

## ***William Blackmore***

### **Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects**

(London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1869)

## **Extracts From the Report of the Denver**

## **Board of Trade on Colorado**

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The completion of the Union Pacific Railroad to the northern boundary of Colorado; the rapid approach of the Union Pacific Eastern Division--aiming to pass through the centre of the territory; and the commencement of the Denver Branch, to connect with the first-named road at Cheyenne, already affording cheap, rapid, and safe communication with the East, and promising a speedy and direct connection with Chicago and St. Louis, have attracted so much attention to the rich mineral and agricultural resources of the country that it is deemed expedient by the Denver Board of Trade to issue this pamphlet as a brief answer to the numerous letters daily received from abroad, by the Secretary and members of that body.

Denver, *May 19th*, 1868.

**General Description of Colorado.**--Colorado, lying within the central belt through which the emigration of the American people is flowing westward, half-way between St. Louis and San Francisco, has an area of over one hundred thousand square miles, nearly equally divided into plains and mountains.

The plains imperceptibly slope from the base of the mountains, which rise abruptly from them, to the Missouri river; presenting a smooth undulating surface, destitute of timber, save in the valleys of the water-courses, and upon the high land, which, near the mountains, divides the waters of the Platte and Arkansas Rivers.

The climate of this plateau, within the territory of Colorado, is peculiar. Owing to its altitude, remoteness from large bodies of water, and the proximity of the great mountain range, the fall of moisture is small as compared with that of the Atlantic and Mississippi Valley States, and almost wholly confined to the winter and spring months. The summer days are hot, the thermometer often rising to 90 deg., *the nights always cool and dewless*. The winters are, as a rule, delightfully mild, interrupted with occasional light falls of snow, followed by a few days only of severe cold. The great climatic characteristic is intense sunshine and absence of moisture.

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The soil of the river bottoms is identical in fertility and depth with that of the Missouri, and yields, generally without irrigation, immense crops of small grain, hay, and such vegetables as are produced in the same latitude at the East. The uplands have a rich, warm, sandy loam, which produces, wherever irrigation is possible, even more abundantly than the bottoms, and are everywhere covered with buffalo and gramma grasses, affording nutritious feed for stock, which run at large, and *grow fat without fodder throughout the entire year.*

The innumerable herds of buffalo, elk, antelope, and deer, which have from time immemorial subsisted by pasturage alone, on these plains, suggest that they will not only be capable of furnishing the stock and wool needed for a dense population within the territory, but also for a large portion of the people of the continent.

Spring opens one month earlier here than in the same latitude at the East. Seed is sown in February and March. Teams, subsisting on grass alone, are able to leave the base of the mountains for the East; and, carrying, as it were, the grass with them, reach the Missouri River at the earliest period at which it is possible to travel westward. In short vegetation germinates earlier on the Great Plains, measurably in ratio to the increase of longitude.

Fruit trees, when planted upon the uplands and irrigated, live and grow finely. The soil and climate are identical with those of the Sale Lake Basin, which is--with the exception, perhaps, of certain portions of California--the best fruit-producing region in America, and there is every reason to believe that in time Colorado will, in this particular, rival her sister territory.

Black walnut, chestnut, and other American forest trees grow readily from the seed.

Colorado has richer and more extensive mineral deposits than California, and grazing lands as valuable as those of Texas. She has the peculiar excellences of both these favoured States, with the advantages of easier access and a nearer market.

The climate conditions are exceedingly favourable to *consumptives* who are not in the confirmed stage of the disease, to all asthmatic sufferers and to those having chronic bronchitis. *To the latter two it affords instantaneous relief* and rapid and permanent cure.

There is literally no disease peculiar to any portion of the territory, and invalids from abroad rarely fail to rapidly improve under the tonic influences of the climate.

Both to the invalid and voluptuary the contour of surface affords great facility for choice of temperature and density of atmosphere. A ride of two hours over the plains, always hard and smooth, and six hours of mountain travel, either by private conveyance or the six-horse coach, over roads pronounced the best of the kind in the world, and through the grandest of scenery, carries one from the summer heat of the valley, through the intermediate grades of climate, to an altitude where an overcoat is a comfort by day, and a blazing fire a necessity by night. Good inns are found on all the roads, and settlements with public and private houses, having the refinements as well as the comforts of life, hang upon the mountains ten thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Within convenient distance of the mountain settlements, cool streams fresh from the snow, half

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hidden by flowering shrubs and filled with trout, ripple and foam, and silvery lakes reflect the snow-capped mountains overhanging them. This region is a paradise to the angler and hunter, and it is impossible to do justice in writing to the purity of the atmosphere or to the scenery, in which no element of sublimity is wanting.

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### SOUTHERN COLORADO

Embraces all that portion of the Territory lying south of the "Divide," or separating ridge, between the waters of the Platte and Arkansas rivers, and includes the counties of El Paso, Fremont, Pueblo, Huerfano, Las Animas, Costilla, Conejos, and Sahwatch, the five first named lying in the valley of the Arkansas, and the three last in the valley of the Rio Grande del Norte.

All that portion lying south of the Arkansas River is what originally belonged to Mexico, and in the organisation of Colorado Territory was taken from New Mexico. It is mostly covered by Spanish grants, and a portion of which has been settled many years. Irrigation is an essential part of farming, and the labour is mostly performed by Mexicans. Very few farms are fenced, the necessity being obviated by the laws requiring stock to be herded during the growing season.

On account of the necessity of irrigation, the farming is confined to the valleys of streams and such table lands as water can be brought to from the streams in acequias or ditches. United States surveys have been made upon most of the lands north of the Arkansas River, and much of it is open to pre-emption and homestead entry, while south of the river the boundaries only of grants have been established by public survey, and the number of acres of each farm or ranche is limited only by the ability of those purchasing from the grantees or the ambition of those "squatting and taking the chances."

The climate is dry, mild, and healthy. Little snow falls in the valleys during the winter, and up to the present date--March 1st--house-flies have buzzed during every month of the past winter. Stock of all kinds graze and fatten the year round, with no other care or expense than herding, and as the range for grazing is unlimited, stock-growing will always be, as it is now, the most profitable business for agriculturists.

The soil is productive, wheat having been raised which yielded 50 bushels to the acre, and some 100. The average yield of wheat is from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre, and of corn 50.

The average price of wheat and corn is three cents per pound, estimates and prices being made altogether by the pound instead of the bushel.

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### GENERAL REMARKS

The Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division, has surveyed a branch road deflecting at a point about 100 miles east of Denver, so as to strike the Arkansas River at the mouth of the Las Animas, or Huerfano, and thence direct through Southern Colorado to Santa Fe and Arizona, to the Pacific.

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The time is not distant when a railroad will run parallel with the mountains, at their base from Denver, *via* Santa Fe to Mexico. Coal-fields skirt the base of the mountains from the northern border of Colorado to Trinidad. Few efforts have as yet been made to cultivate fruit, but of the adaptation of the climate to fruit culture there can be no doubt. Currants, plums, raspberries and grapes grow spontaneously in immense quantities. A superior quality of native wine is made from the wild grape, and the dryness of the atmosphere prevents the liability to mildew. Pueblo County alone manufactured last year from the wild grape over 100 barrels of native wine.

The following summary of the products of the southern counties exhibits the resources of that portion of the territory, and is as nearly correct as can be obtained. The data for the products of the northern counties were not attainable except by rough estimate, and are not therefore presented, but will probably nearly equal those of the southern counties:--

SUMMARY OF PRODUCTIONS						
Counties	Corn, bus.	Wheat, bus.	Cattle, hd.	Sheep, hd.	Hogs.	
El Paso .....	15,000	10,000	2,000	1,000	500	
Fremont .....	10,000	11,900	1,000	500	250	
Pueblo .....	500,000	100,000	10,000	20,000	1,000	
Huerfano .....	100,000	50,000	6,000	5,000	500	
Las Animas ....	50,000	100,000	8,000	15,000	500	
Costilla .....		20,000	5,000	20,000		
Conejos .....		15,000	2,000	10,000		
Sahwath h .....		5,000	500	1,000		
Total .....	675,000	311,900	34,500	72,500	2,750	

The United States Land Office, located at Denver, furnishes the following as the amount of land entered at that office during the year 1867, viz.:--

M. B. Land Warrants, 46,306 acres  
Acts of 1847, 1850,  
1855 .....

Cash Series ..... 9,545 acres

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Homestead Entries,    11,603 acres  
Act May 20th, 1862  
.....  
Filings made and        70,000 acres  
settled upon, about  
.....  
  
Total ..... 137,454 acres  
.....  
.....  
(Signed) E. C. HOLMES, Registrar.

There are two other Land Office in the territory, from which no report has been received.

**Prices of Provisions and Living.**--Bacon, hams and sides, 25c.; lard 25c.; butter, 65c.; coffee, 35c.; corn, 4c.; meal, 5c.; flour, \$6 to \$9 per 100lbs.; potatoes, 3c.; sugar, 25c.; syrup molasses, \$2 to \$2 75 per gallon; teas, \$2 to \$2 50; beef, 12 1/2 to 20c.; board, per week, from \$5 to \$10. **Prices of Labour.**--Ordinary farm hands obtain from 30 to 60 dollars per month; mechanics from five to eight dollars per day; servant girls from seven to ten dollars per week, and all classes of labour are in good demand.

Governor John Evans, in his Message to the Legislature in 1864, thus compares the profits of farming in Colorado and Illinois:--

One man will attend, by his own labour, in Colorado, ten acres of corn and fifteen acres of wheat, which, at the average prices since the country has been settled, yield as follows:--

10 acres corn, 40 bushels per	\$1,200 00	
acre--400 bushels at \$3 00		
.....		
15 acres Wheat, 30 bushels	\$1,350 00	
per acre--450 bushels at \$3 00		
...		
Corn fodder for 10 acres at	\$ 100 00	
\$10 per acre		
.....		
Wheat straw for 15 acres--20	\$ 200 00	2,850 00
tons at \$10 per ton		
.....		

In Illinois one man will cultivate thirty acres of corn and fifteen acres of wheat which, at the

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general average of crops and prices, would yield:--	30 acres	\$360 00	
	Corn, 60		
	bushels per		
	acre--1800		
	bushels at		
	20 cts .....		
	15 acres	\$168 75	
	Wheat, 15		
	bushels per		
	acre--225		
	bushels at		
	75 cts .....		
	Straw fodder	\$100 00	628 75
	estimated at		
	.....		
	.....		
	.....		
	Showing a		\$2,221 25
	profit on one		
	man's labour		
	in favour of		
	Colorado of		
	....		

**Routes of Travel.**--The Chicago and North Western Railroad from Chicago to Omaha connects with the Union Pacific Railroad at that point. A daily line of packets runs from St. Louis to St. Joseph. The Union Pacific Railroad is completed to the Rocky Mountains. The Denver Pacific Railway will connect with that road at Cheyenne. Daily stages now run from Cheyenne to Denver. The Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Division, is completed to Anetlope--200 miles east of Denver--and is being rapidly constructed towards Denver. This road connects at Kansas City with the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, and the North Missouri Railroad, and the packets upon the Missouri river, affording prompt communication with Chicago and St. Louis. The United States Express Company run regular daily coaches from the end of the road to Denver. The Nye Forwarding Company advertise that they have over 200 teams, and connect with the great U.P.R. Eastern Division at its western terminus, *via* Smoky Hill route, thus forming a direct and reliable line of transportation from St. Louis, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, and all points east, through to Denver City, Colorado.

The Denver and Santa Fe Stage and Express Company run a tri-weekly line of coaches from Denver to Santa Fe through all the principal towns of Southern Colorado, and to the new mines on the Cimarron.

A corespondent of the Department of Agriculture in Pueblo county, Colorado, writes as follows

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upon the agriculture of that territory: "Permanent settlement and agricultural operations first commenced here in 1860, but little progress was made until two years later, since which time no country has ever improved faster; every available foot of land in this county being now occupied and cultivated as closely as in any part of the United States. Every foot that can be watered is being turned by the plough. There are now fifty-three ditches in use in this county, their aggregate length being 147 miles, at a cost of \$91,400, and if the cost of dams, breakages, repairs, &c., was estimated, it would swell the amount to over \$100,000. The actual number of acres already ploughed is 21,150. Considering the insulation and newness of the country, and that not a foot can be cultivated without being irrigated, I think it will be hard to find a parallel. On the first day of June, 1867, there had been entered and pre-empted at the land office in the territory 400,000 acres, and a little over 100,000 are cultivated by 'Spanish grant' holders; and about 50,000 acres are cultivated where the land is unsurveyed and unentered. So that there are nearly 600,000 acres now under the plough in the territory."

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