

# Downtown Florence, Colorado Historic Buildings Survey 2007-08

## *Final Survey Report*



**Front Range Research Associates, Inc.**  
**Denver, Colorado**



# **Downtown Florence, Colorado Historic Buildings Survey, 2007-08**

## ***Final Survey Report***

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November 2008



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*COVER: Early 1900s view east along Main Street from west of Santa Fe Avenue. The Florence State Bank is at the left edge of the image and the Lennox Hotel is at the right. The Lovell Block is at the center left and the Wilson block is at the center right. The building with the belfry in the distance to the right is the town hall and fire department. SOURCE: Historic postcard view, undated, card identification number 1942, Williamson-Haffner Company, publishers, Denver, Colorado, in the authors' collection.*

# INTRODUCTION

Florence is the second largest city in Fremont County, Colorado, with an estimated population of 3,821 in 2006.<sup>1</sup> Agricultural settlement in the vicinity began in the early 1860s, and the area became known as Frazierville. The second oldest oil field in the world was discovered here in 1862. In 1872, local coal deposits attracted the notice of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, which extended its tracks to the vicinity of present-day Florence. Pioneer James A. McCandless platted the townsite in the same year. An oil boom began in the 1880s, and soon wood derricks and refineries dominated the Florence townscape.

The 1890s were a prosperous decade for Florence, which greatly benefited from the discovery of gold at nearby Cripple Creek in 1891. The completion of a rail linkage between Florence and the goldfield in 1894 resulted in the erection of a number of ore reduction mills. The boom times ended shortly after the turn of the century, and Florence lost 27 percent of its population between 1900 and 1910. Between 1910 and 1990, the town's population remained stable, with Florence serving as a service and supply center for the surrounding agricultural, ore processing, and mining areas. Tourism, recreation, and the corrections industry grew in importance during the second half of the twentieth century. It is within this historic context that Florence's architectural heritage emerged.

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<sup>1</sup> Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Municipal Population estimates, July 2006.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to examine and document 62 mostly commercial properties in Downtown Florence. Most of the area was examined previously during a survey in 1981. Properties included in the current study were to be recorded on Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory forms (Form 1403), with expanded architectural descriptions and historical backgrounds, additional photographic documentation and mapping, and current evaluations of potential eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places and State Register of Historic Properties. The boundary of the previously-identified potential National Register Historic District was to be examined, and the contributing or noncontributing status of resources within the area addressed.

## **Project Results**

The survey resulted in the documentation of 63 properties on Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory forms (Form 1403), each with an architectural description, historical background, evaluation of significance, black and white photographs, and sketch and location maps. The survey determined that a potential National Register Historic District is present within the survey area, embracing 67 resources (54, or 80.6 percent, are contributing and 13, or 19.4 percent, are noncontributing). In addition, eleven individual resources included in the intensive survey are evaluated as potentially eligible to the National Register (as well as potentially

eligible to the State Register) and six as potentially eligible to the State Register only. Four resources within the district that were not surveyed in this project are already listed on the National or State Registers.

The information resulting from this survey will assist City staff and interested residents with preservation planning. Assessments of individual National Register of Historic Places and State Register of Historic Properties eligibility, the evaluation of historic district eligibility, and the documentation of buildings on survey forms will provide direction for future preservation efforts. The information resulting from this survey will constitute one basis by which properties are nominated for designation and citizens are made aware of the city's architectural and historical heritage.

## **Funding**

This project was paid for in part by a State Historical Fund grant to the University of Colorado Denver, Colorado Center for Community Development (grant number 2007-T1-001). The project was one of the first three surveys undertaken through the Small Town Survey Initiative of the Colorado Historical Society. The survey was conducted following the guidelines of the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation publication *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual* (2007). Architectural classifications of buildings are based on the Society's publication *A Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering* (Second Edition, March 2003) and the lexicon for architectural styles included in the *Survey Manual*.

## PROJECT AREA

The 2007-08 Downtown Florence Historic Buildings Survey was a comprehensive intensive survey that examined approximately 18.6 acres of urban land in the central part of the city and recorded a total of 63 historic resources (See Appendices). Most of the properties included in the survey were erected for commercial purposes. Figure 1 shows the location of the geographically contiguous survey area on a USGS map extract, while Figure 2 identifies surveyed resources on a map showing building footprints. The survey area was roughly located in the area bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the north, the railroad tracks on the south, Petroleum Avenue on the east, and between Santa Fe and Maple avenues on the west. The surveyed properties were located in Sections 16 (62 resources) and 21 (one resource), Township 19 South, Range 70 West, 6th Principal Meridian, Fremont County, Colorado.

### Physical Setting

The street grid in this section of Florence is rotated approximately 14 degrees east of true north to roughly align with the

Arkansas River, 0.6 miles to the north. Within the intensive survey area, the north northeast-south southwest oriented streets include Santa Fe, Pikes Peak, and Petroleum avenues; west northwest-east southeast streets include Front, Main, and 2nd streets. Full blocks in the survey area are rectangular (about 428 feet by 328 feet), with alleys on the longer axis. The route of State Highway 115 follows Main Street through the survey area, while State Highway 67 follows Pikes Peak Avenue south to Main Street and then proceeds eastward.

The intersection of Pikes Peak Avenue and Main Street represents the address origin for east-west and north-south streets. The street numbering pattern employed within the city is unusual in Colorado. Odd and even street numbers flip on opposite sides of the address origin point (see below). For example, West Main Street odd numbered addresses are on the south side of the street and even addresses are on the north; East Main Street odd numbered addresses are on the north side of the street and even addresses are on the south (see table below).

STREET	STREET SECTION	ODD-NUMBERED ADDRESSES ARE ON THE-	EVEN-NUMBERED ADDRESSES ARE ON THE-
East-West Streets	East of Pikes Peak Ave.	North Side	South Side
	West of Pikes Peak Ave.	South Side	North Side
North-South Streets	North of Main St.	West Side	East Side
	South of Main St.	East Side	West Side

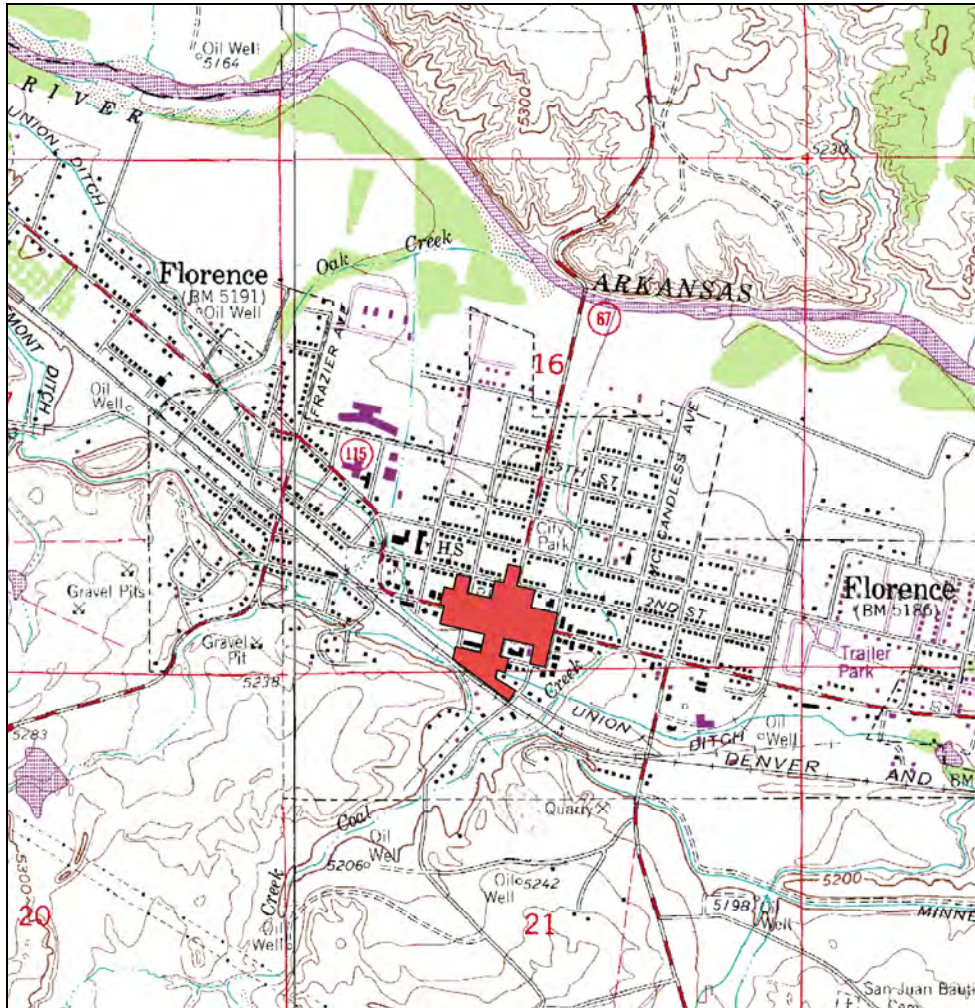


Figure 1. The boundary of the Downtown Florence survey area is indicated by the shaded polygon on the map. SOURCE: Extract of U.S. Geological Survey, "Florence, Colorado," 7.5 minute quadrangle map (Denver: U.S. Geological Survey, 1975).



**LEGEND**

- SURVEY STATUS**
- Primary Surveyed Building
  - Surveyed Outbuilding
  - Not Surveyed NRHP or SRHP
  - OUTSIDE SURVEY AREA
  - PARCELS
  - SURVEY AREA

**Figure 2**  
**SURVEY STATUS, 2007-08**  
**DOWNTOWN FLORENCE**



# 3

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

### **Objectives and Scope of Work**

The objective of the 2007-08 survey of historic resources in the City of Florence was to document 62 properties within a contiguous survey area and evaluate their eligibility for listing in the National and State Registers (63 buildings were actually recorded). The buildings were described, photographed, researched, mapped, and evaluated, with Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory forms (Form 1403) completed for each property. An additional completed goal was the evaluation of the contributing and noncontributing status of resources within a potential historic district. The project also called for this final report explaining the survey findings, including evaluations of the surveyed properties, and providing an overview of the history of Florence and the survey area. The report includes a USGS topographic map extract outlining the project area and a survey map showing the surveyed buildings' locations.

### **Previous Surveys and Listed Resources in Florence**

A file search of the Colorado Historical Society's COMPASS database performed on 2 October 2007 revealed that most of the resources within the survey area (63 of 67) had been previously documented (See Table 1). Sixty-two of these resources were recorded in a 1981 survey undertaken by the Colorado Historical Society for the Four Corners Regional Commission. That multi-community project was under the general

direction of Paul M. O'Rourke, with Mary Taylor conducting the Florence portion of the study.<sup>2</sup> The remaining resource (5FN94, Fremont Hotel/Elks Home, 127-31 East Front Street) was surveyed before that project. Four resources had never been recorded before the current project: 5FN2269, Florence Carnegie Library, 100 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street; 5FN2320, McCandless House/Florence Mortuary, 120 North Pikes Peak Avenue; 5FN2328, Southern Colorado Power Company office, 204 West Main Street; and 5FN2327, Snow White Laundry, 112 S. Santa Fe Avenue.

The 1981 survey determined a 62-resource "Florence Commercial District" was potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. Forty-two of the resources (76 percent) were evaluated as contributing and fifteen (24 percent) as noncontributing. Two resources were apparently not included within the proposed district, but were assessed as potentially individually eligible to the National Register: Fremont Hotel/Elks Home, 127-31 East Front Street (5FN94) and an unidentified building on West Main Street (5FN657).

Four resources within the survey area are currently listed in the National or State Registers and were not resurveyed as part of this project. The materials compiled for

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<sup>2</sup> Paul M. O'Rourke, comp., "Historical Surveys of Colorado Communities," Final Report (Denver: Colorado Historical Society), prepared for the Four Corners Regional Commission, March 1982.

designation provided sufficient documentation for these buildings. Listed in the National Register is the Florence U.S. Post Office, 121 North Pikes Peak Avenue (1936, 5FN642). There are three State Register-listed resources: the Braden and Griffith Block/Florence Pioneer Museum, 100 East Front Street (1894, 5FN597); the Ramsey-McGuire Mercantile/New Lennox Hotel, 201 West Main Street (1906, 5FN622); and the Rialto Theater, 209 West Main Street (1923, 5FN624).

### **Expected Results**

Based on the results of the file search, preliminary historical research, and a reconnaissance of the area, it was expected that the resources surveyed would be principally commercial in nature. Important questions about the properties to be surveyed included their dates of construction, the principal building materials used, and the architectural styles exhibited. Identification of prominent persons and businesses or organizations associated with the buildings and the original functions of the properties were topics for research. Examination of the ability of the buildings to convey their historic character was an important component of the project. The determination of dates of alterations was also a focus of the study.

### **Intensive-Comprehensive Survey Fieldwork**

The comprehensive-intensive level field survey was conducted in February and April 2008. Fieldwork included examination of each building for architectural features and design elements, style, building materials, building condition, plan, setting, and alterations. The location of each resource was verified on a base map. Black and white photographs of each primary building and secondary buildings visible from public right of ways were taken. Property owners and

other interested persons encountered or identified during the fieldwork were interviewed for information about some historic properties. A total of 63 primary buildings, together with their associated outbuildings, if any, were recorded in the field. Few of the buildings had outbuildings.

### **Photography**

Black and white photographs of each surveyed resource were taken from February through April 2008. All prints are 4" X 6", produced on Fuji Color Crystal Archive paper from 35-millimeter black and white negatives. Photographs are identified using archival computer labels produced from the project database. The labels indicate Smithsonian identification number, address, photographer, date, film roll and frame, camera direction, and location of negative.

Negatives are stored in archival sheets in a notebook with a photographic log (sorted by street address and by roll and frame number). The Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in Denver received one set of original prints, and the John C. Fremont Library in Florence retained one set of original prints and the associated negatives. The Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center in Cañon City also received a CD-ROM with the forms and photographic images. Color digital images (at least one of each building) were taken for use at the public meeting presenting the results of the survey.

### **Mapping**

The Fremont County GIS Authority aided the project by providing geographic data, which included parcels, streets, street centerlines, building outlines, and other layers. In a number of cases, building polygons were split or otherwise edited based on fieldwork and Sanborn maps to

more closely reflect the relative sizes and locations of buildings. The building outlines were linked to a parcel layer with attribute data from the Fremont County Assessor. The parcel attribute database was then used to populate relevant fields in the survey database used for the generation of the Colorado Historical Society's Architectural Inventory Form for each building.

Using the project GIS, a location map and sketch map were produced for each surveyed resource for inclusion in the Architectural Inventory form. For the location map, the geographic position of each resource was determined by calculating the centroid of each building. The centroids were converted from Colorado State Plane-Central NAD 1983 to UTM NAD 1927 and then plotted over a digital extract of the USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle map covering the area: "Florence, Colo." (1975).

Sketch maps were created from the project GIS showing each resource in the context of its block. Report, presentation, and analytical maps of the survey area were completed using the project GIS, which was also used to compute the acreage of the survey.

### **Historical Research**

Historical research provided essential information about the resources surveyed. Information was obtained from public agencies and institutions in Florence, Cañon City, and Denver, as well as residents and property owners of Florence and other individuals with knowledge of the city's history and historic buildings. General and site-specific research materials about the Florence area, including primary and secondary sources, were reviewed for background and individual property information.

In Florence, the Price Pioneer Museum and Historical Society's historic photographs,

city directories, exhibits, and maps were examined. Historic photographs, newspaper clippings, and other research materials collected by John and Carol Fox proved extremely valuable for the study. In Cañon City, the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center provided historical information on each of the surveyed properties, historic photographs, city directory data, newspaper clippings, and property abstracts.

In the Denver area, the files of the Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation contain survey forms, project reports, and nomination forms for the National and State Registers. Historic newspapers, photographs, and other research materials in the Stephen Hart Library of the Colorado Historical Society proved useful. The historical materials housed at the Western History and Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library included important reference sources, including Sanborn insurance maps, historic photographs, clippings files and brochures, newspaper indexes, city directories, and books relating to Florence. Manuscript U.S. Census returns for 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 and the Colorado 1885 Census were accessed to identify residents of particular buildings and to discover occupations and demographic characteristics of business owners.

Historic and recent Florence newspapers were a major source of information for the history of the city, construction of buildings, biographies of local citizens, and business descriptions. Newspapers utilized included the *Florence Refiner*, especially the Industrial Edition of September 1897, the *Florence Herald*, the *Florence Tribune*, and the *Florence Citizen*. The *Cañon City Daily Record* provided much information about Florence buildings, businesses, and people.

Newspapers based in Pueblo and Denver also contained articles about Florence.

Among published materials covering the city's history are: B. F. Rockafellow, "History of Fremont County," in *History of the Arkansas Valley* (1881); Rosemae Wells Campbell, *From Trappers to Tourists* (1972); Fremont Middle School Local History Class, *Boomtown: A Brief History of Florence and Surrounding Area, 1890-1920* (1981); and Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas: A Mountain River Valley* (1990). H. Lee Scamehorn's "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek: Florence from 1885 to 1910" (1978) provided a detailed look at the town's oil and ore reduction industries during its boom years. A 1906 Florence Chamber of Commerce publication, "Florence and Its Environs," includes a number of photographs of downtown buildings.

### **Construction Dates**

Construction dates of historic buildings were determined from Fremont County Assessor information, date stones on buildings, Sanborn maps of the survey area, city directories, historic photographs, newspaper accounts, published books, and other written sources, as well as the field survey. Construction dates from Assessor's records proved to be unreliable in some cases. Estimated dates of construction (in some cases expressed as a span of years) were produced from sources such as Sanborn fire insurance maps for 1890, 1895, 1900, 1906, 1912, 1926, and 1948. The examination of historic photographs and newspaper articles, books, architectural styles and features, building materials, and construction techniques also provided clues for dates of construction.

Florence has fairly good city directory coverage, with the city sometimes combined in a volume with Cañon City. Year ranges for city directories (with gaps) are as

follows: 1902-1937, 1951-1989, and 1993-2007. Historic telephone directories cover the 1940-50 period. No nineteenth century directory of residents with street addresses has been found, and it appears the town lacked building numbers until 1902.<sup>3</sup> Newspaper articles provided useful information for dates of construction of specific buildings. State business directories also included indications of when certain residents were present in the city, as did newspaper advertisements.

### **Preparation and Distribution of Forms and Report**

After completion of the field survey and historical research, Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory forms were prepared in an output form acceptable to the Colorado Historical Society and in a database format for analysis and mapping uses. The task required developing a report template that replicated the appearance of the state form produced from a database structure conforming to other project needs. The system was used for forms completion and printing and analytical sorts, listings, and queries. Sorted extracts from the database were imported into a word processing package for use as survey report tables.

The forms included information on each property's ownership, location, date of construction, building materials, architectural description, style, alterations, associated buildings, historical background, construction history, statement of significance, and sources of information. The Colorado Historical Society assigned a unique Smithsonian identification number for each property. The numbers were included on forms and photographs and

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<sup>3</sup> The numbering was needed for the town to secure the home delivery of mail. *Denver Times*, 14 April 1902, 5.

were referenced in the report. New identification numbers spanned the range from 5FN2269 through 5FN2328.

The architectural styles assigned on the forms were based on those in the Colorado Historical Society's booklet, *A Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering*, and a lexicon of architectural styles included in the Society's *Survey Manual*. Included with each survey form were related photographs, a sketch map showing the building outline of the surveyed resource in the context of the block where it is located, and a location map consisting of an extract of the USGS quadrangle map. Both maps were produced from the GIS.

All of these survey products, together with the final report (this document), were submitted to the University of Colorado Denver, Florence representatives, and the Colorado Historical Society. The Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation transfers the information generated on the inventory forms into its statewide database and houses an original copy of the forms and survey report. The John C. Fremont Library in Florence also retains copies of the report, forms, and original photographs and negatives. PDF versions of the survey forms and survey report and the Access table containing the survey form data were also provided to the library on CD-ROM. In addition, a copy was provided to the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center.

### **Public Meetings**

Laurie and Tom Simmons of Front Range Research Associates, Inc., attended a meeting with local representatives to discuss the project goals and methodology and to learn of possible sources of information in December 2007. They also provided a briefing on the results of the survey in a

public meeting at the conclusion of the project.

### **Project Participants**

Front Range Research Associates, Inc., of Denver, Colorado, conducted the historic building survey as a consultant to the Colorado Center for Community Development at the University of Colorado Denver. R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons of Front Range Research completed research, fieldwork, and consultation regarding eligibility of resources, and prepared the forms, maps, and final survey report. Susan Cochran of the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center in Cañon City provided research support for the project. Carolyn Gentile assisted with historic newspaper research. Tom Simmons took black and white photographs of the buildings included in the survey.

The University of Colorado Denver Center for Community Development, directed by Jon Schler, was the grant recipient. Kirsten Christensen participated in administration of the project. Diana Laughlin was the Colorado State University/Department of Local Affairs Field Representative.

Local Florence residents provided input on the survey area, buildings to survey, project methodology, and sources of historical information, and reviewed the products of the survey. Chris Geddes, National and State Register Historian for the Colorado Historical Society (CHS) consulted on evaluations of eligibility to the National and State Registers and reviewed the survey report. Mary Therese Anstey, CHS Historical and Architectural Survey Coordinator, answered technical questions and reviewed the survey forms and report. Elizabeth Blackwell administered the project for the State Historical Fund.

## **Acknowledgments**

A number of individuals and organizations contributed to the successful outcome of the project. Florence residents Larry and Beryl Baker and Morrie and Laurie Aves served as local points of contact for the project, assisted in the selection of properties for inclusion in the intensive survey, suggested sources of information, facilitated access to local repositories, and coordinated meetings. Longtime Florence residents John and Carol Fox generously made their collection of historic photographs, newspaper clippings, and other research materials available to the surveyors and answered questions regarding specific buildings. Roberta Miller of the Price Pioneer Museum provided a tour of the repository's exhibits and archives. W. Drew Lamoreux, former president of the First National Bank, answered questions about that institution and an associated adjoining building. A number of other property

owners and interested citizens also provided information about buildings included in the survey. Bob Bush of the Fremont County GIS Authority supplied geographic data and digital aerial images for use in the project.

Historian H. Lee Scamehorn, who wrote a scholarly history of the development of the oil and ore processing industries in Florence, generously provided the surveyors with the use of 28 microfilm rolls of historic Florence newspapers. Susan Cochran and volunteers at the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center provided extensive information about building and business histories and local biographies. Library staffs of the Colorado Historical Society Stephen Hart Library and Denver Public Library assisted with access to research materials.

To these persons and the many others who provided information and assistance, we offer sincere thanks.

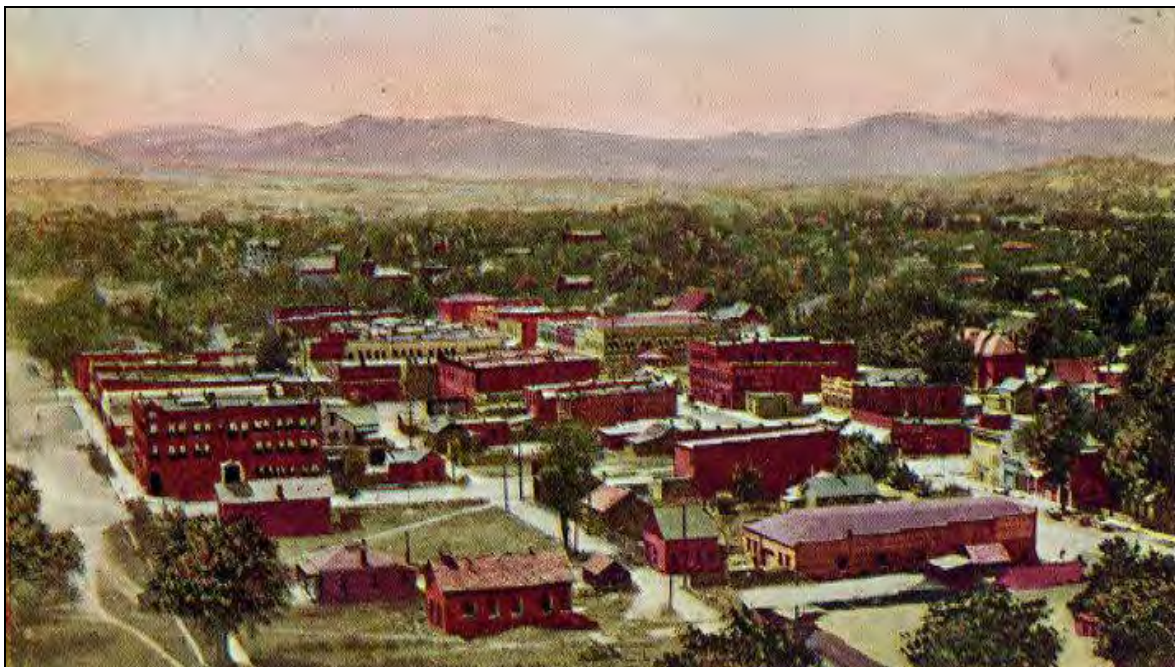


Figure 3. This undated (c. 1910s) view to the west shows the extent of Downtown Florence, with the three-story Fremont Hotel in the lower left and Main Street passing diagonally from center through the lower right of the picture. SOURCE: Historic postcard, authors' collection.

**Table 1**  
**Previously Surveyed Resources**  
**Downtown Florence, Colorado**

State Identification Number		Street Address		
Current	Previous			
5FN94	5FN94	127-31	E.	Front Street
5FN597 ☆	5FN597	100	E.	Front Street
5FN622 ☼	5FN622	201	W.	Main Street
5FN624 ☆	5FN624	207-09	W.	Main Street
5FN642 ☼	5FN642	121	N.	Pikes Peak Avenue
5FN665	5FN665	218	W.	Main Street
5FN666	5FN666	208	W.	Main Street
5FN2270	5FN523.62	201	W.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Street
5FN2271	5FN523.7	112	W.	Front Street
5FN2272	5FN523.4	105	W.	Front Street
5FN2273	5FN523.5	107	W.	Front Street
5FN2274	5FN523.6	108	W.	Front Street
5FN2275	5FN523.3	109	W.	Front Street
5FN2276	5FN523.8	114	W.	Front Street
5FN2277	5FN523.2	119	W.	Front Street
5FN2278	5FN523.9	121-23	W.	Front Street
5FN2279	5FN523.10	129	W.	Front Street
5FN2280	5FN523.13	100	E.	Main Street
5FN2281	5FN523.21	101-03	E.	Main Street
5FN2282	5FN523.17	102	E.	Main Street
5FN2283	5FN523.24	104-10	E.	Main Street
5FN2284	5FN523.22	105	E.	Main Street
5FN2285	5FN523.27	107	E.	Main Street
5FN2286	5FN523.30	109-11	E.	Main Street
5FN2287	5FN523.16	114	E.	Main Street
5FN2288	5FN523.34	115-23	E.	Main Street
5FN2289	5FN523.35	116	E.	Main Street
5FN2290	5FN523.15	118	E.	Main Street
5FN2291	5FN523.39	120	E.	Main Street
5FN2292	5FN523.41	122	E.	Main Street
5FN2293	5FN523.14	124	E.	Main Street
5FN2294	5FN523.43	125	E.	Main Street
5FN2295	5FN523.47	127-31	E.	Main Street
5FN2296	5FN523.46	128	E.	Main Street
5FN2297	5FN523.54	132	E.	Main Street
5FN2298	5FN523.23	101-03	W.	Main Street
5FN2299	5FN523.25	105	W.	Main Street

State Identification Number		Street Address		
Current	Previous			
5FN2300	5FN523.26	106	W.	Main Street
5FN2301	5FN523.28	107-09	W.	Main Street
5FN2302	5FN523.29	108-10	W.	Main Street
5FN2303	5FN523.31	111	W.	Main Street
5FN2304	5FN523.33	112-14	W.	Main Street
5FN2305	5FN523.32	113	W.	Main Street
5FN2306	5FN523.36	115-17	W.	Main Street
5FN2307	5FN523.37, 5FN523.20	116-20	W.	Main Street
5FN2308	5FN523.38	119	W.	Main Street
5FN2309	5FN523.40	121	W.	Main Street
5FN2310	5FN523.18	122	W.	Main Street
5FN2311	5FN523.42	123	W.	Main Street
5FN2312	5FN523.19	124	W.	Main Street
5FN2313	5FN523.45	125-27	W.	Main Street
5FN2314	5FN523.44	126-28	W.	Main Street
5FN2315	5FN523.48	129-31	W.	Main Street
5FN2316	5FN523.49	130	W.	Main Street
5FN2317	5FN523.50	132	W.	Main Street
5FN2318	5FN523.12	200-02	W.	Main Street
5FN2319	5FN523.53	205	W.	Main Street
5FN2321	5FN523.56	112	S.	Pikes Peak Avenue
5FN2322	5FN523.55	118	S.	Pikes Peak Avenue
5FN2323	5FN523.57	120-24	S.	Pikes Peak Avenue
5FN2324	5FN523.58	200	S.	Pikes Peak Avenue
5FN2325	5FN523.59	100		Railroad Street
5FN2326	5FN523.61	113	N.	Santa Fe Avenue

NOTES: A ☼ indicates that the resource is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; a ☆ denotes that the resource is listed in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties. For the 1981 survey, resources were assigned “point numbers,” such as 5FN523.19, which indicated that they were components of the potential Florence Commercial District (5FN523). This practice is no longer followed, so the resources were given whole numbers in this survey. Resource 5FN2307 (116-20 W. Main Street) was recorded as two separate buildings in 1981 with two state identification numbers, 5FN523.37 for the east part (number 116) and 5FN523.20 for the west part (number 120). While originally built as two separate buildings the two sections are now integrated and function as one unit; therefore the resource was recorded under one state identification number in the 2007-08 survey.

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Florence is an example of a town that had to be because of the economics of the case. The natural resources surrounding are so great and diversified that the town came into being as a logical conclusion.

--*Florence Daily Citizen*, 2 October 1936

## Early Exploration and Settlement

The Florence region was originally the domain of several indigenous groups, including Ute, Arapaho, and Cheyenne peoples. Native Americans, who occupied the area for hundreds of years before the coming of Euro-Americans, were drawn by the abundance of water (including mineral and hot springs), temperate climate, and plentiful wildlife. In December 1806, the exploration party of Lt. Zebulon Pike passed through the Florence area, where the troops found a rich supply of wild game, including buffalo and turkeys. The Arkansas Valley, a natural gateway that attracted mountain men by the 1820s, was traversed by John C. Fremont's exploring expedition in 1845.<sup>4</sup>

An early attempt at year-round settlement in the area dated to the 1840s but was abandoned in the face of Native American hostility. Permanent settlement began to occur along the Arkansas Valley in the wake

of the Pikes Peak Gold Rush of 1859. The area contained sufficient population for Fremont County to be formed when the Colorado territorial government was created in 1861. The following year the county government organized and the county boundary was set.<sup>5</sup>

Jesse and Stephen Frazier, who settled at the present-day site of Florence in 1860, were among the earliest agriculturists of the area, which became known as Frazierville.<sup>6</sup> Jesse Frazier, born in Missouri in 1819, grew up in that state and in Illinois. He came to Colorado in 1859 and first farmed on the Platte River north of Denver. After settling in Fremont County, Fraizer initially grew vegetables which he sold to area miners. In 1867, he began cultivating fruit trees, and, by 1881, his orchard included 2,000 apple, pear, and plum trees. Frazier also grew berries, kept bees for honey, and raised various grains.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966), 251 and *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1991), 37-38 and 118-119; Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas: A Mountain River Valley* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1990), 21 and 25.

<sup>5</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 65.

<sup>6</sup> Jesse's last name sometimes appeared as "Frazer," but the *Frazier* Methodist Church is named for him. Other Fraziers who settled in the area included Henry J. and Thomas. U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population, manuscript returns, Fremont County, Colorado Territory, 1870*.

<sup>7</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 65; O.L. Baskin and Co., *History of the Arkansas Valley* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1881), 659.

As agricultural pursuits were developing, the first indication of the Florence area's petroleum prospects emerged. In 1860, Gabriel Brown discovered oil in a seepage on Four Mile Creek. The trapper-hunter sold his claim to Alexander Morrison Cassiday, who had come to Colorado from Iowa in the gold rush. Cassiday undertook small-scale commercial production in the field in 1862, just three years after the nation's first oil well was drilled in Pennsylvania. Florence became the second developed oil field in the world and the first in the western United States. Wells were drilled near the seepage and a light lamp oil was distilled and sold in Denver and other towns. Annual production ranged between 3,000 and 10,000 gallons until 1870, when railroads reached Denver and introduced less expensive eastern oil to Colorado Territory. Cassiday then became interested in coal mining.<sup>8</sup>

### **Railroads, Coal Mines, and the Platting of Florence**

General William Jackson Palmer's Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG), seeking a source of fuel, pursued the plentiful coal deposits in Frazierville's vicinity. The narrow gauge line extended westward from South Pueblo in 1872, reaching a point the railroad named Labran, just east of present-day Florence, in October. A D&RG subsidiary, the Cañon Coal Railway Company, then built a line from Labran about three miles south to the mines at Coal Creek; trains carrying coal were running by December. The Central Colorado Improvement Company (CCIC), a venture organized in 1871 by Palmer and his

business associates, replaced smaller coal operators in the area. The coalfield eventually extended over a large area south and southwest of Florence, embracing the mining towns of Coal Creek, Rockvale, Williamsburg, and Chandler.<sup>9</sup>



Figure 4. James A. McCandless, who platted Florence in 1872, erected this impressive brick residence in 1889 at 120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue. SOURCE: Lewis, *Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad*, 107, Ed and Nancy Bathke Collection.

The CCIC, acting as the town development arm of the D&RG, laid out Labran. In addition to generating revenue from land sales, the company anticipated the residents and businesses in the town would be a source of freight and passenger traffic for the D&RG. Resisting the railroad's plans, in 1872 local landowner James A. McCandless platted a rival 40-acre townsite named for his daughter, Florence, located immediately west of Labran. Florence survived and Labran soon disappeared.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 153, 223, and 224 and Tivis Wilkins, *Colorado Railroads*. Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1974), 7.

<sup>10</sup> The D&RG's tactics were usually more successful, as witness the competition between Cleora and the D&RG's Salida further up the Arkansas Valley. Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 153; Maxine Benson, *1001 Colorado Place Names* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 70; *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901.

<sup>8</sup> H. Lee Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek: Florence from 1885 to 1910," 55 *Colorado Magazine* (1978), 207-08; "Florence—Second Oldest Oil Field in the United States," *Denver and Rio Grande Western Magazine* 1 (October 1925).

James A. McCandless, known as "the father of Florence," was born in North Carolina in 1836. Described as "sturdy as an oak," he grew up on a farm with limited educational opportunities. McCandless married at age 17 and at 19 started a mercantile business. He subsequently moved to Nebraska, where he farmed and raised livestock until 1864, the year he came to Colorado. McCandless farmed elsewhere in Fremont County for two years before settling in the Florence vicinity, where he continued to be interested in agriculture and raising horses.

A newspaper account discussing the local influence of McCandless indicated "what he said in the community was the last word." In 1877, he was appointed a county commissioner, and he served in the state legislature in 1878 and 1880. He operated an early livery service before opening a long-lived mercantile business. In 1894, he erected the three-story McCandless Building at 109-11 East Main Street (5FN228). McCandless founded the Florence National Bank, predecessor of the First National; built a wagon road from Florence to Cripple Creek; was an organizer of the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad; and heavily invested in property in the city. The *Florence Citizen* judged, "Almost everything of worth connected with the growth and development—building, banking, railroad and road building, promotion of mills—all of the city of Florence, has the hand of McCandless upon it."<sup>11</sup>

McCandless opened the Florence post office in May 1873. By the end of that year, the *Denver Tribune* reported the new town was "fast-gaining headway," noting that several buildings were going up, including a school. However, the community saw little development in the mid-1870s. One

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<sup>11</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 28 February 1922, 1 and 4 March 1922, 1.

account observed that Florence "struggled along as a village for a few years." By 1877, the *State Business Directory* listed only three businesses for Florence: A.F. Alexander, general merchandise; V.R. Tanner, physician; and J.A. McCandless, livery.<sup>12</sup>

When Leadville, to the north in the upper Arkansas Valley, emerged as a significant silver mining district in the late 1870s, both the D&RG and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe (AT&SF) railroads competed to be the first to lay track to the new camp. In 1878, the two railroads began a struggle over the right to build a line through the narrow Royal Gorge (the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas), which was pursued on the ground and in the courts. The D&RG won legal possession of the Royal Gorge route in 1880, but the Santa Fe received a number of concessions. One of these was the right to build a line from Pueblo to the coal mines near Florence. In October 1880, the Santa Fe completed a route through Florence to Rockvale. The AT&SF track passed through the northern edge of Florence, with a depot located at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and McCandless Avenue.<sup>13</sup>

### **Further Development of the Florence Oil Field and Growth of the City**

Energy historian H. Lee Scamehorn notes that Florence showed little growth in the late 1870s and early 1880s, despite the presence of two railroads. George A. Crofutt, in his 1885 guide to Colorado, observed in his entry for Florence that "farming is the principal occupation of the people in the vicinity." Three miles south of town on Coal Creek were "extensive coal

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<sup>12</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February, 1901, 1; *Denver Tribune*, 31 December 1873; *Colorado State Business Directory*, 1877, 54.

<sup>13</sup> B. F. Rockafellow, "History of Fremont County," in *History of the Arkansas Valley* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1881), 608.

mines” of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company and the Cañon City Coal Company. Scamehorn argues that renewed interest in oil drilling resulted in Florence’s “emergence as an industrial center.”<sup>14</sup>

The *Florence Tribune* came to the same conclusion in 1901, noting the discovery of oil in commercially profitable quantities in the early 1880s gave the city its first growth. Although the oil industry developed slowly in the early years, it attracted many individuals who had financial assets and were interested in the town’s future.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 5. An oil boom swept the Florence area in the late 1880s and early 1890s, with wells drilled in and near town. SOURCE: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, photographic collection, image X-8442, c. 1890s.

Alexander M. Cassiday inadvertently re-entered the oil exploration field in 1881, when a water well he commissioned on Coal Creek south of Florence struck oil. Cassiday, with assistance from investors in Cleveland, organized the Arkansas Valley Oil and Land Company, which drilled several oil wells and constructed a refinery in Florence in 1885. By 1887, the refinery’s

<sup>14</sup> George A. Crofutt, *Crofutt’s Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado*, 1885 ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books, 1966; orig. pub. Omaha, Nebraska: Overland Publishing Company, 1885), 92; Scamehorn, “In the Shadow of Cripple Creek,” 207.

<sup>15</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 1.

output (including kerosene and lubricating oil) was 200 barrels a day, which was shipped to Denver and other major Colorado cities. The area found itself in the midst of an oil boom that saw production increase over the next few years. The Land Investment, Coal and Oil Mining Company became the second major oil company in the area. Formed in 1882 by David G. Peabody and other Cañon City businessmen, the firm had little initial success. It then reorganized as the Colorado Oil Company, secured additional capital from New York, and profitably drilled several wells on area farms.<sup>16</sup>

The Cassiday and Peabody companies merged in 1887, creating the United Oil Company. Nathaniel P. Hill, ore smelting magnate and former U.S. Senator, headed the new combination. Continental Oil Company distributed the output of the firm’s Florence refinery in Colorado and other Rocky Mountain states. United remained the dominant company in the Florence field for the next decade, although two new firms, the Florence Oil and Refining Company (FO&RC) and the Rocky Mountain Oil Company (RMOC), posed unsuccessful challenges. When FO&RC terminated its distribution arrangement with Continental in 1889, an oil price war ensued; eventually it resumed distribution through Continental. In the early 1890s, RMOC built a twenty-eight-mile, four-inch pipeline from Florence to a refinery at Overton, north of Pueblo. It ceased operations in 1903 and sold its assets to United.<sup>17</sup>

Expanded drilling activity in the Florence field caused a jump in production between 1887 and 1889, when crude oil output grew

<sup>16</sup> Scamehorn, “In the Shadow of Cripple Creek,” 207-09.

<sup>17</sup> Scamehorn, “In the Shadow of Cripple Creek,” 210 and 213.

from 76,295 barrels to 297,612 barrels. Output increased to 665,482 barrels in 1891 and peaked in 1893 with 824,000 barrels. The oil boom stimulated a renewed interest in townbuilding.<sup>18</sup>

While the Florence townsite was platted in 1872, it was not until September 1887 that the town formally incorporated. A town government organized, with James McCandless as the first mayor. The city's first newspaper, the *Florence Oil Refiner*, started publication in December 1887, providing coverage of events in the development of the city.

Building construction picked up speed in the late 1880s, responding to the stimulation provided by the growing oil industry. In 1888, the *Refiner* observed the city "enjoyed a reasonable degree of prosperity during the past year which continues today without any signs of abatement. New buildings, residence and business, are springing up all over town." Among the construction projects cited were a new brick school, the Methodist Episcopal church and parsonage, and the Florence Brewing Company's \$15,000 facility. The newspaper estimated 50 to 60 new buildings were completed in 1887.<sup>19</sup>

In 1888, the Knights of Pythias erected their Castle Hall at 105 West Main Street (5FN229). The Pythians were an international fraternal order founded to "promote friendship among men and relieve suffering." The group dedicated itself to universal peace and understanding among men. The building incorporated several architectural elements that would become common for the city's nineteenth

<sup>18</sup> Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 210 and 213; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948), 2:509-10.

<sup>19</sup> *Florence Oil Refiner*, 1888, quoted in the *Florence Citizen*, Pioneer Day Edition, 1965.

century commercial buildings, including space for storefronts and an entrance to the upstairs on the first story, a large hall on the second story, a composition of red brick with stone trim, columns flanking the storefront area, tall one-over-one-light segmental arch windows, a name and date plaque, and a cornice ornamented with corbelling and bands of brick.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 6. The Bank of Florence and the Florence Hotel occupied this early (1890-91) building at the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Pikes Peak Avenue. SOURCE: Lewis, *Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad*, 103, Ed and Nancy Bathke Collection.

The original section of the Florence Hotel at 100 East Main Street (5FN2280) also represents this early period of expansion in the city. The southern component of the building, which appears on the 1890 Sanborn fire insurance map of Florence, is red brick, with tall, narrow windows on the upper story. Construction of the hotel reflected the growing number of business travelers and tourists entering the city.

### *Domestic Architecture*

Residential construction expanded to serve the growing number of new residents. A notable achievement was the completion of the first brick house in town at 108 West Front Street (5FN227). George M. Deibert, who had come to the area in 1884, erected

<sup>20</sup> References utilized for producing historical information about surveyed buildings are included on the individual survey forms.

the building with his brothers, quarrying the rock for the foundation between Florence and Coal Creek and helping make the brick. When the building was ready for use, Deibert and his mother operated it as a boarding house for the first oil men in the area. Although heavily modified, the house still stands.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the simple design of the Deibert House, James McCandless built one of the most substantial and elaborately ornamented residences in the city in 1889 at 120 North Pikes Peak Avenue (5FN2320, See Figure 4). The first house of the pioneer had been a log structure. The noted Denver architecture firm of Balcomb and Rice designed his 1889 dwelling in a high Queen Anne style. The residence featured a brick design heavily ornamented with stone, multiple gables, decorative shingles, porches and balconies, fireplaces, panels of colorful tile, and stained glass.

### **Florence and the Cripple Creek Gold Boom**

The discovery of gold in January 1891 at Cripple Creek, 25 miles to the north, bolstered the period of prosperity for Florence that lasted into the early twentieth century. Colorado historian LeRoy R. Hafen deemed Cripple Creek “the greatest gold camp in the world.” The value of gold output from the district soared from \$200,000 in 1891, to \$587,310 in 1892, to \$8,750,000 in 1893.<sup>22</sup> Historian Virginia McConnell Simmons describes Florence’s prosperity during the 1890s as a railroad town and ore reduction center:

The town blossomed with streetcars [sic], electric lights, parlor houses, saloons, homes of railroad and smelter workers, and even a few miners from

the gold camp who commuted by rail.<sup>23</sup>

Florence boosters quickly found ways to share in the Cripple Creek bonanza. James McCandless and Isaac Canfield led Florence businessmen and the Pueblo Board of Trade in raising \$10,000 to construct the Florence and Cripple Creek Free Road, a wagon road built north from Florence through twisting Eightmile (later Phantom) Canyon to the mining district in Teller County in 1892. The new road provided a means of hauling supplies and ore to and from Cripple Creek and immediately drew a large volume of traffic. No toll was charged, as the investors reasoned that they would be repaid by increased business generated by the road.<sup>24</sup>

The following year, when it appeared Cañon City interests were contemplating building a railroad to the goldfield, Florence supporters (including McCandless) and railroad magnate David H. Moffat organized the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad (F&CC). As the *Florence Tribune* noted, the town’s native fuel resources made it a logical terminus of the railroad and “virtually settled the location of the reduction plants for handling the district’s ore.”<sup>25</sup>

Railroad builders took advantage of the existing grade of the earlier free road for the narrow gauge route, with construction beginning in the winter of 1893. The F&CC reached Victor in May 1894 and Cripple Creek in July of the same year. The *Florence Tribune* later judged the completion of the railroad “marked an epoch in the history of the town and set a new pace for its progress.” The newspaper observed, “The discovery and development of Cripple Creek in 1891 meant much for

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<sup>21</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 1 May 1922, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Scamehorn, “In the Shadow of Cripple Creek,” 214; Hafen, *Colorado and Its People*, 2:509.

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<sup>23</sup> The town never had a streetcar system. Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 237-38.

<sup>24</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 213.

<sup>25</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 1.

Florence, and the town felt the good effects of it immediately. But the future of Florence was assured in the winter of '93-'94, when the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad was built."<sup>26</sup>

The F&CC constructed a roundhouse in Florence and connected with the D&RG tracks there. The railroad was important in carrying freight to and from the Cripple Creek-Victor goldfield. However, the F&CC line proved difficult to maintain, given the rockslides and flashfloods that frequently occurred in the terrain.<sup>27</sup>

The railroad connection to Cripple Creek, coupled with large deposits of coal in the area, made Florence a natural site for reduction mills and smelters for processing ore. Seven mills were erected in and around Florence in the middle- to late-1890s. Four mills were located north of town: the Metallic Extraction Company at Cyanide (1894), the U.S. Economic Reduction Works (Beam Mill) (1895), the Union Mill (1900) and the Dorcas Mill (1901). South of town were the London and Cripple Creek Reduction Company (1896), the El Paso Reduction Company (1897), and the Kilton Mill.<sup>28</sup>

The Rocky Mountain Smelter was the only smelter constructed in town. The company organized in 1896, but not until 1900 were adequate funds available to erect the plant. The effort drew significant local support, including land donated by the town and \$10,000 in company stock purchased by

<sup>26</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 1.

<sup>27</sup> The terminal and other facilities of the railroad were moved to Cañon City in 1899, in spite of financial inducements offered by Florence. Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 213-15; *Denver Times*, 11 June 1899, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 238-39; *Denver Times*, 31 December 1899, 29; *Colorado Miner* 2(December 1900): 5; Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 219-22.

residents. Technical problems, financial shortfalls, and competition from other areas of the state plagued the smelter. Together, the mills and smelter employed several hundred men in Florence.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 7. In the late 1890s, the Golden Rule, an early chain department store, occupied the 1893 building at 113 West Main Street. SOURCE: John and Carol Fox, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

Oil production continued to be an important industry in Florence throughout the 1890s. By the end of the decade, the town had two refineries producing illuminating, lubricating, and fuel oil. Banking on Florence's location in "the heart of this garden section of the valley," the Florence Canning Company, headed by P.T. McGuire, constructed a short-lived canning plant in 1895. A new cement plant, the Portland Cement Company, was erected in 1899 about six miles east of town. Headed by W.H. James, the new enterprise boasted authorized capital of \$100,000.<sup>30</sup>

Two separate efforts were made in the 1890s to establish electric car lines in the Florence area: the Florence Street Railway and the Cañon City, Florence, and Royal

<sup>29</sup> Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 222-23.

<sup>30</sup> *Denver Times*, 9 November 1899, 2 and 31 December 1899, 29; *Florence Chronicle*, 18 April 1895.

Gorge Railroad Company. The former company proposed linking Florence and Cañon City with a system, while the latter plan connected the two cities with the Royal Gorge. Neither system was completed.<sup>31</sup>

### *Construction in the Early 1890s*

Florence's retail, service, social, and civic sectors also grew. A source of community pride and a sign of the town's stability was the 1892 town hall and fire department constructed at 119 West Main Street (5FN2308) in 1892. The two-story red brick building with stone trim featured a large arched window on the second story and was crowned by a belfry at the west end and a corbelled cornice at the east end. The Central Block, a two-story brick building erected three years later at 122 East Main (5FN2292), also fulfilled a civic function for the town, housing the post office as well as commercial enterprises.

Businesses expanded or built new facilities to accommodate the influx of new residents and visitors. A northern addition to the Florence Hotel, completed in 1891, reflected the greater exuberance of the city as it matured. Featuring brick construction, an angled wall facing the important intersection of Pikes Peak Avenue and East Main Street, panels of decorative brickwork, and entrances elaborated with stone, the hotel was an important building for the community. In 1897, the *Refiner* noted it was the only first class commercial and tourist hotel in the city and included 40 guest rooms, an office, dining room, reading and writing rooms, and parlors, as well as sample rooms for "knights of the grip," the traveling salesmen who often utilized its facilities to display their wares. With rooms renting

for \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day, the Florence Hotel offered travelers excellent lodging in the city.<sup>32</sup>



Figure 8. This section of a panorama photograph of Main Street shows the south side of the 100 block of East Main about 1915. The large two-story building at the center is the early 1890s Union Block at 104-10 E. Main Street. SOURCE: John and Carol Fox photograph collection, Carl Babberger photograph, c. 1914-15, Florence, Colorado.

The largest commercial building erected during the first half of the 1890s was the Union Block built at the east end of Main Street (104-10 East Main, 5FN2283), replacing several older and smaller stores. The two-story brick building displayed cast iron columns, continuous bands of stone trim, and elaborate decorative brickwork crowning the facade. Joseph D. Blunt, one of the developers, came to Florence in 1894 wealthy from Cripple Creek mining ventures. Builder James Hall was described as "a member of the firm that built the most prominent business blocks of the city." The Union Block contained four storefronts and two upstairs halls, one used as the Florence Opera House, which became a popular venue for touring productions and an important location for local cultural and civic events. Historian Ralph Taylor wrote, "In its hey-day, Florence was one of the

<sup>31</sup> *Denver Times*, 1 July 1899, 2; *Denver Republican*, 1 January 1901, 8; Ken Fletcher, *Centennial State Trolleys* (Golden, Colorado: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1995), 159.

<sup>32</sup> *Florence Refiner*, Industrial Edition, September 1897.

foremost entertainment towns between St. Louis and San Francisco.”<sup>33</sup>

Across the street, town founder James A. McCandless demonstrated his faith in Florence by erecting Main Street’s only three-story business block at 109-11 East Main in 1894 (5FN2286). McCandless selected the architects who designed his 1889 home, Balcomb and Rice, to work on his new substantial brick building, which featured cast iron columns, continuous bands of rock-faced stone, large arched central windows on the second story, ornamental spandrel panels on the third story, and courses of decorative brickwork ornamenting the cornice. The building included two large storefronts, one of which housed the McCandless Mercantile Company. A large hall and offices were on the second story, and the European Hotel operated on the second and third stories. An elevator at the rear of the building was hand-powered and designed so that one man could lift several hundred pounds by pulling on a rope. The elevator lifted baggage, furniture, and supplies for the tenants of the upper stories.

Of the business blocks completed in the first half of the 1890s, a number were located in the 100 block of West Main. Among them were: a two-story brick drugstore at 106 West Main (5FN2300); a one-story brick meat market (111 West Main, 5FN2303); a two-story brick dry goods store notable for twin arched windows with stone surrounds on the upper story at 113 West Main (5FN 2305); and a two-story brick grocery store at 120 West Main (5FN2307). Several of the West Main buildings were completed in 1894 alone: a two-story brick building with

paired round arch windows on the second story for furniture dealer and undertaker Thomas Carmody at 122 West Main (5FN2310); the two-story brick Julius McCandless hardware store at 124 West Main (5FN2312); and the two-story brick Lovell Block, with its paired segmental arched windows and a corbelled cornice at 132 West Main (5FN2317). At 121 West Main (5FN2309), the Van Nest Block of 1895 featured a front of white stone and a cast iron column separating the storefront from an entrance to the upper story, which contained living quarters.



Figure 9. James A. McCandless commissioned Denver architects Balcomb and Rice to design this 1894 building at 109-11 E. Main Street to house his mercantile store. McCandless stands to the right in this undated photograph. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

Streets adjacent and intersecting Main Street also saw development. Saloonkeepers Syl Braden and Phillip Griffith erected the Braden and Griffith Block (now the Price Pioneer Museum) at 100 East Front Street in 1894. The two-story commercial building with walls of rock-faced coursed sandstone included an angled corner entrance. Over the years the building housed saloons and a hay and feed business, as well as the clubrooms of the local aerie of the Fraternal Order of

<sup>33</sup> Ralph Taylor, “Florence Boasts Proud History,” *Colorful Colorado Column*, *Pueblo Star-Journal Chieftain*, 1959, in the files of the Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, clipping collection, Denver, Colorado.

Eagles.<sup>34</sup>

In 1895, W.H. Davie moved into his new Palace Pharmacy at 112 South Pikes Peak (5FN2321), sharing the first story with a barber shop, while offices occupied the second floor. In the same year, Civil War veteran J.A. Trulove, a pioneer businessman and real estate investor, built a large two-story brick building at 120-24 South Pikes Peak (5FN2323). Trulove, who came to the state for his health, lived upstairs, where his family offered furnished rooms. A clothing store and a cigar manufactory were also located in the building.

On Front Street, W.E. McDonald completed a two-story brick building with a stone façade and three arched windows on the second story to house his feed and fuel business and his family (107 West Front Street, 5FN2273). The *Florence Tribune* described McDonald's firm as carrying "a large stock of hay, grain, feed, and coal," as well as offering a transfer service on a cash basis.

### *Houses and Hotels*

The town's supply of houses and hotels also increased during the first half of the decade. A two-story brick hotel built at 114 West Front (5FN2276) took advantage of its location near the Denver & Rio Grande railroad station. In 1895, this building was known as the Hotel Glenwood. By 1901, this was the location of the Glenrock Hotel, which advertised itself as "the best \$1.50 per day hotel in Florence."

Among the many single family residences completed, a large Queen Anne style brick dwelling at 205 West Main (5FN2319) included a variety of materials and ornament, as was typical of the architectural style. Another two-story brick and stone

building at 113 North Santa Fe Avenue (5FN2326), erected during the same period, served as an office and home of the owner and featured an angled corner on the northeast, flat and hipped roofs, and a variety of window designs. Virginia transplant Dr. R.H. Paxton lived here with his wife.



Figure 10. Presbyterians built a Gothic Revival style church at 201 West 2nd Street in 1896. SOURCE: Historic postcard view, c. 1913, authors' collection.

### *Presbyterian Church*

Florence gained new places of worship in the 1890s. In 1894, Presbyterians meeting in the local school organized a new congregation with 42 charter members. The group met in the school, the Houston Opera House, and the Knights of Pythias Hall before erecting their own building. In 1895, the Presbyterians requested plans for a church that could be built at "the cost not to exceed \$3,000."

The cornerstone of the new building (201 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 5FN2270) was laid on 11 February 1896, and in September, the pastor began preaching in the church. The Gothic Revival style red brick building featured a projecting tower topped by a belfry and a massive stained glass window on the facade. Due to problems arising from paying off the construction debt, dedication ceremonies for the church did not occur

<sup>34</sup> Braden and Griffith Block, State Register of Historic Places nomination, 10 October 2001.

until 17 January 1897. In 1916, an existing house at 113 North Santa Fe Avenue (5FN2326) was acquired to serve as the manse. The congregation continued to worship in the church until 2003, when it ceased functioning due to lack of members.

#### *Continued Commercial Progress During the Second Half of the Decade*

Growth continued during the remainder of the 1890s. The *Florence Refiner* reported \$60,000 expended on new buildings in 1896, noting that the figure exceeded any year in local improvements except 1894, when the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad was completed. Five hundred new people moved to Florence in 1896, and one hundred new houses were built, of which 75 percent were brick. Commercial buildings constructed in that year represented some of the city's finest nineteenth century architecture, including the \$10,000 Bank Block at 101-103 West Main (which burned and was replaced in 1952), erected by the Blunt family, and the \$8,000 Daniels Block housing the drugstore of W.R. Daniels (later destroyed by fire). Less elaborate in design, but representative of many of the commercial buildings of the era was George M. Deibert's two-story brick furniture store and undertaking house at 105 West Front (5FN2272). The *Refiner* noted, "Florence is rapidly becoming the trading center for all eastern Fremont County."<sup>35</sup>

The Wilbar Block, 108-10 West Main located east of the Daniel's Block, was erected in two stages: the east half in 1895 and the west half in 1896-97. In November 1897, the *Refiner* commented on the "beautiful white stone and pressed brick front" of the two buildings, noting, "The rock is from the quarry of Norman McKay and the cutting was done by D. Mustard."

<sup>35</sup> *Florence Refiner*, 5 January 1897, 1 and 23 October 1896.

O.D. Smith, tinner and sheet metal worker, provided galvanized iron and tin for the Wilbar building. In December, the *Refiner* judged, "With the completion of the Daniel's-Wilbar block [sic], there will be presented a business front of 100 feet which will compare in appearance with any two-story front in the state." William Pawton Wilbar operated his business in the original half of the building, offering "staple and fancy groceries." The Department Store, operated by S.G. Kelso and selling items such as dress goods, dry goods, ladies and gentlemen's furnishings, millinery, shoes, notions, groceries, and silverware, moved into the addition.



Figure 11. Architect James P. Julien drew the plans for H.L. and Phoebe Rice's massive three-story Fremont Hotel (1897) at 127-31 East Front Street. The building became the Elks Home and Lodge in 1915. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

#### *Fremont Hotel*

In July 1897, the *Refiner* observed, "There are in the neighborhood of twenty-five buildings in course of erection in this city at the present time." The three-story Fremont Hotel was one of the finest and most anticipated construction projects completed near the railroad station in that year (127-31 East Front, 5FN94). The owner, H.L. Rice, who came from Durango and had successfully operated the Strater Hotel until the 1893 Silver Panic, was described as "a

man with money and that other essential, experience in the hotel business." The *Florence Refiner* of 23 February 1897 reported, "Front street gets the \$15,000 hotel." The *Refiner* later indicated, "Architect Julien is preparing plans for the structure which will occupy a ground space of 70 feet on Front street by 84 feet on Petroleum avenue and will contain seventy rooms." Cañon Brick & Tile Company received a contract for 250,000 pressed bricks for the new building.

After a tour of the structure in July, a reporter judged, "The interior arrangement is all that could be desired, and our citizens when they see the building completed will have reason to be proud of it." The hotel boasted electricity, steam heat, and well lighted and ventilated rooms. The lobby was handsomely furnished, and the building also contained a large waiting room. With a capacity of more than 100 persons, the dining room included the finest linen and silver.

The 1900 U.S. Census found the Rices employing eleven people at the hotel. The employees, who were male and female, included three black workers and people from places such as Ireland, Wales, and Sweden as well as the United States. Occupations ranged from waiters, clerks, chef and assistant cooks to chambermaids. Ten persons listed as boarders of the establishment included the wealthy businessman, oilman, rancher, and developer A.R. Gumaer and his wife. A 1904 advertisement in the *Florence Daily Tribune* described the hotel as one of the finest in the state, with "rooms en suite, baths, steam heat, electric bells and all modern conveniences. Service and cuisine unexcelled. Transient rates \$2.50 and \$3.00 per day. Weekly and monthly rates so low that you can live here for less money than it is now costing you."

### *Other Commercial Construction*

The first component of another of the city's finest commercial buildings, the Wilson Block (129-31 West Main, 5FN2315), was completed in 1897. George Wilson, who operated a hardware store and tin shop, built and became the original occupant of the new building, having his store on the first story and his home above. The second story was also used as a rooming house known as the Lennox. Born in England, Wilson came to the United States as a child. In 1882, he moved to Colorado, where he worked in coal mines for three years before entering the hardware business, which he pursued until his retirement in 1920. A civic leader, Wilson served as a member of the city council, city treasurer, and two-term mayor.

Florence architect James P. Julien designed the building, and respected builder J. Juergens erected it for the hardware merchant. Observing the plans, the *Florence Refiner* judged it "one of the most attractive business buildings" in Florence. Wilson quickly determined to expand the structure; in December 1900, the *Florence Tribune* reported, "Excavating for the Wilson Annex is well underway."

Florence pioneer Edwin Lobach built a two-story brick building with stone trim, cast iron columns, a parapet with decorative brickwork and a stone name and date plaque, and highly decorative panels with fleur-de-lis and anthemion ornament at 125 East Main (5FN2294) in 1897-98. Originally, the building housed a clothing store and a combination confectionery and cigar store on the first story and an Elks Lodge on the second. In 1899 Lobach erected a one-story three-storefront building to the east that notably housed the *Florence Tribune* newspaper.

Edwin Lobach had been a miner, opened a mercantile, hauled freight, and worked on

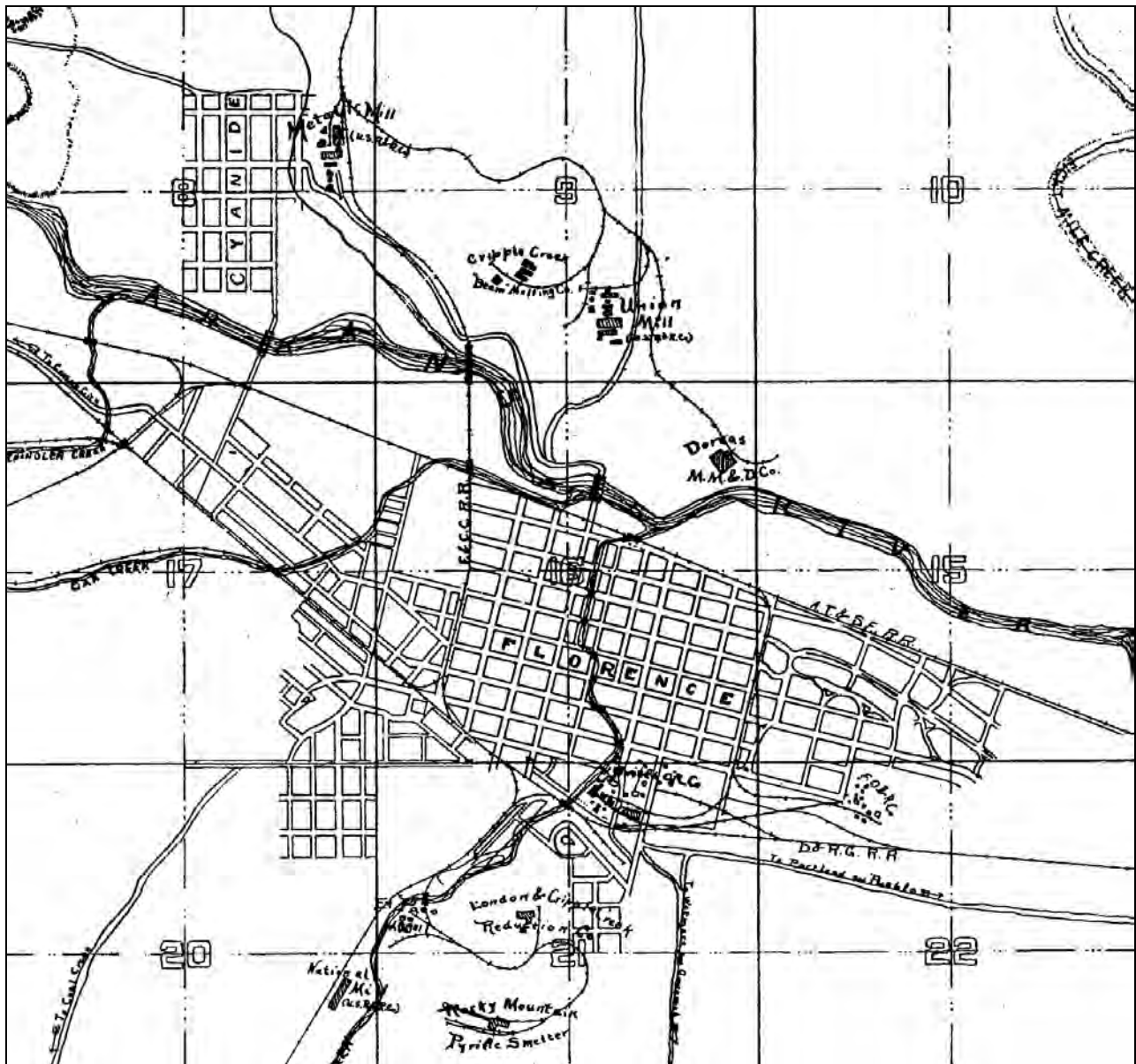


Figure 12. This c. 1906 map of the Florence vicinity shows the alignments of the Denver & Rio Grande and Santa Fe railroads and the locations of ore processing facilities. SOURCE: Florence Chamber of Commerce, *Florence and Its Environs*.

the railroad before Colorado became a state. He subsequently pursued interests in oil production, agriculture, and real estate in the Florence region. Along with six others, he organized a company in the city, and an oil well was drilled on his land about 1880. He served as a county commissioner and was described as "identified with the growth and development of this wonderful territory

and state."

Florence contractor and builder Henry Lewis, who had come to the city from Denver, erected an unusual two-story brick building with a glazed mezzanine level for William G. Ricketts at 127 West Main (5FN2313). After moving to Florence in about 1891, Ricketts started selling second-hand merchandise. In March 1899, the *Florence Refiner* reported, "The walls of

the Ricketts' block are climbing rapidly skyward. The first floor is going to make the projector a handsome furniture store room." In June, Ricketts moved his business, W.G. Ricketts Company, into his new building, where he displayed furniture, carpets, and house furnishings. The *Refiner* commented:

Mr. Ricketts started in business in this city in a small way five years ago and has by fair dealing and close attention to business built up an enviable trade. He has practically made everything he owns in Florence. To be sure he found it necessary to go in debt some on his block, but a rustler like Ricketts will soon rustle himself out of debt.<sup>36</sup>

In 1915, a matching addition expanded the building. William and Nettie Ricketts had their quarters and operated a rooming house on the upper story, and Mrs. Ricketts continued to own the building and operate W.G. Ricketts Company after her husband's death in 1928. The Ricketts name was associated with a business in the building until the early 1960s.

In December 1899, the *Denver Times* found that "one of Colorado's most active and talked of valley cities is Florence." Estimating the town's population at 5,000, the *Times* reported that "building has been active during 1899, and many residences and several handsome business blocks now occupy lots that were vacant a year ago. Houses are all full and practically none for rent."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Florence Refiner*, 6 June 1899.

<sup>37</sup> This population estimate appears overstated given the number of inhabitants recorded by the Census in June 1900. *Denver Times*, 31 December 1899, 29.

## **Brief Prosperity for Florence in the Early Twentieth Century**

Boom times for Florence continued through 1900, when it posted \$1 million in improvements and bragged, "no other valley town in the state can equal it." In October, the *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that the sale of real estate was "unabated" and that numerous houses and business blocks were under construction or planned. Housing was reportedly scarce, with many families "doubling up" in dwellings. The housing shortage prompted the creation of the Florence Co-Operative Building Association in November 1900. The organization, headed by John O'Malley, planned to build three-room houses in west Florence for "workingmen."<sup>38</sup>

By the beginning of 1901, the *Florence Tribune* found "the business center has grown from a few towering blocks at indifferent intervals to an almost solid mass of big buildings with handsome fronts and elegant interiors." Florence received both a new gravity waterworks and a sanitary sewer system in 1899-1900 for a total cost of \$167,000. To meet growing school enrollment a new \$12,000 school building was erected in 1900.<sup>39</sup>

Hugh Houston, a Scottish immigrant who reportedly built the first brick business building in Florence in 1887 and another commercial building in 1893, completed a brick edifice with stone trim and cast iron columns at 107-09 West Main (5FN2301) during 1900. In August 1899, the *Florence Refiner* reported, "Hugh Huston [sic] is getting figures on a new business block to be erected on the vacant lots adjoining K. of P. block." The *Florence Citizen* indicated in October 1899 that "Hugh Houston is

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<sup>38</sup> *Pueblo Chieftain*, cited in the *Denver Times*, 5 October 1900, 12 and 8 November 1900, 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 5.

completing a fine block covering two lots, the entire ground floor to be occupied by Sam Amter of the Globe." The Globe offered dry goods, clothing, and shoes at this location. At the top of the façade, builders placed a stone inscribed with the name "Morgan" and the date "1900" flanked by the initials "HH."

On 21 September 1900, the *Refiner* noted, "Stone masons began work yesterday on the foundation walls for the Geo. Columbia business block on Main street." In November, the brickwork on the front of the building at 130 West Main (5FN2316) was nearly complete, and the *Florence Tribune* commented, "If the appearance of the entire building conforms with what the front display promises, it will certainly be a credit to the business section of Main Street." George W. Columbia (b. 1861) lived in Florence for many years and was described as "very active in civic, fraternal and business circles." He served two terms on the city council and was a longtime member of the Elks, joining the lodge in 1918. Columbia was a pioneer in the theater business in Florence, opening the Liberty Theater in the building. He was also described as "a large property owner" who promoted and developed the south oil field.

By 1900, the two-story brick building at 105 West Front (5FN2272) that George M. Deibert erected about 1896 for his furniture store and undertaking services had become a special type of residence. The 1900 Sanborn map indicated that the front part of the building was used for "female boarding." The term was used by the map maker to refer to houses of prostitution.

The pace of construction appeared to be undiminished in early 1901, when a number of buildings were being contemplated or actually planned. In February, the *Tribune* took stock of development in the business district:

The business buildings of the town, especially those erected in recent years, are of the most substantial order, of brick, with stone trimmings. Business property in Florence is in great demand, and the local architects are nearly all busy with plans for new business structures.

The standard of building for both business houses and residences has greatly altered in the past seven years. That many years ago the principal business houses and residences were adobe or frame buildings, but within the past four years handsome and substantial brick and stone structures have been the choice of those erecting either homes or store buildings.<sup>40</sup>



Figure 13. Architect James P. Julien designed this 1901 building at 115-17 West Main Street, whose west half was owned by John F. Fritz and whose east half was owned by George D. Johnson. SOURCE: Florence Chamber of Commerce, *Florence and Its Environs* (1906).

The *Tribune* reassured residents, "The business houses that are being put up would be a credit to any city and area and are guaranteed proof of the faith that rests in the future of Florence." The city's status as a supply center for the surrounding area

<sup>40</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 1.

helped it maintain its financial equilibrium. In February 1901, the *Tribune* reported, "The stores were kept open last night to accommodate the trade, the Union mill and the smelter having paid Saturday."<sup>41</sup>

However, construction seemed markedly reduced from the previous year. By March the paper remarked, "Isn't it a peculiar circumstance that nearly all the proposed buildings and improvements are delayed for an indefinite period at this time?" In April, the *Tribune* reported Florence was experiencing a "brick famine" due to large demand. No common brick was available for construction, and no new buildings would be started until the situation improved.<sup>42</sup>

In June 1900, the *Florence Refiner* had reported German immigrant and meat market operator J.F. Fritz had purchased a lot on Main Street next to the city hall for construction of a new building. In an unusual arrangement, Fritz would pay for half of the building and Judge George D. Johnson, an attorney and real estate investor who had come to Colorado for his health, would own the other half. Construction began in January 1901, and a February edition of the *Florence Tribune* contained a lengthy story about the building, which the newspaper said would "typify one of the most substantial business blocks ever evolved from the brain of the prominent architect, J.P. Julien." The newspaper indicated the two men held separate ownerships because "Judge Johnson was not to be outdone by Mr. Fritz who concluded last fall to build."

Built of Denver No. 1 pressed brick, "the finest grade available," the Fritz-Johnson Block cost approximately \$10,000. Steel

beams were imported from Chicago, and W.H. Runkle of Florence, cast the 6-inch iron pillars (described as "quite a mechanical feat for a town of this size"). The ground floor was to include one large or two smaller storerooms, while the upstairs featured four offices "en suite." At the center of the building was a huge skylight (11' X 23') and on either side an open court provided light for the offices. Steam heated the building in the winter, and "a patent process in summer which forces cold air throughout the block" cooled it in summer. The *Tribune* concluded, "Altogether the enterprise reflects the highest credit on the owners and it is hoped will act as an incentive for more of the good work on the part of other citizens."

A significant example of continued economic optimism despite troubling signs on the horizon was the proposed construction of the Florence State Bank (5FN2318) at the growing western end of the commercial district in 1901. In March, Newton P. Large purchased a site for the building at the important location of West Main and Santa Fe Avenue and went to Denver to consult with an architect on the building's design. The \$50,000 bank, erected at 200-02 West Main Street, was a large Classical Revival style building that broke with established commercial architecture of the previous century. By employing buff colored brick in a restrained classical composition, the bank differed from its nineteenth century red brick predecessors. The two-story corner building featured a widely projecting metal cornice with a running foliate ornament, molding, and brackets and an angled corner with columns and a remarkable acorn pendant. Newton Large and his father, S.P. Large of Denver, reserved the corner location in the building for their bank and included storefronts on the

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<sup>41</sup> *Florence Tribune*, 12 February 1901.

<sup>42</sup> *Florence Tribune*, Special Edition, 4 February 1901, 5, 30 March 1901, and 12 April 1901.

remainder of the first story and offices above. The Florence State Bank and other businesses opened in the building in November 1901.

### **Economic Retraction in the Early 1900s**

The effects of the Cripple Creek boom began to fade during the early years of the twentieth century. Lee Scamehorn attributes the town's industrial downturn to "a decline in oil production and in metallurgical activities. Subsidiary enterprises inevitably reduced operations or disappeared. Before 1910, ore reduction had shifted entirely from Florence to other communities."<sup>43</sup>

The Ramsey-McGuire Mercantile Company Building (201 West Main Street, opposite the Florence State Bank) was the only large commercial building started in the downtown area after the onset of the economic slowdown. Construction of the two-story, red brick building with an angled corner entrance and elaborate decorative metal cornice began in 1902. The mercantile had a short-lived occupation of the storefront; by 1906, the Lennox Hotel (later the Hotel Florence) occupied the entire building.<sup>44</sup>

Only two of the seven ore reduction mills were still operating in 1903. After fire destroyed the Dorcas Mill in 1906 and the Union Mill ceased operations in 1910, Florence's role as an ore processing center came to a close. More efficient mills in the goldfield and in Colorado Springs, as well as increased competition, were principal factors in Florence's decline. In 1912, the city's railroad link to Cripple Creek was

severed when a flood washed out portions of the F&CC track in Phantom Canyon. The line was not rebuilt and was formally abandoned in 1915.<sup>45</sup>

After peaking at 824,000 barrels in 1893, Florence oil production dropped in the late 1890s and leveled off at about 400,000 barrels yearly at the turn of the century. The Florence field was unable to increase output to meet growing regional demand, which was increasingly satisfied by new fields in California, Oklahoma, and Texas. Scamehorn asserts that the Florence field was relegated to "an insignificant role" by the first decade of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, within Colorado the Florence field led production until 1923.<sup>46</sup>

**Table 2**  
**FLORENCE POPULATION TRENDS**  
**1890-2000**

YEAR	POPULATION	POPULATION CHANGE	
		Absolute	Percent
1890	732	N/A	N/A
1900	3,728	2,996	409.3%
1910	2,712	-1,016	-27.3%
1920	2,629	-83	-3.1%
1930	2,475	-154	-5.9%
1940	2,632	157	6.3%
1950	2,773	141	5.4%
1960	2,821	48	1.7%
1970	2,846	25	0.9%
1980	2,987	141	5.0%
1990	2,990	3	0.1%
2000	3,653	663	22.2%
2006	3,821	168	4.6%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1890-2000; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2006. In 1890, the population provided is that of Florence Precinct, since a total for the town was not separately returned.

The town's population trends mirrored that of its economy. During the 1890s,

<sup>43</sup> Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 206.

<sup>44</sup> Ramsey-McGuire Mercantile/New Lenox [sic] Hotel, State Register of Historic Places nomination, 22 November 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 239; Wilkins, *Colorado Railroads*.

<sup>46</sup> Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 210 and 213.

Florence's population had surged, growing from less than 1,000 residents in 1890 to 3,728 in 1900. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the town lost more than a thousand residents (a 27 percent decline), reporting 2,712 inhabitants in 1910 (See Table 2). Looking back on this period, a 1936 article in the *Florence Citizen* bluntly concluded that "the Florence boom was dead at the dawn of the new century."<sup>47</sup>

Alarmed Florence boosters took steps to revive the local economy. In September 1903, more than 100 businessmen organized the Chamber of Commerce, with a stated goal of pursuing "an active campaign for the interests of Florence." In 1906, the Chamber issued an attractive, heavily illustrated publication touting the town's advantages: *Florence and Its Environs: Its Resources, Its Attractions, Its Possibilities*. The booklet attempted to put the best face on current conditions, asserting that Florence differed from most western towns in that it "has never had a boom with its disastrous results. Florence has had its periods of unexampled prosperity and comparative depression but never a period of wild inflation and consequent collapse of values."<sup>48</sup>

#### *Business Closings and Modest Growth*

The Chamber's efforts could not counteract the nationwide financial downturn in 1907 and the ongoing local economic slump. Construction in the downtown area revived, although at a slower pace, in the 1910s. For the next 80 years, between 1910 and 1990, the city's population remained quite stable, fluctuating between 2,475 and 2,990. Lee

Scamehorn, while noting that "industrial greatness eluded Florence," concluded that the town fared well in succeeding decades:

With the demise of milling and the decline of petroleum enterprises, Florence, as a trade center, provided diverse goods and services that sustained agricultural, mining and related activities in eastern Fremont and contiguous counties.<sup>49</sup>

When building resumed, some new developers played a role in the city's progress. In 1913, local businessman Thomas Orecchio erected a substantial two-story brick building at 200 South Pikes Peak (5FN2324). Orecchio was one of a sizable group of people who moved from Italy to Colorado to work in its coal mines in the 1890s and later established businesses in Florence. In 1907, he took over the area's Walters Brewing Company distributorship, becoming the longest active distributor for the Pueblo brewing company. Orecchio continued to invest in area coal mines, operated a macaroni factory and an ice company in Florence, and had a wholesale grocery business. He built and financed business buildings and houses throughout the town and the county, including automobile-related facilities at 109 West Front (5FN2275) in 1921 and 119 West Front (5FN2277) and 121-123 West Front (5FN2277) in 1923. At the time of his death in 1950, he was described as a "long-time county business leader" and "actively associated with the business and mining interests of Fremont County for 60 years."

One Florence financial institution failed to weather the economic downturn. In May 1913, following a year-long investigation, the State Bank Commissioner declared the Florence State Bank at 200 West Main

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<sup>47</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, Florence, Fremont County, Colorado, 1890, 1900, and 1910; *Florence Citizen*, 2 October 1936.

<sup>48</sup> Florence Chamber of Commerce, *Florence and Its Environs: Its Resources, Its Attractions, Its Possibilities* (Florence: Florence Chamber of Commerce, 1906), no paging.

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<sup>49</sup> Scamehorn, "In the Shadow of Cripple Creek," 229.

insolvent and obtained a court order placing it in receivership. Newton Large, the cashier, was criminally charged with receiving money for deposit when he knew the bank was not sound. In March 1914, Large was found not guilty, much to the consternation of depositors who organized an “indignation meeting” that drew 250 persons. The jury (which included some persons employed by other banks) apparently accepted the argument that Large was an inept banker rather than a criminal. In December 1914, the Fremont Lodge Number 97 of the A.F. and A.M. (the Masons) purchased the 1901 bank building for its lodge rooms. After “considerable remodeling” (including the addition of an entrance to the upper floor from Santa Fe Avenue), the Masons held their first meeting in the building in May 1915.

The large Fremont Hotel, 127-31 E. Front Street, also fell on hard times and was acquired by a fraternal order. Personal misfortune played a role in the establishment’s demise. Mrs. Phoebe Rice, who was a partner in its operation with her husband, died unexpectedly from appendicitis in 1908. H.L. Rice reportedly did not want to operate the enterprise by himself. Regardless, the hotel may have had too much lodging capacity to survive in a period of diminished economic activity. In 1914, after Mr. Rice also died suddenly, the hotel was purchased by the Elks Lodge No. 611, who converted it into their home and lodge hall the following year.

### *Impact of the Automobile*

As automobiles became more numerous in the 1910s, campaigns for improvement of roads received support. In 1911, civic and business interests in southern Colorado endorsed the concept of a highway called the “Rainbow Route,” linking Pueblo and Montrose. Counties along the route secured state funds to upgrade and replace sections

of road forming the highway, including a new Monarch Pass segment completed in 1921. In 1926, with the designation of a nationwide system of highways, the Rainbow Route became part of U.S. 50, a principal transcontinental thoroughfare. In 1918, the former route of the F&CC Railroad to Cripple Creek was turned into an auto road. The Phantom Canyon Road “became widely famous as one of the great scenery drives of the state.” When rains washed out parts of the road in 1921, the Florence Chamber of Commerce led a volunteer effort to rebuild it.<sup>50</sup>



Figure 14. A group of horseless carriages are gathered on South Pikes Peak Avenue in this c. 1910 image. In the background (from left to right) are 120-24, 118, 114-16 (no longer extant), and 112 South Pikes Peak and 101-03 West Main Street (no longer extant). SOURCE: John and Carol Fox photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

Local governments recognized the economic potential travelers and tourists presented. As early as 1917, Florence planned a parking area for motorists on East Main Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets. By the mid-

<sup>50</sup> Alvin Edlund, Jr., “Coast to Coast on U.S. Highway 50: A Brief History of America’s Backbone and How It Came to Pass Through Central Colorado,” *Colorado Central Magazine* (January 1999), accessed on [www.route50.com/history.htm](http://www.route50.com/history.htm) on 4 August 2008; *Florence Daily Citizen*, 2 October 1936.

1930s, the town also developed auto campgrounds for travelers.<sup>51</sup>

The Florence Auto Company, a garage and auto sales business, responded to the growing demand for car service businesses with the construction of a new building at 115-23 East Main (5FN2288) in 1917. Henry Mathew Fox, owner of the auto company, was described as a "community builder, civic booster, and pioneer businessman." He was a pioneer of Florence who arrived in its early days and helped construct and improve the county and the town. Fox acquired the Ford Auto Agency in 1912 and started a new business, the Florence Auto Company managed by his son, Nicklas Mathew Fox. The enterprise was described as having "one of the largest payrolls to be found in the Florence area outside of the mines."

Later, Henry Fox added onto the original Main Street building with the Fox Machine Shop. The facility was described as one of the most extensive in the region. A large amount of mining equipment was built to specifications and repaired at the shop. In addition, Henry Fox used the space to design and build his own equipment for construction jobs. Grandson Henry Alden Fox became the third generation of the family to operate the machine shop.

#### *Florence Receives a D&RG Railroad Station and a Carnegie Library*

Rising demand for products and services resulting from America's participation in World War I led to greater local prosperity and the stirrings of new construction projects in the downtown area. The new buildings were not the typical commercial blocks that had dominated construction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Florence had long clamored for an up-to-date Denver and Rio Grande

depot, and in 1918 a new combined passenger and freight building opened at 100 Railroad Street. Also long-anticipated was the Carnegie Library at 100 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, designed by Pueblo architect George Roe.

For some years, Florence pressed the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad to replace its old frame depot with a more fitting and up-to-date structure. The railroad finally complied, beginning construction on a combined passenger and freight building in July 1917. The track side of the one-story, hipped roof, brick building displayed the name "FLORENCE" in "gold bronze," while the street side showed the name of the railroad.

The *Florence Paradox* published an extended description of the new depot in January 1918. Approaching the station from the north, the visitor entered a vestibule and then came to the ticket office, which was flanked by separate waiting rooms for men (to the west) and women (to the east), each with its own toilet facilities. West of the men's waiting room were the express, baggage, and freight areas. In the center of the building facing the tracks the depot office contained space for the train dispatcher, the ticket agent, and Mr. Hitchcock, the depot agent.

A room for trainmen to report and receive orders in stood adjacent to the tracks. The interior floors and paneled walls consisted of fir, oiled and waxed to resemble oak. The depot amenities included steam heat and chain drop lights. Dedication of the building occurred on 5 July 1918, with speeches from Florence civic and business leaders and D&RG railroad representatives, a band performance, ice cream, and a dance staged in support of the Red Cross. The *Paradox* stated the new depot would give arriving passengers "the impression of a prosperous, thriving and progressive

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<sup>51</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, 1 January 1917, 6.

community” and deemed the new building “a credit to the city and in accordance with the march of events.”

Florence gained a permanent home for its public library (5FN2269) in March 1919, thanks to a generous grant from industrialist Andrew Carnegie. In the late 1890s, citizens from local churches had established a free reading room to provide a “homelike” place for young men to get out of their small rented rooms. In the early twentieth century, agitation for the creation of a permanent public library increased, and in 1917 library board members and city officials united in an effort to secure a building. The estate of Florence businessman A.R. Gumaer donated a site on West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Carnegie provided \$10,000 for construction. Between 1899 and 1917, Carnegie provided funds to 27 communities in Colorado to erect 35 libraries. The first award was given to Grand Junction and the last to Florence.

The *Florence Citizen* described the building:

There will be a commodious reading room for both adults and children and the basement will be used as a public assembly hall capable of seating two hundred people. The heating plant, toilets, and storage room will also be located in the basement.... The handsome structure will also be a credit to Florence and will be in keeping with the new Rio Grande depot and the new city park, all of which will add to the appearance of Pike’s Peak avenue.<sup>52</sup>

Pueblo architect George W. Roe designed the library, which had a 52-foot front facing Second Street and a basement six feet above the ground.

<sup>52</sup> *Florence Citizen-Democrat*, 21 March 1918.

## Growth of Florence in the 1920s

Florence entered the 1920s with a bright outlook. At the beginning of the decade, important new buildings were underway, agricultural production had increased, the Standard Oil and Union Oil refineries were operating at capacity, and new wells were being drilled in the area. The coal mines were running at full capacity, and the cement plants at Portland and Concrete were conducting their largest business in history. Record numbers of tourists visited the county in 1920 and took advantage of the Florence Auto Campground improved by the Chamber of Commerce and described as “a model of comfort and convenience.”<sup>53</sup>



Figure 15. Shown under construction, First National Bank of Florence (1921) was the first major commercial building erected on Main Street after 1902. SOURCE: Colorado Historical Society, Denver and Rio Grande Collection, image CHS.X5199, c. 1920.

In 1920, Florence built an impressive new high school building costing \$150,000, designed by the Denver architectural firm of Mountjoy, French, and Frewen and erected by A.S. Hall & Son contractors. The white brick building, which included a large auditorium and a gymnasium, was intended to be the “center of all important

<sup>53</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 10 and 27 July 1920, 1 and 17 November 1920, 1.

educational activities of the community.” The Citizen predicted, “The structure when completed will add to the beauty of Florence as well as the convenience of the scholars at least 100 percent.”<sup>54</sup>

The same firm drew plans for the First National Bank of Florence, which completed its new \$65,000 building at 101-03 East Main Street in 1921 (See Figure 15). Demonstrating its continued faith in the community, the First National Bank of Florence erected its new headquarters at the northeast corner of East Main Street and North Pikes Peak Avenue (101-03 East Main Street, 5FN2281). The double-height wire-drawn brick building displayed a sandstone base, decorative white terra cotta columns and pilasters with Corinthian capitals, and large windows. Work began in April 1919, but delays in obtaining adequate labor and materials, especially terra cotta, resulted in a long period of construction. The building finally opened in late February 1921, when 3,500 area residents attended an open house. The *Florence Citizen* judged,

Particularly is the new structure a source of civic pride to every resident of Florence and those who are in sympathy with its growth and development. That the bank is not only a credit to Florence but would likewise be a credit to cities with many times its population was freely expressed by the delighted visitors...<sup>55</sup>

The golden age of motion picture theaters was represented in Florence by the Rialto Theater, completed in 1923. The project was developed by Richard Elhage, a Syrian native who had immigrated to the United States in 1879. Bugbee and Kimmel

Contractors erected the two-story, buff magnesium brick building that featured contrasting brick panels and a shaped parapet. The main floor and balcony provided seating for over 500. The theater auditorium contained an orchestra pit and originally showed silent films. The building, the only purpose-built theater in Downtown Florence, continued to screen films until 1960.<sup>56</sup>

Many of the new buildings erected in the 1920s were in some way related to the automobile. In 1921, local developer Thomas Orecchio financed a new building at 109 West Front (5FN2275) that housed the Service Motor Company, which offered Studebaker cars. In 1922, N. Saleh erected a new garage occupied by Liberty Motor Company at 208 West Main (5FN666). The building later became the home of Vendetti Chevrolet. In 1923, Thomas Orecchio built two buildings on West Front (5FN2277 and 2278) utilized by Marsh Motor Company. In the same year, a fine new automobile garage was completed at 128 East Main (5FN2296).



Figure 16. A number of one-story brick buildings, mostly housing automotive-related businesses, were built along W. Front Street in the 1920s, including (from left to right) 119, 121-23, and 129 West Front Street. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

<sup>54</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 21 September 1920, 1 and 17 December 1920, 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 28 February 1921.

<sup>56</sup> Rialto Theater, State Register of Historic Properties nomination, 25 November 1992; U.S. Census, manuscript returns, Florence, Fremont County, Colorado, 1920.

The new economic growth in Florence in the early 1920s also attracted new businesses. One of the more unusual was the “parlor house” of Lillian Powers. Powers, who had worked for Salida’s famous madam, Laura Evans, came downriver in 1920 to open her own establishment in Florence. The 1930 U.S. Census showed her operating a boarding house with two female “lodgers” at 311 S. Union Street. The brothel operated until 1950, when Chaffee and Fremont counties shut down all of the houses of prostitution.<sup>57</sup>

After years without a local laundry service, the Chamber of Commerce convinced an up-to-date steam laundry to move to Florence. Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Shults of Madison, Kansas, expanded the old facility at 112 South Santa Fe Avenue (5FN2327) from one story to two and installed new equipment in 1921. The couple previously operated a similar business in Kansas.<sup>58</sup>

During the second half of the 1920s, only a few commercial buildings were erected in the downtown area. The new buildings were one-story, with flat roofs, and minimal exterior ornamentation. Representative of this era is 218 West Main (5FN665). In 1926, Italian immigrants John and Lorina Tollis, who moved to Florence in 1921, built it as a one-story combination shop and dwelling. John Tollis had worked previously in the coke ovens and coal mines of southern Colorado. The couple started a shoe making and shoe repair business in a building on East Main Street. In 1926, Mr. Tollis became a naturalized American citizen and erected the new building to house their Tollis Expert Shoe Repair business, which the couple operated until their retirement in 1951.

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<sup>57</sup> Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas*, 165; U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population*, manuscript returns, Fremont County, Colorado, 1930.

<sup>58</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 2 December 1920, 6.

Florence celebrated its first Pioneer Day on 1 October 1928 under the auspices of the Federated Woman’s Club. The festival honored previous generations who contributed to the city’s history. For the first three years, Pioneer Day was held indoors. The first outdoor event occurred in 1931. In 1942, the management of the festival, which is still held in September, was turned over to the Florence Pioneer Association, Inc.

### **Florence During the Depression**

In the 1930s, fewer of the Florence oil wells were producing and the large coal companies in the area were replaced by numerous small operators. The cement plant at Portland continued to be an important employer in the area. Despite harsh weather conditions and poor markets, agriculture played an important role in the local economy. A Works Projects Administration guide to the state noted that “apple orchards border the road [U.S. 50 then, now Colorado 115/120] for many miles east of Florence.” Federal public works projects resulted in the creation of jobs and a variety of improvement projects. Local boosters believed tourism would continue to play an increasing role in the local economy and touted the nearby areas with mountain scenery and recreational opportunities such as hunting and fishing. The creation of good roads and the lure of attractions such as San Isabel National Forest and the Royal Gorge were seen as important sources of tourist dollars.<sup>59</sup>

The federal government’s decision to construct a Florence Post Office in the depths of the Great Depression provided

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<sup>59</sup> Works Projects Administration Writers’ Program, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Colorado* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987; orig. pub. *Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State*, New York: Hastings House, 1941), 308; *Florence Daily Citizen*, Christmas Edition 1929.

both work and income for local residents. In February 1929, Postmaster N.R. Usher requested proposals for “suitable quarters” for a new Florence post office. Among the requirements were a building size of 2,000-square-feet and a “reasonably” central location. An appropriation for the new building was made in August 1935, as part of a federal emergency economic stimulus program. The \$52,000 one-story, L-shaped, tan brick building, designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, represented the “Starved Classicism” style common during the period in its restrained appearance with some classical details. Newstrom and Davis of Denver began construction in the fall of 1936, and the building opened in August 1937.<sup>60</sup>



Figure 17. This late 1930s view shows the north side of the 100 block of West Main Street from the Rialto Theater. The corner building with the white painted front is 132 West Main Street, which then housed the Florence Creamery. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

Although there was little or no new construction in the downtown area other than the post office during the 1930s, the city worked on improving its infrastructure. Some of the historic buildings in town were rehabilitated for on-going use. Cecil C. Holt

<sup>60</sup> *Florence Daily Citizen*, 11 February 1929; Florence Post Office, National Register of Historic Places nomination, August 1985.

purchased the former James A. McCandless mansion at 120 North Pikes Peak Avenue in 1931 and converted it to the Holt Funeral Home. The Holt family continues to operate a mortuary at that location today. A discussion of building developments for 1938 by the Florence Chamber of Commerce listed such modest undertakings as “new store fronts, reconstructed and improved residential properties, oil paving on residential streets, curb and gutter projects and general improvements by the city and school district.”<sup>61</sup>

## Florence After World War II

After World War II ended in 1945, Florence continued to rely on many of the economic sectors that had sustained it in the pre-war era. The Florence-Cañon City-Penrose area remained important agriculturally for the growing of apples, berries, and cherries, as well as truck gardening. Farms in the area also raised thousands of turkeys. The coal fields produced about a quarter million tons of ore in 1945. One new industry in town was the Florence Vault Company, which fabricated plastic burial vaults. In 1948, the cement plant at Portland, then known as Ideal Cement Company, completed a major expansion. In the same year, Sisters from the Order of St. Benedict began operating St. Joseph’s Hospital in the city. Mary S. Rankin donated a building that was remodeled into the hospital.<sup>62</sup>

Florence suffered a series of misfortunes in the late 1940s. In June 1949, heavy rains caused flooding in the town’s northern and eastern residential areas and left two feet of water, inundating basements in the downtown area. In December 1949, fire damaged the Blunt building (101-03 West Main Street), a two-story brick building

<sup>61</sup> *Denver Post*, 2 January 1939, 8A.

<sup>62</sup> *Pueblo Star-Journal Chieftain*, 1 January 1946, 7; *Denver Post*, 30 August 1964, 21.



Figure 18. Main Street looks busy in this c. 1940s view westward from just east of the First National Bank of Florence in the 100 block of East Main. SOURCE: Historic postcard view, City of Florence, Colorado, website, [www.florenceco.govoffice2.com](http://www.florenceco.govoffice2.com), accessed 15 July 2008.

erected in 1897. The burned ruins remained as a “sore eye” for several years. In the late 1940s, Florence suffered a blow to its prestige when the route of U.S. 50 was modified to pass several miles to the north of Florence. The change meant that both Florence and Portland were no longer on a transcontinental highway and faced a resulting drop in tourist-related revenues.<sup>63</sup>

#### *The 1950s and Beyond*

The town saw gradually improving conditions during the 1950s. During 1951, a

paved cutoff from U.S. 50 to Florence was completed. The Florence Chamber of Commerce supported the project as a means of drawing visitors and stimulating business. Rebuilding of the Bank/Blunt Block (5FN2298) in 1951-52 as a one-story building faced with thin Roman brick revitalized an important intersection. A small one-story concrete block building was erected at 204 West Main (5FN2328) in 1953 as an office for Southern Colorado Power Company. In about 1956, a one-story Conoco service station replaced a small canopied gas station at 132 East Main (5FN2297). In general, however, the

<sup>63</sup> *Denver Post*, 6 June 1949, 1; *Pueblo Star-Journal Chieftain*, 1 January 1952; Edlund, “Coast to Coast on U.S. Highway 50.”

downtown area saw little new construction in the early post-World War II era.<sup>64</sup>

The Florence vicinity gained a new employer when a \$2 million Pabco gypsum wallboard plant began operations four miles east of town in 1956. The national company enjoyed continued demand for construction materials in the postwar expansion of housing. Erection of the manufacturing facility influenced the decision of the Alexander Construction Company to build 106 two- and three-bedroom houses in Florence. The 1956 project represented “the largest housing development in the history of Fremont County” up to that time.<sup>65</sup>

The first major strike in the Florence oil field since 1924 occurred in January 1959. The well, drilled by Peak Petroleum Company, had an initial flow of 400 barrels a day. At that time, the Florence field encompassed 41 producing oil wells, including what was then the oldest continuously producing oil well in the nation.<sup>66</sup>

In 1963, the Florence Pioneer Museum opened at 100 E. Front Street. Displays illustrating the history of the area included themes such as coal mining, oil exploration, railroads, household goods, and clothing. Local electrical contractor Charles “Chopper” Price became the moving force in the creation of the museum, which represented a project of the Florence Pioneer Day Association.<sup>67</sup>

Some building storefronts within the downtown area underwent remodeling in the 1960s. Senatore’s Department Store at 107-09 West Main Street initiated one of the earliest and most dramatic façade

alterations in 1964. Vertical, windowless, stucco panels were placed on the upper part of the building, hiding the windows and ornate brickwork of the second story. A 1965 *Florence Citizen* article commented that Senatore’s was the “first to have a completely remodeled front on Main Street from sidewalk to top story, [which] has been hailed as the beginning of a new era in restoration of older buildings in this historic old river valley community”<sup>68</sup> (See Figure 21).

In 1976, a Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home opened in Florence. The 120-bed facility had a staff of 74 and an annual payroll of \$1.4 million. In 2004, the center was renamed the Bruce McCandless Veterans Nursing Home to honor a local Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. The most recent building in the downtown, a one-story building at 112-14 West Main (5FN2304), was erected in 1976. The new brick building with a shingled mansard sheltering its display windows filled the space previously occupied by the Daniels Block, which had been destroyed by fire the previous year. S.J. “Jim” Provenzano, known as “Jim the Tailor,” established a clothing and tailoring business in the older building in 1927. Provenzano had learned to sew while working as a tailor’s assistant for almost ten years. In its heyday, his store employed as many as five tailors crafting handmade suits. When the demand for that type of clothing declined, he carried shoes and apparel for all ages. Provenzano’s son continued the business in the newer building until 2003.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Pueblo Star-Journal Chieftain*, 1 January 1952.

<sup>65</sup> *Denver Post*, 14 July 1955, 21 January 1956, 16 and 23 March 1956, 64.

<sup>66</sup> *Denver Post*, 1 February 1959, 1E.

<sup>67</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, 18 July 1965, 22.

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<sup>68</sup> The panels were removed in 2003, exposing the original upper facade. *Cañon City Daily Record*, 7 October 1980, 11; *Florence Citizen*, 1 April 1965.

<sup>69</sup> “Bruce McCandless State Veterans Nursing Home,” Colorado Department of Human Services website, [www.cdhs.state.co.us](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us), accessed 7 August 2008.

## **New Growth and Historic Preservation in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-first Centuries**

In a complimentary town profile in November 1982, *Rocky Mountain News* reporter Marjorie Barrett opined that “Florence may be the state’s best kept secret” and noted that it had escaped “artsy-craftsy-cutesy restoration.” Interest in Florence’s historic downtown commercial area was stimulated by a 1981 study funded by the Four Corners Regional Commission. The Colorado Historical Society conducted a historic buildings survey of Downtown Florence and found that a collection of 62 buildings in the area comprised a potential National Register-eligible historic district.

In 1984, 1987, and 1989, Florence residents attempted to follow up on the study’s recommendations to have such a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Dennis Lancaster, a member of the city council and Chamber of Commerce, led the 1987 attempt that produced a draft National Register nomination. None of the efforts resulted in designation, and no nomination was ever formally considered by the Colorado Historical Society.<sup>70</sup>

In 1986, Florence’s economy felt an impact when Ideal Cement laid off more than half the workers at its plant east of town. A

potential new major employer emerged in 1988, when the U.S. Bureau of Prisons (BOP) started to study Florence as a possible site for a new prison. The town offered free land for the facility, and in November 1989, BOP announced its selection of Florence as the site for a \$196 million prison (“the Alcatraz of the Rockies”) with a capacity of nearly 2,500 inmates and a staff of 900. The prison opened in stages in 1992-93 and contained a “Supermax” unit housing those deemed the nation’s most dangerous and/or notorious prisoners. Today, the corrections industry is the Florence area’s largest employer.<sup>71</sup>

In recent years the antique trade has become an increasingly important business sector in Downtown Florence, which now boasts one of the largest collections of antique stores in southern Colorado. Growing numbers of retirees have chosen to make the Florence-Cañon City area home. Reflecting increased economic activity, Florence’s population surged by more than 22 percent between 1990 and 2000. The 2006 population estimate of 3,821 surpassed the city’s previous population high of 3,728 recorded in 1900. A number of historic downtown buildings have been rehabilitated as a result of the influx of new people and businesses in Downtown Florence.

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<sup>70</sup> *Cañon City Daily Record*, 2 May 1987, 3; *Florence Citizen*, 14 September 1989, 17; *Rocky Mountain News*, 7 November 1982, 6N.

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas J. Noel, *Buildings of Colorado* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 347; *Denver Post*, 17 April 1994, 18A.



Figure 19. The intersection of Main Street and Pikes Peak was the early commercial center of Florence. This c. 1897 view southward on Pikes Peak shows the Florence Hotel at the left on the southeast corner, the Houston Block to the right on the northwest corner, and the Blunt/Bank Block (the lighter building) on the southwest corner. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, C.A. Erickson photograph, Florence, Colorado.

## RESULTS

The 2007-08 Downtown Florence Historic Buildings Survey documented 63 resources in the central area of the city. Eleven individual resources examined in the survey were evaluated as potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, while six were assessed as potentially eligible to the State Register of Historic Properties only. Table 4 presents a summary of eligibility assessments for resources found potentially eligible to the National and/or State Registers. The surveyors consulted with Chris Geddes, National and State Register Historian with the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, concerning National and State Register eligibility in August 2008. She concurred with the evaluations presented in Table 4 and with the conclusion that the survey area contained a potentially eligible National Register historic district.

The Appendices 1 and 2 in this report list all surveyed resources in street address order and state identification number order and include year built, historic name, and evaluations of National and State Register eligibility and contributing status. Evaluations of eligibility are based upon the status of the building during fieldwork, and any subsequent alterations made to a resource may have a positive or negative impact on a building's historic physical integrity and significance.

### **Original Uses**

The original uses of the surveyed resources were assigned to broad categories specified

by the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). An analysis of the uses reveals the overwhelmingly commercial nature of the survey area. Nearly three-quarters of the buildings (47 resources or 74.6 percent) fell into the Commerce and Trade category. Specialty Stores, with 27 buildings, was the most numerous subcategory, and included such undertakings as hardware stores, drug stores, clothing, dry goods stores, furniture stores, and gas stations. Ten resources were counted in the Department Store subcategory, including six grocery stores. Other subcategories within Commerce and Trade were Business (four buildings), Restaurant/Bar (three), Financial Institution (two), and Professional and Warehouse (one each).

The second largest use category was Domestic, with eight resources (12.7 percent of total surveyed buildings). Four of the resources were Hotels (a subcategory that includes boardinghouses) and four were Single Dwellings.

The Government category included two surveyed buildings, the original Florence City Hall and a building that initially housed the post office. None of the other categories numbered more than one resource each: Education (Florence Carnegie Library); Health Care (101-03 West Main Street); Religion (First Presbyterian Church); Social (Knights of Pythias Building); Transportation (Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot); and

unknown use (105 East Main Street).

### Period of Construction

The surveyed buildings predominantly date to the 1890s and early 1900s, when Florence benefited from the impacts of the oil industry, mining and ore processing, and the Cripple Creek gold boom (See Figure 20). Almost two-thirds (63.5 percent or 40 resources) of the surveyed buildings were constructed in the 1890-1902 period. As population declined and the economy slowed, few buildings were erected in the next decade. Construction activity picked up in the late 1910s and early 1920s, and buildings from that period account for 22.3 percent (14 resources) of surveyed properties. Somewhat less than 15 percent of buildings were built in other eras: four buildings prior to 1890; three during the 1950s; and one each in the 1940s and 1970s. The earliest documented building (108 West Front Street) dates to 1885, while the most recently constructed building (112-14 West Main Street) was put up in 1976 to replace a historic building destroyed by fire.

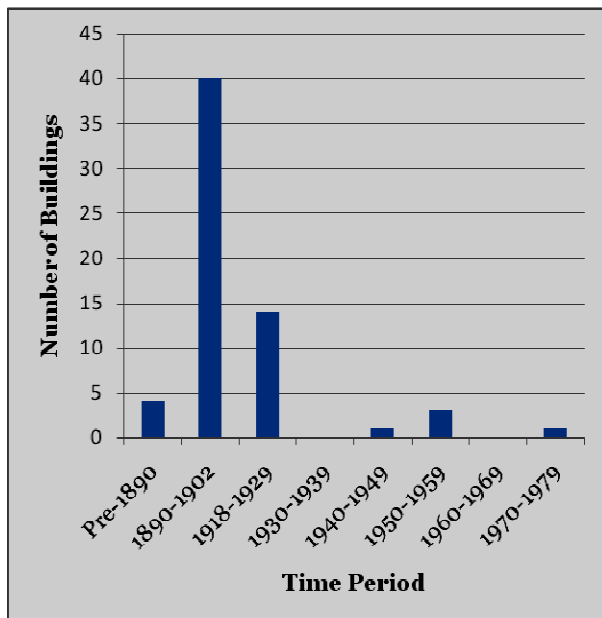


Figure 20. Number of Surveyed Buildings Erected by Time Period, Downtown Florence

### Architectural Styles

The architectural development of the downtown area is discussed in the Historic Overview above. Each of the documented buildings was assessed as to its architectural style, use type, or form. Twenty-eight (44.4 percent) of the 63 buildings were characterized as reflecting the Nineteenth Century Commercial use type. The OAHP's *Guide to Colorado Historic Architecture and Engineering* (2003) discusses the characteristics of this type:

Most nineteenth-century commercial buildings are two or three stories in height, with a flat roof and a variety of ornamental detailing. The 'textbook' storefront has a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows with kickplates, window and door transoms. The primary or roofline cornice is often bracketed with parapets, finials, or simple decorative panels. There is sometimes a secondary cornice separating the first two stories, which sometimes repeats the pattern of the upper cornice. Windows on the upper stories are generally smaller than the display windows on the street level and are usually decorated with molded surrounds, radiating voussoirs, or plain stone lintels.<sup>72</sup>

The second most frequently observed use type within the Florence downtown was the Early Twentieth Century Commercial. Eleven buildings (17.5 percent) were evaluated as falling within this category. The OAHP *Guide* notes that these types of buildings often feature blond or light colored brick and "have very little ornamentation other than some decorative

<sup>72</sup> Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, *A Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering*, 72.

brickwork along the cornice or parapet. In some of the smaller towns, Twentieth century commercial structures retain some elements of 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures.”<sup>73</sup>

Seven buildings displayed characteristics of Late Victorian architectural styles, including two Queen Anne examples and one Gothic Revival. Six buildings were categorized as Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Revivals, including four Classical Revival style buildings and two Mediterranean Revival style. Four buildings (nonhistoric infill buildings and altered historic buildings) were characterized as examples of more recent styles: Modern Movements/Neo-Victorian (one building) and Neo-Mansard (three buildings). Seven buildings were classified as No Style, generally reflecting buildings altered so that they no longer represented a particular architectural style.

### **Cast Iron Columns**

At least ten buildings in Downtown Florence had visible cast iron storefront columns. Appendix 3 presents a discussion of the four manufacturers of columns in Florence. The National Park Service prepared a brochure on the maintenance and repair of architectural cast iron which building owners may wish to consult: John G. Waite, “The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron,” Preservation Brief 27 (Washington: National Park Service, November 1991). This and other preservation briefs are available on the National Park Service website ([www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)).

### **Architects**

Information produced by the survey provided the names of four architects who

designed seven of the buildings studied (See Table 3). It is likely that more of the buildings were also planned by architects, who might be identified through additional research. Information about the architects associated with surveyed buildings follows.

*James P. Julien.* James P. Julien designed at least three buildings in Downtown Florence: the Fremont Hotel, 127-31 East Front (1897); the Fritz and Johnson Block, 115-17 West Main Street (1901); and the Wilson Block and Annex, 129-31 West Main Street (1897, 1901). Julien, born in Indiana in 1844, served in the 40th Indiana Infantry in the Civil War before coming west in 1867. He settled in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in that year. Julien first worked as a carpenter, studying architecture beginning in 1882. He lived in Omaha for a short period before returning to Cheyenne, where he was described as the leading architect. There he provided plans and oversaw the construction of “the handsomest structures in the well built city,” including a large residence known as “Castle Dare.” His strangest work may have been inventing the “hydraulic gallows” in 1892. The device was used to execute outlaw Tom Horn in 1903. Julien also worked in Laramie, Green River, and other parts of the state. In 1895, the architect sought a lower altitude and more temperate climate for his wife’s health.

Julien’s name was listed in state business directories as working in Florence in 1897-1898 and 1902. The 1897 *Florence Refiner* called Julien “an architect of both scientific training and practical experience and application.” He furnished plans for the Wilson Block, as well as several residences, including the double terrace built by P. McCoy. He designed and superintended the construction of the Methodist Church in Florence. Julien was a member of state and national architects’ associations and had offices in the Bank Block. The 1900 U.S.

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<sup>73</sup> Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, *A Guide to Colorado’s Historic Architecture and Engineering*, 74.

**Table 3**  
**IDENTIFIED ARCHITECTS**  
**FOR DOWNTOWN FLORENCE BUILDINGS**

Architect	Street Address	Year Built	State ID Num.
Balcomb and Rice	109-11 E. Main Street	1894	5FN2286
	120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue	1889	5FN2320
Mountjoy, French, & Frewen	101-03 East Main Street	1921	5FN2281
George W. Roe	100 W. 2nd Street	1918-19	5FN2269
James P. Julien	127-31 E. Front Street	1897	5FN94
	115-17 W. Main Street	1901	5FN2306
	129-31 W. Main Street	1897, 1900-01	5FN2315

Census listed Julien living with his wife, Sarah E. Julien, in Florence. The 1920 U.S. Census found him in Cheyenne again, working as an architect.

*Balcomb and Rice.* Denver architects Robert G. Balcomb and Eugene R. Rice designed the McCandless House, 120 North Pikes Peak Avenue (1889), and the McCandless Block, 109-11 East Main Street (1894), for James A. McCandless. The partnership opened its office in 1886 and the Colorado Historical Society indicates it designed "some of Denver's most elaborate examples of the Queen Anne style." Little is known of Balcomb's early life, although he was a native of Massachusetts and came to Denver in 1884. He was listed in the 1885 Denver directory as a carpenter. Rice studied architecture at Cornell University and moved to Denver in 1886. The firm worked on a variety of building types, including stores, barns, houses, a Masonic temple, and a church. The partnership ended in 1897, and Rice continued working in his own office. He died at age 37 of pneumonia.

*George W. Roe.* Pueblo architect George W. Roe designed the Florence Public Library, 100 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (1918-19). Roe was born in 1850 in Jefferson County, Ohio, and attended Hopedale College in that state. In 1874 he moved to Pittsburgh to study architecture and begin his career. Roe moved to Colorado in 1881, establishing an office in Cañon City that he operated alone and with various partners until 1889. There, he advertised "plans and specifications gotten up in a scientific manner and at reasonable rates." Among his notable commissions in Cañon City were the Fremont County Courthouse, the South Cañon High School, several residences, and a hotel for the hot springs. The architect then moved to Pueblo, where he worked until his death in 1925. Among the designs from his Pueblo office were a library at the University of Colorado (now the University Theater) and a number of schools in Pueblo and the southeastern part of the state. He drew plans for more than 350 houses in Pueblo, as well as the Minnequa Bank, the Masonic Hall, the National Register-listed

First Methodist Episcopal Church, the Guggenheim Block, the National Register-listed Strait Block, the Colorado Supply Company warehouse, and other buildings.

*Mountjoy, French, and Frewen.* The 1921 First National Bank of Florence, 101-03 East Main Street, was designed by the Denver architectural firm of Mountjoy, French, and Frewen. The firm also designed the Florence High School, which opened in 1921. Frederick E. Mountjoy, born in 1870, became a draftsman for the Denver firm of Gove and Walsh in the 1900s and established a partnership with Frederick M. Eagleton in 1909. After operating a solo practice for two years, Mountjoy partnered with Park M. French in 1911-12. Frank W. Frewen joined the company in 1917, and French departed about 1921. Frank Frewen, who was born in Denver in 1887 and studied architecture at the University of Colorado, had worked with Harry Manning during 1913-16. The firm of Mountjoy and Frewen designed buildings until 1931.

### **Historic District Potential**

The 1981 survey of Florence's downtown area determined that a potential National Register district existed. The current survey confirms this finding and recommends a slightly revised and expanded district boundary which contains 67 resources (See Figure 22). Fifty-four or 80.6 percent of the buildings are evaluated as contributing, and 13, or 19.4 percent, are noncontributing. The district is evaluated as potentially eligible under National Register Criteria A (history), B (association with persons having a significant influence on society), and C (architecture).

Contributing buildings were built within the district's period of significance, have historical associations with the district, and retain sufficient physical integrity to convey their historic character. Noncontributing buildings were constructed after the period of significance (1959 or later), and/or are not associated historically with the district, and/or no longer retain their historic physical integrity (i.e., substantially altered buildings). The period of significance extends from 1888 (the date of the earliest documented contributing building) through 1958 (a date 50 years before the present).

A wide majority of properties within the potential district display historic physical integrity. Generally, the buildings appear much as they did at the time of the 1981 survey. In at least one case (107-09 West Main Street), a façade added in the mid-1960s has been removed, revealing the original design and materials of the building (See Figure 21).

The significance and integrity of the potential district is underlined by the fact that 21 (31 percent) of the area's buildings are individually significant. One individual resource is currently listed in the National Register. Three resources are currently listed in the State Register. Eleven resources are considered potential candidates for listing in both the National and State Registers. An additional six properties are potentially eligible for listing in the State Register only. See Table 4 and Appendices 1 and 2 for listings of individual properties that are potentially eligible. Images of the individually eligible resources appear at the end of this chapter.



Figure 21. The top photograph depicts 107-09 W. Main Street at the time of the 1981 survey, reflecting a 1964 façade recladding. The stucco panels were removed in 2003, and the bottom photo shows the building in 2008.



**LEGEND**

**CONTRIBUTING STATUS**

- Contributing
- Noncontributing
- NR/SR or OB
- OUTSIDE SURVEY AREA
- POTENTIAL DISTRICT
- PARCELS

**Figure 22**  
**CONTRIBUTING STATUS**  
**DOWNTOWN FLORENCE**  
**POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**



**Table 4  
EVALUATION OF RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY  
FOR NATIONAL OR STATE DESIGNATION**

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility	
				NRHP	SRHP
100 W. 2nd Street	5FN2269	Florence Public Library/Florence Carnegie Library	1918-19	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
201 W. 2nd Street	5FN2270	First Presbyterian Church	1896	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)
127-31 E. Front Street	5FN94	Fremont Hotel, Elks Home and Lodge	1897	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
105 W. Front Street/ 106 Railroad Street	5FN2272	Deibert Furniture and Undertaking	1896 c.	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
101-03 E. Main Street	5FN2281	First National Bank of Florence	1921	Not eligible	Eligible (A,C)
109-11 E. Main Street	5FN2286	McCandless Block, McCandless Mercantile, McCandless Hall	1894	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A,B,C)
125 E. Main Street	5FN2294	Lobach Block, Kirk & Rinner Millinery, Elks Lodge	1897-98	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
128 E. Main Street	5FN2296	Fabrizio Brothers Coors Beer Distribution	1925	Not eligible	Eligible (A,C)
107-09 W. Main Street	5FN2301	Houston Block, Morgan Block, The Globe, Senatore's	1900	Not eligible	Eligible (A,C)
115-17 W. Main Street	5FN2306	Fritz-Johnson Block	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
121 W. Main Street	5FN2309	Van Nest Block	1895	Not eligible	Eligible (A,C)
125-27 W. Main Street	5FN2313	Ricketts Block, Ricketts & Clausen, W.G. Ricketts Company, Palace Drug Store	1899, 1915	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
129-31 W. Main Street	5FN2315	Wilson Block and Wilson Annex	1897, 1900-01	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A,B,C)

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility	
				NRHP	SRHP
200-02 W. Main Street	5FN2318	Florence State Bank, Fremont Masonic Temple	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)
208 W. Main Street	5FN666	Liberty Motor Company, Quinley Auto Company, Gold Belt Auto Company, Vendetti Chevrolet	1922	Not eligible	Eligible (A,C)
120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2320	James A. McCandless House, Holt Funeral Home	1889	Not eligible	Eligible (A)
113 N. Santa Fe Avenue	5FN2326	Paxton Office, The Albion, Sheridan Office and Hospital, Surtorius Office, Presbyterian Church Manse	1890-95	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)

NOTE: Letters in parentheses in the NRHP and SRHP columns indicate the applicable National or State Register criteria.

**National Register Potential Eligibles**



Florence Carnegie Library, 100 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (1918-19), 5FN2269.



First Presbyterian Church, 201 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (1896), 5FN2270.

**National Register Potential Eligibles**



Fremont Hotel, 127-31 E. Front Street (1897), 5FN94.



Deibert Undertaking, 105 W. Front Street (c. 1896), 5FN2272.

## National Register Potential Eligibles



McCandless Block, 109-11 East Main Street (1894), 5FN2286.



Lobach Block, 125 East Main Street (1898), 5FN2294

## National Register Potential Eligibles



Fritz-Johnson Block, 115-17 W. Main Street, (1901), 5FN2306.



Ricketts Block, 125-27 W. Main Street (1899, 1915), 5FN2313.

## National Register Potential Eligibles



Wilson Block and Annex, 129-31 W. Main Street (1897, 1901), 5FN2315.



Florence State Bank/Florence Masonic Temple, 200-02 W. Main Street (1901), 5FN2318.

## National Register Potential Eligibles



Dr. Paxton Office/Presbyterian Manse, 113 N. Santa Fe Avenue (early 1890s), 5FN2326.

## State Register Potential Eligibles



First National Bank of Florence, 101-03 East Main Street (1921), 5FN2281.



Fabrizio Brothers, 128 East Main Street (1925), 5FN2296.

## State Register Potential Eligibles



Morgan Block, 107-09 W. Main Street (1900), 5FN2301.



Van Nest Block, 121 W. Main Street (1895), 5FN2309.

**State Register Potential Eligibles**



Liberty Motor/Vendetti Chevrolet, 208 W. Main Street (1922), 5FN666.



McCandless House/Holt Mortuary, 120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue (1889), 5FN2320.



Figure 23. This 1968 view shows the south elevation (trackside) of the former Denver & Rio Grande Railroad depot in Florence before its east and west sections were enclosed. SOURCE: Photograph donated by Gladys Carmichael to the Florence Senior Center, included with previous Colorado Historical Society survey form for 100 Railroad Street, 17 January 2005.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. National Register Historic District

The survey identified a potential National Register historic district in Downtown Florence, as did a 1981 survey. The district should be nominated for such recognition, if owner support exists. Such designation places no restrictions on what owners may do with their properties and will increase public awareness of the importance of and interest in the preservation of the city's historic buildings and structures. Listing also may qualify properties within the district for federal and state tax credits and State Historical Fund grants.

### 2. Survey of Additional Areas

Florence's other historic neighborhoods and individual historic properties scattered around the city should be surveyed. Such studies will provide more complete information and documentation about buildings and identify significant individual resources and historic districts.

### 3. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines provide assistance to property owners in preserving the character of buildings within a historic district. The city should adopt and distribute such guidelines. The City also should consider the adoption of a local program for recognition of significant buildings and historically appropriate rehabilitation of storefronts.

### 4. Educational Activities

The City should continue to support educational activities and programs providing historical and preservation-related information to local residents.

Property owners should receive information (including survey forms) about the history of their buildings and the benefits of preservation.

### 5. Publications and Walking Tours

Historical publications and walking tours focusing on surveyed parts of the city should be produced to stimulate greater interest in preservation issues. Information from the survey could be made available from a link on the City's website. The history of Florence deserves further scholarly research and the publication of a book discussing its growth and development. A historic tour booklet providing a summary of information for downtown buildings would be useful for local residents and would benefit heritage tourism.

### 6. Donation of Photographs and Archival Information

The Price Pioneer Museum and the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center collect and archive information about Florence's history and its buildings. Historic photographs, maps, newspapers, books, manuscript collections, and city records should be donated and maintained for the use of future researchers. Oral history interviews with persons who possess knowledge and information about the history and development of the city should be conducted.

### 7. Retention of Survey Deliverables

Copies of the products resulting from this survey should be placed in public repositories such as the Price Pioneer Museum, the Florence Public Library, and

the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center, where citizens can consult the materials associated with the project to

learn more about their properties and where the survey products will be preserved for future generations.



Figure 24. The east half of 125-27 West Main Street had not been constructed when this early 1900s photograph was taken of Ricketts and Clausen New and Second Hand Store. The eastern portion of 129-31 West Main Street is shown at the right. SOURCE: Price Pioneer Museum, photograph collection, Florence, Colorado.

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# APPENDICES



**Appendix 1**  
**FLORENCE HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY, 2007-08**  
**SURVEYED RESOURCES IN STREET ADDRESS ORDER**

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
100 W. 2nd Street	5FN2269	Florence Public Library/Florence Carnegie Library	1918-19	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
201 W. 2nd Street	5FN2270	First Presbyterian Church	1896	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)	Contributing
127-31 E. Front Street	5FN94	Fremont Hotel, Elks Home and Lodge	1897	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
105 W. Front Street/106 Railroad Street	5FN2272	Deibert Furniture and Undertaking	1896 c.	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
107 W. Front Street	5FN2273	McDonald Block	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
108 W. Front Street	5FN2274	Deibert House, Leggett House	1885	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
109 W. Front Street	5FN2275	Service Motor Company Building	1920-21	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
112 W. Front Street	5FN2271	Bernard House, Frank and Hedda Orecchio House	1880s	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
114 W. Front Street	5FN2276	Hotel Glenwood, Schumps Block, Glenrock Hotel	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
119 W. Front Street	5FN2277	Marsh Motor Company	1923	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
121-23 W. Front Street	5FN2278	Marsh Motor Company	1923	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
129 W. Front Street	5FN2279	Berardi House	1926-36	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
100 E. Main Street/109-11 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2280	Florence Hotel, Bank of Florence	1890-91	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
101-03 E. Main Street	5FN2281	First National Bank of Florence	1921	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
102 E. Main Street	5FN2282	Greenlight Bar, Boston Lunch, Johnnie's, Capri Restaurant	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
104-10 E. Main Street	5FN2283	Union Block, Union Hall, Florence Opera House	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
105 E. Main Street	5FN2284	Dr. Morgan Office, Bramer & Tull Optometrists	1926-49	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
107 E. Main Street	5FN2285	New Music Company	1926	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
109-11 E. Main Street	5FN2286	McCandless Block, McCandless Mercantile, McCandless Hall	1894	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A,B,C)	Contributing
114 E. Main Street	5FN2287	National Club Bar, Charles Bates & Son, Magnet Café and Bar	1895-97	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
115-23 E. Main Street	5FN2288	Florence Auto Company, Fox Machine Shop	1917	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
116 E. Main Street	5FN2289	Grande Liquor Store, Fremont Jewelry	1948	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
118 E. Main Street	5FN2290	Central Market, J. Bald & Company	1902	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
120 E. Main Street	5FN2291	Cornwall (Cornwell) Block, Fulton Market, Master's Studio, Bundy Auto Company	1897	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
122 E. Main Street	5FN2292	Central Block, Florence Post Office, Boston Market	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
124 E. Main Street	5FN2293	Boston Market, Fulton Market	1900-06	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
125 E. Main Street	5FN2294	Lobach Block, Kirk & Rinner Millinery, Elks Lodge	1897-98	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
127-31 E. Main Street	5FN2295	Lobach Annex, Florence Daily Tribune, Thompson Confectionery	1899	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
128 E. Main Street	5FN2296	Fabrizio Brothers Coors Beer Distribution	1925	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
132 E. Main Street	5FN2297	Morgan Conoco	1956	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
101-03 W. Main Street/104-08 S. Pikes Peak Ave.	5FN2298	White House Barber Shop, Dr. McGrath Office, Dr. Knause Office	1952	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
105 W. Main Street	5FN2299	Knights of Pythias Castle Hall	1888	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
106 W. Main Street	5FN2300	City Drug, McCreery & Widerfelt Drug, Stewart Drug, Florence Pharmacy	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
107-09 W. Main Street	5FN2301	Houston Block, Morgan Block, The Globe, Senatore's	1900	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
108-10 W. Main Street	5FN2302	W.P. Wilbar Block	1895-97	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
111 W. Main Street	5FN2303	City Meat Market, Florence Market	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
112-14 W. Main Street	5FN2304	Jim's Clothing	1976	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
113 W. Main Street	5FN2305	Dils Dry Goods, Golden Rule Store, Broken \$ Store	1893	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
115-17 W. Main Street	5FN2306	Fritz-Johnson Block	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
116-20 W. Main Street	5FN2307	The Fair, J.C. Penney, Nu-Way Cleaners	1890-95, 1928	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
119 W. Main Street	5FN2308	Florence Firehouse, Florence City Hall	1892	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
121 W. Main Street	5FN2309	Van Nest Block	1895	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
122 W. Main Street	5FN2310	Carmody Block	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
123 W. Main Street	5FN2311	Proctor & Company, Jones Grocery Company	1895-1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
124 W. Main Street	5FN2312	Julius McCandless Hardware	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
125-27 W. Main Street	5FN2313	Ricketts Block, Ricketts & Clausen, W.G. Ricketts Company, Palace Drug Store	1899, 1915	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
126-28 W. Main Street	5FN2314	Andrews Block, Jones Grocery Co., Merchants and Farmers Bank, Safeway	1898-99	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
129-31 W. Main Street	5FN2315	Wilson Block and Wilson Annex	1897, 1900-1901	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A,B,C)	Contributing
130 W. Main Street	5FN2316	Columbia Block, Hoffman Brothers, Columbia Theater, Liberty Theater	1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
132 W. Main Street	5FN2317	Lovell Block, Palace Theater, Florence Creamery	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
200-02 W. Main Street	5FN2318	Florence State Bank, Fremont Masonic Temple	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
204 W. Main Street	5FN2328	Southern Colorado Power	1952	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
205 W. Main Street	5FN2319	Hutton House, Merwin Law Office	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing

Street Address	State ID Num.	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
208 W. Main Street	5FN666	Liberty Motor Company, Quinley Auto Company, Gold Belt Auto Company, Vendetti Chevrolet	1922	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
218 W. Main Street	5FN665	Tollis Expert Shoe Repair, Tollis House	1926	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2320	James A. McCandless House, Holt Funeral Home	1889	Not Eligible	Eligible (A)	Contributing
112 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2321	Palace Pharmacy, Davie Building	1894-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
118 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2322	Deibert's Furniture and Undertaking Office, Campbell Furniture and Undertaking Company	1895-1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
120-24 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2323	Trulove Block, Arcade Hotel, Florence Chamber of Commerce	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
200 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	5FN2324	Orecchio Block, Eagles Lodge, Depot Hotel, Florence Citizen	1913	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
100 Railroad Street	5FN2325	Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot	1918	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
113 N. Santa Fe Avenue	5FN2326	Paxton Office, The Albion, Sheridan Office and Hospital, Surtorius Office, Presbyterian Church Manse	1890-95	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)	Contributing
112 S. Santa Fe Avenue	5FN2327	Florence Steam Laundry, Snow White Laundry	1901	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing

NOTE: Letters in parentheses in the NRHP column indicate the applicable National or State Register criteria.

**Appendix 2**  
**FLORENCE HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY, 2007-08**  
**SURVEYED RESOURCES IN STATE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER ORDER**

State ID Num.	Street Address	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
5FN94	127-31 E. Front Street	Fremont Hotel, Elks Home and Lodge	1897	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN665	218 W. Main Street	Tollis Expert Shoe Repair, Tollis House	1926	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN666	208 W. Main Street	Liberty Motor Company, Quinley Auto Company, Gold Belt Auto Company, Vendetti Chevrolet	1922	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2269	100 W. 2nd Street	Florence Public Library/Florence Carnegie Library	1918-19	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2270	201 W. 2nd Street	First Presbyterian Church	1896	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)	Contributing
5FN2271	112 W. Front Street	Bernard House, Frank and Hedda Orecchio House	1880s	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2272	105 W. Front Street/106 Railroad Street	Deibert Furniture and Undertaking	1896 c.	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2273	107 W. Front Street	McDonald Block	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2274	108 W. Front Street	Deibert House, Leggett House	1885	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2275	109 W. Front Street	Service Motor Company Building	1920-21	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2276	114 W. Front Street	Hotel Glenwood, Schumps Block, Glenrock Hotel	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2277	119 W. Front Street	Marsh Motor Company	1923	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2278	121-23 W. Front Street	Marsh Motor Company	1923	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2279	129 W. Front Street	Berardi House	1926-36	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2280	100 E. Main Street/109-11 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	Florence Hotel, Bank of Florence	1890-91	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2281	101-03 E. Main Street	First National Bank of Florence	1921	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2282	102 E. Main Street	Greenlight Bar, Boston Lunch, Johnnie's, Capri Restaurant	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing

State ID Num.	Street Address	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
5FN2283	104-10 E. Main Street	Union Block, Union Hall, Florence Opera House	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2284	105 E. Main Street	Dr. Morgan Office, Bramer & Tull Optometrists	1926-49	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2285	107 E. Main Street	New Music Company	1926	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2286	109-11 E. Main Street	McCandless Block, McCandless Mercantile, McCandless Hall	1894	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A, B, C)	Contributing
5FN2287	114 E. Main Street	National Club Bar, Charles Bates & Son, Magnet Café and Bar	1895-97	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2288	115-23 E. Main Street	Florence Auto Company, Fox Machine Shop	1917	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2289	116 E. Main Street	Grande Liquor Store, Fremont Jewelry	1948	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2290	118 E. Main Street	Central Market, J. Bald & Company	1902	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2291	120 E. Main Street	Cornwall (Cornwell) Block, Fulton Market, Master's Studio, Bundy Auto Company	1897	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2292	122 E. Main Street	Central Block, Florence Post Office, Boston Market	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2293	124 E. Main Street	Boston Market, Fulton Market	1900-06	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2294	125 E. Main Street	Lobach Block, Kirk & Rinner Millinery, Elks Lodge	1897-98	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2295	127-31 E. Main Street	Lobach Annex, Florence Daily Tribune, Thompson Confectionery	1899	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2296	128 E. Main Street	Fabrizio Brothers Coors Beer Distribution	1925	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2297	132 E. Main Street	Morgan Conoco	1956	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2298	101-03 W. Main Street/104-08 S. Pikes Peak Ave.	White House Barber Shop, Dr. McGrath Office, Dr. Knause Office	1952	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2299	105 W. Main Street	Knights of Pythias Castle Hall	1888	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2300	106 W. Main Street	City Drug, McCreery & Widerfelt Drug, Stewart Drug, Florence Pharmacy	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing

State ID Num.	Street Address	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
5FN2301	107-09 W. Main Street	Houston Block, Morgan Block, The Globe, Senatore's	1900	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2302	108-10 W. Main Street	W.P. Wilbar Block	1895-97	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2303	111 W. Main Street	City Meat Market, Florence Market	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2304	112-14 W. Main Street	Jim's Clothing	1976	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2305	113 W. Main Street	Dils Dry Goods, Golden Rule Store, Broken \$ Store	1893	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2306	115-17 W. Main Street	Fritz-Johnson Block	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2307	116-20 W. Main Street	The Fair, J.C. Penney, Nu-Way Cleaners	1890-95, 1928	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2308	119 W. Main Street	Florence Firehouse, Florence City Hall	1892	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2309	121 W. Main Street	Van Nest Block	1895	Not Eligible	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2310	122 W. Main Street	Carmody Block	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2311	123 W. Main Street	Proctor & Company, Jones Grocery Company	1895-1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2312	124 W. Main Street	Julius McCandless Hardware	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2313	125-27 W. Main Street	Ricketts Block, Ricketts & Clausen, W.G. Ricketts Company, Palace Drug Store	1899, 1915	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2314	126-28 W. Main Street	Andrews Block, Jones Grocery Co., Merchants and Farmers Bank, Safeway	1898-99	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2315	129-31 W. Main Street	Wilson Block and Wilson Annex	1897, 1900-1901	Eligible (A, B, C)	Eligible (A,B,C)	Contributing
5FN2316	130 W. Main Street	Columbia Block, Hoffman Brothers, Columbia Theater, Liberty Theater	1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2317	132 W. Main Street	Lovell Block, Palace Theater, Florence Creamery	1894	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2318	200-02 W. Main Street	Florence State Bank, Fremont Masonic Temple	1901	Eligible (A,C)	Eligible (A,C)	Contributing
5FN2319	205 W. Main Street	Hutton House, Merwin Law Office	1890-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing

State ID Num.	Street Address	Historic Name	Year Built	Eligibility		Contributing Status
				NRHP	SRHP	
5FN2320	120 N. Pikes Peak Avenue	James A. McCandless House, Holt Funeral Home	1889	Not Eligible	Eligible (A)	Contributing
5FN2321	112 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	Palace Pharmacy, Davie Building	1894-95	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2322	118 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	Deibert's Furniture and Undertaking Office, Campbell Furniture and Undertaking Company	1895-1900	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2323	120-24 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	Trulove Block, Arcade Hotel, Florence Chamber of Commerce	1895	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2324	200 S. Pikes Peak Avenue	Orecchio Block, Eagles Lodge, Depot Hotel, Florence Citizen	1913	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2325	100 Railroad Street	Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Depot	1918	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Contributing
5FN2326	113 N. Santa Fe Avenue	Paxton Office, The Albion, Sheridan Office and Hospital, Surtorius Office, Presbyterian Church Manse	1890-95	Eligible (C)	Eligible (C)	Contributing
5FN2327	112 S. Santa Fe Avenue	Florence Steam Laundry, Snow White Laundry	1901	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing
5FN2328	204 W. Main Street	Southern Colorado Power	1952	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Noncontributing

NOTE: Letters in parentheses in the NRHP column indicate the applicable National or State Register criteria.

## Appendix 3 Florence Cast Iron



Runkle column,  
115-17 West Main Street.

A notable feature of Downtown Florence is the number of buildings with cast iron storefront columns. Although such columns are rare in many cities today, they were extremely popular components of commercial architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cast iron, an alloy of iron with high carbon content that displays great strength in compression, enjoyed widespread use in the second half of the nineteenth century. Cast iron elements are created by pouring the molten material into forms. Cast iron storefront columns helped support the load of upper floors, permitted the inclusion of large display windows that brought light into building interiors, and were inexpensive to assemble at the jobsite. Given the demand for architectural cast iron in the late nineteenth century, “many American foundries that had been casting machine parts, bank safes, iron pipe, or cook stoves added architectural iron departments. These called for patternmakers with sophisticated design capabilities, as well as knowledge of metal shrinkage and other technical aspects of casting.” Ten buildings with cast iron columns bearing the nameplates of the original manufacturer were identified during the survey. The four foundries represented are discussed below.

***W.H. Runkle, Florence, Colorado.*** William H. Runkle established an iron foundry in Florence in June 1896, and employed ten workers by the following year. Runkle had operated a foundry in Denver for 23 years, but believed that the area’s oil wells, refineries, and ore reduction plants made Florence a good location for a foundry and machine shop. In August 1897, the firm (also known as the Star Boiler and



Machine Works) was profiled in the “Industrial Number” of the *Oil Refiner* newspaper. The business engaged in the manufacture and repair of boilers, sheet metal, tanks, and smokestacks. Runkle cast iron columns were found on two Florence buildings: 115-17 and 129-31 West Main Street. The building at 115-17 West Main Street has a Runkle column that includes a 1901 manufacturing date. In February 1901, the *Florence Tribune* noted that the production of the columns was considered, “quite a mechanical feat for a town of this size.” The foundry operated at least through 1901, but was not listed in the 1903 State Business Directory.

***Riverside Iron Works, Kansas City, Missouri.*** The Riverside Iron Works was initially known as “Keystone, the Consolidated Iron Works” and was incorporated in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1881. The

firm moved to the Riverview area of Kansas City, Kansas, in 1889 and changed its name to the Keystone Iron Works Company. The firm became known as the Riverside Iron Works in the early 1890s and had 200 workers. Riverside manufactured boilers, hoisting equipment, bridges, brass fittings, and architectural and ornamental iron. The L.J. Smith Company purchased the foundry plant in 1910 and devoted it to locomotive repairs. The two Downtown Florence buildings with Riverside columns are 104-10 and 109-11 East Main Street.

**Paxton & Vierling Iron Works, Omaha, Nebraska.** Paxton & Vierling Iron Works was established in 1885 by W.A. “Billy” Paxton and brothers A.J. Vierling of Omaha and Robert Vierling of Chicago. The business employed 30 persons at this time. Paxton (1837-1907) was a pioneer businessman of the city, whose activities included the development of the Omaha Stockyards, banking, wholesale groceries, and real estate investment. Paxton & Vierling manufactured all kinds of industrial ironware, including girders, beams, street lamps, manhole covers, and entrance thresholds. In the twentieth century, Paxton & Vierling became a subsidiary of Owen Industries, Inc. Only one Downtown Florence building (108-10 West Main Street) was identified with Paxton & Vierling columns.

**John Seaton, Atchison, Kansas.** Ohio-born John Seaton (1834-1912) grew up in Kentucky and entered the trade of machinist. In 1856, he established a foundry at Alton, Illinois, that eventually employed 50 men. Following service in the Union Army in the Civil War, in 1872 Seaton relocated his company to Atchison, Kansas. The city had offered \$10,000 in bonds to anyone establishing a foundry there. A 1900 publication noted Seaton’s penchant for perfection “has given him a prestige, and no foundry stands higher with architects and builders. He does general architectural work, and in addition makes locomotive wheels, smoke stacks, steam cylinders, car stoves, etc., for the Santa Fe, Missouri Pacific and Fort Scott & Gulf roads.” The foundry employed 200 workers in 1900, and in 1910 had annual revenues of \$250,000. Upon his death in 1912, one account observed that the Seaton firm “stands without a peer in its line in the West.” Five Florence buildings with Seaton columns were identified: 125 East Main Street and 107-09, 123, 125-27, and 130 West Main Street.

**SOURCES:** The principal sources for this discussion include: Florence city directories; Colorado State business directories; Howard L. Conrad, *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri* (New York: Haldeman, Conrad & Co., 1901); Frank W. Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History* (Chicago: Standard Publ. Co., 1912), vol. 3, part 2; Perl W. Morgan, *History of Wyandotte County, Kansas and Its People* (Chicago: Lewis Publ. Co., 1911); “Keystone Story Lies in Road,” *Kansas City Kansan*, 26 January 1986; Owen Industries, company website, [www.owenind.com](http://www.owenind.com), accessed 20 August 2008; William A. Paxton, biographical profile (citing original sources), [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), accessed 20 August 2008.



John Seaton



Runkle column,  
129-31 West Main St.