



Iron Art

A self-guided tour of Colorado City's historic iron and wire fences

Improvements in iron technology guaranteed a steady supply of fence material: wire, malleable iron and steel rods, and ornate castings. Invariably labeled "wrought iron", most fences were actually a composite of several factory-processed materials.

Fences were only a small and highly visible part of the new iron explosion. Urns, settees, window guards, boot scrapers, flower stands--the offering of iron goods seemed endless. Late 19th century foundries offered cradle to grave services, making everything from baby carriages to cemetery railings--ironwork was an immensely popular decorative item.

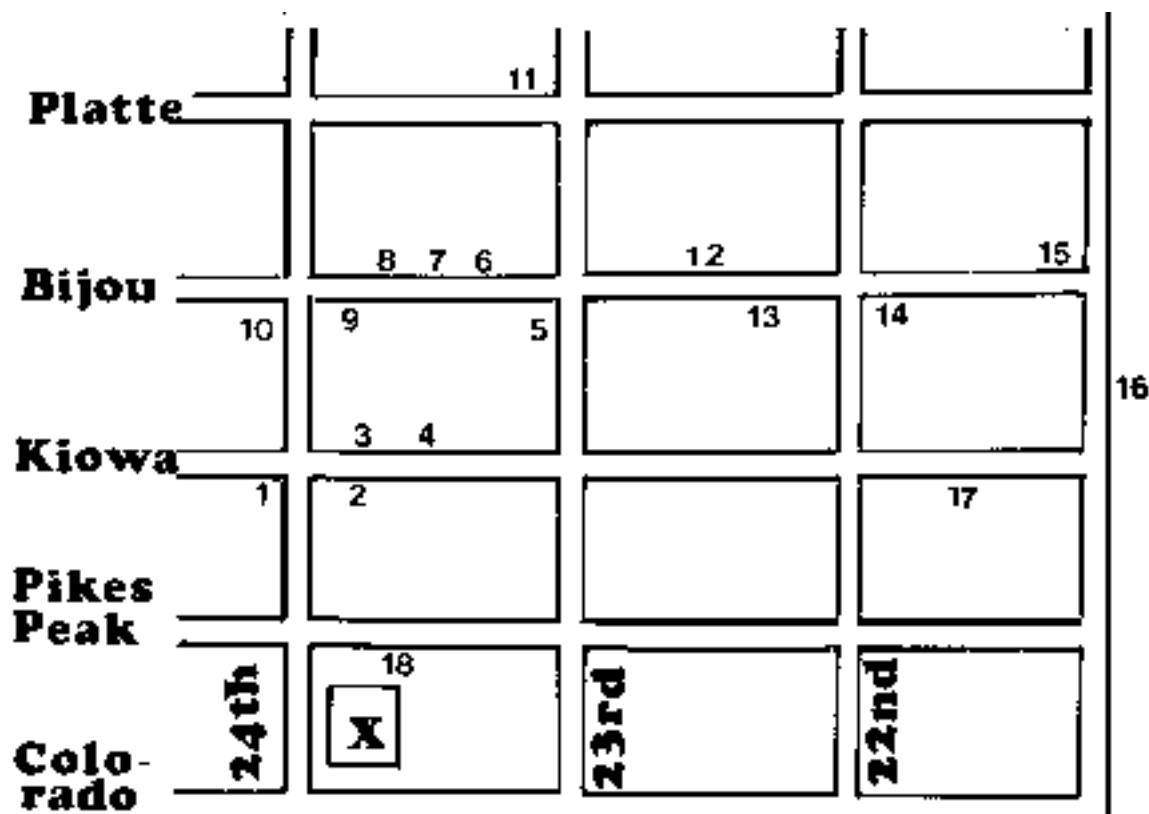
By the late 1880's Colorado City had its own foundry, the Hassell-Talcott Iron Works on South 25th Street, specializing in ornamental iron. "H-T" sold fences all over the region, competing with the midwestern foundries which did a brisk business by mail order, selling iron and wire work from illustrated catalogs, and then shipping the orders by rail. The local firm's rivals included the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati and several other Ohio foundries.

Hassell acted as agent for other firms, thus augmenting his already impressive selection of ironwork. He advertised woven steel fencing from the Hartman company and iron fences from the Barbee Iron & Wire Works of Chicago.

When the Colorado City foundry burned on January 13, 1896, with an estimated loss of \$5,000, Hassell dissolved his partnership with Talcott and rebuilt the Hassell Iron Works on Sierra Madre, south of Colorado Springs' downtown area. By this time Hassell had shifted the foundries emphasis to the production of structural iron, railroad and mining equipment, capitalizing on the big gold boom in Cripple Creek. Ornamental iron remained a bread-and-butter line throughout, however, and was featured regularly in the firm's advertising.

Decorative iron fences ranked high in 19th century tastes, combining as they did the qualities of utility and elegance so special to Victorians. Homeowners of that era, seeking both style and strength in a residential fence, embraced the new foundry- fashioned ironwork. Outlasting wood by generations and requiring almost no maintenance, iron fencing was a Bargain despite its initial expense. Best of all, ornamental iron work offered a heady choice of design, ranging from Gothic tracery to modern floral motifs, with a few Egyptian patterns thrown in for variety.

Fences in Old Colorado City



This is the index to the above map:

1. 16 North 24th Street.

A simple design of overlapping arches. Corner posts, decorated with classic acanthus leaves, add a touch of elegance.

2. 2327 West Kiowa.

Spearheads from the Stewart Iron Works of Ohio, with an embellishment of medallions.

3. 2330 West Kiowa

Double-Daisy picket head was often used with the acanthus-leaf posts. 4. 2326 West Kiowa

Overlapping arches with "rams head" line posts, which was used by several foundries.

5. 116 North 23rd Street

A Hassell gate with a wire fence. Inscription: "Pat Int'l Steel Post Co., St. Louis, Mo."

6. 2310 West Bijou

Overlapping arches, and carved bargeboards on the gables and great pattern of the shingle-siding

7. 2314 West Bijou

Spearhead from hammering and cutting the round rod. Beveled glass in the front window.

8. 2318 West Bijou

Wire pickets shaped like the wood pickets of the time.

9. 2327 West Bijou

Probable Hassell Gothic remnants.

10. 116 North 24th Street

Stewart Iron Works spearhead design, with a great garden of poppies, clematis, day lilies, daisies, and baby's breath.

11. 2302 West Platte

Iron cresting on a mansard roof.

12. 2228 West Bijou

Leaf and berry pickethead on the gate, with ram's head line post top, and woven wire fence.

13. 2215 West Bijou

similar to the St. Louis Steel Company fence with matching gate.

14. 2131 West Bijou

Hassell probably bought these wire pickets already made from other companies.

15. 2106-2110 West Bijou

The corner house has turrets, cables, and caps, with return cornices, brackets under the eaves and decorative molding.

Hassel-Talcott Iron Works and Decorative Fences

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16. 2032 West Kiowa

Iron picket fence in the rear from an unknown foundry.

17. 2123 West Kiowa

Overlapping arches and a wire fence from St. Louis Steel Company on the side.

18. 2311 Pikes Peak

Leaf and Berry picketheads, ram's head line post tops and decorative braces. The gate is gone, but the gate post is inscribed Hassel and Ward. They had a short partnership in 1890.

19. 1901 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

20. 1903 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

21. 1816 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

22. 1804 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

23. 1643 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

24. 1637 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

25. 1228 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

26. 1224 West Colorado

Rogers Iron Company, Springfield, Ohio.

27. 1005 West Colorado

unknown foundry

28. 1003 West Colorado

unknown foundry



Fences close to Old Colorado City

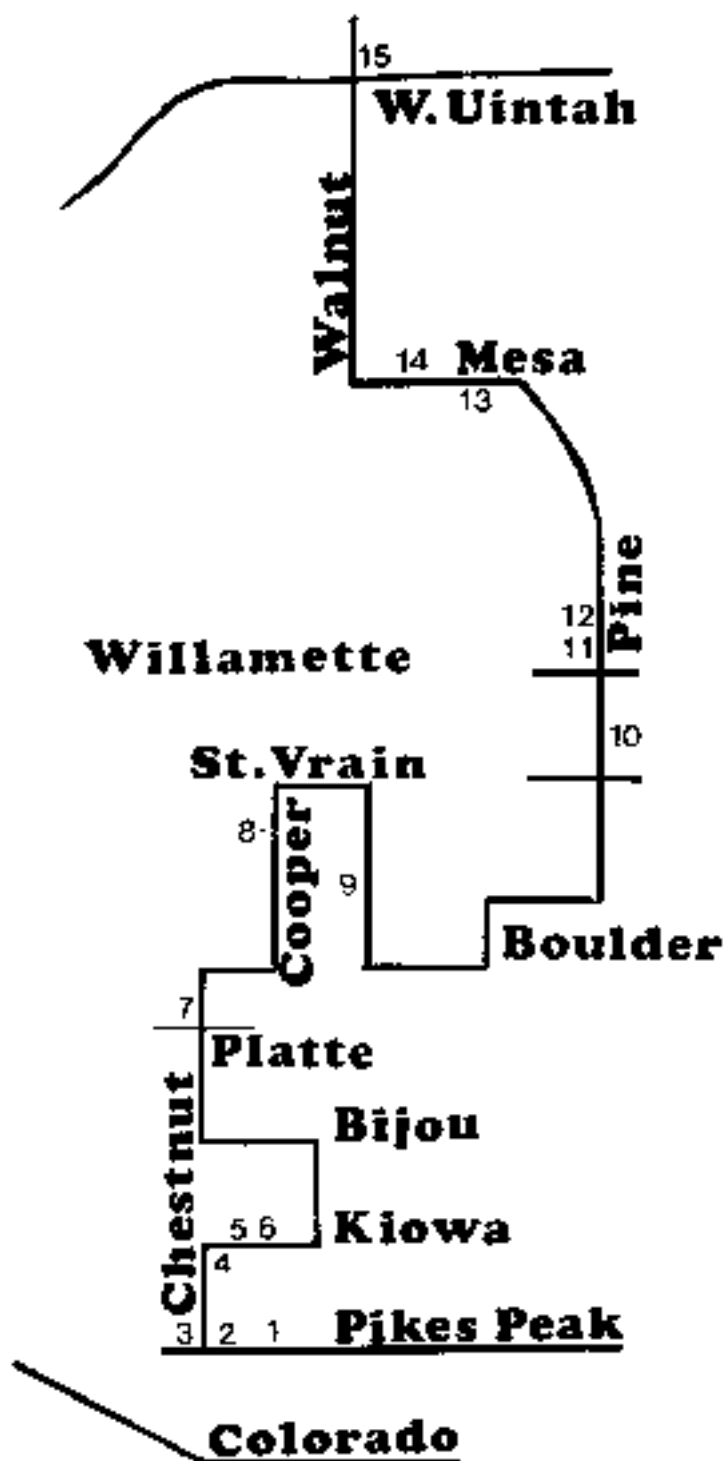
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1. 516 West Pikes Peak

Scrolls on the gate with medallions, and a spearhead variation with a leaf and petal pattern from an unknown foundry.

2. 520 West Pikes Peak

Traditional iron picket in concrete.

3. 602 West Pikes Peak

Hassel gate on the side, with a fence from a different foundry in the front, using cut and notched sheet metal.

4. 529 West Kiowa

Hassel overlapping arches fence on the left, and a corner section of arches and pointed pickets, with ram's head line posts, probably from the Stewart Foundry.

5. 528 West Kiowa

Pointed pickets, again, with fluted spearhead line post tops, and tulip tops on the gate posts, a commonly used motive at the Stewart Foundry.

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6. 522 West Kiowa

Hassell fan-shaped lotus pickethead with under an arch; a commonly used Hassell design.

7. 304, 308, 312 North Chestnut

All matched with the exception of the north fence having a fluted spearhead picket top, and the other two going with the lotus design. A local foundry made it possible for neighbors to work together for continuity.

8. 427, 435, 439, 443 North Cooper

Hassell design that was advertised heavily in the spring of 1897 in the Evening Telegraph. A common practice throughout the 1890's.

9. 424 North Walnut

Fluted spearheads with a shingled house.

10. 507 North Pine Acanthus posts, with lotus spearheads; a classic Hassell design.

11. 704 North Pine

Open-work corner posts, elaborate gate, fluer-de-lis picketheads on top, with crosses below. Hassell and the Stewart Steel foundry made this design, but the gate suggests Stewart.

12. 708 North pine.

A fence from the Champion Fence Company of Kenton, Ohio. Acorns on the top, and large foundry markers.

13. 315 Mesa Road

Acanthus posts, double-daisy picketheads, scrolls, arches, and more tracery make this one of the most lavish fences in the city 14. 340 Mesa Road Fluer-de-lis spearheads and arches on a Hassell designed fence.

15. 450 West Uintah

Lotus and double-daisy picketheads, acanthus posts inverted crosses, stars, and connecting tracery make this a compendium of most of the



Hassell patterns used at the time.

Credits:

Elaine Freed, Project Director, has written many articles on Colorado Springs' iron fences for: [Mountain and Plain History](#) Notes of the State Historical Society of Colorado (October, 1974), [The Old House Journal](#) (December, 1974) [Americana](#) (May, 1976), and [Historic Preservation](#) (1977) This inventory of the ornamental fences was made possible by a grant from the Springs Area Beautiful Association, and the Pikes Peak or Bust Bi-centennial Committee. The following students from Coronado High School helped with the field work for the inventory: [Beth Brooks](#), [Becky Bliss](#), [Tim Barbari](#), [Dan Starch](#), [Ann Burnett](#), [John Cox](#), [Erica Jessen](#), [Regina Walter](#), and faculty coordinator: [Dr. Robert Smith](#).