PROFITING from the PEAK

Landscape and Liberty in Colorado Springs

John Harner

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COVER ILLUSTRATIONS. *Front, clockwise from top:* Sheepherding, looking south from Templeton Gap toward Colorado Springs, 1885, painting by Charles Craig; promotional brochure from the Manitou and Pikes Peak Railway, circa 1900; postcard of the Broadmoor Hotel; Chamber of Commerce promotional materials, circa 1925. *Back:* Postcard of the second Antlers Hotel. All illustrations from Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

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Preface

When a place speaks to you, you should listen. I have now spent twenty-three years listening to Colorado Springs, trying to hear, decipher, interpret, and understand the clues this city yields to anyone willing to pay attention to its landscape, its history, its daily activities, and its people. Colorado Springs speaks to me; it is now time I try to put that voice to paper.

This book seeks to understand the events and socioeconomic conditions that shape contemporary Colorado Springs and the greater Pikes Peak Region, and then convey that to the reader in a coherent story. It is a historical geography, an exploration into the ways that time and space work together to create a unique place. To understand Colorado Springs as a place, I have organized this book into thematic chapters that address major drivers of change, from development of water infrastructure that was vital to urban growth through other fundamental historical topics that shape the urban landscape and the local culture. I use maps, often with time-enabled data to show snapshots of change, along with historic landscape photos, sketches, advertisements, and other materials to document the evolving landscape. Deciphering clues visible in the contemporary built environment also helps us understand much of the story; then archival research in historical repositories fills in the gaps and orients the context under which change occurred.

What makes this place unique? What creates its sense of place, or the very essence of what Colorado Springs is all about? Capital accumulation has been

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a defining theme of the city from its very beginning, but while its founder and early leaders did generate enormous profits from control of regional industrialization, railroads, land sales, and extraction of coal and gold, wealth generation was founded and sustained by exploiting its environmental and cultural capital—the beauty, use, and shaping of its natural and built landscapes. In short, it has long profited from Pikes Peak and built an urban infrastructure to sustain that relationship. That has led me to focus on three dimensions to place throughout this book: the built landscape, the values of the people, and the nature-society relationships.

First, the creation of the built environment that we know today as Colorado Springs has been in the forefront of my mind as I poured through archival materials and as I go about my daily life. I seek to understand how the urban forms and spatial layout of the city came to be and how their intrinsic qualities help define the city today. Why does this city look the way it does? How do previous land uses affect what we see today? In turn, what do these observations tell us about the city's sense of place? The built environment reflects the prevailing social, economic, and cultural values that existed at the time it was constructed, thereby telling us a story about the conditions that motivated past actors and of those shaping the city today. One conclusion I draw from this research is the vital importance of the historic downtown Colorado Springs. The downtown brings people together. Its architecture and public spaces tell the city's story and project its image to the outside world. It is central to its place identity, and recent revitalizations of the downtown core continue to generate creative place making.

The second dimension I explore is the creation of the cultural values that have come to define the city. How do institutions, political and economic conditions, cultural movements, individual actors, and administrative policy create an urban personality? In turn, how has Colorado Springs influenced and affected other places in the state and nation? Since the material landscape interacts with the cultural environment in such a way that both shapes and informs each other, bringing these two avenues of exploration together seems the best way to distill a sense of place. A core theme that emerged from my research that defines this city is the persistent drive for liberty but specifically the freedom to conduct business and generate profits in a relatively unconstrained setting. This belief manifests itself most pervasively in what Mayor John Suthers calls a "small government" ethic. The city has been the forefront nationally in promoting a government agenda that is anti-regulatory, low tax, and limited. These policies shape the urban sprawl of the built landscape and mold the city's political culture. They also lend support for the military as an expression of freedom. The Rocky Mountain libertarian spirit is very much alive in Colorado Springs and has come to be a basis for the city's identity.

The third dimension to any place is the place setting, the physical geography of the site that shapes the natural world and sets parameters for the human

modifications to that world. The importance here is the profound relationship and connections between Pikes Peak, the mountain, and Colorado Springs, the city. Pikes Peak is the lone sentinel, an isolated fourteener abruptly rising from the Great Plains. The city was located at is base because of this proximity between mountain and plain. As each chapter evolved, the integral connections to the mountain became clear: it molds the climate that drove the health seekers; it provided the water for the early city; gold was extracted from its slopes; the trails, canyons, reservoirs, and ski slopes are the basis for tourism and the recreation economy; and its symbolism as America's Mountain provides inspiration for both liberty seekers and spiritualists. Pikes Peak is far more than just a marketing icon, but it has also shaped the city's identity from the start. The two are inseparable, and Colorado Springs continues to profit from the peak.

My hope with this book is to instill curiosity among readers, particularly Colorado Springs residents, so they pay attention to the landscape around them and ask meaningful questions about how this city came to be. As John Stilgoe has advised, "Enjoy the best-kept secret around—the ordinary, everyday landscape that rewards any explorer, that touches any explorer with magic."[1] With an enhanced understanding and appreciation for the unique identity of this place and the many ways that Colorado Springs influenced the state of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West, I hope that people will feel connected and their sense of place will shine.

Readers should be aware that as this project unfolded, it evolved from just this book into a related, digitally animated museum exhibit and web experience entitled *The Story of Us* at the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum. Created in collaboration with Tierra Plan, LLC, users can explore a rich variety of digital maps, spatial data layers, georeferenced historical photos, rich textual and graphical content, and physical artifacts. You can also explore online at http://www.cspmstoryofus.com.

The exhibit does not follow the format of this book; nor does it include the same content (though there is overlap). Rather, it provides yet another way to get to know this city at the base of Pikes Peak. Readers may wish to engage with the many avenues for self-paced exploration in *The Story of Us* as they read the chapters of this book.

As with any story of place, the interpretation of historical events that shape it are just that—an interpretation. There is no one truth, no exclusive hold on the "real" meanings of events, nor one way to tell the story. While I strive to remain true to facts, no doubt my personal biases and ways of imposing meaning onto data will show through. Others may disagree, but that is the point of work in the humanities—to raise more questions, open dialogue, and create debate about our human existence. My apologies in advance for any errors I make, and my thanks to you, the reader, for engaging in this narrative.

Profiting from the Peak

1

Grass

> I shall never forget my sudden sense of hopeless disappointment at the moment when I first looked on the town. It was a gray day in November. I had crossed the continent, ill, disheartened, to find a climate that would not kill. There stretched before me, to the east, a bleak, bare, unrelieved, desolate plain. There rose behind me, to the west, a dark range of mountains, snow-topped, rocky-walled, stern, cruel, relentless. Between lay the town—small, straight, new, treeless.
>
> —HELEN HUNT JACKSON, 1873

> A queer embryo-looking place it is, out on the bare Plains . . . To me no place could be more unattractive than Colorado Springs, from its utter treelessness.
>
> —ISABELLA BIRD, 1873[1]

The short grass of the semiarid, treeless, high plains most certainly would have appeared desolate to travelers accustomed to the lush deciduous hardwood forests of the eastern United States or Western Europe.[2] The site that would become Colorado Springs was no exception, as noted by the two prominent visitors quoted above who arrived at the infancy of the city (figure 1.1). To create place—a built environment with meaning to the residents that becomes a very part of their identity—takes time, vision, and commitment—not to mention access to capital, good marketing (even audacious boosterism), and both investors and settlers willing to take great risk. Despite the bleak descriptions from first impressions, Colorado Springs had one great advantage that assisted its founder, General William Jackson Palmer, to envision a great place. Looking east from the relatively flat mesa where the city was founded one would see the endless expanse of short grass plains described above, but one need merely turn around and face west to see the abrupt ascent of the Rocky Mountains, framed by the sheer wall of Cheyenne Mountain to the south, Monument Hill with the Black Forest extending along the northern horizon, and 14,115' Pikes Peak, now dubbed "America's Mountain," centered due west (figure 1.2). Two streams running from the mountains join at

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FIGURE 1.2. Sketch of Cheyenne Mountain, Pikes Peak, and the Rampart Range due west of Colorado Springs, as seen in 1873. The sketch is from Pulpit Rock, about five miles north of the downtown and adjacent to the campus of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. *Source*: Ferdinand V. Hayden, *Geological and Geographical Atlas of Colorado and Portions of Adjacent Territory* (Department of the Interior: United States Geological and Geographical Surveys of the Territories, 1877).

FIGURE 1.1. Surveyors laying out the original town site of Colorado Springs on the grassy mesa at the foot of Pikes Peak. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

the foot of the mesa, eight mineral springs burble from the ground at the base of the mountain in nearby Manitou, and the dramatic sedimentary rock formations of Garden of the Gods protrude upward at the rupture where plains contact mountains. Visualizing a setting for people to play, relax, and enjoy the bountiful splendor can be quite easy for contemporary Americans who have long assimilated the iconic grandeur of the Rocky Mountain West into the fabric of American culture. But to foresee a site of tranquility and comfort amidst the wild and harsh environment in 1871 required a rare vision, one that had to overcome traditional

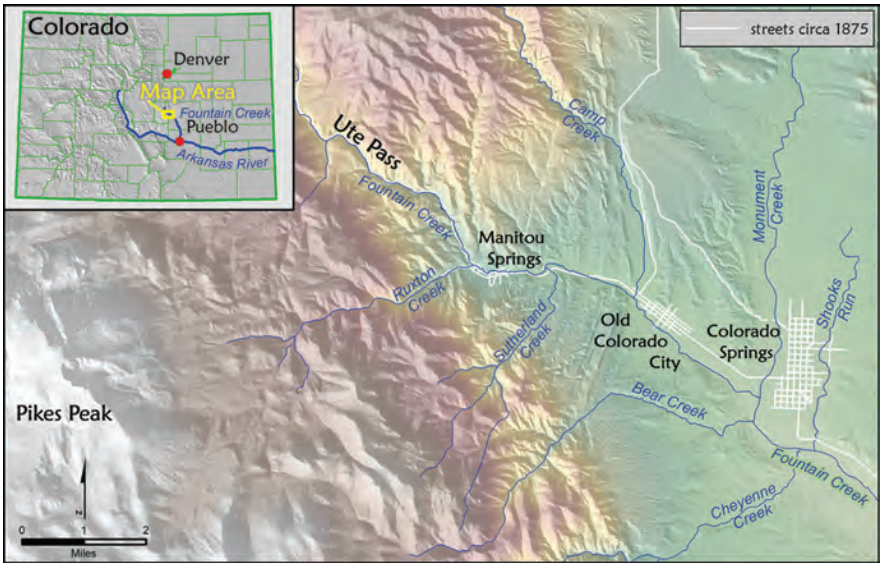

FIGURE 1.3. Colorado Springs, at the junction of Fountain and Monument Creeks, at the base of Pikes Peak. Ute Pass provides access to the mountains. Old Colorado City predated Colorado Springs, and Manitou Springs is nestled at the entrance to Ute Pass where the mineral springs burble from the ground. *Source*: Cartography by author.

views of aesthetics and beauty and one that, fortunately, William Jackson Palmer could see (figure 1.3).[3]

When Palmer first visited the region in the late 1860s and started dreaming of founding a new city, the Rocky Mountain West was still largely unknown—an idea more than a place, a frontier full of potential. Americans were made aware of the dramatic natural environments of the West by early explorer expeditions that included sketches and landscape paintings, and then from reports of gold rush speculators and other adventurers. But getting to the region was still a long and arduous task that required crossing the Great Plains, prohibiting firsthand

experience for most Americans. Based on his 1806 expedition, Zebulon Pike reported that the Great Plains would be a natural barrier to westward expansion, a region that would impede Americans from settling any farther west than the Mississippi Valley. From the 1820s through much of the nineteenth century, the Great Plains captured the American imagination as "The Great American Desert."[4] This epithet regularly appeared on maps, and was perhaps first coined in reports from the 1820 Stephen Long expedition by Dr. Edwin James. His report stated, "In regard to this extensive section of the country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence."[5] Like Pike, James also saw the Great Plains as a barrier to prevent westward movement of the restless Americans. Subsequent explorations reaffirmed this conceptualization. Once past the limit of forests while exploring up the Red River in 1852, Captain Randolph B. Marcy described the landscape as "barren and desolate wastes, where but few streams greet the eye of the traveler, and these are soon swallowed up by the thirsty sands over which they flow."[6]

Of course, the Plains were not a barren, uninhabited expanse; rather, they were extensively used for millennia and remained the home for thousands of people. Equally, neither General Palmer nor any other European was the first human to see and appreciate the spectacular setting that is now Colorado Springs. Paleo-Indian sites from the Clovis culture go back as far as 13,000 BCE, and there is mounting evidence that humans lived in the Americas well before that.[7] A recently excavated site on the campus of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs is likely over 9,000 years old.[8] The strip of land immediately to the east of Pikes Peak and the Colorado Rocky Mountain Front Range was particularly appealing. As a contact zone between plains and mountains, inhabitants could exploit different ecosystems to fit their needs. Rivers flowing from the mountains eroded this thin belt to a lower elevation than the plains a few dozen miles east, capturing more runoff and creating a slightly warmer and less windy shelter nestled against the mountains. Use of the region for hunting and habitation has deep roots, and it was the vast expanses of grassland that enabled buffalo and other big game to thrive and hence sustain the Plains Indian lifestyle.

We know that this meeting point of the plains and the mountains was a space used by many groups of people in the centuries prior to European arrival. The Native Americans of the region have a complex history of movement, alliances, intermarriage, trading, contestation, raiding and capture, and cultural exchange that goes far beyond the scope of this book.[9] This history also included a multicultural mix of miscegenation and cohabitation with early European and American explorers, perhaps exemplified by the Bents, traders who established the primary trading post along the Arkansas River in 1833. William Bent married Owl Woman, daughter of a Cheyenne chief, became accepted into the tribe, and raised five

children who negotiated both the Indian and Anglo worlds.[10] For the sake of simplification, suffice it to say that at the time of European expansion into the Pikes Peak Region, the Algonquin-speaking Cheyenne and Arapahoe were the most prevalent tribes on the plains in the Pikes Peak Region and north, arriving from the upper Midwest in the mid-to-late 1700s. The Comanches, Shoshone speakers who came from regions north and west of Colorado, had become the dominant force in the southern plains about a century earlier, in what is now Texas, but extending their domain up into southern Colorado and the Arkansas River Valley. They entered into alliances and collaboration with Kiowas, who migrated from the Yellowstone area and occupied the plains in present-day Oklahoma and into Kansas and Colorado. Numerous Apache tribes, Athabaskan speakers who include the Navajo, arrived from Canada by about 1500, and occupied parts of the plains but concentrated in New Mexico to the south.

Immediately prior to European settlement, the group most utilizing the resources of the local site that is now Colorado Springs were the Utes who would trek between mountain park hunting grounds to the west and the plains in regular movements, often wintering near Manitou Springs. Ute Pass is the name now given for the route from the mountains into Manitou Springs, through which now passes US Highway 24 and is also the source for the naming of El Paso County, for which Colorado Springs is the county seat. This corridor between mountains and plains follows a valley that Fountain Creek carved into geologic faults within the granite of the Pikes Peak massif. The mineral springs at Manitou had special significance for the Utes, and migratory settlements were long established among the rocks of Garden of the Gods.[11] Early settler accounts tell of Utes camping along Fountain Creek in 1866, at least 300 Utes camping in Garden of the Gods in 1875, and of Utes returning to camp along creeks and in the foothills long past the establishment of the city.[12]

Despite the long-established use of the region by Indigenous groups, to the early Americans the West was considered wide-open territory ripe for exploitation.[13] Images and descriptions of the region created popular myths for a young nation. George Ruxton spent time at Manitou Springs in 1847, later writing about the natural beauty, his encounters with Native Americans, and the abundance of game and carnivores, particularly wolves.[14] The West became the iconic symbol of freedom from the constraints of culture, class, tradition, government, and religion in the East that inhibited liberty and individual expression. Looming large in the American psyche was a vast open space of opportunity, particularly to claim and own land, and clearly it became the manifest destiny of America to conquer the wilderness and push the frontier all the way across the continent.

The drive to get rich and exploit western resources was nowhere more evident than in the early rushes to gold camps. California, of course, opened the popular imagination in 1849 to the riches of the West, a land reportedly where gold could

be simply picked up off the ground. Gold was next discovered in tributaries of the South Platte River by a party led by William Russell in 1858, setting the stage for the founding of Denver and a major gold boom in the Rocky Mountains to the immediate west. The "Pikes Peak or Bust" gold trekkers used the beacon of Pikes Peak as a guide in their movement west across the plains, but the mining activity actually took place some seventy miles north of Pikes Peak. Little activity occurred nearby. The first permanent town in the Pikes Peak Region was Colorado City along Fountain Creek, about two miles west of where Colorado Springs would be founded. A party of explorers from Kansas camped in 1858 near present Glen Eyrie, a cove at the mouth of a canyon where Camp Creek (named for this initial camp) exits from the mountains near the Garden of the Gods.[15] After failed attempts to establish Colorado City as a mining camp in 1858 and 1859, a group of settlers moved down from the Denver area in summer 1859 to establish a trade supply post for mining speculators traveling up Ute Pass into South Park in search of new riches. This group formed the "El Paso Claim Club" and began selling lots.[16] These actions were completely illegal, since the sellers made no efforts to first purchase the land from the public domain or file any land claims, let alone compensate local Native Americans, but their actions lent an air of legitimacy to unknowing buyers.

Although a route over Kenosha Pass into South Park was established from Denver to serve mountain mining camps, Ute Pass provided a competitive alternative. By the winter of 1859–1860, upwards of 100 log cabins had been built and the town reached the peak of its prosperity. In a not-too-uncommon, but nonetheless audacious feat of exaggerated boosterism, a professor Goldrick sent a letter from Colorado City to the *Missouri Democrat* newspaper on March 1, 1860, claiming:

> There are now some two hundred and forty fine, handsome-looking houses erected, and hundreds more in progress and contemplation. Some very large three-story stone houses and some very handsome gothic offices and dwellings are completing. The beautiful red rock quarries and cliffs, within a mile of the city, and also the ridges of beautiful white and brown sandstone and limestone quarries surrounding will furnish the greatest and cheapest opportunities for putting up the finest stores and warehouses, and the handsomest residences this side of Fifth Avenue, New York City.[17]

In reality, Colorado City was a collection of wooden buildings that had brief success up to 1860, then began to decline.

Travelers crossing the plains to Denver or anywhere on the Front Range from the east came via two principal routes, the northerly route along the South Platte or the southerly route along the Arkansas River (figure 1.4). The southern Arkansas River route followed the long-established Santa Fe Trail that connected Kansas City to New Mexico for much of the journey. Travelers would divert from the Santa Fe Trail and continue west on the Arkansas River to the site that would

FIGURE 1.4. Two principal routes to Colorado City, 1860: the northern route along the South Platte or the southern route along the Arkansas River. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

become the city of Pueblo, then travel up Fountain Creek, past Pikes Peak, and onward over Monument Divide to Denver.[18] This was the route that brought most people to Colorado City and Ute Pass. However, the Civil War slowed all movement west in 1861 and especially inhibited movement along the Arkansas River as Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas became contested grounds between North and South. More traffic was diverted to the South Platte route, feeding into the growing dominance of Denver and the solidification of routes from there into South Park and other mountain destinations. Although El Paso County was organized in 1861, and Colorado City even vied for recognition as the territorial capital in that year, a census in 1863 recorded only 300 people there. It then continued to dwindle to fewer than 100 houses so that by the official 1870 Census, there were only 81 residents in the city and only 987 in the entire county[19] (figure 1.5).

Into this setting came General William Jackson Palmer, a Civil War cavalry veteran from Philadelphia who worked after the war as secretary and treasurer for the Kansas Pacific Railroad. He worked to survey a route west from Kansas City to San Francisco, via New Mexico, to compete with the Union Pacific's more northerly route.[20] Palmer first came through the area in 1868 while surveying possible corridors. The Kansas Pacific eventually made it only to Denver (and then connected to the Union Pacific running through Wyoming to the West Coast) before funding dried up. Palmer still envisioned a more extensive railroad network, and knew much of the land from his Kansas Pacific surveys. To make this happen, he started his own railroad company to run north-south and connect the interior United States to Mexico, perhaps eventually to connect with Mexico City or Pacific ports such as Mazatlán or Guaymas. The Denver & Rio Grande (D&RG) Railroad was organized in autumn 1870.

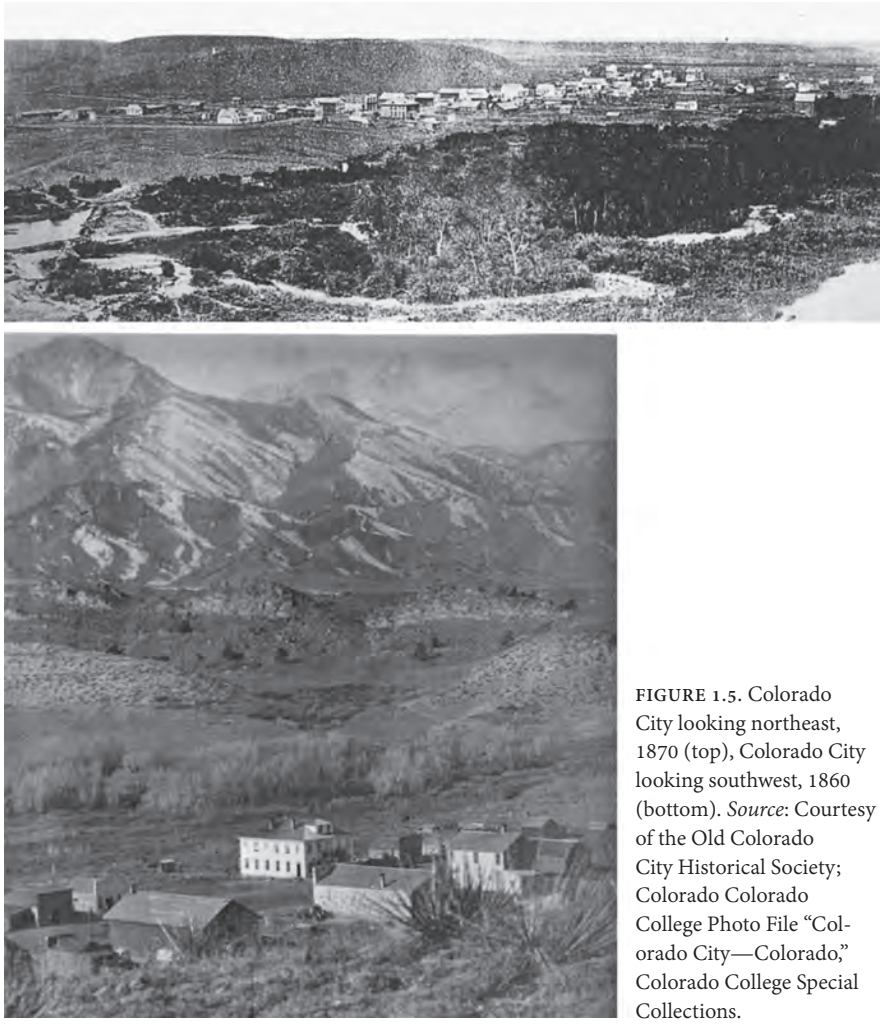

FIGURE 1.5. Colorado City looking northeast, 1870 (top), Colorado City looking southwest, 1860 (bottom). *Source*: Courtesy of the Old Colorado City Historical Society; Colorado Colorado College Photo File "Colorado City—Colorado," Colorado College Special Collections.

To run his new company, Palmer needed to live nearby. Plus, this would fulfill his dream of building a home in the West and help assimilate his new wife, Queen, to the rough-and-tumble settlement in an undeveloped frontier. Palmer devised a plan for a new town, one not based on the norms of mining, farming, or other resource exploitation so common in the West. His dream was for a resort, a getaway for eastern friends and investors—a place of refined culture in which to relax amidst the natural splendor of the Rocky Mountains. Palmer sought capital from investors in England, Philadelphia, and New York to create a land company, expecting to sell lots, create a model town, and get rich in the process.

And where to locate his new town? No better place could be found than the contact point between plains and mountains, and no more abrupt transition existed

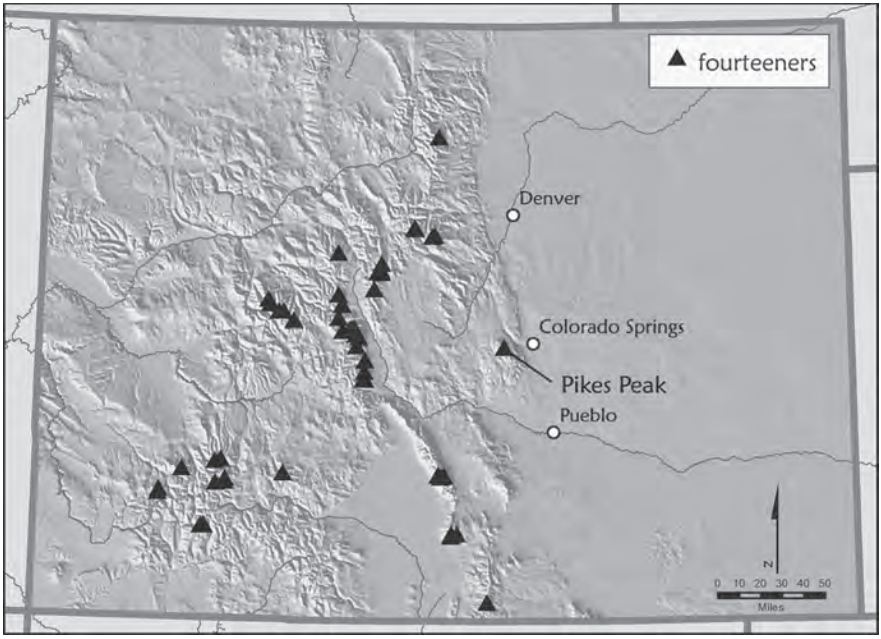

FIGURE 1.6. Mountain peaks in Colorado over 14,000 feet. Note how isolated Pikes Peak is from the rest and how close it is to the Front Range corridor. *Source*: Cartography by author.

than where Pikes Peak jutted up from the piedmont. Called the "Sun Mountain," or *Tava* by the Utes, Pikes Peak is a lone sentinel, an isolated "fourteener" farther east than the other mountains over 14,000 feet in Colorado, and standing above the plains as a clear marker for this new physiographic province, the Rocky Mountains. Its close proximity to the Colorado Front Range provides immediate access to this mountain wonderland (figure 1.6). Pikes Peak is the reason for the location of Colorado Springs. As described by author Helen Hunt Jackson, Colorado Springs would be a town "lying due east of the Great Mountains and west of the sun."[21] Palmer himself described the sensation one feels, after the arduous travel across the Great Plains, of reaching the base of the Rocky Mountains: "It is as though one had crossed the sea and reached the shores of a new country, full of novel attractions and advantages."[22]

Along with other investors, Palmer sought to capitalize on the landscape, to profit from the peak. They started the Colorado Springs Company that sold membership into the Fountain Colony. The colony model was a marketing strategy used in the 1870s to encourage settlers to move west and join in a cooperative endeavor where all would work together in the common cause of building a new town. In Colorado, Fort Collins, Greeley, Longmont, and Colorado Springs were all started as colonies. Some, like the Union Colony at Greeley, organized around the cooperative efforts of irrigated agriculture and settlers did work for

the common good. Others, like the Fountain Colony at Colorado Springs, were a colony in name only, a strategy used by the founders to sell lots. Organized in June 1871, Palmer called on influential local, territorial, and eastern friends to put claims and purchase on close to 10,000 acres.[23] The new city was "founded as an unabashed exercise in pure speculative capitalism"[24]

> The Town is a Colony Town, and the whole of the profits derived from the sale of the Colony Lots and Lands, are appropriated to public improvements. The land having been bought in large parcels at low rates, and being sold to colonists in small lots at advanced figures, many thousands of dollars will thus be devoted to the purposes named . . . Persons may become colonists by purchasing certificate of membership, which are of four grades, according to the privileges conveyed: $50, $75; $100, $200.[25]

Despite the claim that "the whole of the profits" would be reinvested in public improvements, the founders certainly expected to profit personally from land sales along the way. Capital accumulation has been a defining theme of the city from its very beginning. The original city plans laid out a two-square-mile area oriented with a classic grid pattern, though slightly offset from true north-south and east-west directions. The town would have broad streets, up to 140 feet wide for the avenues running north-south and 100 feet wide for the east-west streets. Legend has it that the excessive width was to ensure a horse and carriage could easily turn around without backward motion. These wide avenues still exist today in the original town area, though central medians were slowly added onto alternating avenues and streets after 1913.[26] The east-west running streets are generally named after rivers and creeks in the region that flow from the mountains, and the north-south avenues are named after western mountain ranges. The principal thoroughfare, Pikes Peak Avenue, was aligned looking directly at that mountain, and the first surveyor stake was laid on July 31, 1871, at the southeast corner of Pikes Peak and Cascade Avenues. A lot in town was reserved for each church denomination,[27] and Palmer donated much land for parks and schools, including the parcels for what would become Colorado College in 1874. There were strict temperance covenants for Fountain colonists, a business decision Palmer made to protect investment and create a lasting, sustainable urban model. The sale of any intoxicating liquor was considered a breach of contract and resulted in forfeiture of property.[28] Palmer stated,

> I regard the temperance clause at Colorado Springs as doubling the value of property, because people will want to come here for nice houses and they will want to raise families free from the temptation of liquor shops.[29]
>
> The aim was intensely practical—to create a habitable and successful town in the broadest sense of the word.[30]

Palmer was, as he put it,

> desiring to have a different sort of town, and to invite people of gentle breeding to come and make their homes here . . . My theory for this place is that it should be made the most attractive place for homes in the west—a place for schools, colleges, literature, science, first class newspapers, and everything that the above imply.[31]

Despite the arrival of the D&RG railroad from Denver on October 23, 1871, belief in the success of this investment again took vision and dedication; by November 1871, there were only twelve inhabited houses and a number of shacks and tents.[32] Geographer Curt Poulton described the site of the original town plat as "the flattest, driest, least interesting piece of real estate imaginable . . . the setting was beautiful, but the place itself was unremittingly plain and dry."[33] Rose Kingsley, A British friend of the Palmers and sister of Maurice, an initial investor in the town, remembered first arriving to Colorado Springs in November 1871, shortly after its founding:

> "There's the city," said M., pointing eastward; and I will confess that a feeling something like dismay crept over me when I followed his hand with my eyes. All that I could see were a dozen wooden houses of various shapes and sizes, and a large unfinished hotel, standing along the top of a sandy rise. You may imagine Colorado Springs, as I did, to be in a sequestered valley, with bubbling fountains, green grass, and shady trees; but not a bit of it. Picture yourself a level, elevated plateau of greenish brown, without a single tree, sloping down about a quarter of a mile to the railroad track and Monument Creek (the Soda Springs being six miles off), and you have a pretty good idea of the town-site as it appeared in November 1871.[34]

Yet the colony was remarkably successful. After one year, there were 197 settlers invested in land, and by the second year in June 1873, there were about 400[35] (figure 1.7). The company directors did indeed invest much capital from land sales back into the colony. An irrigation canal was dug and provided water by November 1871, only four months after the city was founded. Within the first year 6,000 cottonwood trees were set out along the streets at twenty-five-foot intervals. The newly established newspaper, the *Gazette*, summed up the changes that had occurred within the first two years:

> The progress already made by the Town has been astonishingly rapid. Up to date—that is, writing less than eighteen months from the commencement of the enterprise—there have been 320 certificates of membership taken out, on most of which two locations have been made. The population, according to a recent enumeration taken by order of the town trustees, lacked only about a score of being 1,000, and is now fully that number.[36]

FIGURE 1.7. Colorado Springs Hotel and other first businesses along Cascade Avenue, 1871, looking northeast. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

By January 1873, there were two churches, with a third being built; two schools; a public auditorium; a bank; three hotels and numerous boardinghouses; a livery stable; the newspaper; and a telegraph and post office. Nascent industries included a saw mill, brick manufacturer, and a fruit cannery (figure 1.8). In a typical rant of boosterism, the *Gazette* stated, "The springs and the scenery combined are destined, of themselves, to build up a town of considerable size and importance. Here will be a place of resort—of almost unequaled attractions—known the world over"[37] (figure 1.9).

While Palmer's dream for a respite for "people of gentle breeding" came to fruition to some extent, not everybody could sit back and enjoy the good life without actually working. A ranching community grew around the town, taking advantage of the splendid natural grasslands. Since its founding in 1861, El Paso County was known as the largest raiser of sheep in the territory and state and later known for its cattle.[38] Census numbers show this grass-based economy continued to grow. In 1871, the county assessor counted over 5,000 cows and over 10,000 sheep, and by 1872 there were over 6,000 cows and 50,000 sheep[39] (figure 1.10). As the town grew, several dairy farms located nearby (an industry that grew rapidly as tuberculosis patients sought milk for recovery and strength). Over fourteen lumber mills sprouted to supply local construction demands and to export to the Denver market. Even neighboring Colorado City finally grew into its potential as

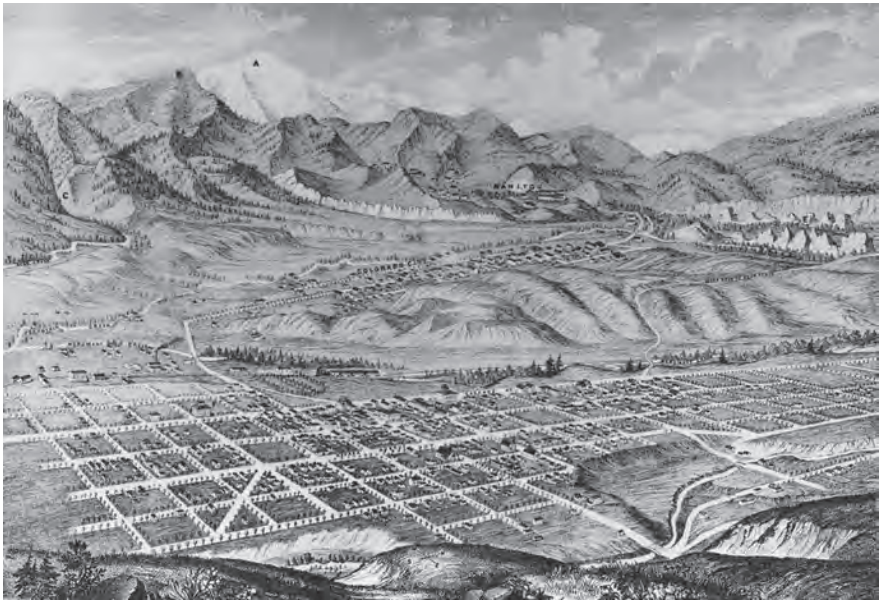

FIGURE 1.8. 1874 Birds-eye view of Colorado Springs. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

a freight supplier; in 1872 county commissioners bonded the county for $15,000 to construct wagon road up Ute Pass (figure 1.11). The result was so successful that that by 1873 local outfitters had to subcontract out for more mule teams to keep up with demand from traffic to Fairplay and other mining camps. In one week alone, 45,000 pounds of freight on twenty-two wagons with mule teams were sent to Park, Summit, and Lake Counties.[40] Locally produced beef and mutton were important commodities sent to feed workers in the mountain mining camps. Traffic grew greatly to supply Leadville up until the arrival of railroads to that mining camp in 1880.[41] Colorado Springs was incorporated in September 1872, and became the El Paso County Seat in March 1873. The city was indeed taking shape, as were its two neighbors Colorado City and Manitou Springs (figure 1.12). Even Helen Hunt Jackson, who stated her "hopeless disappointment" at first seeing the city in the quote introducing this chapter, in later years said "To-day that plain and those mountains are to me well-nigh the fairest spot on earth."[42]

However, Palmer envisioned neither a pastoral economy, nor a place for common laborers and teamster services.[43] For his dream resort to come true, he and others immediately recognized the need for a steady and abundant supply of water, the resource most lacking in his little utopian village. With only two small streams and no natural lakes Colorado Springs is one of the few western cities not located adjacent to a reliable and large water source. Generating a sufficient supply of water would preoccupy city leaders from the first years of the city up to the

FIGURE 1.9. Mosaic of the city from the top of the newly built High School, 1874, located on the southeast corner of Bijou Street and Cascade Avenue. Left side of the image is due north, the image panorama sweeps east, to the right side of the image that looks due south, along Cascade Avenue toward Cheyenne Mountain. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum individual images; mosaic by author.

FIGURE 1.10. Sheepherding, looking south from Templeton Gap toward Colorado Springs, 1885. Templeton Gap is a pass through Austin Bluffs north of Colorado Springs, one of the principal routes to Denver. Painting by Charles Craig. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

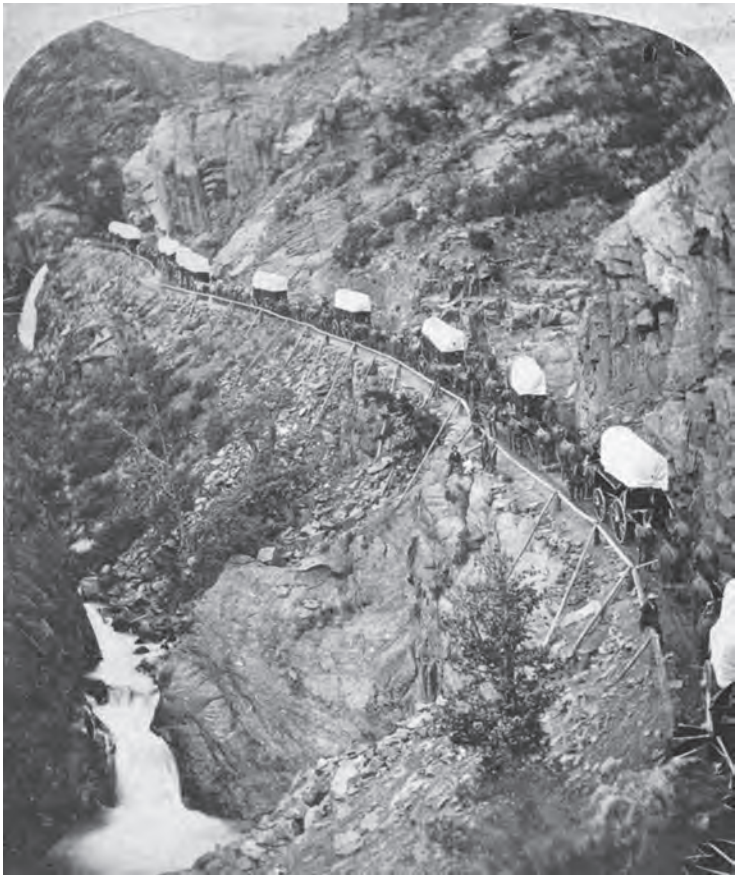

FIGURE 1.11. Mule-drawn wagons traveling up the Ute Pass road, circa 1875. *Source*: Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

FIGURE 1.12. Pikes Peak Avenue looking west, 1888. *Source*: *Colorado Springs Gazette* (1888), January 1, courtesy Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

present day. The source of that water, of course, could only be the mountains to the west, from which all streams emerged. City leaders wasted little time exploiting the geographical proximity to these water supplies.