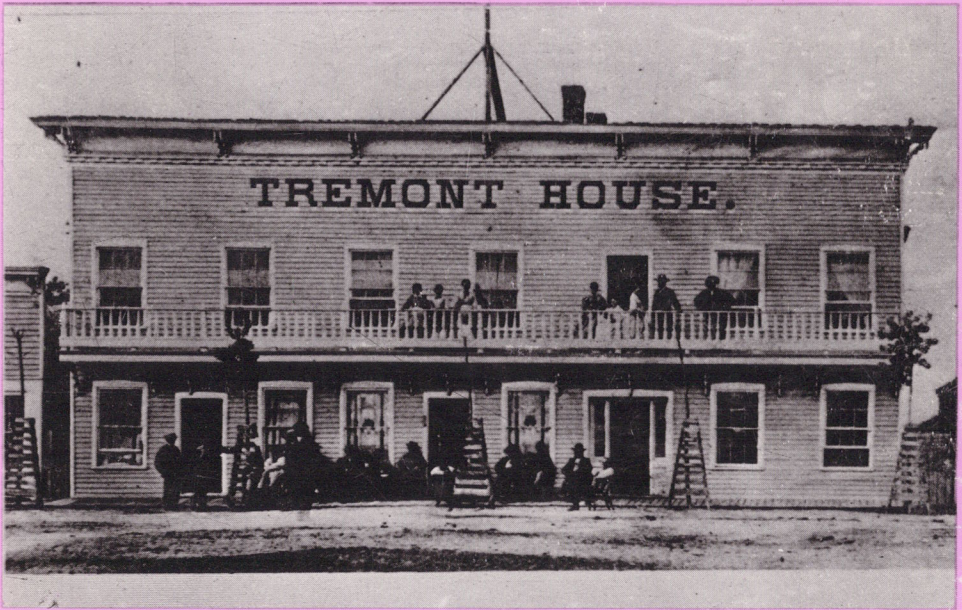


Exploring the Colorado Frontier



A Study in Historical Archaeology
at the Tremont House Hotel,
Lower Downtown Denver

by
Richard F. Carrillo and
Daniel A. Jepson

Published by
Colorado Department of Transportation
and the Federal Highway Administration

EXPLORING THE COLORADO FRONTIER

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A STUDY IN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE TREMONT HOUSE HOTEL, LOWER DOWNTOWN DENVER



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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FOREWORD

In 1988 and 1989, the remains of one of Denver's earliest and most noteworthy commercial establishments, the Tremont House Hotel, was excavated by archaeologists from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Located west of Cherry Creek, beneath a parking lot on the campus of the Auraria Higher Education Center, the intact archaeological remains of the Tremont House were threatened by a major road realignment project through the South Platte River valley. The hotel, constructed in 1859 and enlarged on several occasions thereafter, was one of the young city's premier hotels and restaurants, providing a touch of elegance and refinement on an otherwise harsh frontier. After several decades of decline at the end of the last century, however, the Tremont was demolished in about 1912 subsequent to a severe flood.

With the excavation of the Tremont House, the discipline of historical archaeology in Colorado has entered a new, higher-profile phase in its development. Yet the detailed archaeological investigation of historic sites in western North America is in its infancy, and many archaeologists trained to study prehistoric cultures do not possess the background necessary to adequately assess the integrity and significance of historical resources. As such, it has sometimes been difficult to present historical archaeology to the general public in an informative, relevant, and engaging format.

This publication summarizes a sizable technical report produced by the Colorado Department of Transportation Archaeological Unit in 1993 (Carrillo et al. 1993). The excavations conducted at the Tremont House have, we believe, helped to establish a foundation of strong support for historical archaeological studies within the professional archaeological

community in Colorado. Although certainly not the first excavation of a historic site in the region, the Tremont project was unique in the degree of governmental involvement and public interest it generated, as well as in the quantity and quality of data it produced about early urban settlement along the Front Range. We hope to reach a broad audience with this booklet—one perhaps unfamiliar with the alliance of documentary history and archaeology—and demonstrate the value and significance of this type of research. No longer poor cousin and handmaiden to prehistory, historical archaeology is emerging as an important and integral component within the realm of anthropology in the western United States.

Richard F. Carrillo and Daniel A. Jepson
Denver, Colorado
May 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals and organizations contributed to the successful completion of this project. The original excavation, laboratory analysis, and report writing phases of the Tremont House investigations were funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in conjunction with the CDOT. The preparation of this volume was financed by an Enhancement Program grant awarded to the CDOT Office of Environmental Services, under the auspices of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, also administered by FHWA. The Enhancement Program emphasizes and encourages awareness of environmentally responsive transportation issues in the public interest, of which archaeological research and planning is but one.

The authors wish to express their gratitude to the dozens of professional and avocational archaeologists and lay volunteers who participated in the Tremont House excavations and subsequent artifact analyses. The dedication exhibited by the field and laboratory personnel is the foundation upon which this publication is based. Kenneth (Kim) Gambrell and George Gerstle, Branch Manager and Section Head, respectively, in the CDOT Office of Environmental Services, are acknowledged for their unwavering support of this endeavor. Former CDOT Staff Archaeologist Debra Angulski provided the initial motivation and encouragement for a popular publication about the Tremont House. Colorado State Archaeologist Dr. Susan Collins is recognized for her continued advocacy of this project and historical archaeology in general.

Several professional and avocational archaeologists reviewed an earlier draft of this manuscript; their thoughtful comments were most useful and greatly appreciated. However,

any errors in or omissions from the manuscript are solely the responsibility of the authors. Reviewers included Jonathon Horn and Susan Chandler, Principal Investigator for historical archaeology and President, respectively, of Alpine Archaeological Consultants in Montrose, Colorado; Dr. William Buckles, director of archaeological investigations at the El Pueblo Museum and Professor Emeritus at the Department of Anthropology, University of Southern Colorado, Pueblo; O D Hand, CDOT Assistant Staff Archaeologist; and Don and Jeanne Tucker, avocational archaeologists affiliated with the Hisatsinom Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society, Cortez, Colorado.

Steven M. Kalasz, Staff Archaeologist at Centennial Archaeology, Inc., in Fort Collins, Colorado, conducted statistical manipulations on data recovered from the Tremont House, and this work generated many avenues of research. Dr. Jonathon Kent, Professor of Anthropology at Metropolitan State College, Denver, furnished the authors with valuable information about previous archaeological investigations conducted under his direction on the Auraria campus. Bruce McClelland, a member of the excavation field crew, rendered the excellent ceramic maker's mark illustrations contained herein. Artifact photographs were produced by former CDOT Staff Photographer Dave Grover. The historic photographs scattered throughout the document are provided by, and used with the permission of, the Colorado Historical Society.

Finally, Richard Carrillo would like to dedicate this volume to Stanley South of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology--"a kind and generous person who took the time to show me the way."

A note regarding bibliographic references: cumbersome footnotes are shunned here in favor of the *American Antiquity* style of referencing bibliographic sources, a standard in archaeological literature. When citing the work of others in the narrative, the author's last name and the date of publication appear in parentheses. A comprehensive reference list is provided at the end of the booklet, followed by suggestions for additional reading.

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1850s the infant communities of Denver City and Auraria were located near the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek in the newly-created Territory of Jefferson. The recent discovery of gold along nearby tributaries of the South Platte, as well as in the Rocky Mountains to the west, resulted in a sudden influx of white miners and assorted fortune-seekers to the region, which hitherto had been home almost exclusively to nomadic American Indians. Given their respective locations bordering Cherry Creek on the east and west, Denver City and Auraria--soon to be united as the city of Denver in Colorado Territory--quickly became thriving hubs of activity, serving both the hordes of transient miners as well as a growing resident population.

In response to the immediate need for temporary lodging and associated services, several hotels, boarding houses, and temporary apartments were erected in both communities. Among these was the Temperance Hotel, an Auraria boarding house constructed in the fall of 1859. As the name implies, this particular hostel catered to those wishing to escape the pervasive influence of liquor on the American western frontier. However, during a time when one of every three buildings in town contained a saloon, an inn which prohibited consumption of alcoholic beverages was bound to fail. Thus, within a year the Temperance Hotel became the Tremont House Hotel, in the process abandoning its teetotalling image (Figure 1).

The Tremont House soon became Denver's premier sleeping, dining, and entertainment establishment, and was the scene of many prominent social and political events. Over the next 15 years several different owners periodically renovated

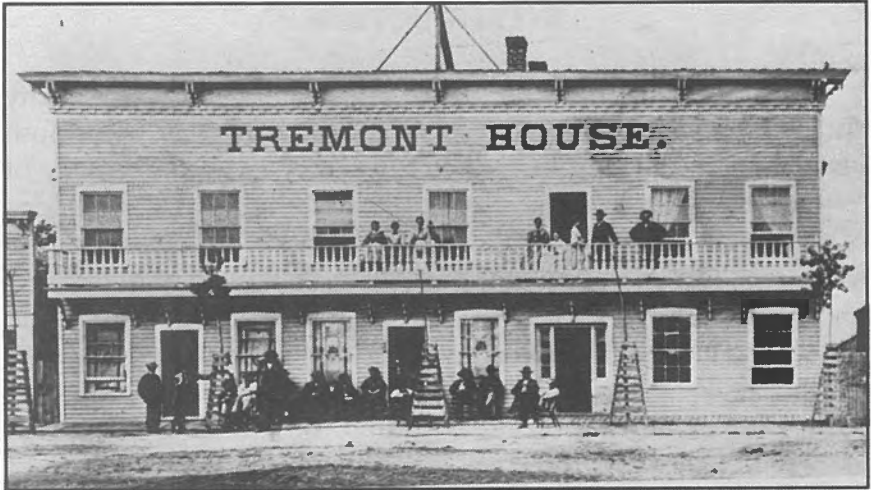


Figure 1 - The original Tremont House Hotel as it appeared in the early to mid-1860s. This is the only known close-up photograph of the hotel's facade. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

the interior and built structural additions, and the hotel remained one of the city's more noteworthy institutions. But as a result of demographic, residential, and commercial changes in the city's landscape, coupled with the hotel's unfortunate location in an area prone to repeated flooding, by the 1880s the Tremont had been relegated to second-tier status. As larger and more luxurious hotels were constructed on higher ground east of Cherry Creek, the Tremont House was absorbed into the city's burgeoning warehouse and railroad district. Although it continued to function as a boarding house and restaurant in its later years, the Tremont apparently catered almost exclusively to Denver's socially and economically underprivileged. Following a severe flood in 1912, the hotel was deemed unsafe, its superstructure razed, and its foundations buried.

During the ensuing decades the site of the Tremont was used primarily as a storage area for adjacent businesses; in the 1970s the entire block was paved with asphalt and served as a parking lot for nearby college campuses. As the 1980s drew to a close, the once acclaimed Tremont House had been all but forgotten, its remains concealed beneath a flourishing, modern city and its memory merely a footnote of local history. The Tremont, however, was soon to achieve new life and importance in the name of progress.

This publication documents investigations conducted by Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) archaeologists and historians at the Tremont House Hotel prior to a major roadway reconstruction project that threatened to obliterate the remains of the site. We hope to familiarize the reader not only with the results of the excavation project, but also with the process through which the site was discovered and evaluated for historical significance. Archaeologists were able to rescue valuable information from the hotel site by performing large-scale controlled excavations, and thereby retrieving important physical remnants of early Denver society. When studied in conjunction with historical records, the archaeological remains provide a dramatic visual—and tangible scientific—complement to our knowledge of life in Denver during the city's first fifty years.

WHAT IS HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY?

I am fascinated with the idea of winking history out of trash,...out of the things we take so utterly for granted that we never give them a thought. All we know of many of the very earliest cultures comes from what archaeologists have been able to deduce... Why shouldn't it work for modern cultures (Kernan 1995:18)?

When contemplating the discipline of archaeology, many people conjure images of the artifacts and cultures of celebrated societies (for example, Egypt during the time of the pharaohs, or the prehistoric Puebloans of the southwestern United States). While it is certainly true that a significant portion of archaeological method, theory, and research focuses on the interpretation of prehistoric cultures, this need not be—and in fact is not—always the case.

Archaeology is an element of anthropology, which is defined as the study of humans and human behavior. Rather than focusing strictly on the study of languages, social group behaviors and other less tangible evidence, however, archaeology attempts to formulate explanations and interpret behavior through the analysis of material remains created and used by past cultures, and to trace their differences or similarities through time. In this way, archaeologists provide information that emphasizes many elements of human history and the effect they have had in shaping present societies. But "past cultures" does not implicitly suggest study only of the period prior to the advent of modern written records, as many assume. On the contrary, archaeological investigations of historical sites are also pertinent to studies of subjects as diverse as environmental adaptations, settlement patterning,

industrialization, urbanization, and social organization and change. Historical archaeology, as noted by a practitioner,

is a vital element of this nation's historic preservation program. While originally more prevalent in the eastern parts of the [United States], historical archaeology has also been recognized as a vital topic of investigation and research in the western states. The archaeological remnants of historical communities, industrial sites, and ranches...represent a unique set of opportunities to study and better understand our earlier history. In addition, information contained in these sites may be of relevance to much larger questions dealing with human...adaptations (Hardesty 1986:1).

Historical archaeology attempts to integrate archaeological data (i.e., artifacts and other tangible evidence) with written records, and thereby obtain a more comprehensive overview of a cultural system. In this way, archaeologists, historians, architects, folklorists and others are better able to understand and interpret the historical record. Historical archaeology serves in part to supplement written history, and possesses the facility to provide alternative questions and explanations that may modify the way we view the past. For it is often "precisely the things we don't pay any attention to, the everyday implements—the toothbrushes and spoons and bottle tops, the givens" (Kernan 1995:18)—that can hold the clues to a particular society. Many scholars are in fact convinced that the study of historical sites is best approached by uniting specialists from several interrelated disciplines, resulting in a more thorough vision of our cultural history. This

strategy was implemented throughout many different phases of work at the Tremont House Hotel.

What Constitutes a Historical Archaeological Site?

An archaeological site can be described as a specific location where past human activities have left physical traces. A site can range in size and complexity from a few stone flakes produced by a prehistoric hunter while manufacturing an arrowhead, to an entire modern city, with many variations in between. In essence, sites consist of areas that exhibit evidence of patterned human activity which, in the case of historical archaeological localities such as the Tremont House, may include structures and structural remnants, or artifact concentrations or scatters suggesting patterned use of an area, such as a refuse dump. Types of artifacts frequently found in historic sites in the western United States consist of items such as whole or fragmentary glass bottles and pottery vessels, window glass, nails, brick fragments, butchered bones, coins, and buttons. Examples of all of these artifact types were recovered at the Tremont House, in addition to dozens of other varieties.

As a concept, therefore, an archaeological site is defined in relation to specific physical remains and an explicit set of scientific problems—essentially, what types of archaeological materials are present, and what questions are likely to be answered by unearthing and studying them? Because the Tremont House Hotel was constructed soon after Denver was founded and was used continuously during the ensuing fifty years, researchers believed that its remains could provide a veritable window to the past of Denver, the state of Colorado in general, and possibly a significant part of the urban settlement of the west.

Historical Archaeology In Denver

It is fortunate that the Tremont House foundations were not affected by the Auraria construction, but were protected by pavement. How ironic that one of Denver's many parking lots served a preservation purpose (Collins 1993)!

The practice of historical archaeology is fairly new to the western United States, and the discipline has only recently become a major focus within the realm of historic preservation. Historical archaeological investigations in Denver first began in the early 1970s, yet--with notable exceptions--they have been relatively limited both in scope and number since that time. The first documented historical archaeological project in the city was completed in 1971, and involved the excavation of a brick-lined shaft located on the grounds of the Forney Museum near the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek. Although a relatively small-scale endeavor, the project archaeologists determined that future scientific historical studies could provide a wealth of information about the earliest period of the city's existence. Demonstrating keen insight, they recommended in their final report that "the potential of historic archaeology in urban Denver should be pursued before early records are obliterated by construction..." (Gillio and Scott 1971:33).

In the early 1970s, construction of the new Auraria Higher Education Center west of Cherry Creek was eagerly anticipated. However, Colorado archaeologists expressed concerns about razing historic structures in the surrounding neighborhood. University of Colorado Professor Jack Smith approached the Denver Urban Renewal Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding the

potential for historical archaeology on the grounds of the new campus. Although he received the moral support of the Colorado Historical Society for this endeavor, the pertinent agencies were unwilling to pledge financial support to an archaeology project in advance of new construction (Mullen 1977). Colorado State Archaeologist Dr. Susan M. Collins, in addressing the Auraria neighborhood scenario, succinctly describes the general preservation mood of the period (Collins 1993:xix):

It should be noted...that this struggle was simultaneous with both the Colorado Archaeological Society's legislative campaign to create the State Archaeologist position in Colorado, and with Historic Denver's highly successful, but very difficult, effort to create the Ninth Street Historic District on the Auraria campus. It seems fair to say in retrospect that the community's organizational infrastructure was not ready for an intensive historical archaeology program in the early 1970s, when so much of early Denver's architecture--as well as buried cultural features and strata--was rapidly disappearing.

In the mid-1970s, then-Colorado State Archaeologist Bruce Rippeteau promoted several historical archaeological efforts in and around Denver. At Four Mile House, an early stage station on the Smoky Hill Trail four miles southeast of the state capitol, he encouraged and supported excavations financed by the City and County of Denver (Nissley 1979). Following these initial test excavations, several archaeologists affiliated with regional colleges and universities conducted excavations on the grounds of Four Mile Historic Park.

In the latter part of that decade central Denver finally saw its first historical archaeology project performed in compliance with the mandates established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, archaeologists with a private consulting firm monitored construction of a storm sewer system in what is now known as Lower Downtown.

Even after construction at the Auraria campus was completed, buried resources on remaining open portions of the property lured its archaeology faculty, who conducted field schools for student training. The first excavation was performed in 1981 by the University of Colorado at Denver in the area of the Tivoli Brewery, located to the southwest of the Tremont House (DeSart 1981). Subsequent excavations were undertaken at sites as diverse as the First German Presbyterian Church and the Hungarian Flour Mill, the latter located between 7th and 9th Streets and Wazee Street. General excavations on the campus have been on-going, albeit on a sporadic basis. Yet it was not until the excavation of the Tremont House Hotel that Denver witnessed a large-scale archaeological exploration of its early history.

DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE TREMONT HOUSE

In 1987, the Colorado Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the City and County of Denver, proposed to replace an outdated and crumbling section of roadway in downtown Denver. The road project entailed substantial construction and realignment along a portion of Speer Boulevard, a major traffic artery which spans the South Platte River and connects Interstate 25 to downtown Denver. In part, project plans called for replacement of the existing raised viaduct with a ground-level roadway slightly west of its original alignment, as well as for the addition of various aesthetic and safety improvements along the entire route.

As mandated by state and federal historic preservation laws (outlined below), research was conducted prior to the start of road construction to identify any significant historical and/or archaeological remains that might be located within the project corridor (Figure 2). These studies of the areas to be affected were initiated and completed far in advance of earth moving activities so that the improvement project was not delayed in any way. Research was conducted in several distinct phases, which included: (1) a walking, or "pedestrian," survey of the entire proposed construction corridor to identify sites, features (such as architectural remains), or artifacts on the ground surface; (2) preliminary historical records research and small-scale (or "test") archaeological excavations in areas identified during the survey as potentially containing important historical features; (3) additional library research and locality-specific test excavations (e.g., at the presumed site of the Tremont House Hotel); (4) assessing the significance of all identified sites with regard to criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places, which serves to protect and preserve important cultural

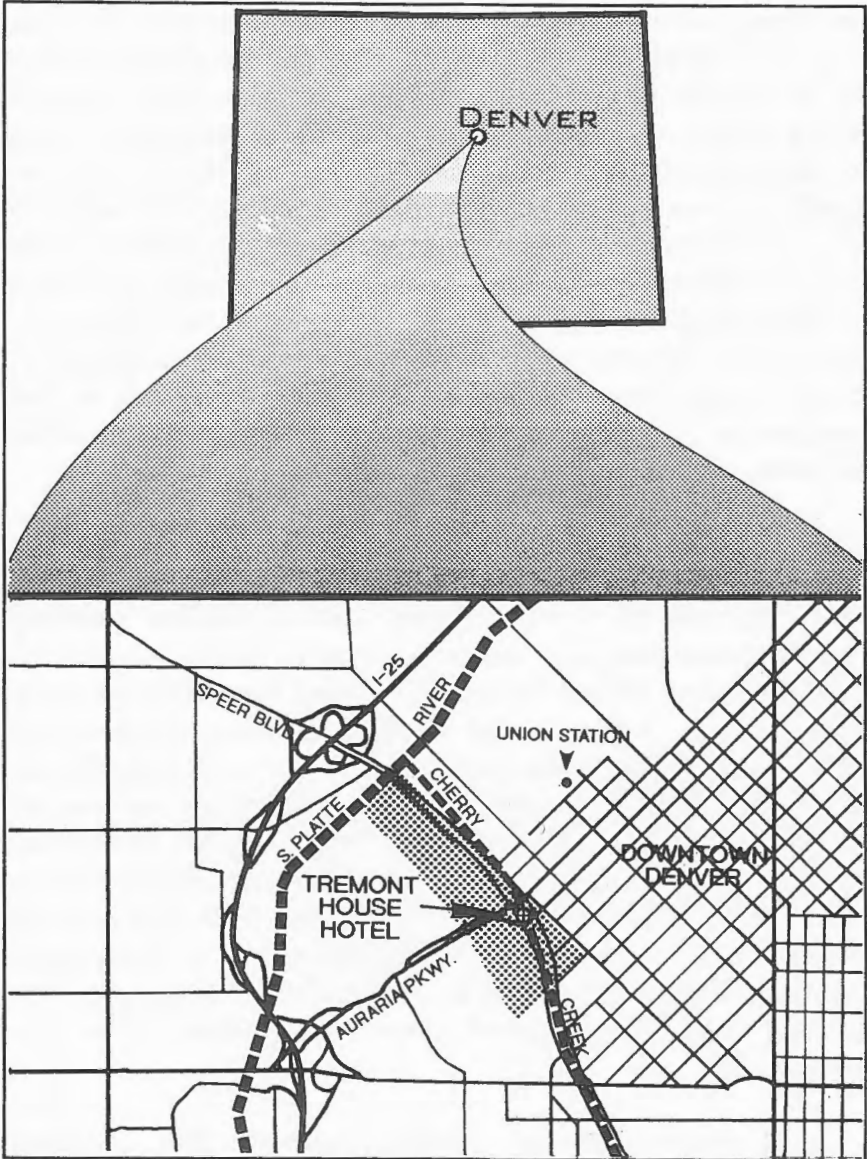


Figure 2 - The Speer Boulevard improvement project study corridor in downtown Denver (shaded), and the location of the Tremont House Hotel within the project area.

resources; and (5) the recovery of valuable information through large-scale archaeological excavations at any site determined to be historically significant, and which could not be avoided during construction. In the jargon of archaeological contracting and federal and state bureaucracy, recovery of information from significant sites that cannot be avoided is known as "mitigation of adverse effects through data retrieval." In essence, this means retrieval of valuable scientific information from an archaeological site through excavation prior to its destruction. Intact historical structures or features are often subjected to forms of documentation other than excavation, such as the completion of extensive architectural drawings, a historical narrative, or archival quality photography.

Initial investigations within the project area consisted of a general surface reconnaissance by CDOT archaeologists. This survey focused on identifying any surface artifacts resulting from past occupations in the area, including those of American Indian cultures known to have inhabited the region for over 10,000 years. Although the developed urban environment realistically precluded the presence of intact prehistoric Indian remains (such as stone or bone tools, grinding implements, or architectural remnants), these types of artifacts can sometimes be found in almost any area. However, no prehistoric sites or cultural materials were located. Thereafter, historical archival research and a historical archaeological survey of the project area were completed. It was hoped that by investigating these sources, some knowledge of historic occupations of the area would result.

It quickly became evident, however, that historical archaeological sites, represented by buried architectural remains and other features (such as privy pits, wells, and cisterns), would not necessarily be visible on the ground surface.

Because earlier buildings in the vicinity had been destroyed, many as a result of the 1912 flood, and much of the area had not been rebuilt, researchers believed that the potential for intact historical sites below the surface was good. Based primarily on the results of the walking survey, two areas within the project corridor were identified as possibly containing buried and undisturbed historical remains. Limited excavations in these areas revealed artifacts dating from the late nineteenth century, which in turn indicated that potentially significant historic sites might be present in the general vicinity.

Historical record searches identified the configuration of early Denver's streets and neighborhoods, and suggested that remains of the Tremont House Hotel might be present near the south end of the raised viaduct. Of particular importance in this search were nineteenth century documents such as *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Denver*, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, and other plan sketches of the city housed at the Colorado Historical Society (Figure 3). A painstakingly constructed scale diorama of 1860s Denver on display at the Historical Society Museum was also consulted (Figure 4).

As with many modern cities, Denver's facade has changed dramatically since its modest birth. In addition to the many structures that have disappeared over the years, numerous original streets no longer exist and/or have been replaced with contemporary thoroughfares, and even the channels of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River have been modified through repeated flooding and subsequent flood-protection measures implemented by the city. As such, the Sanborn maps, which began publication in Denver in 1887 and were updated periodically thereafter, were especially helpful; not only did they identify the general location of the Tremont House, they also distinguished the shape, size, building materials, and functions of various portions of the hotel through

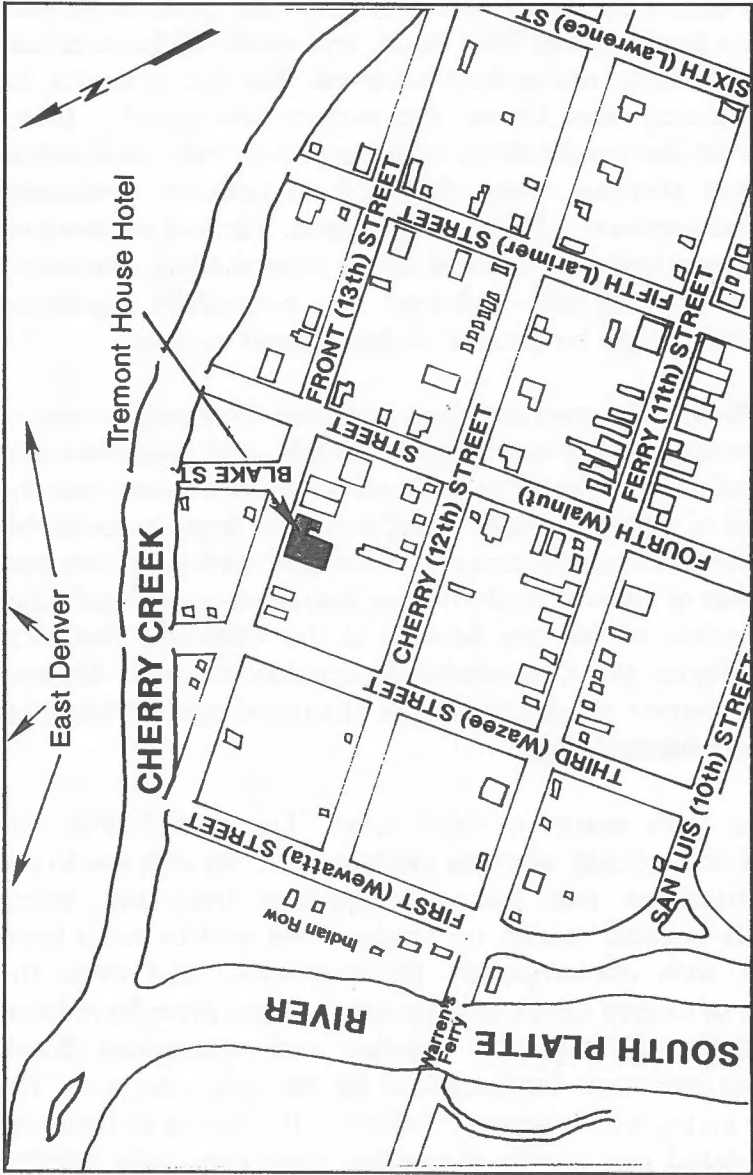


Figure 3 - Map of Auraria (West Denver) in 1860. The Tremont House was situated near the intersection of Front and Blake Streets, very near Cherry Creek. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

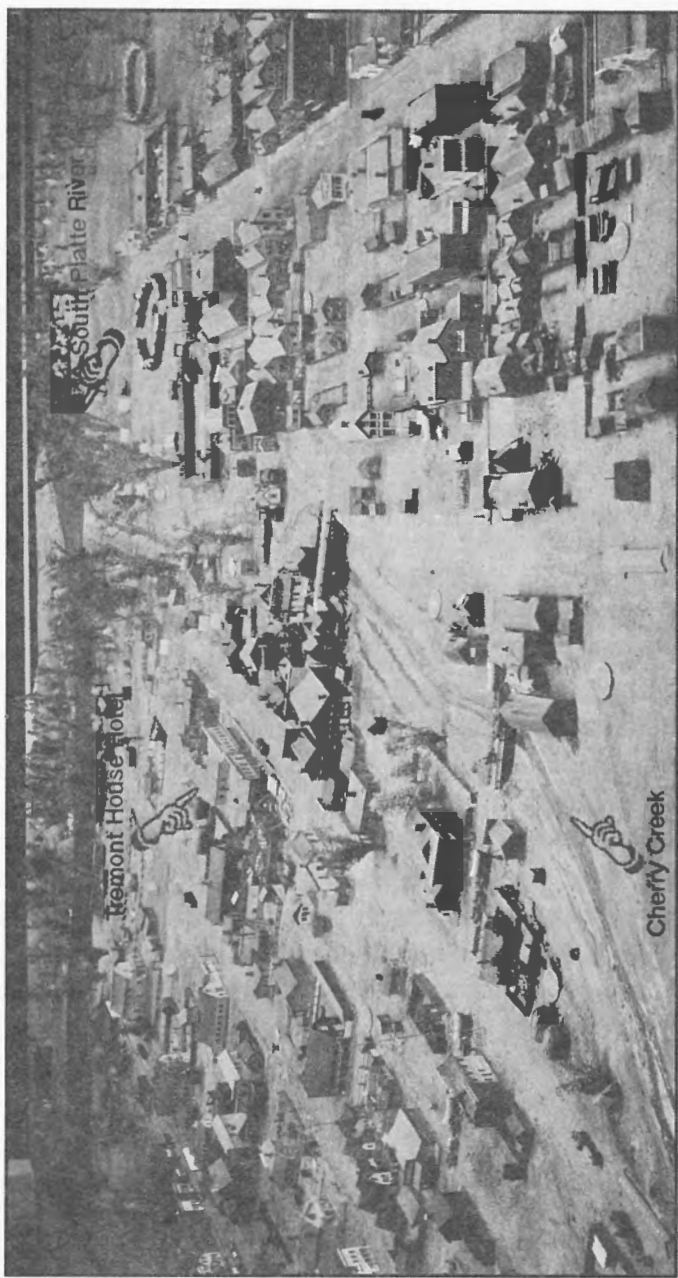


Figure 4 - Scale diorama of early 1860s Denver, looking northwest. The Tremont House faces Front (later 13th) Street, one block west of Cherry Creek. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

time (illustrating, for example, the locations of the saloon, kitchen, and parlor through the hotel's last two decades) (Figures 5 and 6). Rather than create new sketches for each structural alteration, modifications to the original bound versions of the Sanborn maps were sometimes made by pasting updates directly on the pages. As a result, it was possible for researchers to literally glimpse beneath later architectural revisions and view earlier layouts of the hotel.

The predicted site of the Tremont House lay under an asphalt parking lot owned and administered by the Auraria Higher Education Center, home to both the University of Colorado at Denver and Metropolitan State College. Historical records suggested that the hotel site--originally located on the west side of Front (later 13th) Street between Third (Wazee) and Fourth (Walnut) Streets--had apparently not been severely disturbed after the structure was torn down in 1912 or 1913. The area was paved and used as a parking lot in the 1970s, which protected the ruins. But the presence of an asphalt cover presented an obvious dilemma: would it be possible to search for intact historical remains beneath a parking surface used on an almost daily basis without actually removing the blacktop? Could preliminary archaeological investigations, and likely inconveniences that would result, be justified in light of the various unknowns? In an effort to identify and evaluate the site prior to the road construction project, it was essential that these issues be addressed promptly.

Ground-Penetrating Radar Study

The technology necessary to identify buried cultural features without the benefit of traditional archaeological excavations has existed since the 1940s. Known as "remote sensing," this process is based on nondestructive identification

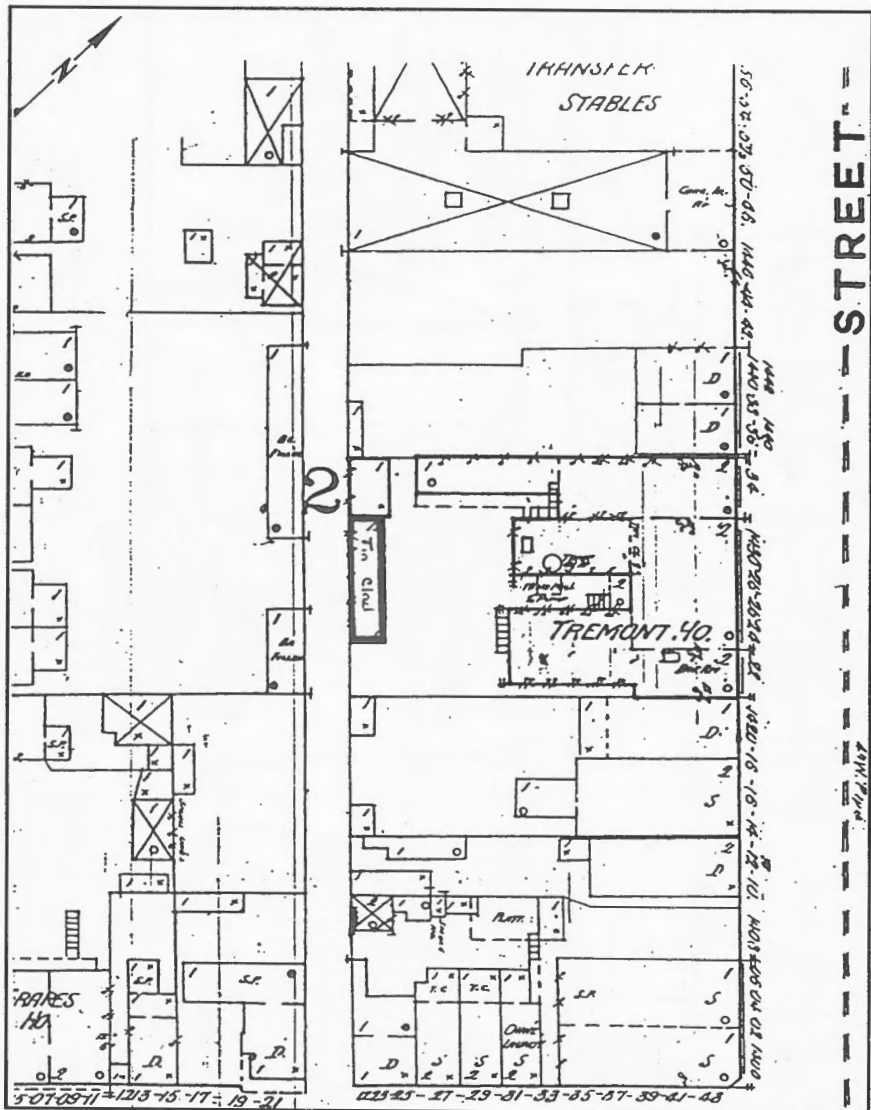


Figure 6 - The 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of the Tremont House Hotel. Note the structural modifications that occurred since the 1887 map was published (Figure 5).

of buried cultural features such as fire hearths or architectural remains. Although initially developed for the mining and petroleum industries early in this century, many remote sensing techniques are available to the archaeologist, and have become invaluable tools in preliminary site investigations.

One such technique that has gained both in popularity and reliability over the past decade is known as ground-penetrating radar (GPR), which involves the use of low frequency electromagnetic signals. When electromagnetic pulses are introduced into the ground through a surface transmitting antenna, radar energy is absorbed or reflected by buried materials depending primarily on their electrical properties. The approximate nature, shape and location of a buried cultural feature (such as a wall segment, for example), called an "anomaly," can be determined based on the magnitude and frequency of the received signal. The vertical depth of the anomaly can also be calculated, depending on the nature of the soil and other conditions.

In the fall of 1988, a GPR system was used at the presumed site of the Tremont House to test the accuracy of observations and conclusions made during the initial survey and records research the previous year. The primary mission of the GPR survey was to locate walls or other buried anomalies associated with the hotel prior to digging up the parking surface. As a result of this test, future excavation work could be planned for specific locations where the most important information was likely to be recovered. The test was conducted on a Sunday morning, when the parking lot was unoccupied (Figure 7). A square grid was established over the target area as a control for the investigation. As predicted, linear anomalies (interpreted as wall foundations) were identified that appeared



Figure 7 - Ground-penetrating radar test in progress. The towed sled contains transmitting and receiving antennae, which relay an image of buried soil strata and cultural features to a printer.

to be consistent with the historically documented shape and dimensions of the Tremont House Hotel (Figure 8). Several areas also seemed to indicate the presence of a possible basement complex.

Preliminary Excavations at the Tremont House

The ground-penetrating radar survey resulted in the identification of a probable early Denver historical site within the direct construction impact area of the road project. However, several stages in the complex scientific and administrative governmental process regarding the treatment of archaeological and historical resources remained to be

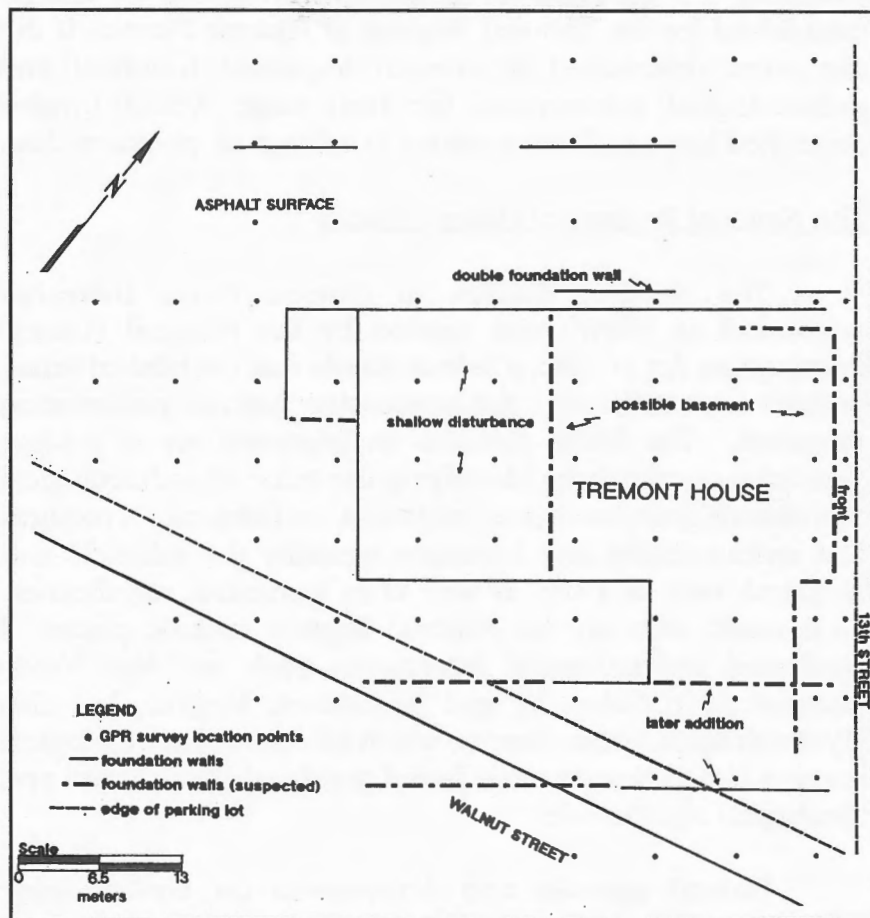


Figure 8 - Map of the Tremont House site showing the results of the ground-penetrating radar study. Note that wall segments are identical to those on the historic Sanborn maps (Figures 5 and 6).

completed before the road could be built over the site. The first stage involved partial exposure of the structure remains in order to verify actual architectural features and associated artifacts, and thereafter evaluate their condition and research potential. Based on this information, the second task entailed

assessing the significance of the site according to criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places. If the site were determined to contain important historical and archaeological information, the final stage would involve controlled large-scale excavations to salvage all pertinent data.

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (hereafter referenced as NRHP) was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, a federal statute that established broad policies and authorities for nationwide historic preservation programs. The NRHP presents an important set of guiding principles or criteria for identifying the value of archaeological and historic sites, structures, buildings, and objects. It requires that archaeologists and historians consider the scientific and historical merit of a site, as well as its humanistic significance. As a result, sites on the National Register include places of confirmed archaeological importance such as Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, and Jamestown, Virginia, but also Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, which exhibits no archaeological remains but possesses value based purely on its historical and ideological significance.

Federal agencies and departments (or entities using federal monies) are compelled to take into account the effects of their undertakings on districts, sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are included on, or eligible for, the NRHP. It is not necessary for a site to be enrolled on the Register in order for it to be worthy of protection under the law, however. Archaeological and historical sites are evaluated according to four criteria, and must meet the minimum standards of at least one in order to be eligible for preservation. Sites must:

- (a) be related to events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (b) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (c) bear a pattern of distinctive characteristics of historic, architectural, archaeological, engineering or cultural significance; and/or
- (d) have yielded or may in the future yield information important in history or prehistory.

These criteria are intended to provide formal recognition to all properties that have contributed to our rich cultural heritage, whether they are of recent or more distant (prehistoric) antiquity. The National Register is an incomplete, yet nonetheless major, listing of important and tangible elements of our past.

A more recent federal statute, the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, mandates that adverse impacts to significant sites (such as those resulting from road construction) be mitigated. In the case of archaeological sites threatened by federal actions (including the Speer viaduct project, which was partially funded with federal highway monies), mitigation often takes the form of excavation. Other types of recordation, such as photography and detailed architectural drawings, are conducted at historic sites containing above-ground features or objects.

Exposing Portions of the Tremont House

Small-scale excavations in areas of limited asphalt removal were completed in late December 1988 and early January 1989, while the college campuses were on holiday break and vehicles were absent from the parking lot. Two goals guided this phase of the archaeological investigations. The first involved an attempt to verify the existence of foundation walls and other buried features indicated by historical research and the ground-penetrating radar study. Based on this information the second task, which entailed assessing the historical significance of the site according to NRHP criteria, could then be accomplished.

Test excavations initially employed a backhoe to remove sections of the pavement that corresponded to potential wall segments identified by GPR. The excavations were monitored by an archaeologist trained to detect intact historical remains, who could guide the backhoe operator so that significant features were not destroyed. The tests confirmed that the GPR anomalies were indeed foundation remnants. The backhoe removed soil to a point immediately atop the walls, which were then exposed using trowels and whisk brooms to further define architectural details. Portions of 12 distinct walls were revealed using this technique (Figure 9). Historical artifacts directly associated with the hotel, including complete and fragmentary glass bottles and ceramic dishware, nails, animal bone, and other assorted commercial and domestic materials, were collected and cataloged as excavations continued.

In addition to the backhoe work, a square test excavation pit measuring two meters (about six-and-a-half feet) on a side was systematically excavated by hand. This was completed in order to define the depth and complexity of the



Figure 9 - A brick foundation wall beneath the asphalt surface exposed during test excavations.

site as a guide for future archaeological exploration, to obtain artifacts from intact settings, and to gather information related to soil stratigraphy.

The data obtained during this phase of the investigations helped to establish the relationships of various wall segments so that the basic architectural layout of the structure could be defined and systematically mapped. The tests exposed brick foundations in association with artifacts dating to the 1870s and 1880s and, based on the historically documented shape and dimensions of the hotel, confirmed that these remains were in fact part of the Tremont House. It was then evident that a substantial portion of the hotel remained intact beneath the asphalt parking surface.

Assessing the Historical Significance of the Tremont House Remains

Once the preliminary investigations were completed, the next step involved assessing the historical significance of the site according to National Register criteria, and subsequently determining the nature and extent of any additional archaeological research to be conducted. Each cultural resource recorded in Colorado is assigned a unique Smithsonian Institute alpha-numeric designation to differentiate it from the tens of thousands of other known sites in the state and throughout the nation. The Tremont House Hotel was given the number 5DV2954: the first digit refers to Colorado's alphabetized ranking (number 5) of all 50 states; "DV" indicates the county in which the site resides (Denver); and the last four numbers signify that it was the 2,954th cultural resource officially recorded in Denver County since record keeping began.

On the basis of data collected through historical research and test excavations, Department of Transportation archaeologists judged the Tremont House to be eligible for nomination to the NRHP according to Criterion D (has yielded or may in the future yield information important in history). A

recommendation to that effect was forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), an official of the Colorado Historical Society responsible for overseeing all aspects of cultural resources work performed in the state. After reviewing the evidence gathered by project scientists, the SHPO concurred with the CDOT assessment in early 1989. The site was thus eligible for protection under the law.

Whenever possible, archaeologists prefer to avoid disturbing significant sites and artifacts, leaving them permanently untouched and intact in their original setting. While the supply of interesting and important archaeological localities documenting a wide variety of early North American cultures may appear endless to some, this is of course untrue. Remains of prehistoric and historic cultures are finite and non-renewable, and once lost these vestiges of the past can never be duplicated or replaced. As such, it is imperative that we effectively manage and protect the fragile traces that remain of our collective heritage. And though it is impractical and unnecessary to save every site encountered, an accurate portrayal of the past will result only from study of a wide range of intact site types.

Archaeologists also must consider how destruction of an archaeological site affects those who claim an ancestral, spiritual, economic, or ideological kinship to the original inhabitants. This is especially true for prehistoric American Indian sites, for numerous modern Indian groups display great respect and reverence for such places. Other ethnic and cultural groups also honor the physical and spiritual traces of archaeological and historical sites.

It must be acknowledged that archaeological sites are often endangered and sometimes lost as a consequence of

expanding populations and changing patterns of land use, in addition to the detrimental effects of looters and collectors. Although this is an unsavory situation, archaeologists possess the capability to retrieve important information about a site through excavation, and thereby save cultural data that would otherwise be destroyed. Department of Transportation engineers designing the Speer Boulevard improvement project concluded that the road realignment would encompass the area containing the Tremont House. Primarily because of economic and engineering factors, avoiding the site and preserving its original integrity was not considered a feasible alternative. In order to create a uniform surface on which to construct the new road, all remains of the hotel would have to be demolished and removed. This would result in an obvious adverse effect to the remains of a historically significant site. Consequently, mitigating the adverse effect through data retrieval--excavation--was deemed appropriate and necessary. Only in this way would the important historical and archaeological information remaining at the Tremont House be saved for posterity.

The history of the Tremont House Hotel, like that of any structure inhabited continually for many years, is a reflection of the period of its existence. It was owned, operated, and frequented by people who lived within social, political, and ideological contexts specific to the times and place. The ethics and standards of those eras, as well as the technologies and styles reflected in remaining artifacts, were much different than those of today. The archaeological remains of the Tremont House had the potential to provide over 50 years' worth of tangible--and very valuable--historical remains reflecting the earliest period of Denver's existence.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF COLORADO, DENVER, AND THE TREMONT HOUSE

When compared to the great cities of the East, Denver was crude, dirty, disorganized, expensive, and culturally deprived. "In New York, [a] one-story house...with a shed for a kitchen would be an indifferent stable; here it is a palace" (Ashley 1936:6).

The historical archaeologist, unlike his prehistoric counterpart, often has the advantage of written records upon which to base his research framework, hypotheses, and assumptions. As such, the historical record is an essential instrument for the archaeologist, for it literally provides a foundation for building a coherent synthesis of the archaeological record. Historical archaeology enables artifacts and structures--and by inference the people who manufactured and utilized them--to be related to historical *contexts*, which can then be used to ask and test relevant questions about our past. In order to place the Tremont House investigations in such a context, the following sections present a brief historical overview of Colorado and the city of Denver in general, and also outline details about the Tremont gleaned from written documents.

The region first gained national attention during the first decade of the nineteenth century when it was acquired for the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase. The tremendous financial opportunities available in the Rocky Mountain West soon became widely known from reports of official exploring parties and from the results of entrepreneurs who trapped and traded for furs, hides, and other resources. Overland travel on routes such as the Oregon and Santa Fe

Trails resulted in the establishment of outposts and expanding knowledge of the area. The conquest of New Mexico and California led to settlements and further explorations, including exploitation of mineral resources. Between the 1820s and mid-1840s, over two dozen trapping and trading outposts were established from New Mexico north to Montana, including several in Colorado (Billington 1967; Carrillo and Mehls 1992).

The discovery of gold in the late 1850s in and near Colorado's Rocky Mountains began a period of significant change and upheaval. Impacts from the influx of Anglo and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic American settlers and their increasing economic power base were felt regionally as well as nationally. Mining was the major economic activity that contributed to the establishment of Denver and surrounding towns in the Rocky Mountain region, though agriculture became increasingly important as the population rapidly increased.

Political Development of the Territory and State of Colorado

Organization of the Colorado Territory coincided with the onset of the Civil War. In early 1859 newly arrived emigrants to the region began formulating ideas and rallying support for creation of a new state or territory. The popular belief held that a legally constituted government would provide more effective regional control, and the new residents would therefore not be directly responsible for their own safety and welfare. Additionally, creation of a territory would necessitate unifying the disparate mining districts and settlements under one administrative unit. Until the Colorado Territory was established, Coloradans were under the somewhat vague jurisdictions of Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico, and Utah Territories. Early regional settlers established the Territory of Jefferson as an extralegal territory because it assured stability

and order in the region, and also served as the initial step toward the creation of a sanctioned territory.

Congress was not able to deal with the Colorado issue in 1859 because of the more pressing problems created by increasing friction between the northern and southern states. It was not until late 1860, during which time the thirty-sixth Congress was awaiting the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, that Colorado's request for territorial status was accepted. The people of Colorado, believing an attempt would be made by the Confederate States to invade its gold regions, remained loyal to the Union. After debating borders and names, the request was passed by Congress on February 28, 1861.

William Gilpin, a prominent politician, soldier and entrepreneur, was named the first territorial governor by President Lincoln in 1861. Nearly twenty years earlier, Gilpin had been in Colorado as a part of Captain John C. Fremont's western expedition. Gilpin was awarded the governorship for his political loyalty to the president and his prominence as a westerner and familiarity with the Colorado region.

After Gilpin's arrival he toured several regional settlements and mining camps. He also administered a territorial census, which revealed a total population of 25,331, 3,000 of whom resided in Denver. By the beginning of the Civil War, immigration quickly declined as large numbers of individuals returned east to participate in the fighting (Hafen 1948:283):

The issue of statehood arose shortly after creation of the Colorado Territory, resulting in many local as well as national battles. Within the territory many groups favored statehood for ultimate political stability and continued economic growth.

Conversely, others were concerned with the prospect of increased taxation, in addition to the possibility that a military draft for the Union Army would be extended to the new state.

Between 1868 and 1875 the statehood issue was set aside as attention focused on pursuing local interests in business, agriculture, mining, and other industries. It was not until 1876 that national interests jibed with local interests. President Grant issued the proclamation of statehood on August 1, 1876 (Lamar 1977:243).

Early History of Denver

During the summer of 1858, miners were prospecting along the South Platte River and its tributaries, and finding placer gold. Later that fall, a small group settled for the winter on the banks of Cherry Creek. On October 30, 1858, the Auraria Town Company was organized, named after Auraria, Georgia, the hometown of two brothers who were prominent in locating the initial gold deposits.

Another group, from Lawrence, Kansas, arrived in the area in September and established a town they called Montana City, but the settlement was short-lived due to a poor location. The Lawrence group relocated to Cherry Creek and organized the St. Charles Town Association on a one-mile-square plot of land, located across from Auraria on the east bank of Cherry Creek. The group returned to Kansas for the winter without constructing a single cabin. However, another Kansas group took over the St. Charles town site on November 22, 1858, assuming it had been abandoned, and renamed it Denver City in honor of then-Kansas Governor James W. Denver. The principal thoroughfare was named Larimer Street, after the group's leader, William Larimer.

Denver City and Auraria hoped to be the center of activity in the spring of 1859 when new prospectors would arrive on the banks of Cherry Creek in search of gold. The spring indeed brought an increase in population, and new buildings sprang up in the two little towns along the banks of Cherry Creek, as the influx of miners and visitors created an early need for housing and services. By the time the *Rocky Mountain News* published its first issue in April 1859, Auraria consisted of 150 homes, three stores, two hotels, one bakery, one print shop, two saloons, two meat markets, a blacksmith, a carpenter, a tinsmith, and a tailor.

The earliest structures consisted of crude cottonwood log shacks chinked with mud, log chimneys plastered with heavy adobe, dirt floors, and no glass windows. Bricks were used in late 1859, after Thomas Warren opened the first Denver brickyard. The streets of Denver and Auraria were ungraded, and neighborhoods generally lacked lawns, flowers, and trees. Sidewalks were simple dirt trails along the edge of the road. Water was carried by barrel from the creek or obtained from privately dug wells. Despite the primitive appearance of the two settlements, however, there were numerous trappings of civilization. Billiards, chess and debating clubs, a circulating library, news stands, horse racing, poetry readings, and religious services were available to early residents.

By 1860, the two towns were engaged in fierce competition. Denver City had grown faster than Auraria and had more hotels, saloons, and businesses. This was due in part to the ability of the Denver City Company to bring the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Stage Company to their side of the creek. Auraria was more residential, but managed to support a small business district. The issue was settled only when the

two towns united under one name, Denver, on April 15, 1860. Auraria subsequently became known as West Denver.

As the years progressed, log homes gave way to frame and brick structures with wooden floors, glass windows, and shingled roofs. Numerous two-story business blocks were constructed in both parts of town, and more businesses opened. The city began to assume metropolitan airs:

Distinct commercial and residential sections emerged with a central business district around Blake, Larimer, Market, and Fifteenth Street, and a stylish residential area southeast from Fourteenth and Arapaho, where John Evans's house set the pattern for merchants, promoters, and land speculators. Following a serious fire in April 1863, the city rebuilt in an improved style. In the business area, two- and three-story brick structures replaced wooden frame houses after the municipality forbade construction with wood downtown. Residential areas blossomed with two-story houses in Victorian styles, while the completion of an irrigation ditch in 1865 made possible the planting of trees and lawns. The whole effect delighted visitors, who found this 'square, proud, prompt little place' an oasis of architectural quality in the dreary West (Abbott et al. 1982:67).

Between 1860 and 1870, over \$27 million worth of gold was extracted from the nearby mountains. During this time Denver became a regional business and cultural center, although its population remained very unsettled. The resident population of Denver in 1860 was still well under 5,000. It was

estimated that during the 1860s, between 100,000 and 150,000 unattached men passed through Denver on their way to the gold fields and mining camps. The *Rocky Mountain News*, in an article dated September 6, 1860, indicated that "The Broadwell, the Platte, the Tremont, the Vasquez, and the Jefferson Hotels, are all doing a good business for this dull season."

The transient population continued to predominate throughout the city's first decade, as the permanent population had added only 10 individuals by 1870. The transients provided revenue and stimulated business in Denver, but this type of population also restricted economic growth. The miners came into town to spend their newly found riches on gambling, liquor, prostitutes, and room and board. But because they did not own property, they could not be taxed and thus had no vested interest in the community. As a result, public utilities and services were often nonexistent: streets remained ungraded and treacherous in bad weather; there was no system to provide public water from the river; and tallow candles were the only form of lighting. It was not until the arrival of the railroad in 1870 that significant municipal advances such as street grading occurred in Denver, followed by the installation of gas in 1871, water pipes in 1872, and electricity in 1880.

Transportation was the key to growth and development in Denver. In the years prior to the arrival of the railroad, the only public transportation was by stagecoach or freight wagon. The first stage line opened for business in 1859, and by 1860 three competing lines linked Denver with the rest of the country. But stages moved slowly, and consequently it took a great deal of time for information and news to reach the isolated community.

Supplies, especially construction materials and food items, were hard to get and often very expensive. Glass and nails remained expensive throughout the decade. Brick was an inexpensive building material only because it could be manufactured in Denver. Milled lumber became cheaper and more readily available after the Excelsior Mill opened in 1861.

In 1870 an extension line was constructed from the main track of the Union Pacific railroad in Cheyenne, Wyoming, to Denver, tying the city to the nation's transportation and communication network. In the same year the Kansas Pacific Railroad linked Denver to the east. As a result, mail service improved and manufactured goods became more readily available. By 1872, the population that had remained relatively stable for a decade quickly doubled.

Boosterism, made easier by improved communication with the eastern cities, attracted new businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors and led to a boom in economic growth. Out-of-state investors spread information about Colorado Territory and Denver throughout the Midwest and along the eastern seaboard, and individuals were encouraged to come to Denver. The majority of investment capital went into transportation, real estate, banking, utilities, and manufacturing. Mining speculation was relatively minor in comparison.

Denver soon became the hub of Colorado's rail network as the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad linked the city to the south in the 1870s and construction of other railroads in the 1880s changed the early character of the area.

By the late 1880s, the central Platte Valley area of Denver had developed into an important wholesale and warehousing market. By the turn of the century, most of Denver's wealthy

had left the older neighborhoods along the South Platte and moved "uptown" toward the State Capitol, where they built large mansions. At the same time, major industries such as the Anheuser-Busch and Blatz breweries opened new facilities on Wazee Street adjacent to the railroad yards. Many small businesses and industries, including hotels and boarding houses, livery stables, foundries, and blacksmith and repair shops sprung up to service the railroad lines. Coal yards and stonecutting works represented industries that located adjacent to or within the railroad yards north of Wazee (Carrillo et al. 1987:6).

By the turn of the century factories, warehouses, railroad yards, and aging housing now lined the banks of the South Platte River. The poor were left behind to move into the old neighborhoods. In the one-half-mile square area between Colfax Avenue, Speer Boulevard, and the South Platte River, nearly 8,000 people, one-quarter of whom were immigrants, inhabited the crowded boarding houses, small frame homes, and old hotels in 1890. Eastern European Jews began to settle in the area in the 1880s after the German and Irish populations moved uptown. By the early twentieth century, this area was predominately Jewish.

The late nineteenth century also witnessed the emergence of a commercial section on Blake Street east of 13th Street called "Chinatown." The main part of this district consisted of a series of common wall brick buildings on the north side of Blake. In actuality, this block represented the third Chinatown district in Denver. The first had been located on 16th Street between Wazee and Blake, and the second on 20th and 21st Streets between Market and Blake (the latter district eventually relocated between Market and Larimer Streets and gained notoriety as the vice-filled "hop alley"). The

existence of chinese laundries in the 13th Street vicinity indicates that Chinese occupied West Denver from the early 1870s, after the introduction of the railroad. Denver's Chinese population grew gradually until the turn of the century, when a total of 3,000 inhabitants were counted. Over the next two decades, the Chinese were subjected to intense discrimination, repeatedly raided, and many of the occupants forced to leave the city. As a result of the constant intimidation of the Asian community, the Chinese population dwindled to about 160 by 1930 (Hermsen 1990).

The so-called "power elite" who ran the city made improvements to their own neighborhoods and the business district (such as street paving), but left the rest of the city to fend for itself. When Mayor Robert Speer took office in 1904, he began the "City Beautiful" movement, waged a war on poverty, and expanded many of the services to include the poor neighborhoods neglected by the wealthy and influential few. To improve the appearance of the community as well as modernize the city, many older brick businesses were torn down and replaced by larger, more elaborate commercial structures. West Denver, however, remained a lower class neighborhood full of small, often disheveled brick and frame houses and businesses, including the Tremont House.

The low-lying area of West Denver, bordered by Cherry Creek on the north and the South Platte River on the west, was a frequent victim of flooding. Major floods in Cherry Creek occurred in 1864, 1876, 1885, and 1912. Each time, West Denver was devastated by raging flood waters, yet the community was repeatedly rebuilt. The July 1912 flood swept many of the small frame and brick homes off their foundations. Of those that remained intact, over 75 buildings were ordered demolished by the city building inspector because they were

determined unsafe. The Tremont House Hotel was one of the victims of demolition.

Impact of Settlement on Native American Populations

In the late 1840s and early 1850s only a few settlers, mainly New Mexican Hispanics, lived in the San Luis Valley near the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. Similarly, the Arkansas River valley and its tributaries supported scattered settlements of former mountain men and traders, Hispanics, and others, including a few women, who practiced subsistence agriculture. The initial settlements of this period were located primarily in the middle and lower portions of the Arkansas River valley and along its tributaries, including the St. Charles, Huerfano, and Purgatoire Rivers.

After the Mexican-American War of 1848, trader William Bent and others developed settlements and trading posts serving influxes of travelers and exploiting the area for stock raising, small-scale farming, and other resources. In the early 1850s, the U.S. Army began building a series of military posts in the newly acquired territory to control the possibility of revolt by the Hispanic populations who had occupied areas of the Southwest for 250 years, and to protect the new settlers from Native American raids. The attendant increase in contact inevitably produced conflicts between Indian groups and newcomers to the area. In the Colorado region, Utes and Apaches were the primary source of troubles.

The initial discovery of gold along Cherry Creek, and the subsequent Rocky Mountain gold rush in the late 1850s, led to the development of mining camps. The major camps soon became towns, and the permanent settlement of the Colorado Territory began. The vast changes created at both the national

and regional levels due to the founding of Denver and surrounding mining communities is evidenced, in part, by population influxes into other portions of Colorado. A shift occurred from a subsistence-based economy to commercial agriculture, with concomitant rapid development of an efficient regional transportation network. The few original ranches and farms in existence were joined by new settlements, especially after the 1862 Homestead Act was enacted by Congress. These settlements became important sources of food supplies for Denver and the other newly emerging mountain towns, especially during the critical period of the Civil War. Unfortunately, this situation also served to exacerbate poor relations between white settlers and indigenous peoples. The decade of the 1860s, especially the early portion, was one of persistent turmoil.

Between 1861 and 1864, the wagon traffic produced by miners traveling the South Platte Trail (a branch of the Oregon Trail), the Smoky Hill Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail along the Arkansas River, created significant problems with the Native American populations. In 1861 the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho signed the Fort Wise Treaty, which ceded their traditional hunting land east of the Front Range to the U.S. government in exchange for a smaller reservation on the plains. Many of the younger Indians refused to accept the treaty. Hunting parties ranged beyond the borders of the new reservation and raids along the South Platte River continued to occur. U.S. Army reprisals followed, and the situation deteriorated throughout early 1864.

The Cheyenne-Arapaho War, which occurred on the high plains of Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska in 1864 and 1865, resulted from pressures created by the 1859 gold rush and subsequent Anglo incursions onto Native American lands.

The Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, wherein over 100 Cheyenne and Arapaho were slaughtered by the U.S. Cavalry, incited violent reprisals. Intensive raiding of settlements spread along the Santa Fe Trail, and communication and commerce between Denver and the mining camps to the west was essentially severed. Julesburg, located in extreme northeastern Colorado, was raided and burned in early 1865. In the fall of that year, after months of the bloodiest warfare in central Great Plains history, the Cheyenne agreed to the Treaty of the Little Arkansas, which gave them a new reservation between the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers. The treaty effectively ended the conflict for most Indians living south of the Platte River. The major threat to settlers in the region had been removed by 1870. However, a few minor incidents involving small groups of Native Americans, primarily in southeastern Colorado, occurred until the mid-1870s.

Prior to 1876, Indians in and near Denver constituted an important facet of the local economy, and in that sense Native American peoples were valued. However, after decimation of regional bison herds, a corresponding decline in the hide trade, and statehood, it became unfashionable to have Indians in Denver, and their trade was no longer viewed as significant. Native groups were perceived to be undesirable welfare wards who possessed valuable reservation lands that were not being put to good use. In an effort to remove Indians from the city, the Indian Agency at Denver was closed and relocated in 1876.

The Establishment, Growth, and Decline of the Tremont House Hotel

Hotels were plentiful in early Denver because of the need to house a transient population. In fact, the construction of hotels, inexpensive boarding houses, and temporary apartments was an important aspect of Denver real estate. On February 1, 1859, David Smoke opened his cabin at 10th and Larimer as the El Dorado, the first hotel in Denver. A short time later, in the spring of 1859, Charles Blake and Andrew Williams opened a large cabin as a store and hotel on Blake Street between 14th and 15th. Called the Denver Hotel, this establishment was the predecessor to the more popular and well-known Elephant Corral. Another early hotel, the Broadwell House at 16th and Larimer, was also built in 1859.

It was to the small pioneer settlement of Auraria that the widowed Mrs. Maggard came in the fall of 1859. She had survived two Indian attacks on her trip west from Missouri by wagon train, and earned her nickname "Mother Maggard" for the care she took of her fellow passengers on the long trip west. (A shrewd businesswoman, she offered to feed the 30 travelers at two dollars a head.) Upon her arrival in Auraria in 1859, she constructed a boarding house (later the Tremont House) and became known as the first woman booster of Denver because of her active campaign to encourage more pioneers to settle there. Mrs. Maggard named her house the Temperance Hotel and was famous for her buffalo tongue pot pies with cabbage and bacon. The Temperance Hotel was unique in that it did not serve alcohol, a rarity on the western frontier.

Architectural styles in early Denver can be classified as typical of the mid- and late-nineteenth century in much of North

America. Influenced by trends on the east coast and in Chicago and Minneapolis, early Denver buildings are best described as classical in character, restrained in style, and uniform in appearance--characterized in general by one material, one color, one basic technique. Red brick arches, repetitive bay construction, simple brick cornices (ornamental horizontal moldings or frames), and an overall lack of ornamentation were characteristics of the city's early architecture. It was not until the 1870s and the arrival of the railroad that more elaborate architectural styles found their way into Denver. Catalogs, newspapers, and photographs provided information regarding new trends in Eastern architecture, which could be applied to local construction.

The Temperance Hotel was originally a two-story, wood frame structure with a side gable roof behind a clapboard-sided false front (refer to Figure 1). The windows consisted of double hung sash affairs reminiscent of the Greek Revival style. The main entrance featured four-paned sidelights on either side of the wood frame door. A second story door opened onto a balcony with a turned balustrade (banister) supported by decorative brackets. The roof cornice was simple, overhanging and supported by paired decorative brackets. The two chimneys were brick, and a flagpole extended above the center of the facade.

Business was initially so good that during the early summer of 1860 Mrs. Maggard built a two-story frame addition on the north side, cross-sectioning the original gabled roof and forming an L-shaped structure. However, for unknown reasons, in July of that year she sold the building to local businessman Nelson Sargent and a partner, and subsequently moved south to Colorado City.

The new owners remodeled the hotel, added a bar, and reopened under the moniker of the Tremont House. The name may derive from an earlier, short-lived log cabin known as the Tremont Hotel that was owned and operated by an entrepreneur from Boston.

As trumpeted by the *Rocky Mountain News* in August of 1860, Sargent's Tremont House was soon known around town as a premier establishment:

The Subscribers, Proprietors of the [Tremont] House (formerly known as the Temperance House) having completely renovated and refined it in modern style, would solicit the patronage of their friends and the public generally. Having added a Bar, well stocked with the choicest beverages of the Eastern Market, and all the comfort of a first-class hotel. We mean that the Tremont shall rank second to none.

Sharing the block with the Tremont House in 1860 were two hotels, the Missouri House and Star Hotel, William Dunn's grocery store, an undertakers parlor, a business block, gun shop, several law offices, livery stables, and a lumber yard. All were false front, wood frame buildings (Figures 10-12).

On May 27, 1861, the Tremont House was gaily decorated for the inaugural reception in honor of the new Territorial Governor, William Gilpin. A large crowd gathered in front of the hotel as Governor Gilpin gave his inaugural speech from the second floor balcony. Scenes such as this became quite common at the Tremont. One year later, in fact, when Gilpin was replaced as governor by John Evans of Chicago, the



Figure 10 - The Tremont House (right) as it appeared during construction of the 1860 scale diorama of Denver at the Colorado Historical Society. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

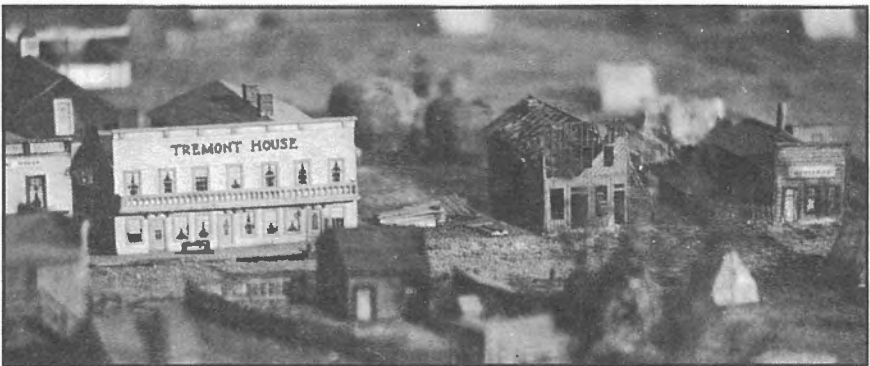


Figure 11 - The Tremont House during an early incarnation of the diorama. Note the structure's distinctive "L" shape. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

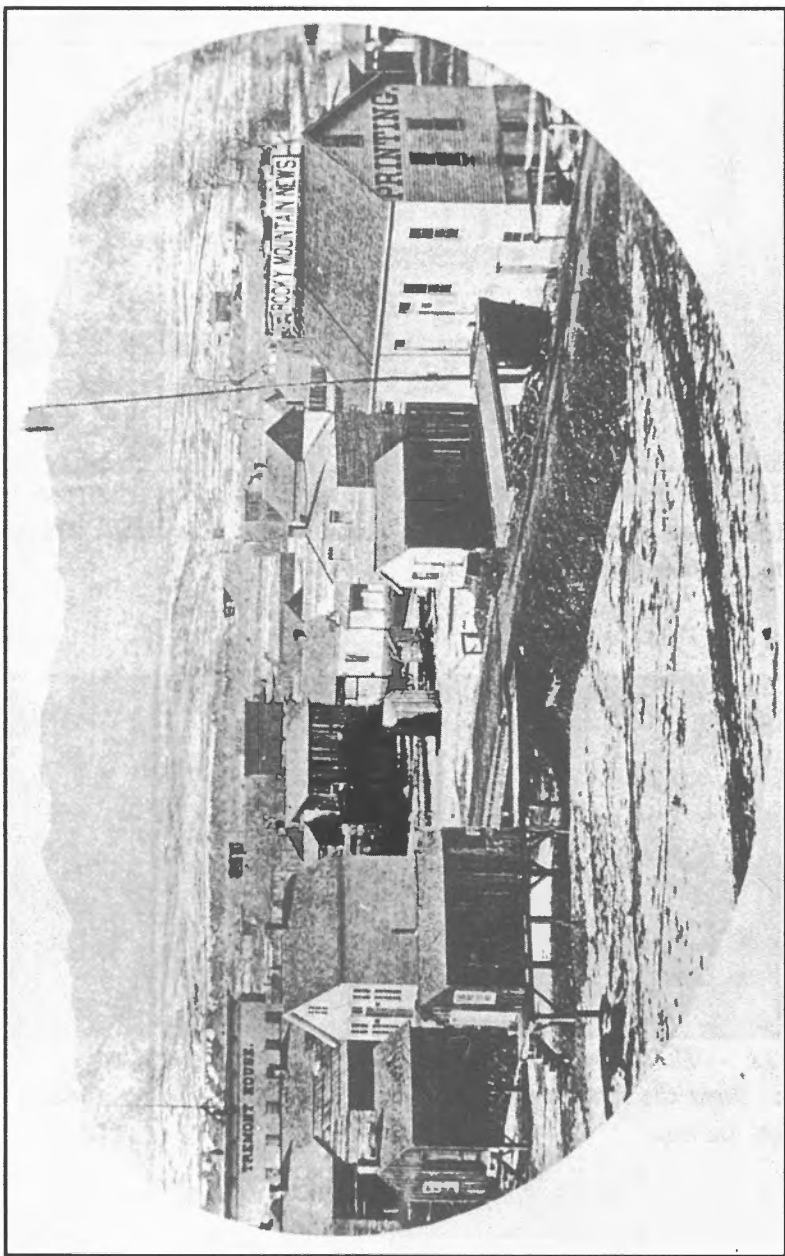


Figure 12 - 1860s photograph of West Denver, with Tremont House at left. The original Rocky Mountain News office is at right, adjacent to Cherry Creek. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

Tremont House was again the site of an impromptu political speech.

The Tremont House was in its heyday during the early 1860s, as Sargent and his wife turned the hotel and its food into the best in Denver. Several newspaper articles written in the spring and late summer of 1862 attest to the hotel's popularity. These suggest, in part, that "the rich delicacies and high living furnished by Judge Sargent, are too much for [this writer]...; if you can't stand good-living, don't go to the Tremont. [However,] we do not suppose any of the guests of the Tremont are going to rush away from it, or we would advise them not to."

The hotel survived a major fire that swept through East Denver in 1863 and destroyed much of that area's commercial district. The Tremont also endured a massive Cherry Creek flood during the summer of 1864, which inundated much of West Denver. Figure 13 is a photograph of Auraria looking northwest, taken during the flood. Swirling Cherry Creek is a blur coursing left to right through the lower center of the frame. Partially submerged structures (including the Tremont House), many of which were washed off their foundations, are located in the low-lying areas west of the creek, while those on higher terrain in the foreground apparently escaped unscathed. The Tremont House is identifiable center-frame by its name on the facade. Newspaper accounts of the flood and its aftermath do not refer to severe structural damage to the building. Advertisements mention cleaning and renovating the interior, but it evidently remained open for business. Figure 14 is an 1865 photograph looking west down Blake Street toward the Tremont House. Notice the broad, sandy bed of Cherry Creek, a testament to the fury of the previous year's deluge. Signs advertising the renowned Elephant Corral stable are visible at right center.

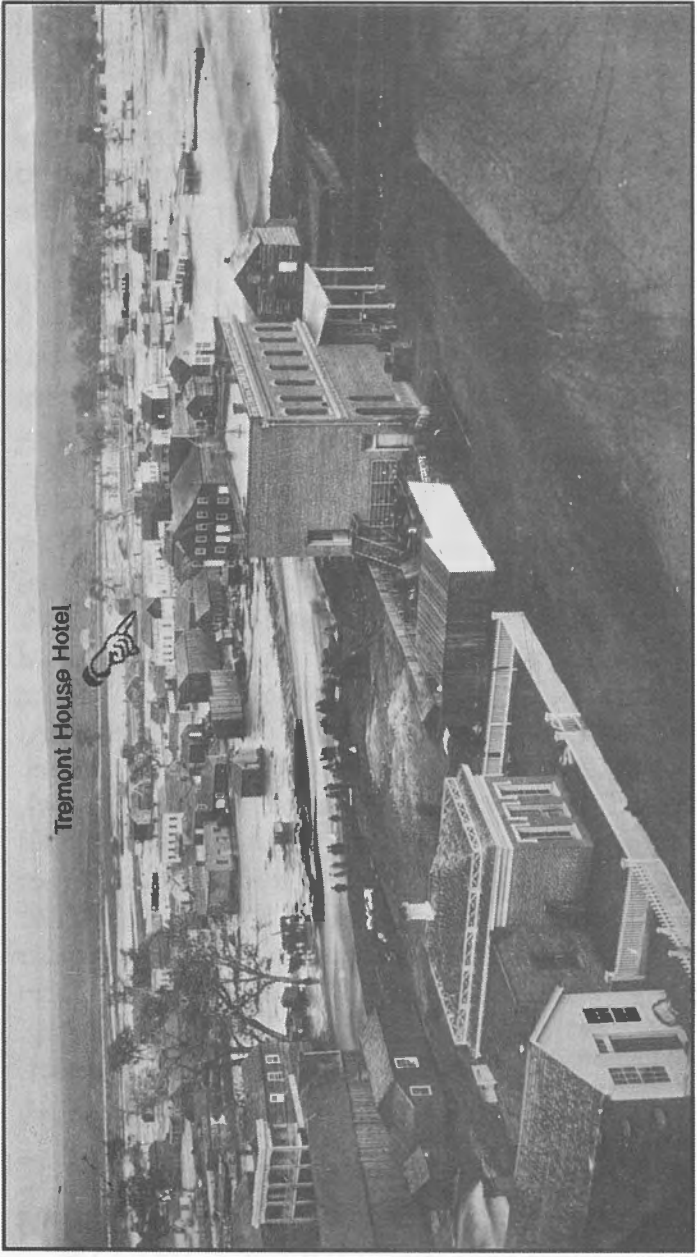


Figure 13 - Photograph of West Denver (Auraria) during the 1864 flood. Cherry Creek is a blur, left-center. The Tremont House is visible, center frame. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

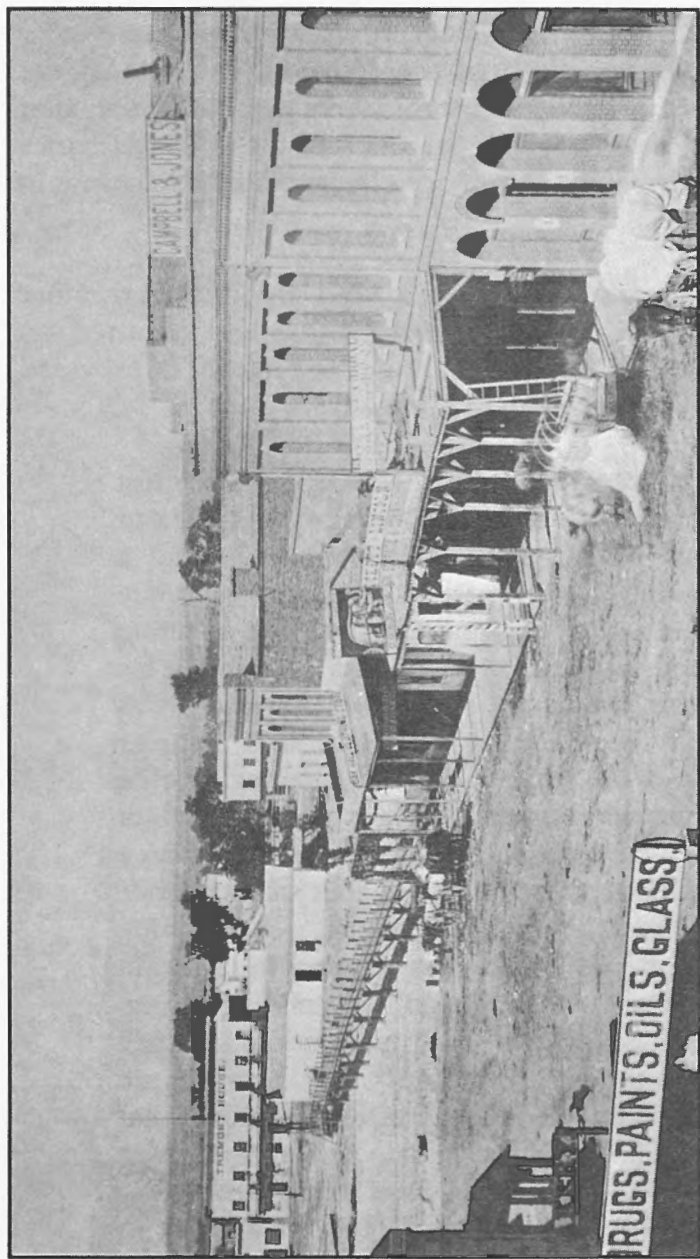


Figure 14 - An 1865 view west along Blake Street toward the Tremont House. A pedestrian bridge across Cherry Creek provides access to West Denver, left. Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society.

In January 1865, the *Rocky Mountain News* ran a story implying that Nelson Sargent had completed a renovation of the hotel. However, sometime prior to December of that year, after ownership for over five years, Sargent sold the hotel to Charles F. Parkhurst, who was listed in city directories as sole owner in 1865 and 1866.

In late December, 1865, the *News* reported--in a rather loquacious style--about a social event that had occurred on Christmas night. A valuable and amusing insight is provided into the cultural scene of the young city:

Yesterday's season of enjoyment was a time most favorable for observing the social relations of our citizens. Music, mirth, fun, happiness, and a pretty large modicum of dissipation ruled the hour. So the day passed and the evening witnessed gay and happy groups assembling for the dance. The most reoberobe [sic] party was given at the Tremont House, and a happier reunion of the respectable and fashionable elite of Denver never assembled or enjoyed a brighter hour of pleasure. We have never looked upon a more brilliant party. Jolly corpulent jurisprudence hob-nobbed with fascinating, bewitching beauties, whose bright eyes beamed with delight and gaiety, sweet music, graceful dancing, enenuster [sic] of wit, and the twaddle of small talk filled the time until the "small hours 'ayant the 'twall" admonished the festive assemblage that another Christmas was past, and the carriage loads of pleasure tired revellers wended their way to their respective homes. This company, upon whom it was a pleasure even to look adding as

they were to the...enjoyment of a pure social life, was the bright side of Denver society.

Sometime between 1865 and the early 1870s, the frame structure was replaced (or encompassed) by a three-story brick edifice (Figure 15). The frame building was apparently not merely refaced with brick because the roof shape changed from gable to flat, and one additional floor was constructed. Subsequent Sanborn Insurance maps indicate the building was entirely brick, though the basic floor plan remained unchanged.

In January 1866, Parkhurst advertised that the hotel had been renovated. Yet the actual rebuilding of the Tremont House could have occurred in June 1867, when the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that the hotel had been enlarged. However, no mention is made that the building had been torn down and a new one built, and there was no significant gap between articles and advertisements that might indicate total reconstruction. In fact, the hotel continued to advertise in the newspaper, so it must be assumed that it was open for business. As noted in the previous section, newspaper articles frequently referred to remodeling, improvements, and renovations to the building without listing specific details. It is possible that the building was replaced in 1867, but the newspaper chose to report only the addition of 25 rooms and not total reconstruction; the latter scenario appears highly unlikely. Photographs of the hotel from this period are rare and somewhat confusing, given that none have dependable dates associated with them. In addition, all known photographs show the wood frame structure to the exclusion of the subsequent brick structure. As such, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the shape and size of the hotel changed dramatically. In any case, by May 1867 the Tremont had been sold twice more.

Denver. Hotels. Tremont

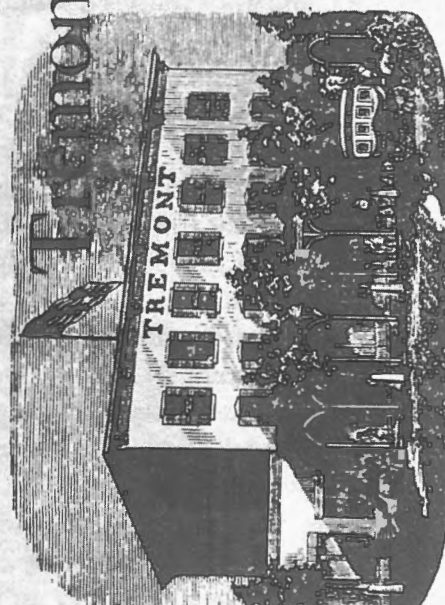
Tremont House,

HEAD OF BLAKE STREET,
DENVER, - - - - - Colo.

This House has been turning the past
 several years into a most enjoy-
 ed a good patronage, and
 stands to-day as the best
 House west of the Mis-
 souri river for the
 money. No more
 to pay, and
 charges as
 follows:

Board, \$2.00 per day; Day Board, \$4.00 per
 week; Board and Lodging, \$4.00 to \$16.00.

W. C. RIPPEY, Prop'r.



15th Street, Head of Blake.

Denver Col. Oct-15th 1876

Figure 15 - Tremont House Hotel letterhead from the mid-1870s, showing a sketch of the remodeled three-story brick structure. Courtesy, Denver Public Library, Western History Department.

Given the substantial addition, business was evidently good. Despite this, however, boarding rates were dropping, probably due to increased competition. The day rates of \$14.00 per week in 1865 had dropped to \$10.00 by 1866. By 1869 the price for day board had dropped to \$7 per week, and had gone from a high of \$4.00 per day for transients to \$1.00 per day (*Rocky Mountain News* 1865, 1866, 1869).

A man by the name of McCarty became the next proprietor in 1870, and he remodeled the hotel several times during his ownership. The June 13, 1871, edition of the *News* notes that the Tremont Hotel was still considered one of the best hotels in Colorado, and was highly recommended to the traveling public. In 1872 McCarty completely refitted the building inside and out. This renovation, in fact, may have involved the total reconstruction with brick. Two years later another addition to the building was finished, which included a baggage room, a reading room, and a wash room. These improvements, together with the new billiard hall, made the Tremont a complete hotel.

The hotel continued to change owners periodically throughout the 1870s. Mid-1875 saw the building survive another major flood during which, once again, the low-lying areas of West Denver were inundated. Flood damage was less severe than the 1864 flood and most buildings suffered only minor damage. Yet many believe West Denver never fully recovered from the '64 flood, when many businesses relocated to higher ground, leaving little new or substantial development on the west side of Cherry Creek until the warehouse building boom of the 1890s.

As the years passed the *Rocky Mountain News*, barometer of the social scene, reported less and less about the

first-class quality of the Tremont House Hotel. The next newspaper entry regarding the hotel does not occur until July 1878, when yet another sale of the hotel was noted. Frequent ownership changes and alterations, coupled with the change in population demographics in West Denver, were beginning to take a toll on the grand old hotel.

The next major architectural change occurred between 1874 and 1887. The building appears on the 1887 Sanborn Insurance Map as a two-story, L-shaped structure. This is verified by a sketch of the hotel in an 1890 article on the history of Auraria in the *Rocky Mountain News*. An unsubstantiated report states that the third floor was removed and the building stuccoed about 1878. As noted above, the lack of photographs of the building and the surrounding area during this period hampers verification of this information. The 1887 Sanborn map indicates that the two-story brick building had a one story frame addition on the rear with a frame porch, a one-story frame addition to the dining room in the rear, and a two-story frame porch on the rear of the office/saloon area. Outbuildings consisted of a frame shed, a two-story brick structure, a possible barn, and a one-story brick shed.

By 1880, the Tremont House had lost its standing as one of Denver's premier hotels. Newer, bigger, and more ostentatious hotels were being built in East Denver, stealing away customers from the smaller inns across Cherry Creek. The Windsor Hotel at 18th and Larimer opened in 1880, followed by the Albany in 1885, the Metropole in 1891, and the Brown Palace in 1892. Slowly, West Denver was being overtaken by warehouses and railroad yards. Affluent residents moved uptown towards the State Capitol (built between 1890 and 1894), leaving the West Denver neighborhoods to recent immigrants and various ethnic groups.

Even though its West Denver neighborhood--and evidently its clientele--was changing, the Tremont underwent at least one additional architectural modification in the late nineteenth century. Between 1887 and 1890, a two-story brick addition was constructed on the south side of the rear of the building. The saloon remained in the front of this section, and a frame staircase, possibly a fire escape, was located on the rear of this new addition. A portion of the two-story frame porch was removed, as was the two-story brick outbuilding/barn. A tin shed was built in its place. A frame pump shed was also added to the rear. No changes were made to the exterior of the building between 1890 and 1903, the next date of publication of the Sanborn Insurance Maps.

As noted above, in 1890 the *Rocky Mountain News* published a story about the history of Auraria and West Denver. In it, the Tremont House was described as one of the great hotels where "scenes were pretty lively at times, and not a few of the schemes which have since done much for the advancement of the city were incubated within the walls." Nelson Sargent was credited with bringing the hotel to its finest hour, but in 1890 the newspaper reported that "he has lost status in recent years and 20 years have passed since [the Tremont] lost rank."

The year 1912 marked the last appearance of the Tremont House in Denver City Directories. At that time, it was serving mainly as a boarding house, with a saloon still operating on the first floor. In January 1912, the *Denver Post* reported that the owners of the Tremont Bar were suing the American Forge Works next door for damages. The American Forge Works had purchased the 1859 Missouri House located adjacent to the Tremont and had converted it into a machine shop. The front of the old log hotel, which had previously

been used as a gambling resort, was boarded up. The Tremont Bar complained that the pounding of the machinery was spoiling their beer. Six months later, both buildings were destroyed by flood.

On the afternoon of July 14, 1912, flood waters from an afternoon downpour raged down Cherry Creek, inundating the West Denver area with water several feet deep. The area hardest hit was bounded by 10th Street, Curtis Street, Cherry Creek and the Platte River. Most frame and less substantial brick buildings were torn off their foundations, leaving thousands homeless. Other more substantial buildings were heavily damaged. The *Denver Republican* newspaper reported that two days after the flood, the Tremont House had mud and sand piled as high as the bar. On July 21, 1912, a headline in the *Denver Post* stated that "Old Turner Hall and the Tremont Ordered Wrecked." The article went on to state that the city building inspector condemned the Tremont as unsafe and ordered the owners to begin tearing it down within five days. The exact date of the structure's demolition remains unknown, however.

During its early years, the Tremont House was considered one of the premier hotels, not only in Denver but throughout Colorado Territory. Its popularity contributed to the successful growth that Denver experienced through its first decades. Ironically, the city's growth in turn contributed to the decline of the Tremont, as well as that of West Denver at large, as the hotel's clientele shifted from the city's elite in the 1860s and 1870s, to European immigrants of lower social stature between the 1880s and the turn of the century.

Alterations to the design of the building through time, as documented by historical records, undoubtedly resulted in

different patterns of use. To the archaeologist, these changes may be reflected in the types and density of artifacts located in a particular area, or possibly in a particular stratigraphic setting below the ground surface. Because the general evolution of structural modifications to the hotel could be ascertained from archival records, this information provided the potential for identifying specific portions of the structure in an archaeological context.

THE TREMONT HOUSE RESEARCH DESIGN

Prior to undertaking large-scale excavations at any significant archaeological site, federal law mandates that a research design (also referred to as a "data recovery plan") be developed to guide all phases of field and laboratory work. A research design provides archaeologists with a framework--really a set of ideas--that helps to direct the course of a scientific investigation in much the same way a blueprint serves an engineer and architect. As a project progresses and new information is accumulated, modifications to the initial research design are often necessary. In this way, the anticipated research potential of a site is tailored to more effectively meet the needs of what actually exists, which helps to illustrate how data can be managed and utilized more appropriately by the researcher. If a project were to lack an explicit plan, the archaeologist would waste time and money, and more importantly end up with haphazardly collected data that is of little interpretational value. A research design, therefore, provides the foundation upon which an archaeological inquiry of this magnitude is based.

Research Themes

The data recovery plan prepared for the Tremont House Hotel excavations focused on several primary elements of continuing regional research interest within the fields of history and historical archaeology. These included defining the site in the context of specific time periods (for example, how was Denver different in 1860 versus 1890, and how might this be reflected in the archaeological remains of the Tremont?); identifying gaps in our knowledge of regional history and historical archaeology that need to be addressed; and evaluating the future needs of historical archaeology based on current

knowledge of the Tremont House. All of these research topics were established in the mid-1980s by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) (Buckles and Buckles 1984), and intended collectively as a focusing element for historical archaeological studies throughout Colorado.

For each research theme, a set of data needs and/or hypotheses was presented in order to test the eventual results of the archaeological investigation. For example, the so-called Data Gaps theme contained several topics of primary importance to regional historical archaeology. These included the need to identify, describe and interpret structures dating from the earliest historic settlement period (1859-1870/1876); identification of locally manufactured goods, such as bottles and fire bricks, which can be used as precise indicators of time periods and industrial development; and identification of specific sites related to social, economic, and political events important to the history of the state. Because of the Tremont's antiquity and apparent prominence in early Denver society, its function as a hostel where a variety of commercial and domestic products would have been common, and the series of architectural phases that the structure evidently underwent, the site appeared to contain information that could address all of these gaps in the historical archaeological record.

The research design proposed that the archaeological remains of the Tremont House would reflect two distinct periods of use. Referred to as the "pre-railroad period" (1859-1870) and the "post-railroad period" (1870-1912), these intervals were based on differing social, cultural, and economic adaptations evident before and after the city was connected to eastern markets by rail. With the introduction of railroad transportation into Colorado, a more diverse array of goods and services became available, both through the importing of

specific finished products as well as the technology to manufacture wares locally. As noted above, the Tremont House would therefore have been an excellent barometer of commodities available at any given time, and it was hypothesized that changes in available commodities should be reflected in the archaeological remains. If the earliest portions of the structure could be identified in association with datable artifacts, and these data subsequently compared with later structural additions and artifacts, a great deal of tangible information could be assembled regarding the impact of rail transportation on early Denver. In addition, the relationship between later hotel additions and their associated artifacts would help further define the structure's architectural evolution.

Another topic of interest to researchers involved the diet of Tremont guests through the years, how it changed, and what consequences this may have had on a variety of social topics. It was known from the results of initial test excavations at the site, for example, that animal remains suggested a pattern of wild game consumption between 1859 and the 1870s. Additional information on this subject could possibly illuminate the social, economic, environmental, and population pressures experienced regionally and at the Tremont House specifically.

EXCAVATING THE REMAINS OF THE TREMONT HOUSE

Fieldwork at the Tremont House was conducted during a seven-week period between March and May 1989. Because government road construction contracts often function under strict time constraints, the duration of scientific studies can be severely limited. Consequently, conducting large-scale excavations at the Tremont house required the efforts of many professional archaeologists, interested avocationalists, and lay volunteers in order to retrieve as much archaeological data as possible in a limited amount of time. Although the hotel was not particularly sizable by today's standards, the historical research and test excavations suggested that it comprised at least three contiguous yet architecturally distinct structures, each reflecting a different period in the evolution of the building. In order to gather pertinent comparative information reflective of the entire history of the hotel, archaeologists determined that it was essential to expose as much of each building section as project parameters would allow. This stage of the investigations proceeded in several phases.

The initial step in this process involved erecting a six-foot chain link fence around the site area, which served both as a safety precaution and as a deterrent to vandals and transients. Bottle hunters had descended upon the site during the previous testing phase, and this fact, coupled with the site's high visibility along a major urban thoroughfare, inspired project planners to prepare for similar difficulties. The fence proved to be an adequate deterrent, however, as no vandal-related problems were encountered during the nearly two-month excavation.

Next it was necessary to remove the asphalt mantle overlying the site, thereby exposing the entire hotel area (Figure

16). The foundation wall segments previously identified had been covered with black plastic prior to being reburied after the completion of test excavations. In this way, the known portions of the structure could be easily defined when the area was reopened. A backhoe was utilized to relocate these alignments, and a large tractor bucket stripped non-cultural soils overlying the remainder of the site. Although the full extent of each wall had not been exposed, archaeologists believed they had defined many of the primary walls associated with the hotel, and that the location of remaining segments could be satisfactorily ascertained. As soils were mechanically stripped, shovels and trowels were used to reveal the top of walls.



Figure 16 - Removing the asphalt parking surface that overlay the hotel site.

Establishing an Excavation Grid

When conducting a large and diverse archaeological excavation, it is crucial to maintain adequate horizontal and vertical control. In order to gather data in a coherent manner and thereafter accurately interpret the archaeological record, the location of all cultural artifacts and features at a site must be pinpointed according to their vertical depth as well as their location on the horizontal plane. In this way, the context of objects and features in relation to one another can be evaluated and explained. Toward this end, an excavation grid consisting of 700 contiguous one-meter-square blocks, each assigned an alpha-numeric designation, was superimposed over the entire site and aligned with the orientation of the foundation walls; approximately 120 of these units encompassed previously identified walls, and were therefore excavated by backhoe. The remaining squares were intended for controlled hand excavations. As outlined below, however, researchers acknowledged that it would be possible to carefully excavate only a fairly small area of the site. The grid was further divided into six "sampling areas" that corresponded to the three known structures and other features defined during test excavations. Thus, objects associated with a specific structure (and often a particular time period) could theoretically be separated from all others during the excavations and ensuing laboratory analyses.

Given the size of the site, coupled with the painstakingly slow progress of careful hand excavations, it was determined at the outset that excavation of the entire hotel complex was not feasible. Consequently, it was necessary to develop a general excavation sampling scheme that would provide sufficient and equitable data from all parts of the site, including both the interior and exterior of structures.

Archaeologists are often faced with limited funding and rigid time restrictions when completing their studies. In order to obtain an adequate sample of the buried remains at a site without excavating every square inch, and subsequently have the ability to address pertinent research questions, investigators sometimes design excavation sampling plans using two elements: (1) A so-called "intuitive" sample, based on the archaeologist's general scientific training and specific background knowledge about the site, which will identify areas that might contribute important information. An intuitive sample is designed to allow flexibility in the location of excavation units; and (2) A "random" sample, which consists of a set of excavation units selected mathematically from a table of numbers. All or parts of 123 grid units were excavated during the project.

Excavation Strategy

Excavations were conducted exclusively within the one-meter-square grid units chosen either randomly or through intuitive methods (Figure 17). In order to maintain adequate vertical control of the archaeological data, excavations proceeded according to natural stratigraphic soil levels, which ranged in thickness from a few centimeters to half a meter (about 20 inches) or more. These soil levels were detected by visible changes in the color, texture, or consistency of the soil itself, and also by variations in the artifact types or densities in a particular area. Pertinent information regarding each excavated level was carefully recorded, including a summary of artifacts recovered, architectural and non-architectural features, and an overview of precise soil characteristics. Obvious vandal pits, created decades earlier by artifact hunters and identifiable by their irregular configuration, were encountered periodically during the project. Data and artifacts obtained from these

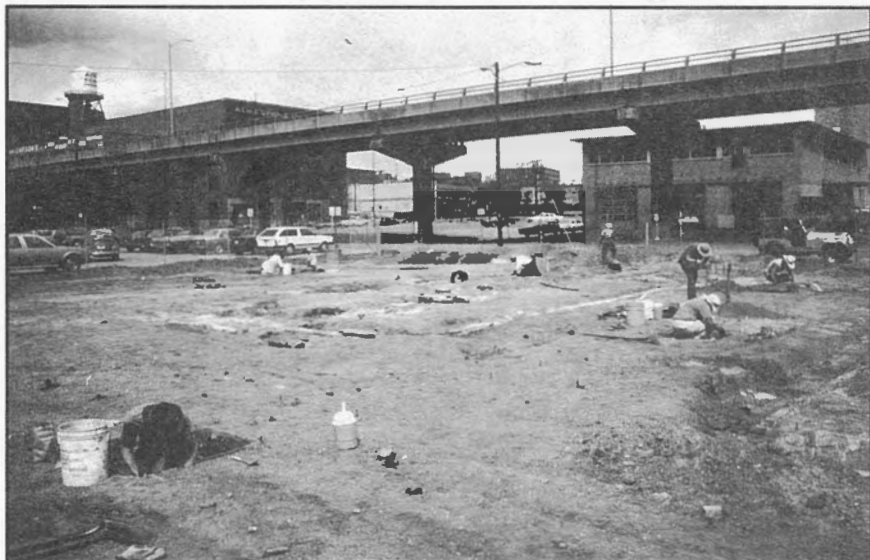


Figure 17 - Excavations in progress in one-meter-square pits.

features were separated from those procured from undisturbed settings.

Soil removed from each excavation pit was sifted through one-quarter-inch wire screen to retrieve all artifacts (Figure 18). Artifacts identified during this process were collected and bagged separately according to vertical level and artifact type (i.e., glass, bone, ceramics, etc.). Two cellars present at the Tremont House were identified and partially exposed by hand excavation of random and intuitive excavation pits. Once the precise location of the cellar floor was known, a backhoe was employed to remove the cellar fill to a point approximately 30 cm above the floors. Controlled hand excavations then resumed to clear the remaining sediments and identify intact artifacts on or near the floors (Figures 19-21). As noted earlier, the hotel was inundated by Cherry Creek flood



Figure 18 - All soil removed from each excavation pit was screened for artifacts.



Figure 19 - Under the supervision of an archaeologist, a backhoe is used to carefully remove fill from a cellar.

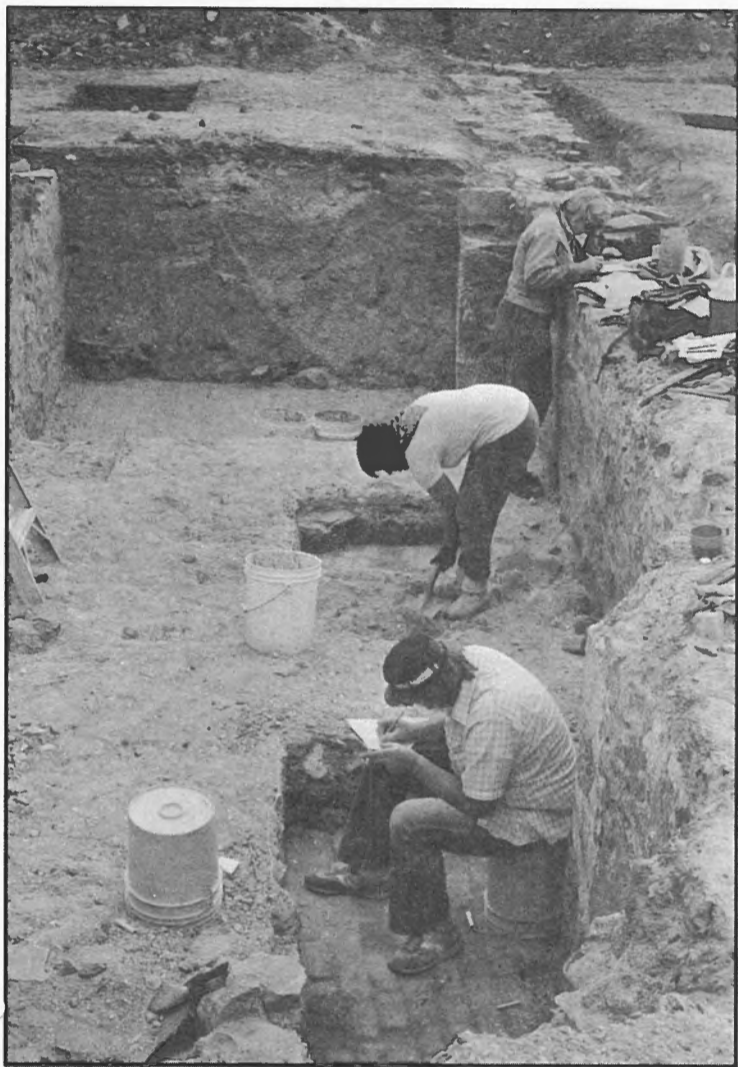


Figure 20 - Hand excavations in progress in the brick-floor cellar. Note the partially exposed bucket on the floor, background left.



Figure 21 - Intact glass bottles and ceramic containers encased in flood-deposited sand on the cellar floor.

waters for the last time in 1912, which resulted in its subsequent demolition. Not surprisingly, most of the sediments archaeologists encountered in the cellars and in other parts of the site consisted of very fine stream sand deposited in 1912, and/or debris resulting from the subsequent razing of the building. However, sediments resulting from several previous floods in the area were also visible in places, stacked atop one another like building blocks.

As excavations progressed and additional portions of the hotel were exposed, a detailed map was produced that identified the location, building materials, and method of construction for each architectural feature. Thus, by the end of the excavation, a comprehensive, scaled map of the entire structure foundation had been completed (Figure 22).

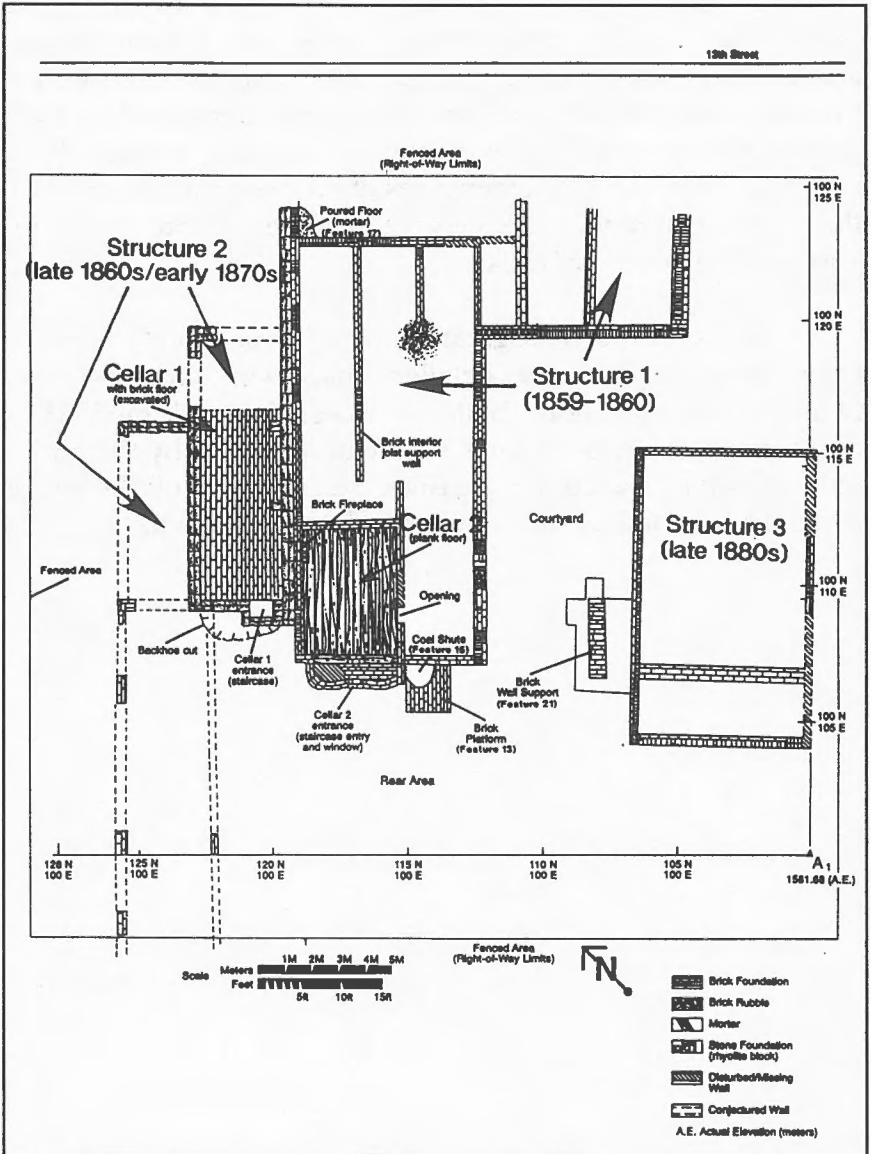


Figure 22 - Post-excavation plan map showing hotel foundations and other features exposed during the archaeological project.

EXCAVATION RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Three distinct but adjoining structures, which collectively comprised the Tremont House at various times during its 50 year history, were identified as a result of the excavation project (Figure 23). Although archaeologists possessed an idea of the general layout of the hotel prior to the excavation, exposing a large portion of the site served to corroborate certain research hypotheses while contradicting others. A large quantity and diverse assortment of new information retrieved during the dig provides fresh insights into a variety of historical and archaeo-



Figure 23 - The Tremont House near the end of the excavation project, looking west. The original front of the hotel is in the foreground. Notice the excavation pits scattered across the site.

logical topics. The urban context of these remains provided an opportunity to study the evolutionary development of the hotel in response to changing environmental and economic conditions that affected Denver during its first 50 years.

The separate sections of the hotel were designated arbitrarily as Structures 1, 2 and 3, and each structure exhibited unique architectural and artifactual attributes. Structure 1 consisted of an extensive brick foundation exhibiting an L-shaped configuration and an intact cellar (refer to Figures 22 and 23). The eastern portion of this structure, comprising the original front of the hotel and the corner "L," was determined to have been destroyed during widening of 13th Street earlier this century. The cellar, located at the rear of the building, displayed a wood plank floor, with the original entrance probably by step ladder through the ceiling (Figure 24). Judging by the masonry and associated artifacts found in and near the cellar, the staircase entry and window at the west end represented a later addition. A brick fireplace was located along the north wall, and a coal chute with an attached subterranean plank-lined coal storage bin was situated on the west end adjacent to the staircase. A large quantity of subsistence-related refuse located within the chute and bin (such as bottles, dishware, and bones) indicated that these features were abandoned during the 1870s and employed thereafter as a trash repository. The presence of a fireplace in the cellar, an oddity for a storage area, suggested that this space may at times have been used as living quarters, perhaps by a maintenance person responsible for distributing coal to a main furnace, or to individual room stoves. A clock, also curious in the context of a supposed storage facility, was also located in the cellar. In the hotel's later years, however, evidence indicated that the cellar was totally abandoned.

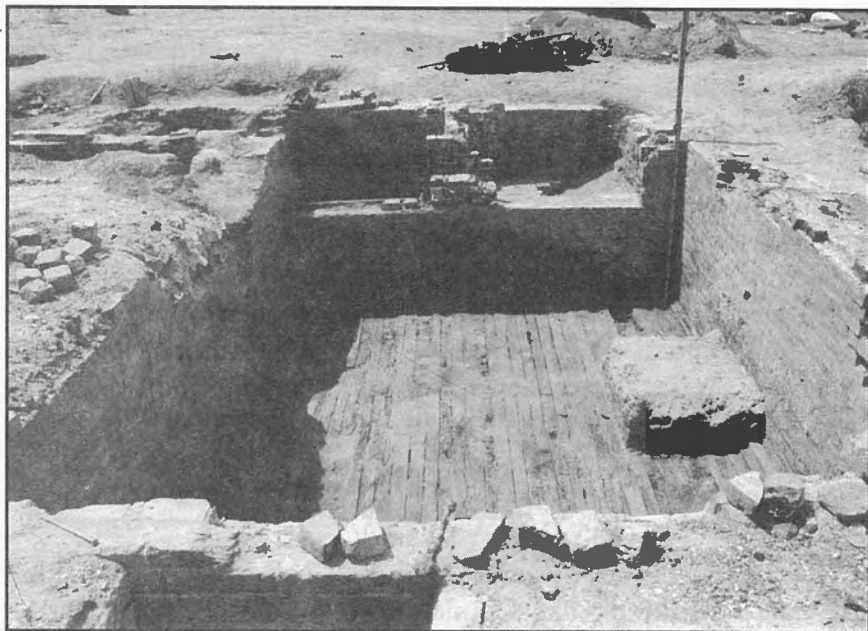


Figure 24 - Plank-floor cellar near the end of excavations. The staircase entry and window well are located at the rear (west end) of the building.

Structure 2 consisted of a rhyolite stone and fire brick foundation, as well as a brick-floored cellar, positioned immediately north of and adjacent to Structure 1. Rhyolite, a distinctive volcanic rock that grades from a gray to pink or coral color, was quarried from the Palmer Divide area south of Denver and often used as a construction material during the city's earliest years. The structure exhibited several perimeter walls oriented perpendicular to the main building on the north side, which were interpreted to denote at least two more structural additions. Based on historical documentation describing periodic expansion to the hotel, however, all of these wall segments were incorporated as a single structure for the purposes of the archaeological analysis. Similar to the plank cellar, the brick cellar also exhibited a staircase remnant

at its west end. However, intact artifacts recovered from this cellar indicated that, unlike the plank counterpart, it was actively utilized until the 1912 flood filled it with sand.

The final identifiable structure was situated south of and physically separate from Structure 1. As noted on the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (refer to Figure 6), Structure 3 did not contain a cellar and apparently shared no foundation elements with the main structures. However, historical records indicate that this addition was in fact attached to the remainder of the building. A subterranean arched brick wall exposed during excavations just north of the structure probably supported wooden buttresses, and this may explain the lack of identifiable linked wall segments.

Archaeologists initially hypothesized that shaped stone pre-dated fire-brick as a building material, not only at the Tremont House but throughout Denver. Compared to quarried stone, brick exhibited a uniform shape, was often more cost-effective, and thus was more convenient and valued as a construction element. Researchers suspected that if crudely shaped rock was incorporated into a structure, it was likely due to the fact that brick was unavailable. Based on this assumption, it was theorized early-on that the Structure 2 rhyolite foundation comprised the original 1859 Temperance Hotel.

However, temporal (age) analysis of artifacts recovered from Structures 1 and 2 (discussed below), coupled with the discovery that bricks were indeed locally produced and available in Denver as of late 1859, indicated that Structure 2 was actually the first substantial *addition* to the hotel (completed in the late-1860s or early 1870s). Careful examination of the meager historical descriptions of Mrs.

Maggard's original 1859-1860 structure, as well as later photographs of the hotel (since no photos of the Temperance Hotel are known to exist), led researchers to revise their initial conclusion: Structure 1 was in fact the foundation for the original wood frame hotel. This evidence sheds new light on historical accounts of the use of stone prior to, and in conjunction with, brick in Denver. It appears that brick and stone were being used contemporaneously in early architecture.

Structure 3 was the last addition to the hotel, constructed between 1887 and 1890. Interestingly, however, many artifacts recovered in this area were found to date from much earlier time periods. The presence of burned areas east of Structure 3 suggested that an earlier (pre-1887) structure may have existed in this location, and later burned. Alternatively, and more plausibly, this area was probably vacant prior to 1887 and offered a convenient area for dumping trash produced during preceding decades. The Sanborn maps post-date all but the last building sequence at the hotel, and the archaeological evidence for the latter scenario is convincing, as outlined below.

Historical documents suggest that the original wood frame structure was razed and subsequently rebuilt entirely with brick in the late 1860s or early 1870s. However, no archaeological evidence exists to support this hypothesis. If the structure had been completely replaced, more uniformity would be expected in the remaining structure foundations, which as we have seen, is certainly not the case. In fact, had the structure been completely rebuilt, the original foundations would undoubtedly have been removed and replaced with new ones. Instead, archaeological indications are that the evolution of the hotel involved additions constructed to the north and south of Structure 1. The enlarged brick hotel of the 1870s (and

after) obviously encompassed all or most of the wooden structure, but did not displace it entirely.

Nearly two dozen architectural and non-architectural features were identified within and adjacent to the three main structures. These included wooden drain pipes, a variety of small brick platforms of unknown function, and metal gas and water pipes. As noted earlier, gas was installed at the Tremont House in 1871, water pipes in 1872, and electricity in 1880, all of which helped the hotel perpetuate an air of civility and propriety on the dusty plains.

Well over 26,000 artifacts were recovered during the Tremont House excavations, which included some of the earliest historic settlement period material ever recovered in the Denver area. The list of artifact types was seemingly endless, and included a broad array of items one might expect to find amongst the refuse of a hotel: glassware, crockery, dishes, silverware, furnishings, fragments of clothing, writing accessories, clocks, toothbrushes, and numerous others (Figures 25-28). Many pieces were retrieved intact, having survived the various construction episodes, floods, and other disturbances over the last 130 years. Not surprisingly, however, the majority of items were fragmentary, and in some cases unidentifiable. However, even broken pieces can contain significant information useful to archaeologists attempting to interpret the past.

Approximately 2,100 artifacts were found to be reliable time indicators, and these were particularly valuable in establishing the types and quantity of items in use in a given period. Many factors help historians and archaeologists determine when an artifact was manufactured and used. Physical characteristics such as shape, size, color, and



Figure 25 - Assorted decorative and utilitarian artifacts recovered during the Tremont House excavations. Upper row: sea shells, a wedding ring, and a glass bead. Lower: bone brush handles.



Figure 26 - Hard rubber, celluloid, and amber pipe stems and bowls.



Figure 27 - Eye glass lenses and a glass "Red Cross" syringe.



Figure 28 - Glass inkwells (1880+) and writing implements.

fabrication technique often provide clues regarding when, where, and by whom an artifact was produced and, by inference, when it may have been utilized. Developing a time sequence for artifacts places them in a so-called "temporally diagnostic" framework, a very important feature for researchers attempting to deduce and interpret past events and behaviors from archaeological evidence. Ceramic vessels and glass containers, for example, can often be placed in a bracketed time period because of known beginning and ending manufacturing dates for certain product styles, the materials used in their production (such as the metallic element manganese in many pre-World War I glass products, which caused them to turn purple when exposed to sunlight), or because of the history of the manufacturer itself (Figures 29-35).

Laboratory analysis of temporally diagnostic artifacts indicated four distinct intervals in which the quantity of these artifacts was significantly higher than others. Artifacts with beginning manufacturing dates between 1855 and 1859 were the most prevalent, comprising nearly 40% of all diagnostic materials, followed by lesser peaks between 1875 and 1884, and finally during the period from 1895 to 1899. The high percentage of early artifacts can be attributed primarily to changing patterns of dumping as the hotel evolved, rather than the presence of more artifacts than in later periods. In fact, as the hotel grew in stature, popularity and size throughout the 1860s and early 1870s, the number and variety of items in use was undoubtedly higher than in the initial years of its existence. Similarly, as the hotel labored to maintain its image and clientele in the decade after 1875, it is probable that the quantity and variety of commercial and domestic objects would have at least remained constant, if not enlarged.



Figure 29 - Medicinal tonics, L to R: "Burnett's Cocaine: Boston-A Perfect Hair Dressing" (1847-57); "E. B. Foote, M.D., New York City" (1867-1915); "Hale's Honey of Horehound and Tar" (1899-1905)



Figure 30 - Medicinal syrup, bitters, liniment, chemical, and shoe polish bottles (L to R), 1870-1903.



Figure 31 - Seltzer or mineral water bottles with "spring popper" seals, all manufactured in Denver. Left to right: A.D. Simmons, 1893-1899; Standard Bottling Co., 1879+; J. Schueler, 1878-1889.



Figure 32 - Ironstone ceramic bowls (British and American manufacturers, ca. 1850-1890).

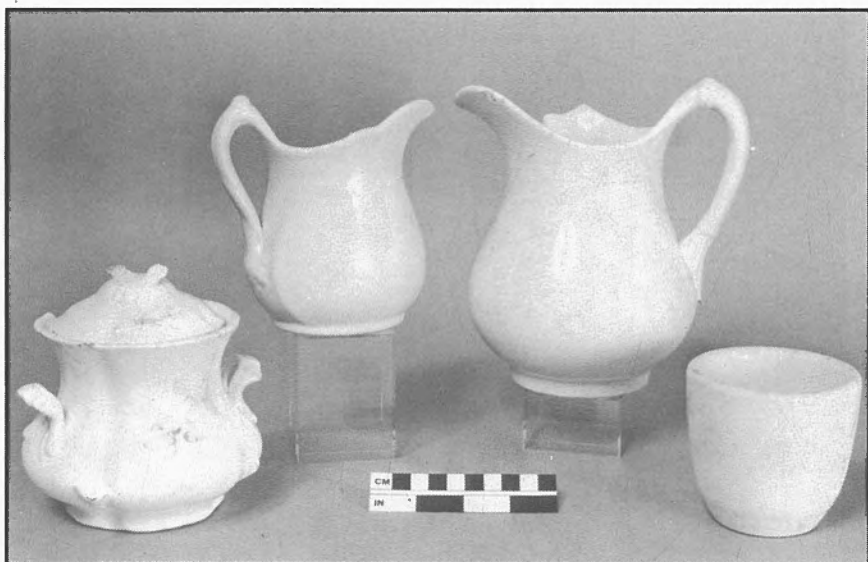


Figure 33 - American-made ironstone sugar bowl, pitchers, and tea cup (post-1873).



Figure 34 - Earthenware crocks from local merchants (ca. late 1800s).

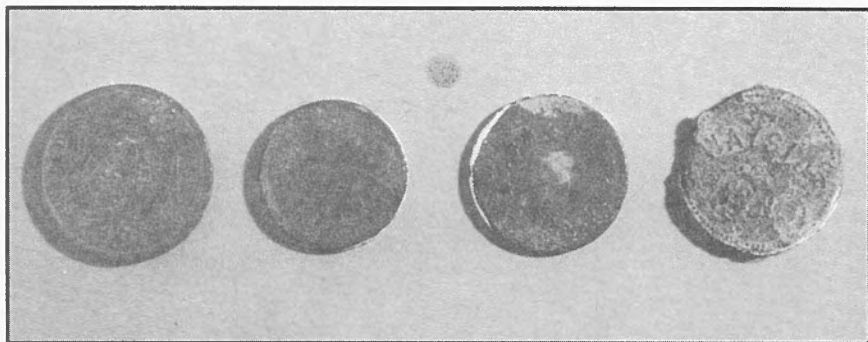


Figure 35 - Nineteenth century coins (actual size), L to R: two-cent piece (1864-1873); 1863 Indian-head penny; nickel (1866-1883); and "Wayside Inn" token (value and function unknown).

During the hotel's earliest period, it appears that vacant areas adjacent to the structure on the north, west and south were used for dumping refuse. An abandoned coal chute, probably an original feature of the hotel, was also used to dispose of 1850s-1860s trash. The hotel's rapid growth during the early 1870s led to the utilization of former dumping areas for additional construction. This competition for space evidently made it necessary to dispose of most post-1875 trash completely away from the building, off-site. Many of the later artifacts recovered at the site were found in the plank cellar, which, as noted above, was apparently abandoned and used as a trash repository while the hotel was still in business.

All other artifacts were identified strictly according to their function, where possible, rather than as time markers, and included goods such as hair combs, keys, beads, and gambling dice (Figures 36 and 37). A few ethnic artifacts were also recovered, including thick ceramic containers exhibiting what appears to be remnants of Chinese lettering (a section of Denver's Chinatown was at one time located in the block across



Figure 36 - Celluloid and bone gambling die, and a celluloid guitar pick.

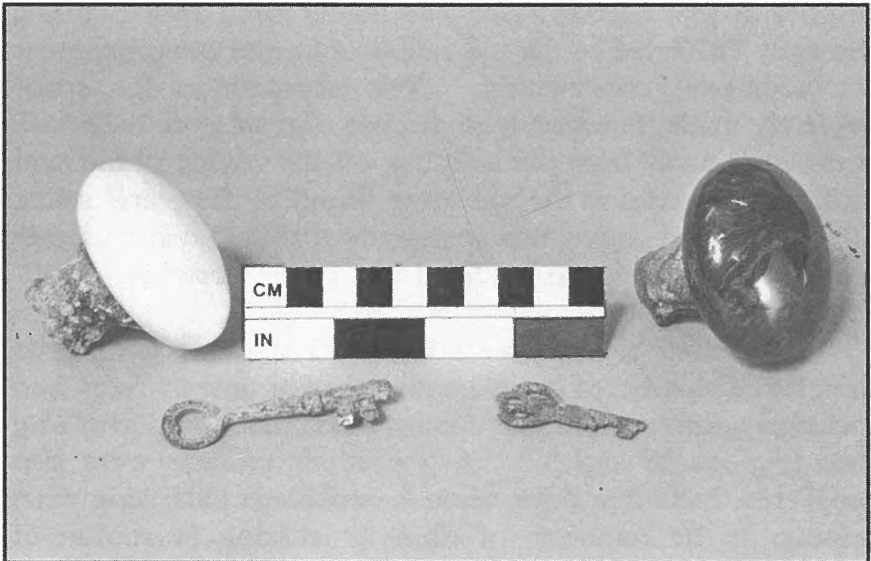


Figure 37 - Porcelain and marble doorknobs, and metal and brass keys.

the street from the hotel, on the corner of Blake and 13th Streets). Researchers were therefore able to carefully examine each portion of the hotel using information derived from associated artifactual material.

Unlike most bottled products manufactured today, which exhibit paper labels identifying contents, maker, and other information, many glass products produced before and during the Tremont's existence had such information embossed into the glass itself (sometimes combined with a paper label) (Figure 38). In addition, the various techniques employed to manufacture glass containers—as well as the materials used in their production—changed dramatically over the years, and these processes are well-documented. Consequently, the function and antiquity of many containers recovered from the Tremont House was easily ascertained through additional historical research. In some instances, the shape of certain product bottles from the nineteenth century remain similar or identical to the same product today. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is Worcestershire Sauce containers, whose general size and configuration is essentially unchanged (Figure 39).

Similarly, interpretations of the function of ceramic vessels were based on the shape and material type of a given piece. One might assume that, being a hotel and restaurant, most ceramics were probably used to prepare and serve food to patrons, or provided in guest rooms in the form of washbasins, cups, or other personal items. While a significant number of whole or partial vessels recovered were undoubtedly utilized in this fashion, this was not universally the case. (In fact, if you were to inventory the pottery in your own home, you might be surprised at the variety and functional diversity of



Figure 38 - Embossed perfume and personal hygiene bottles, L to R: "E.D. Pinaud, Paris, 1810+"; "Lubin Parfumeur," 1865-90; "Newbro's Herpicide, Kills the Dandruff Germ," 1890+.



Figure 39 - Worcestershire sauce bottles (1810-1880), an example of historic glass containers that exhibit essentially the same shape as their descendants in use today.

ceramic types to be found!) At the Tremont House, a substantial quantity and assortment of china and tablewares (including porcelain and earthenwares) were indeed used for food service, and the maker's marks imprinted on the base of these items quite often served to identify the manufacturer and approximate date(s) of production and use (Figures 40 and 41). Nearly 20 different ceramic manufacturers from England and the United States, who collectively created pottery between 1839 and about 1910, were represented in the Tremont collection. While many stoneware vessels were related to food storage, others contained substances that were not consumed, such as ink or bleach (goods that we may not generally think of as sold in ceramic containers today). Other pottery types found included assorted redwares, consisting of a variety of unglazed flower pots.

In addition to commercial and domestic goods, nearly 4,000 bones representing 30 different varieties of fish, birds, and mammals were recovered. Most species were undoubtedly served in the hotel restaurant, although such specimens as rat, dog, cat, and coyote are not considered to have been food sources (yet one rat bone did show evidence of having been cooked!). As expected, cattle was the most prevalent domesticated species, and chicken was the most common fowl. Domestic animals comprised nearly 90% of the total remains, but wild game was obviously an important and fairly frequent contributor to the Tremont menu, especially during the hotel's first decade. Excavations completed in long-used trash piles behind the hotel revealed that wild game remains in fact dominated in the early years (through the early 1870s), whereas domestic species constituted the overwhelming majority as time passed.

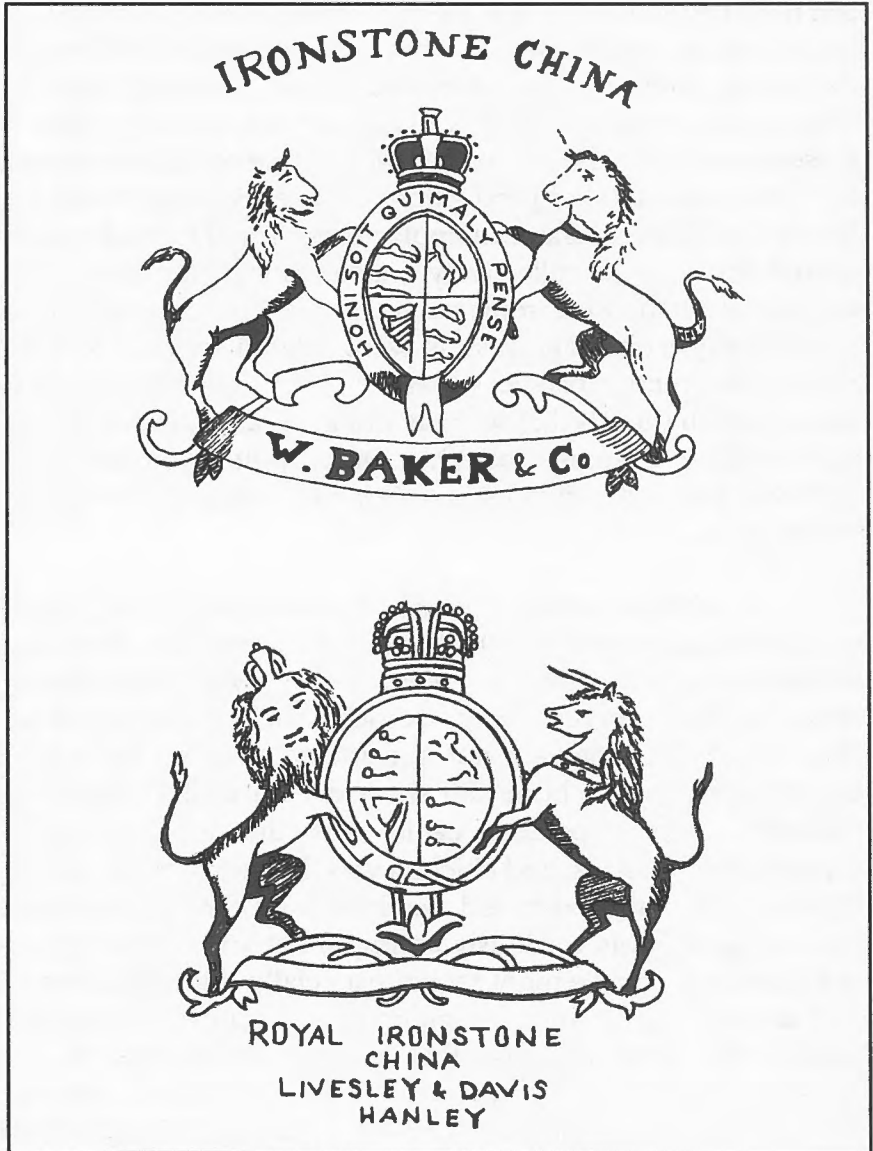
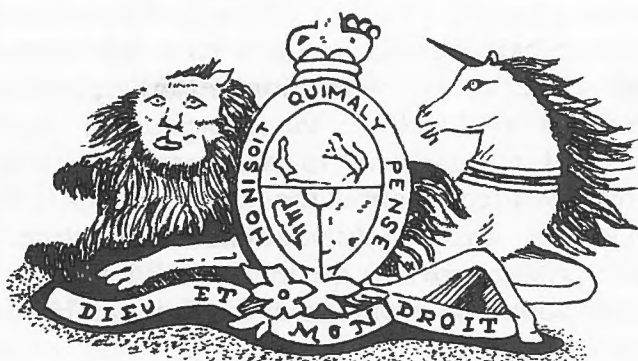


Figure 40 - British manufacturers maker's marks imprinted on the base of ceramic vessels recovered from the Tremont House: top, W. Baker and Co., 1839-1932; bottom, Livesley & Davis, 1844-1851.



IRONSTONE CHINA

J.M. & Co.

HOTEL
IRONSTONE CHINA



KNOWLES, TAYLOR
AND
KNOWLES

Figure 41 - United States ceramic manufacturers maker's marks from Tremont House vessels: J.M. & Co., top, 1863-1890; Knowles, Taylor and Knowles, bottom, 1878.

the hotel was used for illicit or illegal activities such as prostitution or organized gambling.

Structural evidence illustrating the initial development and subsequent deterioration of the Tremont is also persuasive. The architectural evolution of the hotel was characterized by periodic expansion in response to commercial demand, with most of the major structural additions to the hotel completed within the first 15 years of its existence. The Tremont's standing as a first-class inn was secured and amplified during this period. Structural modifications ceased in the mid-1870s, however, suggesting that business flattened and perhaps began to taper substantially. Independent of historical documents, the architectural remains, in association with datable artifacts, reflect a distinct pattern of growth and decline. Although one last addition was constructed relatively late in time (late-1880s), the flimsy foundation elements suggest that it was a second-rate, and perhaps mostly cosmetic, alteration.

(3) Archaeological remains indicate that the diet of Tremont House patrons changed significantly as time passed. Bison still roamed the plains near Denver into the 1870s, deer and pronghorn antelope were numerous in the immediate area, and bear, bighorn sheep, and elk were fairly common in the nearby mountains (all of which were represented in the Tremont faunal collection). Game birds such as grouse, pheasant, prairie chicken, and turkey were also available on the plains or in the foothills to the west. Excavations revealed that locally obtained fish, bison, and prairie chicken were the predominant wild species served in the hotel restaurant during the early days, supplemented with far lesser quantities of domestic pig and cattle. Wild rabbits and domestic cattle comprised the principal varieties later years. This trend reflects over-exploitation of larger game animals and birds by Denver's fast-growing

population. In addition, domesticated beef was more readily available after the Civil War as a result of large-scale cattle drives from Texas, and regional development of the cattle industry on Colorado's eastern ranges.

The Tremont House was apparently renowned for its wild game-based menu during the early years, and historical accounts imply that this table fare was considered rather exotic and opulent, and intended to maintain an image attractive to a higher status clientele. However, the archaeological evidence does not disclose whether certain game animals were in fact a reasonable, affordable food source available to the general population. Because domestic animals began to dominate the restaurant menu at the same time that the hotel started to struggle, further comparisons based on the archaeological evidence are difficult. The region undoubtedly supported numerous market hunters who harvested game from the plains and mountains for sale in small mining camps and towns, as well as in burgeoning urban areas such as Denver. The faunal evidence recovered during the dig indicates that the Tremont House was an active participant in that economic activity. However, such a system could survive only as long as the quantity and variety of wild game species remained constant.

(4) Previous historical archaeological research has concluded that patterns of human behavior as documented in written records sometimes conflict with reconstructions of behavior based on archaeological findings. This theme was demonstrated based on the Tremont House project results.

During the 1860s and 1870s, many articles and advertisements appeared in local newspapers indicating the social prominence of the Tremont. Subsequent to about 1875, however, the hotel fell out of favor as new hotels, businesses,

and residences were built in the Capitol Hill area. Denver's newspaper coverage shifted its focus to the new areas where social activities—once common at the Tremont House—were then being held. Perusing newspaper accounts, the primary source of information about many noteworthy commercial establishments, one might assume that the hotel closed during this period. In reality, of course, the Tremont House was absorbed into a burgeoning warehouse district inspired by the railroad, and was inhabited by a large and diverse population. This segment of Denver society, however, tended to be overlooked by the media, and product advertisements were not often directed specifically toward ethnic or cultural minorities. Archaeological indications, such as diagnostic artifacts in association with architectural evidence, certainly disprove any suggestion of the hotel's demise, and instead reveal that the Tremont House remained a functioning—if not thriving—business into the second decade of the twentieth century.

ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND THE TREMONT HOUSE HOTEL

The archaeological investigations at the site of the Tremont House Hotel have provided a unique view of a frontier community. Rather than relying strictly on documentary historical sources for a depiction of early Denver and one of its first structures, these excavations have exposed tangible elements of a bygone era discovered and researched in their original setting. Examining the archaeological remnants of the Tremont House has allowed intimate contact with a remnant of American culture beyond the images and perceptions available from written history--images that are often inherently skewed by the cultural and ideological biases of the chronicler.

The archaeological record at the Tremont House has revealed patterns that have implications for continued historical archaeological research in the western United States. Early Denverites brought with them behavior patterns learned elsewhere--how to construct houses, prepare food, conduct business, and dump refuse (among other things)--that were adapted to a harsh frontier environment. The results of these behaviors, and their subsequent evolution into a unique cultural system, can be explored in archaeological contexts. The Tremont House project has established a framework for implementing new approaches to future research on topics such as the development of models for artifact examination and precise methods for dating historic sites.

Admittedly, museums are crowded with excellent examples of nineteenth century artifacts similar to those recovered during the Tremont House excavation project. But are such museum displays always truly representative of how, and in what contexts, these artifacts were utilized? Do they

adequately illustrate the broad spectrum of domestic and commercial items in use on a daily basis? Do they consistently provide an authentic, honest view of American culture? Most certainly not. As historical archaeologist James Deetz states, polished museum exhibits frequently "reflect...our view of the American past as a romantic time when things were prettier, problems fewer, [and] life simpler" (1977:157). In point of fact, we often distort our view of the past by ignoring the wide array of archaeological information contained in historical sites.

The discipline of historical archaeology possesses the capability to contribute more than just interesting artifacts to study and ponder; it can be of more value than as mere supplement to "established" fact as recorded by historians. The archaeological investigation of the Tremont House has permitted us to examine, contemplate, and explore the actual location where known events transpired and real people interacted, and to evaluate aspects of early Denver life that are otherwise based on assumption and theory. Material culture is arguably the most objective source of information available documenting the American past, and we must not overlook its intrinsic benefits. Complemented by written records, historical archaeology constitutes a unique hybrid possessing a broad scope and appeal.

It is terribly important that the "small things forgotten" be remembered. For in the seemingly little and insignificant things that accumulate to create a lifetime, the essence of our existence is captured. We must remember these bits and pieces, and we must use them in new and imaginative ways so that a different appreciation for what life is today, and was in the past, can be achieved. The written document has its proper

and important place, but there is also a time when we should set aside our perusal of diaries, court records, and inventories, and listen to another voice (Deetz 1977:161).

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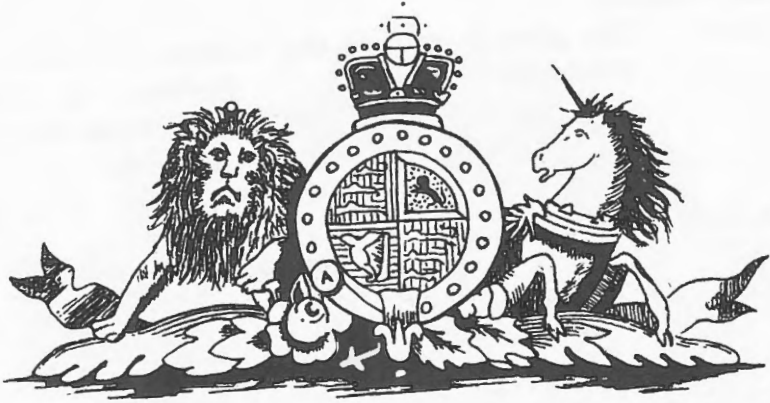
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