip of limp spaghetti at gamblers. The town board passed an ordinance declaring all pool, bagatelle another gaming tables must be licensed at \$5 a year. Mayor Learned and the six member town board clapped their hands over their ears as the hurdy gurdy racket of dancehall music poured into the town streets and resolved attacks the body establishments \$10 per month. Then they turned a stern gaze on Frisco's soiled doves. In September, 1883, the trustees proclaimed, “the Marshall is instructed to collect from all female frequenters, or inmates of Dancehalls, Saloons or any house known to be kept for the purpose of Assignations (prostitution) the sum of Five (5) dollars per month” ... Licensing the world's oldest profession paid off for Frisco; 1884 town coffers bulged to a heady \$1,000.”<sup>41</sup>

The lofty goals of keeping the town “above the fray” had to be balanced with the realities of the economy.

It wasn't only miner's who gathered in Frisco for entertainment. Family picnics, dances, plays and music were common activities.

“Tuesday evening was a joyful one for the boys and girls of 10 mile. For some time past the elite of Robinson, Kokomo, Breckenridge and Frisco have been on the lookout for the grand party to be given at the latter place. At five o'clock, Tuesday evening, a large sleigh, drawn by 4 spirited horses, left Robinson, arriving at Kokomo few minutes later, where they were joined by the fair sex of that place. ... The party arrived at Frisco at 9:00 o'clock. Shortly afterward the Breckenridge party, under the guidance of the general County clerk and recorder, Jack Willoughby, arrived. There were 22 couples from this place. Dancing commenced at 9:30, and at 11 a sumptuous supper was served, to which ample justice was done. Dancing was again in order and continued until 4:00 o'clock in the morning, when the parties started for home...”<sup>42</sup>

By 1885, several mining company headquarters were located in the town of Frisco. Lumber mills, livery stables, groceries, saloons, hotels, and an opera hall.<sup>43</sup>

Ranching was also becoming an important component of Frisco's community and

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<sup>40</sup> Frisco pg 31-32

<sup>41</sup> Frisco page 27

<sup>42</sup> Leadville Daily Herald, December 19th, 1880

<sup>43</sup> Summit pg103

economy. A cattle dealership, run by A. C. Graff, provided a source for stock to be purchased or sold by local ranchers. These local ranches were also a source of fresh food and meat for the local markets.

### ***The Silver Panic of 1893***

“Everything went wrong for Frisco in the 1890s. Well Breckenridge waltzed into an air of white gloves and wallpaper, flush private railcars and 13-pound gold Nuggets like “Tom’s Baby,” Frisco scraped the barrel’s proverbial bottom. Poor Henry Learned scurried to wear all the hats on the town board as trustees quit showing up to meetings. Somehow momentum petered out after an April 1892 blizzard canceled the election, in predictable “Springtime in the Rockies” fashion. A snowbound D& RG failed to deliver election ballots.”<sup>44</sup>

1892 saw the biggest production of silver in the US. Driven by the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, passed in 1890, requiring the US government to purchase silver, beyond the existing requirements, which led to a wild distortion of the market and clever schemes to make money through manipulation of the metals markets. As a result, Congress repealed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1873, sending prices plummeting. “In 1890, the price of silver dipped to \$1.16 per ounce. By the end of the year, it had fallen to \$0.69.

By December 1894, the price had dropped to \$0.60. On November 1, 1895, US mints halted production of silver coins.”<sup>45</sup>

For most, the economics of continuing to mine silver were untenable, people left, and mines closed.

Frisco did have some other sources of work. The areas forests provided a seemingly in exhaustible supply of timber. Sawmills worked in remote sections of the Aspen forest, setting up living quarters on site similar to those of the mining camps. Aspen trees grew on the mountain slopes at the lower elevations, near the Frisco area, but did not extend to the higher mining camps or Leadville. Similarly, the pine and fir forests tapered off around 11,500 feet. The construction of towns, mines and railways above tree line, required lumber to be brought in from lower elevations. Guaranteeing a market for the Frisco area mills. As with mining the impacts to the environment were severe. Harold “Chick” Deming described the destruction:

“The early loggers were not concerned nor they had they heard of the sustained yield concept of modern forestry and when they cut timber they cut only the best, but devastated the mountainsides getting it out. Forest fires were common, some of them due to carelessness and some purposely set to get dry logs ... Many of

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<sup>44</sup> Frisco page 33

<sup>45</sup> wikipedia.org; Sherman Silver Purchase Act

the pictures of the three peaks, Royal, Wichita and Chief now show how bare the mountains were from indiscriminate logging.”<sup>46</sup>

After the crash, Frisco’s population dipped to 175. Buildings fell into disrepair and properties were sold for taxes. What had been one of Frisco’s most significant buildings, The Leyner’s Hotel had closed and was uninhabitable.

By 1897, 100 local mines and town lots were for sale for back taxes. Daniel Recen, brother of Henry Recen, was forced to let go of his Excelsior Lode, having saved none of the fortune he had amassed.

### ***Agriculture***

The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed adults to acquire 160 acres of unappropriated land. The upper Blue River, near Breckenridge had abundant placer gold, the lower had vast ranch lands. Early on ranchers from lower elevations brought cattle and sheep up to the high country for grazing, returning to lower elevations for winter. The railway opened the door for permanent homesteading. Markets for ranchers were expanded, stock could be brought in or transported to outside markets by rail.

Unlike mining, ranching was a generational undertaking. Families homesteaded in the

grasslands east of Frisco. Often large tracts were worked by a single family for grazing and growing of hay and alfalfa. Garden crops such as carrots, turnips, peas, onions and potatoes were cultivated and often brought to market in Frisco. Dairy herds were another source of local milk and cream that could be sold or traded for other goods. Meat products might be sold locally, or the stock sent for sale by train to Denver.

Wilbert Giberson was one such settler. He was born in 1878 in Maine of Canadian parents and at 17 he arrived in Kokomo with three brothers and two sisters. In 1904 Wilbert moved to his new ranch, 162.2 acres in the Blue River basin along Tenmile Creek. His brother Elijah claimed an adjacent 47.5 acres. He married Lizzie A. McDonald who was born in Dillon in 1883 and grew up on an adjacent ranch. They and their children continued to ranch for decades, as did other long time local families, such as the Prestruds the Demings and the Wileys.

The early promoters of Frisco were right to think that Frisco could be something other than an unruly mining camp. Families became what separated Frisco from other, now lost, mining towns. They also sustained the town as fortunes declined in the first half of the 20th century.

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<sup>46</sup> Frisco pg 35

Many ranching families split time between homes on the ranch and homes in town. Winter life in town was far easier than on the ranch. Though Frisco streets were not plowed, a short walk for groceries and school was a significant improvement over miles on horseback through the snow. After 1900, the town had electricity that was not available on the ranch. Older family members also retired to town, allowing them an easier life still close to family on the ranch.

As silver mining declined, these connections sustained Frisco. Skills required on the ranch were desirable in town, food produced on the ranch could be shared and bartered.

### ***Mining returns***

Just as it seemed life had changed forever, a renewed interest in mining began to emerge. New technologies were developed to extract ores at deeper levels and gold was back on the radar of many prospectors and mine syndicates. During the early days of lode mining (aka hard rock or quartz mining) the deeper a mine went, the ores changed making it harder separate the gold and silver from the other ores. In the early 1860s, the technology didn't exist to separate the metals found in deeper rock, and the tools to dig deeper into the granite hillsides were expensive. This led to the abandonment of many mines at the time. Just as silver had revived those mines in the

1880s, new technologies would re-open the abandoned silver mines of the 1890s. The man credited with bringing the new technology to the Tenmile was Colonel James Havens Myers (1844-1924).

Boring thousands of feet into the mountain side required large sums of investment, and Myers was able to assemble a syndicate to accomplish the task. He opened the King Solomon mine with a bore that went 7,000 feet into the side of Mt Royal. Employing men on steam driven drills round the clock to reveal the gold within. These operations required power plants, and cyanide-based extraction techniques.

No longer was mining a low-tech operation. Mine wages increased and Frisco area mines were now operating on an industrial scale. Large sums of money were required and the men who benefitted were investors in the syndicates, rarely the miners themselves.

Frisco did benefit from this new boom. The Excelsior mine built a power plant by damming the North Tenmile Creek, creating a reservoir to generate electricity. This negated the need to pay the railway to transport coal, but it also allowed the mine to power the town of Frisco and several nearby mine operations.

The town board also took the opportunity to review their books and demand final payment

from landowners who had only made down payments in 1882. 39 lots were ultimately forfeited and went up for resale in 1899.<sup>47</sup>

The town sprang back to life as new investors rehabilitated Leyner's Hotel with expanded rooms. The school ordered books, and the town began construction on a new town hall, which opened on Christmas 1899.

"Frisco danced out of the doldrums of its not so gay 90s and partied its way through the next decade. Townspeople had a reason to celebrate. The 1900s brought huge cash investments to Frisco's mines, a flood of new residents, business prosperity, electric power and telephone service, plus find new schoolhouse to an up-and-coming Frisco. Its residents kicked up kicked up their high button heels in joy."<sup>48</sup>

A constant stream of investors were paraded along the Tenmile Canyon's mines. Frisco hotels were refurbished, and rooms were added. Frisco's saloons and dance halls numbered in the thirties.

"Meanwhile the town board busied itself with essentials like its September 7th 1901 ordinance declaring that all livestock is to be kept off the streets at night."<sup>49</sup>

Telephone service arrived in 1904 and the Central Colorado Power Company brought hydro-electric power from its Shoshone Plant in 1907. A water system arrived in 1908 in

the form of a ditch that brought fresh water down from North Tenmile Creek. Water lines and sewage would not arrive for several more decades.

Fourteen significant mines were operating in the Canyon during the 1900s.

Despite the money coming in, the quality of the ores was just high enough to keep things moving, but not high enough to create a new boom. The first blow to the revived mine industry was the closure of the Denver South Park & Pacific, now operating as the Central & Southern. The Railway officials cut service to Summit County in 1911, citing the excessive cost of maintenance on the Como/Boreas Pass/Breckenridge section of the tracks. Some felt that the company was being generous to its investors while scrimping on maintenance. Through legal action the service was restored in 1913 and ran until 1937. The DR&G ceased its service between Dillon and Leadville in 1912, and quickly dismantled its tracks and trestles, and disappeared. The loss of rail service limited the mines ability to get ore to market, and once the service resumed, railway costs skyrocketed. What had been reasonable profits on lower quality ores, became unprofitable, and mining declined once again. Conditions in Frisco were not much better, the

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<sup>47</sup> Frisco pg 41

<sup>48</sup> Frisco pg 44

<sup>49</sup> Frisco 47

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electricity provided by the Frisco Light & Power Company turned off the lights in 1913. Louis Wildhack, a mining engineer, postmaster and shop owner, salvaged the buildings at the Admiral Mine to expand his house on Main Street in exchange for selling off the mine equipment. The salvaging of buildings became a common practice in Frisco, leading to the ad hoc nature of the towns shifting development in the 1910s and beyond. During this time, the women of Frisco were determined to keep the town out of debt and responsibly run. They occupied all the town board seats “attacked the town’s bills and vowed to make Frisco debt-free.”<sup>50</sup>

Global events began to impact life in Frisco. 1917 saw the entry of the US into WWI and 1918 followed with the outbreak of Spanish Flu. Frisco relied on its close-knit community to survive the 20s and the Great Depression. The skills learned as prospectors, ranchers and pioneers served the residents well.

Skiing became a popular pastime. Regional ski jumping competitions became a regular winter event with amateur and professional jumpers. Peter Prestrud brought his Norwegian skiing skills to bear in a 1920 jumping competition, leading a team of six local men, including Anders Hagen who had

the record jump in 1919 at 213 feet. These competitions could only hint at the next boom to raise Frisco’s fortunes.

The 1920 and 1930s were simple times for Frisco. Residents pulled together to support each other with whatever they could offer. Materials were salvaged from the abandoned mines and other buildings. The town coffers had been reduced “to a scant \$56.13 in 1934.”<sup>51</sup> The phone service ended in 1935.

When the C&S railway pulled up stakes in 1937, the town was left with a set of low-quality roads for access to other towns and the outer world. There were no paved highways. With no electricity, no water, no phone, no real access to the outside world, “One resident said it this way: “Everyone knew what everyone else had—nothing!”<sup>52</sup> The population dwindled to 12 permanent residents.

In 1940 electricity returned to town. But little changed. The outbreak of WWII closed the school from 1942 to 1947.

### **Tourism and Skiing**

Tourism would be the next chapter for Frisco. Beginning slowly in the 1930s people came to Frisco to summer in second homes, rentals, or

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<sup>50</sup> Frisco pg72

<sup>51</sup> Frisco pg 93

<sup>52</sup> Frisco page 93



short-term cabins. The same beauty and wealth of outdoor activities, such as fishing and hunting, that drew early explorers to appreciate the land, brought vacationers to the area. After WWII fishermen, hunters and other vacationers could find lodging at Foote's Rest, previously Wildhack's Store on Main Street.

Tourist accommodations began to populate Main Street and environs. The Frisco Hotel was purchased by Elizabeth Kline and her son Virgil Landis. He described his experience as they took on the refurbishing of the hotel:

"It was right after the war and supplies were extremely hard to come by. One of the first things we had to learn was that mountain people were very close knit group that didn't take to outsiders right off the bat so we had a hard time even getting things from Smiths lumber company and western hardware in led Ville until we had done business them with them for awhile. After that they couldn't do enough for us. Our first winter there was really an eye opener for us as the winter in Colorado Rockies cannot be described. It has to be experienced and lived period since we were more or less in the process of tearing down and doing over we sort of roughed it you might say. The plumbing was of the outdoor variety. We boiled water in a big copper closed boiler on the huge kitchen range and pulled our water from a well by means of a windlass. We were not

exceptions as practically everyone else in town then did the same thing." <sup>53</sup>

The hotel reopened in 1947.

Two large infrastructure projects that arrived in the next decade would dramatically alter the world for Frisco.

The construction of the Dillon Reservoir began in earnest in 1960, swallowing the former railway town of Dickey and Frisco's counterpart on the east side of the Blue River basin, Old Dillon. Several of the large ranches that had sustained the area during the last 50 years, were also submerged. The reservoir was filled in 1963.

The construction of Interstate 70, along the north side of the new reservoir and up the Tenmile Canyon, finally brought a modern roadway into the basin. Highway construction began in 1968 and included two tunnels, bypassing Loveland Pass. The second tunnel was complete in 1979, making travel to Colorado's high country easily accessible for the first time in history. It would be another 13 years for the highway to be completed to the Utah border.

A byproduct of the highway construction was an explosion of the ski industry. Scandinavian and Norwegian miners brought skiing with them to the mines in the 1850s, but the

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<sup>53</sup> Frisco pg 113.

popularity of recreational skiing took hold after the Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid, NY in 1935. Formal ski areas began to develop as WWII 10th mountain men returned to the areas they had skied during training outside of Leadville, to create a new industry.

Arapahoe basin, at the top of Loveland Pass was the first to open in 1946. Breckenridge opened in 1961, Vail opened in 1962, Keystone in 1970 and Copper Mountain, at the site of Wheeler's Junction in 1972. Once the highway was complete into the Blue River basin, these areas were easily accessible by car from Denver. Tourist development transformed Frisco in a way not seen since the 1880s. In the last several years Frisco has become more than a bedroom community for ski areas. The 21st century has seen a boom in outdoor recreation in general. What early settlers had seen and admired about Colorado's high country enticed a new generation looking for a small town life in the great outdoors.

## ***Conclusion***

The town of Frisco occupies a complex position in the history of Colorado's high country. A pristine basin of high meadows and rugged peaks impressed anyone who ventured into the area. The wealth of ores contained in the mountains, created an economy upon which many built their lives.

Though surrounded by a wealth, the money came and went so quickly that Frisco never accumulated the large and permanent masonry buildings found in Leadville, Aspen and the gold towns of the front range. Short building booms were interrupted by long periods of decline. Did the large and well developed mine camps in the mountains around the basin spread the wealth through the valley, allowing no one place to outgrow another. Could a different decision by the railways have made Frisco the county seat tempering the decades of marginal life that the town experienced.

In the end, the complex series of competing interests that created Frisco, is a story recorded in its buildings.

*draft*

## *Findings & Recommendations*

Frisco was created by the familiar boom and bust trends that characterize much of the Colorado Mineral Belt. The town may have been born of speculation, on the part of miners, railroad promoters, town boosters and other opportunists, it grew into close knit nlife for themselves in the high country of Colorado.

Over the years the loss of original buildings, the relocation of many of the remaining buildings, and significant generous infill development have made it more difficult to see the town as it once was and to recognize the value of the remaining historic buildings on the streets. Long periods of economic stagnation have also led to considerable alteration of early buildings and deferred maintenance of others.

Normally the relocation of a building would have a serious impact on its integrity, however in Frisco there is a long history of re arranging buildings both around town and from outlying areas. As a trend this contributes the understanding how Frisco developed. In recent years, the relocation of Frisco's most important historic buildings has undermined the ability to visualize how Frisco grew. Where development was concentrated, and how buildings responded to each other in a

neighborhood. It may also contribute to a devaluation of the buildings that remain their original or quasi original locations, making them appear like more scattered remnants than a historic neighborhood.

Over the last decades Frisco has experienced rapid growth in part due to its proximity to the basin's ski areas and in part due to national trends that see more people moving to small, livable outdoor oriented communities. This has brought demolition and redevelopment as well as large multifamily development to the areas of the original townsite.

The current land use code does not protect Frisco's historic buildings and it allows for considerably larger development on small sites, increasing the pressure for development in the historic areas of town.

Up until recently, The Town of Frisco has chosen to acquire historic buildings and relocate them as a means of preservation. This allows a property owner to fully develop a now empty site. There is one example of a new development that has incorporated its historic building on site. This development has heightened the discussion in town on how to be effective at historic preservation or if a preservation program is even viable.

Following is a discussion of each site included in the survey, divided into groups based on the

integrity of each building. These evaluations are included in detail on the individual site forms and is summarized here.

Integrity is defined as the ability for a site to continue to convey its historic significance. There are seven aspects of integrity; design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling and association.

Since there is no formal historic preservation program in Frisco, the buildings have been grouped into categories that can be used to support further discussions on how and what to preserve.

### ***National Register Recommendations***

No buildings in this survey have been determined eligible for National Register Listing.

#### ***1. Buildings that should be considered for a local landmark program:***

Though Frisco does not currently have a historic preservation program, the following sites are significant and retain a high level of integrity. They clearly warrant local preservation.



420 Galena Street • 5ST.1756 • *Yellow House*  
1880s • This building represents a common group of houses with a simple rectangular plan with a front gable. The house is significant because it represents a form that was common and of which many were expanded and altered over the years.



120 N 4th Ave • 5ST.1744 • *Susie Thompson*  
1911 • This building represents a small of buildings that fall into a style group that is commonly found elsewhere in mining towns, but seems to be rare here in Frisco.



116 N 5th Ave • 5ST.1746 • *Deming Cabin*  
1938 • This cabin is associated the Deming family, who were an important members of early Frisco society. The construction of the cabin includes an inverted corner detail, which seems to be a common detail in Frisco.



502 Main St • 5ST.1764 • *Blacksmith*  
1920s • This building appears to be in original condition with some of the smithing adaptations still intact. It is part of an approved development plan that will preserve some of the character of this building.



Excelsior • 5ST.1766 • *Excelsior Office*  
1898 • The mine office has been moved several times and has lost some important features. It does retain its original windows and it represents the type of buildings found in the successful mining operations of the 19th c.



117 Granite • 5ST.1758  
1900s • This simple front gable building is characteristic of the type of buildings built in the early history of the town. Though it came from Old Dillon, it retains a significant amount of historic materials and the form and design are still clearly visible.



**2. Buildings that have some alterations but should still be considered for a local landmark program:**



112 N 5th Ave • 5ST.1745 • *Deming Cabin*

1938 • This cabin is associated the Deming family, who were an important members of early Frisco society. The construction of the cabin includes an inverted corner detail, which seems to be a common detail in Frisco. It is included on this list due to alterations to windows and a very large de facto addition.



107 S 6th Ave • 5ST.1747

1895 • Little is known about this building. The early construction date is somewhat at odds with the window style, implying alterations in the 1940s. It is slated for demolition.



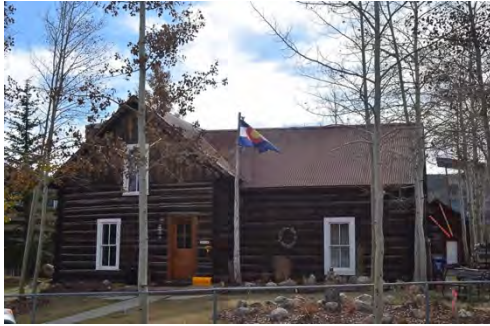
414 S 414 Ave • 5ST.1749

1910 • This house is among a handful of houses of similar construction date that represents a higher style house that is popular in many mining towns, but is not well represented in Frisco. Though relocated to this site, it retains much of its original material.



201 Galena St • 5ST.1750

1890 • This house began as a simple rectangular plan with a front gable, typical of houses from this period in Frisco. Though the rambling additions obscure this fact, original windows remain. This building could be restored to a more original condition.



216 Galena St • 5ST.1752 • *Kreamelmeyer*  
1910 • This house retains a high level of integrity through original materials and form. However the side wing is an addition that was done with such care, that it creates a false history for the building.

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318 Galena St • 5ST.1755 • *Morris House*  
1905 • This house is one of a group of small rectangular plan houses with a front gable roof, characteristic of early buildings in Frisco.

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313 Galena St • 5ST.1754 • *Giberson Barn*  
1904 • This barn has lost its historic house. It is being recognized as significant for its general level of integrity and for its association with the Giberson family who has deep roots in the Blue River basin.

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204 Main St • 5ST.1759 • *Lost Cajun*  
1952 • This log building with a low false front characterizes the type of construction that was typical in the mid-century as tourism began to become a trend in this area.





502 Main St • 5ST.1763 • Cannam Cabins

1935 • The two Cannam cabins are significant as examples of early tourist cabins. They are generally intact with some changes to windows and doors. They are part of an approved development so are likely to be preserved.



267 Marina Road • 5ST.1765 • Lund House

1910 • This house is one of a handful of houses from this period that represent styles that are common in mining towns, but rarer in Frisco. Its relocation out of a residential area and the surrounding deck seriously impact the integrity, but otherwise the materials, windows and design are generally intact.

**3. Buildings that have been substantially altered, but still retain some aspects of integrity:**



205 N 3rd St • 5ST.1743 • *Linguist House*

1908 • This house was built by a long-term local family who also operated the Frisco Hotel. In this case, the original house was a simple rectangle with a front gable roof. The addition of decorative elements, replacement of windows, relocation of the front door and a large addition, all have a substantial impact on the integrity.



212 S 6th St • 5ST.1748

1935 • This log building is characteristic of several rustic buildings found in the Frisco townsite. In this case the roof alteration has

the greatest impact on the integrity of the building.



212 Galena St • 5ST.1751 • *Mumford House*  
1880s • This building began as a simple front gable house with a rectangular plan. It's history is well documented, but the side wing addition, window alterations, material replacement, etc have all had a significant impact on integrity. In its original form it was part of a group of simple rectangular houses.



113 Granite St • 5ST.1757 • *Wiley House*  
1910 • This house has been relocated from Old Dillon. It does retain some original materials, but has an addition and other material replacement.



306 Galena St • 5ST.1753 • *Mary Ruth House*  
1905 • This is an example of the small rectangular plan house with a front gable that was typical in Frisco. As part of a Town redevelopment, the building was relocated for use as an employee dwelling unit. Though it retains its form and window/door pattern, the replacement of materials has had a significant impact on integrity.



208 Main St • 5ST.1761 • *Moose Jaw*  
1954 • This building originated in Old Dillon and likely experienced several alterations upon arriving in Frisco. The false front is not likely original and creates a false sense of history.





300 Main St • 5ST. 1753 • *Frisko Town Hall*  
1899 • This false front building was built as Frisco's Town Hall during a period when new money was flowing into town during a mining revival. Some original materials exist but design changes have altered the original character.

#### ***4. Buildings that retain little or no integrity***



121 E Main St • 5ST.1759 • *Log Cabin Cafe*  
1930s • The Log Cabin Café is a long-standing business in Frisco. Despite that, the original historic building has been completely subsumed by alterations and additions. No aspect of integrity remains.



301 Main • 5ST.1762

1944 • This log building may have at one time had a false front, but the existing false front is not original, creating a false sense of history. Its position in a relatively new development may make it less likely to be threatened by surrounding development at this time.



321 • 5ST.282 • *Frisko Hotel*

1880 • The Frisco Hotel (Lodge) has a long history serving visitors to the Town. Unfortunately, the building has been so heavily altered many times, that it no longer recalls its historic character. It began as a substantial false front building, using typical historic materials and design. All these characteristics have been lost.

### ***Specific Recommendations***

1. The Town of Frisco has accomplished some preservation through acquisition and the historic overlay zoning program. These have had mixed results and sometimes led to inconsistent decision making.

The Town Board and the community need to answer the following questions:

**A. Is there a desire to preserve buildings that are privately owned in the townsite?**

**B. What sort of preservation program suits Frisco?**

Once the town has an approach to preservation, assuming there is some interest in proceeding, the next discussion should center on what the community is willing to give landowners in exchange for the appropriate preservation of a historic building. Most preservation programs include some sort of benefits, whether they are variances, development related bonuses, or other zoning advantages.

Finally, the Town can begin to look at its specific buildings and at what point does a loss of integrity make a building in eligible for the preservation benefits. The recommendations in the section above are intended as a framework to begin to this discussion and to present a possible list that

informs the last question. *Note: Though this recommendation is presented in a step-by-step format, it is not that clear cut.*

2. Outreach to the community through education is essential to the development of a preservation program. The Town should make active outreach a part of the preservation discussion.

3. Appropriate preservation of Town owned buildings can set an example for private property owners. The Town should act on the buildings that they own as the preservation program moves forward.

4. The community has a strong Historic Park and Museum program. This resource is invaluable for the community and should be supported. Oral histories, photo collections and published materials were essential for the completion of this work.

5. Frisco has several significant outbuildings, particularly along the Galena Alley. In some cases these outbuildings are included in surveyed sites, in some cases not. Part of the preservation discussion should recognize these outbuildings as an important part of Frisco's built environment.

6. This survey included several buildings that are part of a redevelopment plan that has been approved for the 500 block of Main Street.

The plan does respect the Cannam Cabins and the Blacksmith's. Several other historic buildings are slated for demolition. A reevaluation of the site should be conducted once project construction is complete. Taking into account the impacts to the State Register Staley Rouse House (5ST.1074) and the National Register Wildhack Grocery (5ST.326).

*draft*

*MAPS*

Town of Frisco Regional Map

Town of Frisco All Sites Survey Map

Frisco and the Region

Map of Relocated Historic Buildings

*APPENDIX A*

Buildings In Chronological Order

### ***Buildings in Chronological Order***

Following are the buildings included in this survey in chronological order. They are listed by address, with the historic or current name indicated.

#### **1880**



321 Main Street • 5ST.282 • Frisco Lodge



321 Main Street • 5ST.282 • Original Frisco Hotel

#### **1880s**



212 Galena St • 5ST.1751 • Mumford House



420 Galena Street • 5ST.1756 • Yellow House

#### **1890**



201 Galena St • 5ST.1750



1895



107 S 6th Ave • 5ST.1747

1900



117 Granite • 5ST.1758

1898



Excelsior • 5ST.1766 • *Excelsior Office*

1904



313 Galena St • 5ST.1754 • *Giberson Barn*

1899



300 Main St • 5ST. 1753 • *Frisko Town Hall*

1905



306 Galena St • 5ST.1753 • *Mary Ruth House*

draft

1905



318 Galena St • 5ST.1755 • *Morris House*

1910



216 Galena St • 5ST.1752 • *Kreamelmeyer*

1908



205 N 3rd St • 5ST.1743 • *Linguist House*



113 Granite St • 5ST.1757 • *Wiley House*

1910



414 S 414 Ave • 5ST.1749



267 Marina Road • 5ST.1765 • *Lund House*



1911



120 N 4th Ave • 5ST.1744 • *Susie Thompson*

1935



212 S 6th St • 5ST.1748

1920



502 Main St • 5ST.1764 • *Blacksmith*



502 Main St • 5ST.1763 • *Cannam Cabins*

1930s



121 E Main St • 5ST.1759 • *Log Cabin Cafe*

1938



116 N 5th Ave • 5ST.1746 • *Deming Cabin*

draft

1938



112 N 5th Ave • 5ST.1745 • *Deming Cabin*

1954



208 Main St • 5ST.1761 • *Moose Jaw*

1944



301 Main St • 5ST.1762

1952



204 Main St • 5ST.1759 • *Lost Cajun*

draft

*APPENDIX B*

Survey Sites - Sorted by state Id number - with National Register Evaluation

Survey Sites - Sorted by Street Address

*draft*

Buildings Grouped by Integrity							
Group 1 • Buildings that should be considered for a local landmark program							
	5ST.1756	420.GAL	420		Galena St	1880s	Yellow House or Pine Lodge
	5ST.1744	120.NFTH	120	N	4th Ave	1911	Susie Thompson House
	5ST.1746	116.NFIF	116	N	5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins
	5ST.1764	502b.MAI	502b		Main St	1920s	Blacksmith Shop
	5ST.1766	EXELS			In Storage	1898	Excelsior Mine Office
	5ST.1758	117.GRA	117		Granite St	1900s	
Group 2 • Buildings that have some alterations but should still be considered for a local landmark program							
	5ST.1745	112.NFIF	112	N	5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins
	5ST.1747	107.SSX	107	S	6th Ave	1895	
	5ST.1749	414.SEI	414	S	8th Ave	1910	
	5ST.1750	201.GAL	201		Galena St	1890	
	5ST.1752	216.GAL	216		Galena St	1910	Kreamelmeyer
	5ST.1754	313.GAL	313		Galena St	1904	Giberson Barn
	5ST.1755	318.GAL	318		Galena St	1905	Morris House
	5ST.1760	204.MAI	204		Main St	1952	Lost Cajun
	5ST.1763	502a.MAI	502a		Main St	1935	Cannam Cabins
	5ST.1765	267.MAR	267		Marina Road	1910	Lund House
Group 3 • Buildings that have been substantially altered, but still retain some aspects of integrity							
	5ST.1743	205.NTHD	205	N	3rd Ave	1908	Linguist House
	5ST.1748	212.SSX	212	S	6th Ave	1935	
	5ST.1751	212.GAL	212		Galena St	1880s	Mumford House
	5ST.1757	113.GRA	113		Granite St	1910	Wiley House
	5ST.1753	306.GAL	306		Galena St	1905	Mary Ruth House
	5ST.1761	208.MAI	208		Main St	1954	Moose Jaw Café
	5ST.1073	300.EMAI	300	E	Main St	1899	Historic Frisco Town Hall
Group 4 • Buildings that retain little or no integrity							
	5ST.1759	121.EMAI	121	E	Main St	1930s	Log Cabin Café
	5ST.1762	301.MAI	301		Main St	1944	
	5ST.282	321.EMAI	321	E	Main St	1880	Frisco Hotel

draft



# Survey Sites by Age

seq	State ID	Temp ID	Address			Construction Date	Historic or Current Name
			#		Name		
1	5ST.282	321.EMAI	321	E	Main St	1880	Frisco Hotel
2	5ST.1751	212.GAL	212		Galena St	1880s	Mumford House
3	5ST.1756	420.GAL	420		Galena St	1880s	Yellow House or Pine Lodge
4	5ST.1750	201.GAL	201		Galena St	1890	
5	5ST.1747	107.SSX	107	S	6th Ave	1895	
6	5ST.1766	EXELS			In Storage	1898	Excelsior Mine Office
7	5ST.1073	300.EMAI	300	E	Main St	1899	Historic Frisco Town Hall
8	5ST.1758	117.GRA	117		Granite St	1900s	
9	5ST.1754	313.GAL	313		Galena St	1904	Giberson Barn
10	5ST.1753	306.GAL	306		Galena St	1905	Mary Ruth House
11	5ST.1755	318.GAL	318		Galena St	1905	Morris House
12	5ST.1743	205.NTHD	205	N	3rd Ave	1908	Linquist House
13	5ST.1749	414.SEI	414	S	8th Ave	1910	
14	5ST.1752	216.GAL	216		Galena St	1910	Kreamelmeyer
15	5ST.1757	113.GRA	113		Granite St	1910	Wiley House
16	5ST.1765	267.MAR	267		Marina Road	1910	Lund House
17	5ST.1744	120.NFTH	120	N	4th Ave	1911	Susie Thompson House
18	5ST.1764	502b.MAI	502b		Main St	1920s	Blacksmith Shop
19	5ST.1759	121.EMAI	121	E	Main St	1930s	Log Cabin Café
20	5ST.1748	212.SSX	212	S	6th Ave	1935	
21	5ST.1763	502a.MAI	502a		Main St	1935	Cannam Cabins
22	5ST.1745	112.NFIF	112	N	5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins
23	5ST.1746	116.NFIF	116	N	5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins
24	5ST.1762	301.MAI	301		Main St	1944	
25	5ST.1760	204.MAI	204		Main St	1952	Lost Cajun
26	5ST.1761	208.MAI	208		Main St	1954	Moose Jaw Café

draft

# National Register Evaluation

seq	State ID	Temp ID	Address		Construction Date	Historic or Current Name		NR Individual		NR District		Local Landmark*
			#	Name				yes	no	yes	no	
1	5ST.1743	205.NTHD	205	N 3rd Ave	1908	Linquist House			X		X	
2	5ST.1744	120.NFTH	120	N 4th Ave	1911	Susie Thompson House			X		X	
3	5ST.1745	112.NFIF	112	N 5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins			X		X	*
4	5ST.1746	116.NFIF	116	N 5th Ave	1938	Deming Cabins			X		X	
5	5ST.1747	107.SSX	107	S 6th Ave	1895				X		X	
6	5ST.1748	212.SSX	212	S 6th Ave	1935				X		X	
7	5ST.1749	414.SEI	414	S 8th Ave	1910				X		X	
8	5ST.1750	201.GAL	201	Galena St	1890				X		X	
9	5ST.1751	212.GAL	212	Galena St	1880s	Mumford House			X		X	
10	5ST.1752	216.GAL	216	Galena St	1910				X		X	
11	5ST.1753	306.GAL	306	Galena St	1905	Mary Ruth House			X		X	*
12	5ST.1754	313.GAL	313	Galena St	1904	Giberson Barn			X		X	
13	5ST.1755	318.GAL	318	Galena St	1905	Morris House			X		X	
14	5ST.1756	420.GAL	420	Galena St	1880s	Yellow House or Pine Lodge			X		X	
15	5ST.1757	113.GRA	113	Granite St	1910	Wiley House			X		X	
16	5ST.1758	117.GRA	117	Granite St	1900s				X		X	
17	5ST.1759	121.EMAI	121	E Main St	1930s	Log Cabin Café			X		X	
18	5ST.1760	204.MAI	204	Main St	1952	Lost Cajun			X		X	
19	5ST.1761	208.MAI	208	Main St	1954	Moose Jaw Café			X		X	
20	5ST.1762	301.MAI	301	Main St	1944				X		X	
21	5ST.1763	502a.MAI	502a	Main St	1935	Cannam Cabins			X		X	*
22	5ST.1764	502b.MAI	502b	Main St	1920s	Blacksmith Shop			X		X	*
23	5ST.1765	267.MAR	267	Marina Road	1910	Lund House			X		X	
24	5ST.1766	EXELS		In Storage	1898	Excelsior Mine Office			X		X	
25	5ST.1073	300.EMAI	300	E Main St	1899	Frisco Town Hall			X		X	
26	5ST.282	321.EMAI	321	E Main St	1880	Frisco Hotel			X		X	

draft



*APPENDIX C*

Bibliography