Forged Together in the Bessemer Neighborhood

Prepared by:

Jeffrey DeHerrera
Cheri Yost
Adam Thomas

HISTORITECTURE, L.L.C.

Prepared for:

City of Pueblo, Colorado

Certified Local Government Grant
Project CO-11-021

August 2012

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CHUCK'S
LUNC
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ICE CREAM
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CHUCK'S LUNC
CAFE

CLUB

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HISTORITECTURE, L.L.C.
Post Office Box 181095
Denver, Colorado 80218
www.historitecture.com

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On the cover. This 1966 photograph shows Bessemer's most prominent landmark, the CF&I Minnequa Steelworks, as well as Liz's Café, which is today the Mill Stop Café. *(Photograph by Myron Wood, © Pikes Peak Library District, 002-5941)*

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Introduction

A Town for the Working Man

In furnaces over 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit, iron—the structure of planetary engineering, the very essence of interstellar creation itself—melts into a blinding white liquid. With the introduction of carbon and various other elements—manganese, chromium, vanadium, and tungsten—what pours forth from the sparking ladles of giants is the soup of American progress—even then hardening into steel for bridges, railroads, skyscrapers, appliances, weapons, wires and nails. Forging steel is a demonic ballet. Millions of tons of sparking black coal, gray coke, rusty ore, snowy limestone, smoldering slag, and molten and hardened steel move effortlessly below, beside, and even above the heads of workers like so many tiny ants. The cacophony is quite literally deafening: stamps and rollers, sirens and whistles, the maddening, ceaseless clang of steel against steel against steel. The air itself breathes of hell, of sulphur, of flame. And then there is the heat. At nearly 2,800 degrees, iron's melting point, human flesh does not burn—it vaporizes. Thus this ballet is also deadly. The forging of steel into the sinews of the American economic juggernaut was and is an act of brilliance and bravery—of service and sacrifice.

Then the whistle blows. The shift ends. The inhuman yields again to the human.

Steps from the gates of the steel mill lies a very different yet fundamentally connected world. It is the world of cold beer and hot green chili, of lively social gatherings and somber church services, of children at study and at play, of leisurely picnics by the park and jaunting streetcars hurrying to downtown. But most of all, it is the world of home.

This is the story of the neighborhood beyond but always in the shadow of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company's colossal Minnequa Steelworks. Though conceived by the mastermind of neighboring South Pueblo, Colorado industrialist General William Jackson Palmer, the town of Bessemer was entirely intended to bear its own identity, one that would contrast starkly with that of South Pueblo. Bessemer was not a playground for the wealthy, white-collar, management types, but a town for the working man who would come home dirty and grimy every night to an overcrowded boarding house or a quaint dwelling squeezed a little too-tightly between its neighbors. These blue-collar workers, many immigrants living without their families, tended to stick together inside the perceived comfort of ethnic enclaves that included corner grocery stores and churches that varied from one block to the next. Over time, Bessemer grew from a fledgling working-class settlement, into a company town, and then into a neighborhood enveloped into the city in just over a decade. It was truly a boom town. Bessemer became one of the most important and most populous neighborhoods in Pueblo, providing the city with its largest employer, the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I), and even an amusement park. The success of Bessemer both as a town and neighborhood depended greatly on the success of CF&I. Though it is not necessarily the case today, as

Historic Pueblo, Inc., and the Bessemer Historical Society provided funding and support for this project.

CF&I flourished or regressed economically so did Bessemer. Today, the Bessemer neighborhood can identify itself as an area that resembles the grittiness of the steelworks: a neighborhood uniquely forged together, not frailly cast from a mold of sterile development.

The steelworks remains the most important development in the history of the city, state, and the West, and still employs over a thousand workers. Indeed, the history of Bessemer and the history of the steelworks are intertwined. Yet for the purposes of this historical context, the City of Pueblo desires to emphasize the Bessemer Neighborhood itself, not CF&I, which has been the subject of numerous scholarly and popular histories. Instead, this history is about the company's town. For the most part, secondary historical sources remain largely devoid of information about the town and neighborhood of Bessemer; generally, the only mention of Bessemer in these sources occurs in a few sentences or a few short paragraphs. Thus, this history of the neighborhood is informed most by its still extant built environment.

For this historical context, Bessemer refers to the geographic area roughly bounded by Washington Street to the north, Interstate 25 to the east, Berkley Avenue to the West, and Streator Avenue to the south. The area also includes Lake Minnequa and the area surrounding the former Edison School and Eilers Smelter site north of Northern Avenue to the Arkansas River. Though the original plat of the town of Bessemer is not nearly as large as the study area, the boundaries make up what present-day Puebloans identify as Bessemer, the historically-named Laibach area (also known as Bojon Town and more recently Eilers Heights), and parts of Minnequa Heights.

Because Bessemer exploded in just a few short years, this context is not organized chronologically but rather thematically. Chapter 1 informs of the neighborhood's origins from the Spanish land grant to a few shacks to a legitimate town. Plat maps and newspapers portray a community coming into its own. Chapter 2 starts in 1892, when Colorado Coal & Iron merged with Colorado Fuel Company to become Colorado Fuel & Iron. During this period, the company's subsidiaries, including the Minnequa Town Company, developed parcels of land, built and sold houses to the workers, and expanded services. Chapter 3 covers the rest of the twentieth century, which saw Bessemer on a trajectory of decline. Chapter 4 discusses Bessemer's reputation as a dangerous and lawless place, and the neighborhood's attempts to refine its image. Chapter 5 focuses on recreation and parks in Bessemer. From the beginning, the neighborhood hosted some of the City's most valued and varied places of recreation: a lake, parks, a carousel, and a YMCA. Chapter 6 covers transportation within the neighborhood, specifically the development of streetcar lines and roadways. While the streetcars connected the neighborhood with other areas of the city, the construction of Interstate 25 bisected the neighborhood. Chapter 7 highlights some of the neighborhood's architectural landmarks, many of which relate directly to the steel mill. Chapter 8 covers the very important development of Dr. Richard Corwin's Minnequa Hospital, which later merged with the Sisters of Charity's St. Mary's Hospital to become St. Mary-Corwin Hospital. Chapter 9 focuses on education and schools within the neighborhood. The topics of race, gender, religion and migration are told in Chapter 10.

Chapter 1

The Iron Hand: Development of the Company Town

The land that Bessemer is situated on has a rather tumultuous history. Only once the dust had settled regarding official ownership and development began, did the contextual fabric of ethnicity, class, and industry weave together the Bessemer blanket. Early influence upon the town was held by the local labor force, though this influence would come to wane within a year of initial construction at the steelworks. After that time, the influence of Colorado Coal & Iron, and later Colorado Fuel & Iron, would dominate the neighborhood. The impacts of both the company and workforce would come to shape Bessemer, with both forced to work together for the betterment of the town and neighborhood.

The setting of the town, and later neighborhood, of Bessemer is quite a contrast to the Pueblo neighborhoods that predate it. Bessemer's geography is almost completely flat and level, save for a very slight gain in elevation toward the southern portion of the neighborhood. A depression near the southwest corner of the area was transformed into a manmade reservoir, Lake Minnequa. Other Pueblo neighborhoods such as the North Side, East Side, and Mesa Junction/Corona Park all grew around uneven ground. Typically, the men who controlled the wealth constructed monumental houses at the higher elevations in these other neighborhoods. The northeast portion of what would become Bessemer in the Laibach Subdivision rests along the bluffs overlooking the Grove neighborhood and ultimately the Arkansas River, though this areas remains devoid of large houses in contrast to the other areas of the city. The other northern portions of Bessemer rest south of South Pueblo, almost as if assuring Bessemer of a second class stature since South Pueblo occupied the much more desirable location atop the bluffs overlooking the river and closer to Pueblo proper. Both towns, however, would ultimately be tied to General William Jackson Palmer's Industrial Utopia; South Pueblo overlooked the rail yards along the river, and Bessemer was quite literally built in the shadow of steel.

The early history of the land that would become Bessemer exactly mirrors that of South Pueblo. The flags of five countries flew over the area at one time or another: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the United States. By the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the U.S. asserted control of the region and began ruling on landowners' homestead rights regarding the newly annexed land. The U.S. government ruled in 1870 that the land that would include the future town site of Bessemer to be privately held by Gervacio Nolan as part of his namesake Nolan Grant. Nolan's heirs previously sold the rights to the grant to Charles and Annie Blake in 1868, but with the U.S. Congress still to officially act, the deal sat in limbo. Once Congress officially recognized the Nolan Grant, the Nolan heirs 'officially' sold the Grant to Annie Blake and her partners Charles Goodnight and Peter K. Dotson; Blake had previously sold one-third interest in the Grant each to Goodnight and Dotson while the 1868 sale was pending. The

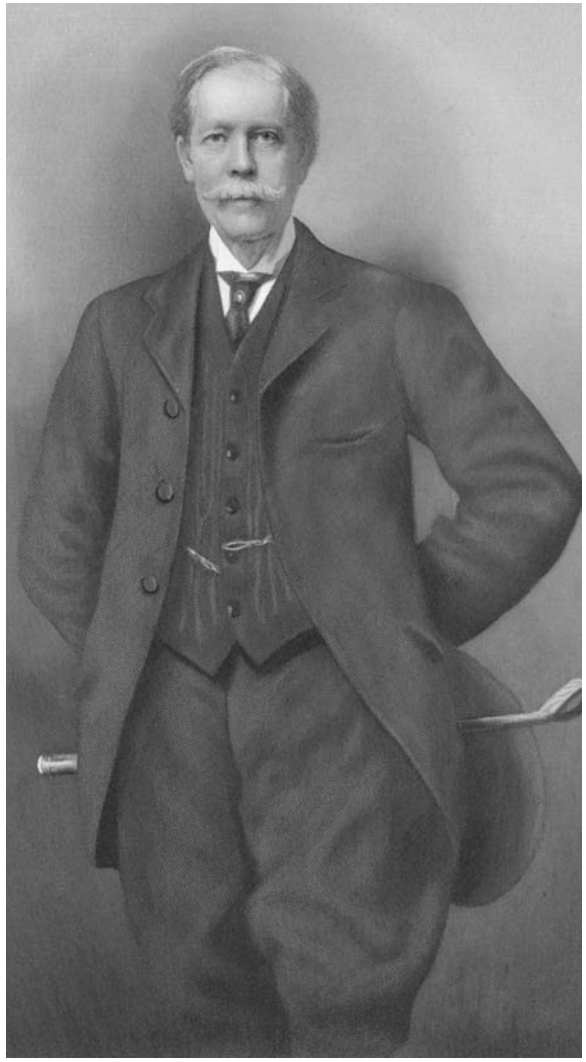


Figure 1.1. William Jackson Palmer envisioned an industrial utopia for his lands south of the Arkansas River. Bessemer, however, turned out to have the same challenges as any other company town. *(Jerome Smiley,* History of Colorado Illustrated*, 1913*)

trio of Blake, Goodnight, and Dotson wasted little time in turning a profit from the Nolan Grant, selling it to William P. Mellen in 1872; Mellen purchased the Grant while serving in an agent's capacity for William Jackson Palmer's Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. Palmer's plans for the land and the development of his railroad would prove to be the largest single influence on the history of both Bessemer and Pueblo.[1]

William Jackson Palmer did not peddle in trivial business affairs; he strategized constructing an international railroad from Denver thousands of miles south to Mexico City. Palmer's birth and upbringing proved modest enough though, born to a Quaker family near Leipsic, Delaware, on September 17, 1836. Upon finishing his schooling, Palmer began his industrious career at the age of twenty-one serving as J. Edgar Thompson's personal secretary with the Pennsylvania Railroad. He served in that capacity for four years, joining the Union Army at the commencement of the Civil War despite the nonviolent ethics of his upbringing. Palmer organized his own regiment, leading them as part of the tremendously bloody Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, his twenty-sixth birthday. Palmer began scouting the Confederate Army in the days following Antietam, and he was captured and held as a prisoner of war until January 1863. Palmer ascended to the rank of brevet brigadier general during the following two years, but word never reached him of his appointment. He directly participated in the capture of Confederate President Jefferson Davis before mustering out June 21, 1865.[2]

Palmer immediately returned to the railroad business following the end of the Civil War, first as the secretary-treasurer of Union Pacific Eastern Division (UPED). The UPED changed its name to the Kansas Pacific in 1869, at which time Palmer began to travel back and forth between the construction areas of the railroad and Washington, D.C., to supervise industry lobbyists. He itched for the independence of managing his own railroad, and the Kansas Pacific accepted his resignation May 3, 1870. With the support of financiers, Palmer filed the certificate of incorporation for the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) October 27, 1870.[3]

The Denver & Rio Grande was but one portion of Palmer's Industrial Utopia, as he envisioned a conglomeration of three companies to achieve his idealized vision of vertical business integration. In addition to the railroad, Palmer envisioned an industrial company to aid in the railroad's construction (the Southern Colorado Coal and Town Company) and subsequent real estate company (Central Colorado Improvement Company) to develop and sell the land acquired by any of the business interests. Through a series of mergers of subsidiary companies, the Central Colorado Improvement Company, the Southern Colorado Town and Coal Company, and the Colorado Coal and Steel Works Company consolidated to form the Colorado Coal & Iron Company (CC&I). Stockholders of the merging companies ratified a plan for consolidation on December 13, 1879, and formally filed the certificate of incorporation for CC&I January 23, 1880.[4]

The Beginning of a Blue Collar Town

CC&I chose to construct its steelworks just southeast of South Pueblo, where the company owned a large tract of land. But this ownership was not the only motivation for choosing this site. First, the land was along the D&RG line that served as a human and material transportation corridor. Second, CC&I's regional market grew as the D&RG lines grew. Lastly, the company's surrounding land could do nothing other than appreciate in value with neighboring industry. The company settled

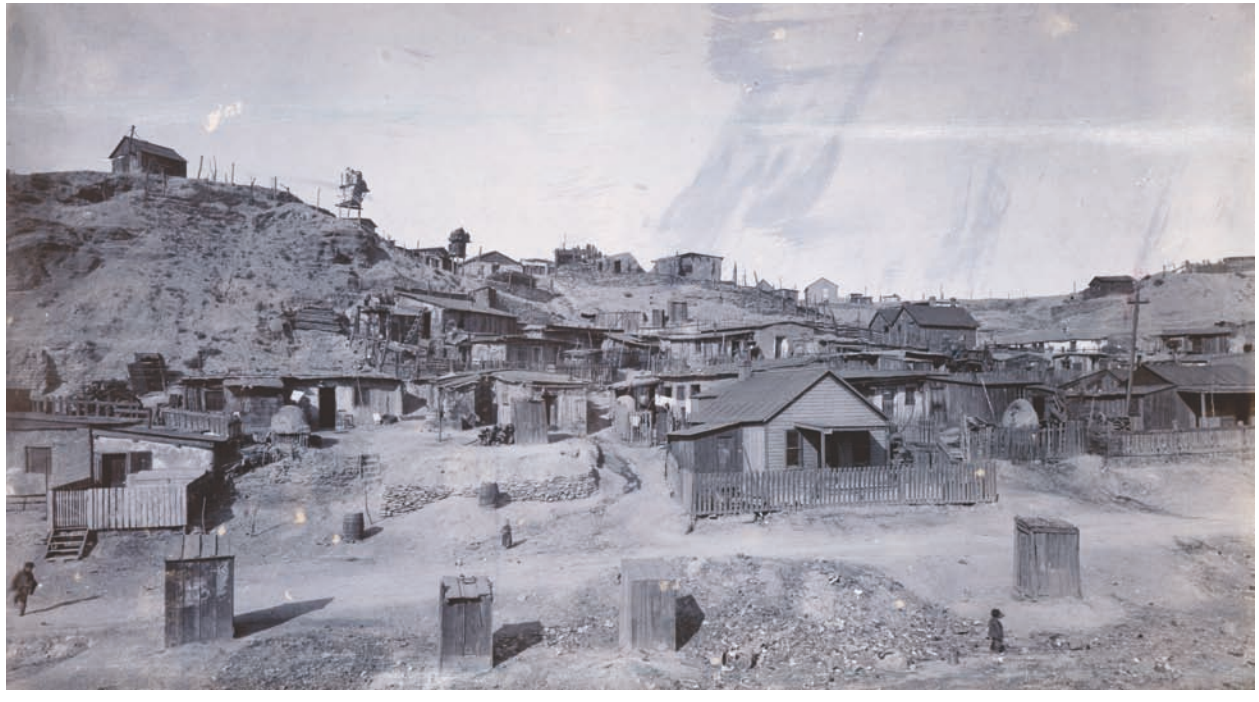


Figure 1.2. Though no photos of Bessemer exist from this time period, these houses in Mexican Town and Goat Hill from the same time period show the marginal conditions typical in the neighborhood. *(photo courtesy Pueblo City-County Library District)*

on 1,260 acres upon which to construct its plant and began surveying the land in February 1880.[5] Concurrently, eight men earning $3 per day began the preliminary work on the mill's first blast furnace.[6]

CC&I's first plant, the South Pueblo Ironworks, supplemented the corporation's vision of vertical business integration by producing rails for the lines of the D&RG. Until the construction of the CC&I mills, all steel rail lines were produced in the eastern United States and shipped west. CC&I sought to sever that supply chain by producing the material closer to its use area and cutting the shipping costs. The plant's production grew rapidly, with 284 tons of pig iron produced in 1880 and 6,392 tons in 1881; the first 30-foot rails rolled off the line April 12, 1882. By that time, CC&I produced coal, pig iron, iron ore, rolled rails, and steel ingots.[7]

When work began in February 1880 on a blast furnace, later christened "Betsy," several workers chose to make the construction area their home rather than make the daily round trip to South Pueblo, roughly one mile away. The first building erected in the area was a rude plank shelter that served as a boarding house and a small office for the construction superintendent. CF&I historian H. Lee Scamehorn writes of the residential housing situation near the blast furnace: "As the labor force multiplied, clusters of makeshift homes blossomed around the construction area. West of the furnace site, the 'rough and ready' town of Dodge City contained 75 'cabins,' many built of scrap lumber, sheet metal, and canvas. Farther east along Routt Avenue, 'Wichita' experienced a similar boom."[8] This rickety housing stock proved desperately inadequate, as workers were "liv[ing] like livestock in large numbers

in small houses and single rooms."[9] One early house is described by the *Pueblo Chieftain:* "A single room shanty in this neighborhood, is occupied by six Italian laborers, employed at the smelting works. These men are huddled together in the shanty, much in the style of the mining camps, yet with infinitely less comfortable surroundings. The room is bare of furniture, rough board bunks, filled with straw and containing a woolen blanket, being the bed used."[10] The area endured other problems as well, as the *Pueblo Chieftain* reported "Cattle and dogs roamed the area at will and drew bitter protests from those [residents] of more orderly minds. Stagnant water and mud holes added to problems of the lusty community."[11]

This early residential development in what would later be known as Bessemer was similar to other company towns of CC&I, which "controlled more towns than any other company in the West."[12] CC&I, and later Colorado Fuel & Iron, would control over sixty towns at one time or another. Bessemer was the only one of these towns that would serve manufacturing rather than mining.[13] The developments around the blast furnace were located near the established city of Pueblo just as several CC&I mining camps surrounded Walsenburg. Company towns throughout the western United States also sprang up this way: the first residential structures were either tents or bunkhouses constructed of scavenged materials, until the company recognized the need for a developed town and constructed one. Like other frontier company towns in the West, Dodge City and Wichita "were notably dirty and unsightly, with poor sanitary conditions, few opportunities for constructive social activity, and oppressive company control."[14]

The haphazard development of a residential community near the grounds of the plant must have troubled the CC&I officials, who had developed South Pueblo where plenty of lots remained available. Once CC&I officials recognized that the corporation could profit from the development of land nearer the plant, they began plotting the town of Bessemer, complete with company-owned housing in which the workers lived.

By 1881, residential construction had taken on a much more substantial and permanent approach. The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that "Any one [sic] who has not visited the steel works lately would scarcely recognize the locality. Many new houses have been erected aside from the steel works proper, and quite a thriving village now occupies the former barren plain surrounding the works, which is styled Taylorville, in honor of Col. Taylor, the enterprising and energetic superintendent."[15] The same article continues about the importance of the steelworks to the city of Pueblo:

> Between three and four hundred men are employed about the works and the monthly pay roll [sic] foots up to between $7,000 and $8,000. This money is all distributed in Pueblo and South Pueblo exclusively, besides the large sums expended by the company in the purchase of material and supplies from our merchants and dealers. There is no questioning the fact that this enterprising corporation is doing as much for the "Twin Cities" [Pueblo and South Pueblo] as any other public enterprise ever inaugurated in this city.[16]

By 1882, CC&I had surveyed the town of Bessemer, but it would be four more years until an expanded plat was recorded. The town of Bessemer was platted with the streets running on the cardinal points, contradictory to those in adjacent South Pueblo. The plat included three distinct sections and also an area left devoid of development: one area was bordered by Fairview Avenue to the north, Box Elder Street to the east, Main Street (present-day Routt Avenue) to the west, and Arroyo Avenue to the south; a second area was bounded by South Pueblo's Zotula Street (present-day Washington Street)

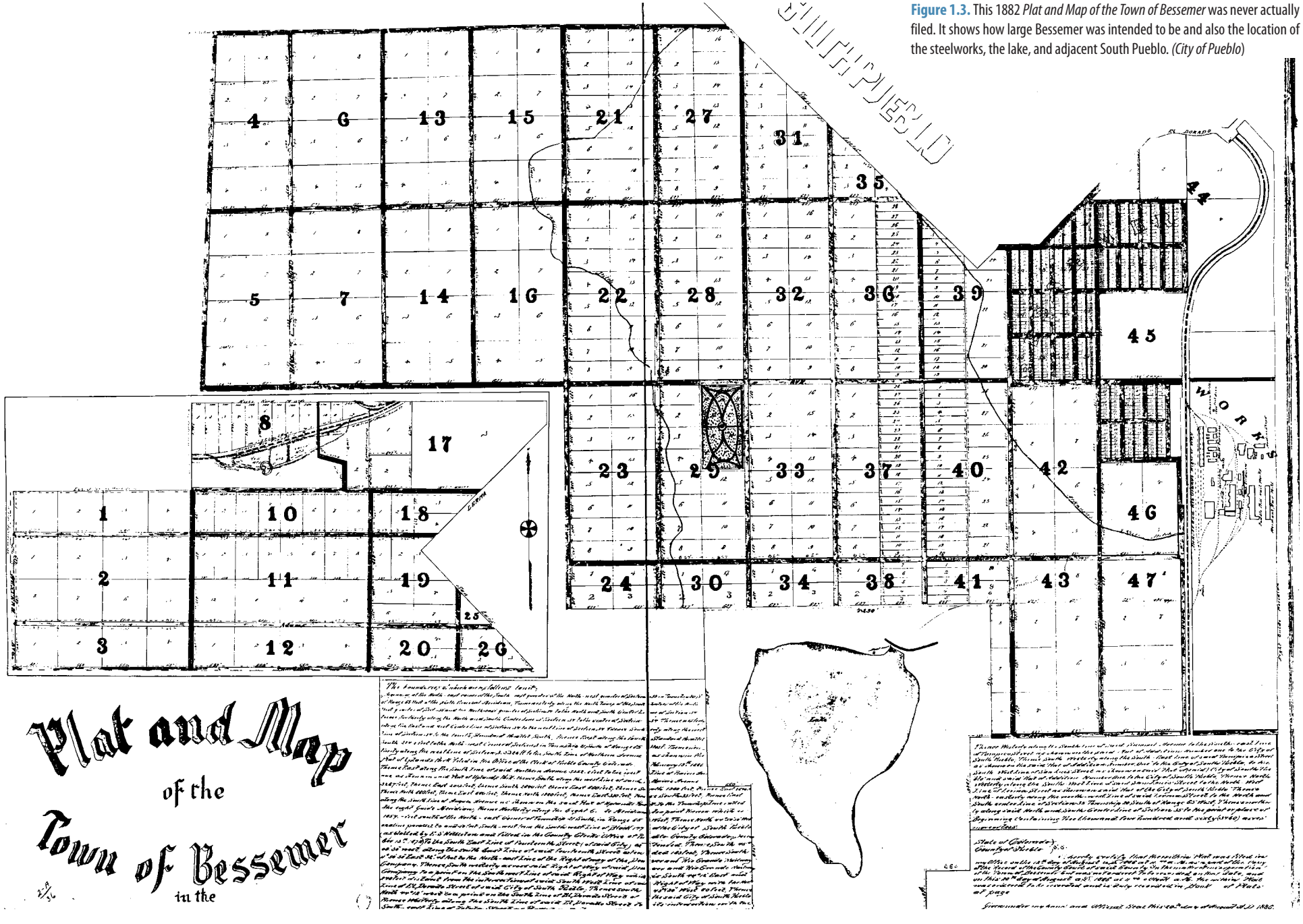


Figure 1.3. This 1882 *Plat and Map of the Town of Bessemer* was never actually filed. It shows how large Bessemer was intended to be and also the location of the steelworks, the lake, and adjacent South Pueblo. *(City of Pueblo)*

Figure 1.4. The town of Bessemer's first council reflected its blue-collar professions: a roller at the mill, master mechanic, engineer, hotelier, brewery agent, and several bricklayers. *(Photos courtesy CF&I Archives/Bessemer Historical Society)*

and Summit Avenue to the north, Main Street to the east, Pinon Street to the west, and Northern Avenue to the south; the third area was bounded by Northern Avenue to the north, Furnace Place to the east, Main Street to the west, and Division Avenue to the south. The area described last is the closest to the mills and would have included the earliest pre-Bessemer buildings; this could explain why there is no continuity between the streets here and those two blocks north. The 1882 plat of the town of Bessemer also reveals the sizes of the lots and streets. Lots were platted with dimensions of 50 feet wide by 122 feet deep, except those on Main Street (Routt Avenue) which were 25 feet wide. The streets running north-south were platted 70 feet wide, while those streets that run east-west were 80 feet wide; Northern Avenue was platted 101.5 feet wide.[17]

It appears that even with a permanent housing stock, the citizens of Pueblo viewed Bessemer as a place to avoid. The same *Pueblo Chieftain* article that describes the house of the Italian smelter employees warns of the dangers of the fledgling town:

> There are a few vicious whelps in this town just now, and people should pay special attention to locking their doors and securing their windows before retiring at night. A good revolver, carefully loaded and placed within easy reach, isn't a bad additional precaution. The prowling miscreants may not call your way, to be sure, but in case they should, it would be well to be fully prepared for their proper interment.[18]

The first small housing boom in the upstart town faded almost as quickly as it began. The market for steel and iron products produced at the steelworks slumped in 1883 to the point that officials considered temporarily shutting the plant. The Bessemer Works continued production that year, although production was slowed and all surplus material was disposed of at discount prices; construction of a second blast furnace was also suspended. Additionally at this time, the management of CC&I was in turmoil. William Jackson Palmer squandered the presidency of both CC&I and the D&RG, leaving the two once complementing companies in an economic quagmire. The D&RG terminated its policy of providing special low rates to transport the goods of CC&I in January 1884, infuriating officials at the latter corporation. According to the D&RG, the reasoning behind the hike in rates charged to CC&I was simple: "The railway persistently found fault with the quality of the goods it purchased from the manufacturer, from whom it demanded immediate payment of transportation charges in cash while it bought what it needed on credit or with depreciated securities."[19] CC&I countered that, for some months, it accounted for more than one-third of the D&RG's total freight business, and that the steelmaker could not compete in the markets of Utah, Nevada, and California with the much more distant manufacturers in the East due to the railway's pricing structure.[20] Furthermore, labor strikes in the coal mining towns of CC&I disrupted production at the mill for six days and financial operating deficits caught up with the operations at the Bessemer Works in 1885. For the greater part of the year 1885, most departments at the mill operated at less than capacity and some even ceased operation. The departments that did harvest a profit could not offset the losses of the remaining departments. The D&RG became the only consistent customer of CC&I products, but nevertheless charged the steelmaker freight prices five times higher than those same costs in Pennsylvania. The pricing stalemate ended in the spring of 1886 when the D&RG accepted the demand of CC&I to provide the steelmaker with a fixed-rate rebate for each ton of finished material produced with raw materials transported by the D&RG.

Both companies turned to the newspapers to swoon public opinion, while crippling the adolescent town. During this tumultuous time, there is no known residential building or expansion in Bessemer.[21]

The economics of steel production from 1883 to 1885 led CC&I actually to refuse rail orders because the company could not produce the item profitably. The company also shuttered its rail department from November 1885 until early summer 1886. Prosperity returned to the corporation as the blast furnace resumed work after a sixteen month hiatus; the company constructed a new butt mill to manufacture merchant steel, and the scrap mill reopened to produce wrought iron. The corporation also withheld dividends to shareholders in favor of acquiring new coal fields and completing a second blast furnace that lay unfinished since 1883.[22]

When prosperous times resumed for CC&I, and the clanking and clashing of steel reverberated throughout the town of Bessemer, the resurgence of the Bessemer Works meant one thing: jobs. Previous employees returned to the steelworks, bringing with them an onslaught of new hires. By late summer 1886, "applicants for jobs were as thick as grasshoppers in Kansas."[23] The number of mill employees also far outnumbered the number of available rental houses in Bessemer, leading to an increase in housing starts.[24] The exact numbers of new residences constructed in Bessemer at this moment could not be determined, as well as the locations of any extant houses. County Assessor records do not indicate construction dates at this time; it is also entirely possible that many of these returning workers resided in boarding houses instead of single-family residences.

Town of Bessemer Booms

Named for Henry Bessemer, inventor of the first inexpensive way to produce steel from pig iron, the original plat of the town of Bessemer was filed August 12, 1886, and recorded eight days later on August 20.[25] At that time, the town had only two salaried men: the town marshal and town clerk; the mayor and town council received a $6 monthly stipend. Fittingly, most of the council worked in blue-collar professions: the mayor, James K. Dempsey (first mayor of Bessemer, and construction supervisor at the steelworks since 1880) worked as a brick maker and junk foreman at the steelworks, three aldermen worked as bricklayers, one worked as a roller at the mill, and another worked as a master mechanic at the mill; of the other aldermen, one worked as an engineer, one operated a hotel, and one worked as an agent for a brewery.[26] The population of the new town was estimated between 1,000 and 2,000 residents.[27]

It appears that the filing of the plat of Bessemer was CC&I's response to the consolidation of Pueblo, Central Pueblo, and South Pueblo. The plat was recorded August 20, 1886, only five months after the vote for consolidation. The 1886 plat included land that completely surrounded South Pueblo; land not included in the unfiled 1882 plat. This was an ambitious plat in terms of size, as with the original plat of South Pueblo, since CC&I knew that an exorbitant amount of undeveloped lots remained in South Pueblo. As filed and recorded, the 1886 plat of Bessemer included land that extended westward beyond present-day Prairie Avenue and southward to include Lake Minnequa in lots that varied in size from 25 feet wide to what appears several acres.[28]

It is important to note that while CC&I owned and controlled the land of Bessemer, employees of the nearby smelters

Figure 1.5. A search of the 1886 City Directory showed that 175 men and 13 women living in Bessemer. Five of the women operated boarding houses. There was one physician and one engineer in town. The steelworks employed 100 of the men; 27 more worked at the smelter. The rest were laborers and retail workers. In 1886, William Cochrane, Mrs. L. Hackett, Mrs. A. O'Keefe, and Mrs. R.A. VanKeuren were constructing blocks.

Address Unknown
Thomas Allen, cutter Bessemer meat market, r
F.J. Andrews, bakery and meat market, Charles St, r
John Apel, nailer, Steel Works, r
John Beatty, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Even Benyon, lab, Steel Wks, r
Jno. Billington, clk, Colo. Trading Co., r
W.H. Billington, clk, Colo. Trading Co., r
C.W. Bitner, clk. Steel Wks, r
Frank Burdgess, nailer Steel Wks, r
Joseph Carara, lab Steel Wks, r
Louis Carara, lab Steel Wks, r
James G. Carson, lab Steel Wks, bds
E.J. Cash, lab Steel Wks,r
Michael Casper, lab Steel Wks, r
William Cochrane, boarding house
Colorado Trading Co., A.R. Wright mgr
Pat Connor, lab, r
Thomas Cook, engineer Steel Wks, r
A. Coontz, bricklayer, r
John Coppinger, puddler Steel Wks, r
W.J. Darnell, night boss Gas House Steel Wks, r
Mrs. A. Dawdy, boarding
James Dawson, lab Steel Wks, r
C.F. Drake, Justice Peace
Anton Eiler, Gen. Mgr. The Colo. Smelting Co., r adjoining wks
Morris Evans, lab Steel Wks, r
D.V. Everts, lab Steel Wks, r
Frank Fagan, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
George Fagan, lab Steel Wks, r
James Fagan, puddler Steel Wks., r
John Fagan, puddler, Steel Wks., r
Michael Feeney, section hand D&RG Ry., r
James Garrey, lab, r
(---) Gutter, lab Steel Wks, r
James Hannon, boss The Colo. Smelting Co., r
Daniel Harkness, lab The Colo. Smelting Co., r
Harry Hartgrave, lab Steel Wks, r
Thomas Janes, lab Steel Wks , r
Mrs. Elizabeth Jenkins, r
D.N. Jones, Gen. Supt Steel Wks, r
James B. Jones, puddler Steel Wks, r
T.H. Jones, lab, r
Michael Landers, lab Steel Wks, r
(---) Laveris, lab Steel Wks, r
Frank Leg, r
Philip Lipf, sampler The Colo. Smelting Co.
Edward Lyons, lab bar mill Steel Wks, r
J.H. Lyss, lab foundry Steel Wks, r
Eugene McCarthy, puddler Steel Wks, r
Archer Manela, furnaceman, Steel Wks, r
Charles Manela, furnaceman, Steel Wks, r
O.W. Montgomery, furnaceman Steel Wks, r
Mrs. H.A. Nelson, r
William Prairie, lab
John D. Price, machinist Steel Wks.
Thomas Price, floating gang Steel Wks, r
William C. Price, nail mill Steel Wks, r
J.W. Pugh, lab, r
J. Rickabaugh, lab Steel Wks, r
L.I. Rickabaugh, lab Steel Wks, r
W.J. Rickabaugh, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
J.J. Rictby, lab Steel Wks, r
James M. Righter, engineer Colo. Smelting Co, r
Charles Rogerson, lab Steel Wks, r
Jos.eph Roschman, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Carl Schofshaw, lab, r
Elizabeth Shaw, r
M. Shields, lab, r
H.M. Shoup, boss roller Steel Wks, r
George Shouse, lab Steel Wks, r
D. Shrewsberry, ranchman, r
Charles Schultz, carpenter Steel Wks, r
Joseph Spoor, lab Steel Wks., r
J.S. Stewart, county clerk, r
Harry Van Keuren, clk CC&I Co., r
Mrs. R.A. Van Keuren, boarding Summit
I. Walker, lab The Colo. Smelting Co., r
Frank Weaver, helper blksmith Steel Wks, r
Miss Libbie, r
David Williams, roller mill Steel Wks, r
John T. Williams, fireman Steel Wks., r
Prof. Gomer Williams, r
R.A. Wright, mgr Colo. Trading Co., r
J.F. Young, bar mill Steel Wks, r

Alden Street
James K. Dempsey, junk foreman Steel Wks, r
Frank Pratt, blksmith, Steel Wks, bds
William Ries, brickmason, r
(---) Wilder, lab The Colo. Smelting Co., r

Alder Street
D.L. Davis, physician, r
Mrs. E. Davis, lodging house, r
C.H. Foster, machinist, r
Eli W. Gibson, brickmason, r
M.N. Harris, salesman The Colo. Trading Co., r
David Prosser, blksmith, Steel Wks, r
George Shearer, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Frank Steinheimer, saloon, nr Colo. Smelting Co., r
George C. Young, pattern mkr Steel Wks, r

Appelton Street
C.H. Cooper, agt D&RG Ry at Bessemer r
William Clarey, lab Steel Wks, bds
James Dowdy, engineer Steel Wks, r
(---) Drunptler, lab Steel Wks, r
John Erman, Bessemer Market, r
Cornelius Finn, heater Steel Wks., r
Jeffrey Fitzpatrick, lab Steel Wks, r
Mrs. L. Hackett, boarding house
Mrs. Maggie Hincinger, r
Miss Rosa Hincinger, r
Peter Krueger, lab Steel Wks., r
Adam Kruntz, foreman brickmason Steel Wks, r
P.W. Maxey, lab, r
William O'Hara, gas producer Steel Wks, r
John T. Robinson, heater Steel Wks, r
Thomas Russell, lab Steel Wks, r
Peter Wessa, roller mill Steel Wks, r

Box Elder Street
John Blakt, lab, Colo. Smelting Co., r
Antonio Blatnk, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Mike Blatnk, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Martin Groff, r
Joseph Heglen, lab, r
(---) Ingle, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
Mate Kluper, yard lab The Colo. Smelting Co., r
Thomas Roach, lab Steel Wks, r
John Ruse, lab Steel Wks, r

Charles Street
R.S. Coe, timekeeper Steel Wks, r
William Drentenshor, baker, r
Thomas H. Gardner, boss nailer Steel Wks, r
Daniel M. Jones, heater Steel Wks, r
G.W. McCadden, shoemkr Charles, r same
William Maddock, heater Steel Wks, r
Miss Bessie Nichols, r
Stephen Nichols, blksmith Steel Wks, r

Elm Street
A.G. Bishop, machinist Colo. Smelting Co., r
G.W. Calvert, engineer City Water Works, r
R.P. Campbell, pattern maker, Pueblo Foundry, r
John Fisher, lab Colo. Smelting Co., r
John Gill, furnaceman, The Colo. Smelting Co., bds
John Hartley, lab Steel Wks, bds
John D. Johnson, lab Steel Wks, bds
John Kane, roaster Colo. Smelting Co. r
J.J. Langdon, abstract office, P.O. Blk, r
(---) McCardy, section hand D&RG Ry., bds
Michael Martin, lab Steel Wks, r
Mark Moren, lab, r
Patrick J. Sullivan, contractor, r
George Traber, brickmason Colo. Smelting Co., r
Nick Traber, brickmason Colo. Smelting Co., r

10 Elm Street
Mike Carpenter, lab Steel Wks., bds
Thomas Barrett, lab Steel Works, bds
Mike Kennedy, lab Steel Wks, bds
Paddy McCoy, section hand D&RG Ry., bds
John McDerman, nail feeder Steel Wks, bds
Adam Noble, pot puller The Colorado Smelting Co., bds

15 Elm Street
Thomas Carpenter, nail feeder Steel Wks, r
Pat Chambers, lab Steel Wks, bds
Mike Burke, lab Steel Wks, bds
Ed. Barnes, lab Steel Works, bds
Michael Bionke, lab Steel Wks, bds
John Playduch, lab Steel Wks, bds
M. Smelch, lab Steel Wks., bds

11 Elm Street
Mrs. Anna O'Keefe, boarding house 11 Elm, r same

16 Elm Street
John Nunan, lab Steel Wks, bds
Lewis Post, lab Steel Wks, bds

20 Elm Street
William Brennan, lab Steel Wks, r

16 Front Street
John Clinak, bricklayer, r

Main Street
(---) Kelley, lab Steel Wks, r
Joseph Kendrick, night watch Steel Wks, r
W.G. Merick, Engineer Steel Wks, r
L.J. Taylor, master mechanic Steel Wks, r

Willow Street
J.H. Benson, lab, Colo. Smelting Co., r
Bessemer Hose House
George C. Coates, machinist Steel Wks, r
Charles Dinglich, lab Steel Wks, r
George S. Foster, lab Steel Wks, r
P.J. Golden, puddler Steel Wks, r
Morton Hughes, barkpr P. Hughes, r
James Humphrey, foreman The Colo. Smelting Co., r
John Jelley, bicklayer Steel Wks, r
Frank Little, stable boss Steel Wks, r Willow and Summit
George McNeil, lab , r
William Montgomery, machinist Steel Wks., r Willow and Summit
Miss Ada Newlon, r, cor Willow and Summit
F.B. Newlon, carpenter, r cor Willow and Summit
Miss Laura Newlon, r cor Willow and Summit
Gus Olsten, lab Steel Wks, bds
David Robinson, lab Steel Wks, bds
Edward Royer, lab Steel Wks, bds
Edward Weaver, foreman Steel Wks, r
Patrick Welsh, lab Steel Wks, bds

lived in the area as well. A perusal of the 1886 Pueblo City Directory reveals exactly who was living in Bessemer at the time. There are 188 identified residents of Bessemer in 1886; 175 men and thirteen women. Five of the women operated boarding houses, while the remaining eight are listed as residents of the area. One hundred of the men are listed as working at the steelworks and twenty-seven worked at the nearby Colorado Smelter; several other men are listed as laborers or manual occupations such as bricklayers or mechanics, or in retail positions in the town stores. The white-collar workers consisted of a miniscule minority: Anton Eiler, operator of the Colorado Smelter, resided in Bessemer near his plant, and there was also one doctor and one engineer residing in the town. As for commercial development, Bessemer remained almost barren. The city directory only reveals four commercial blocks and no churches. The city directory does not appear to have neglected the informal housing areas of Bessemer, as approximately eighty individuals listed in the directory failed to identify a street on which they lived.[29]

A map showing the residential development in Bessemer in 1886 reveals where the permanent housing stock was constructed. Of the three areas of settlement previously mentioned, the one located west of Main Street contained only two boarding houses. One boarding house was located at the northwest corner of Summit Avenue and Main, while the other was located at the northwest corner of Mesa Avenue and Main; there was no residential or commercial development west of Main Street. The northern area, bounded by Fairview Avenue, Main Street, Arroyo Avenue, and Box Elder Street, contained approximately thirty-eight buildings spread over eight blocks. The southern area bounded, by Northern Avenue, Main Street, Division Street, and Furnace Street, contained approximately forty-two buildings spread over six blocks.[30]

The two blocks of Furnace Street, the street nearest the steelworks, is the only area shown on this map to have completely filled in and left no room for future development. Peculiarly, these homes were constructed on two lots and straddled the lot lines. This left only half of the maximum number of buildings as originally platted. At first glance, it seems odd for CC&I to have not constructed homes on single lots and shoehorn as many people into the area as possible. However, this development method also made the area more attractive, resulting in potentially higher property values and also forced future construction on lots further away from the steelworks, on which the company set prices. None of the original houses constructed on Furnace Street remain today, as the alignment of Interstate 25's Central Avenue interchange required their demolition.[31]

A small exodus of people from Pueblo to Bessemer occurred in June 1887. When Pueblo aldermen levied a 13 mill property tax on that city's residents, several residents moved to the upstart community to the south. Once the alderman discovered the practice, they hired an attorney to draft an ordinance "prohibiting the moving of frame shantys [sic] from Pueblo to the town of Bessemer." When charged with the crime by the city of Pueblo, the city's former residents pleaded ignorance of the law, avoiding repercussions; additionally, a Pueblo city ordinance could not be enforced in independent Bessemer.[32]

CC&I dramatically downsized the plat of Bessemer rather quickly with a refiling dated August 24, 1887. Simply put, this amended plat replaced the 1886 plat with the previously unrecorded 1882 plat.[33] Due to the enormous size of the 1886 plat and the amount of undeveloped lots remaining in South

Pueblo, it still appears sensible that CC&I wanted to amend the plat even though the Bessemer Works had recorded its peak yearly production amount up to that date.[34]

This time, the refiling of the smaller 1882 plat appears to preceed poor economic times at the mill rather than responding to them. Construction of the new blast furnace at the Bessemer Works was complete, but the unit remained idle while the first continued to operate below capacity through December 1888. CC&I recorded an operating loss that year, which it once again attributed to high railroad transportation rates. The corporation felt the rates were so high, in fact, that it authorized the superintendent to suspend all production at the Bessemer Works until the freight charges were dropped to a point at which the steelmaker could operate at a profit; in August 1888, the converting, blooming, and all rail mills were closed. The corporation was in such bad financial shape that the Board of Directors went through several superintendents from fall 1888 through the end of 1889. These frequent changes in management led to both of the blast furnaces sitting idle for most of 1889, and steel production was suspended the entire year; only three mills operated on a full schedule that year: the merchant iron mill, the machine shop, and the foundry.[35]

CC&I created and incorporated a collateral company on January 24, 1889: the Colorado Coal & Iron Development Company (CC&ID).[36] The new corporation began operations by marketing CC&I lands strictly in Pueblo County. CC&ID purchased 2,000 lots in South Pueblo from CC&I for $1,000,000 in stocks and the same amount in bonds; the purchase relieved CC&I of its mortgage burden and stimulated the real estate market in both South Pueblo and Bessemer, albeit for only a few years.[37]

Development in Bessemer during the late 1880s remained strictly limited due to decreased demand for CC&I steel products; CC&I actually shut down Furnace Number Two and reported an operating loss for the year 1888, attributed, once again, to railroad freight rates.[38] The South Pueblo Home and Building Association, another subsidiary of CC&I, platted and filed a small subdivision north of Fairview Avenue and west of Willow Street (present-day Abriendo Avenue) on March 5, 1888. This filled in a small triangle created by the awkward junction of Bessemer and South Pueblo's street grids. CC&I also filed the Harlem Subdivision on March 26, 1889. It was located east of the steelworks, on the northern edge of the Philadelphia Smelter and just west atop the bluffs above present-day Salt Creek. A small, two-block area, Harlem was circled on three sides by railroad tracks that carried waste to a slag dump on the addition's eastern edge.[39]

CC&I developed and marketed land on Bessemer's western boundary as well. The corporation filed the Lakeview Place Subdivision, situated on the northern edge of Lake Minnequa, on December 28, 1889. In an area bounded by the Bessemer Ditch to the north, Lake Avenue to the west, Mesa Avenue to the south, and Orman Avenue to the east, CC&I platted and filed six College Hill Subdivisions between July 26, 1889, and January 20, 1890. CC&I filed a relatively large subdivision, the Minnequa Subdivision, a few blocks north of Lake Minnequa on December 17, 1889.[40]

Closer to the mills, CC&I platted the Irondale and City Hall Place Subdivisions. The Irondale Subdivision expanded the town west of Main Street (present-day Routt Avenue) and south of Northern Avenue for approximately four blocks and was filed on August 22, 1889. The City Hall Place Subdivision, which did not include the location of Bessemer City Hall, was

filed on October 30, 1889. This subdivision filled in the gap left vacant in the 1882 and 1886 plats between Arroyo Avenue to the north, Main Street to the west, Northern Avenue to the south, and the D&RG tracks to the east. None of the subdivisions filed in 1888 and 1889 received much, if any development. These subdivisions appear to have been anticipatory or even speculative in nature.[41]

Bessemer Serves Its Residents

The new Bessemer subdivisions suggested that the town was slowly coming into its own. Revenue for the town amounted to $15,000 for the year 1889, with $5,000 of that apportioned for the construction and maintenance of streets and bridges. Citizens complained of hurried horse-riders "fast driving" on the town's streets and "cows running at large." Proprietors also petitioned the town council to lower peddler's license fees from the exorbitant amount of $3 per day; the petition proved successful as the council lowered the fee to fifty cents per day, $4 per month, or $10 per quarter.[42]

Production at the steelworks not only returned in earnest in 1890 but expanded as well, bringing a slew of workers into Bessemer. The plant operated with two shifts, employing 800 men in the mills by mid-March. Most of the employees laid-off the previous year returned from other towns in Colorado and some from as far away as California and Washington Territory.[43] As the population of the boom-bust town swelled this time, residents clamored for utilities to be run to the residences. Formation of the Bessemer Gas and Electric Light Company ensued, organized May 8, 1890, to provide the town's commercial and residential buildings with natural gas for heating and illumination.[44] It is curious that the Gas and Electric Company formed with a president, vice-president, and secretary/man-

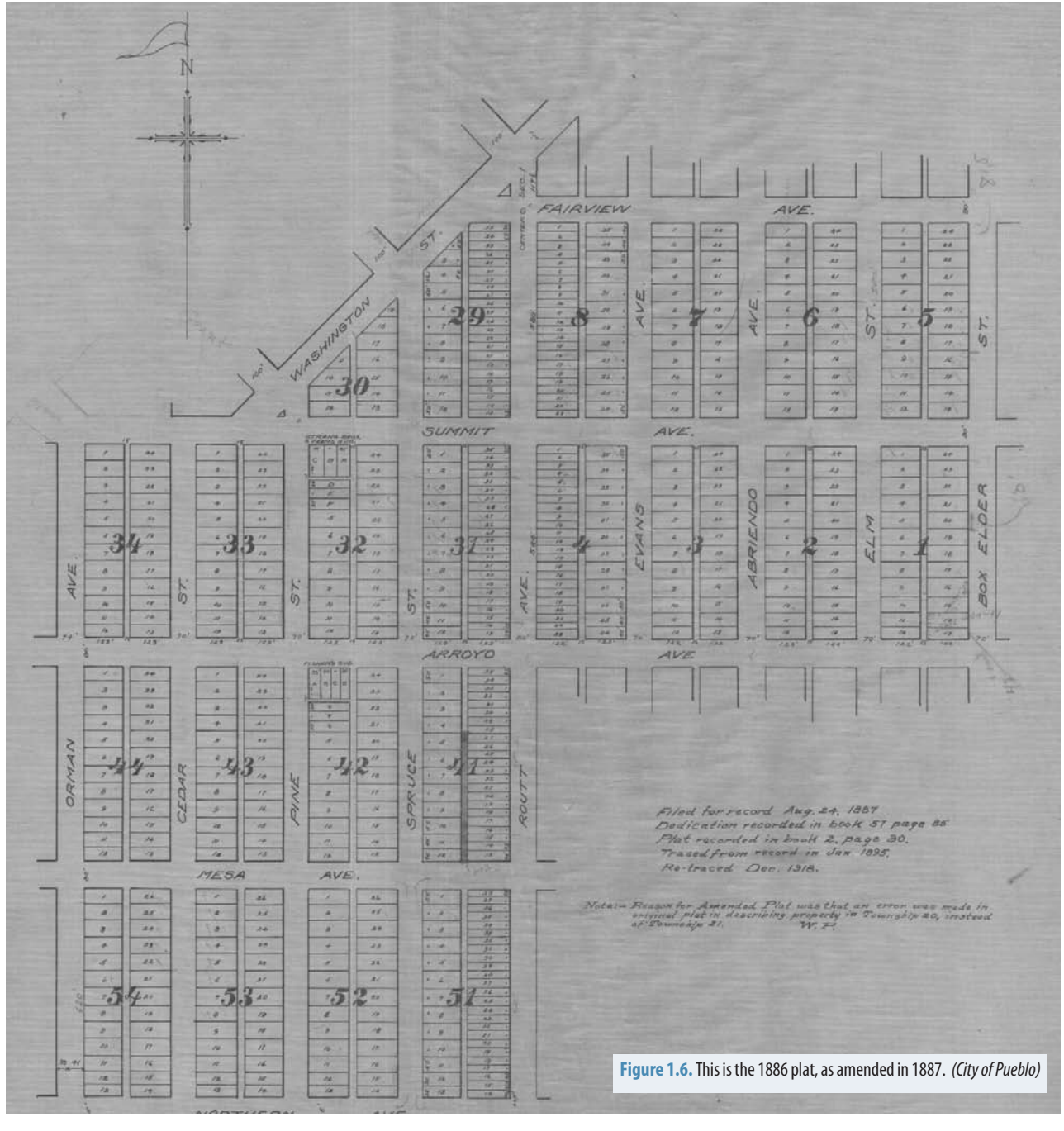


Figure 1.6. This is the 1886 plat, as amended in 1887. *(City of Pueblo)*

ager who do not appear to have any affiliation with CC&I; the president and vice-president worked as real estate agents for private firms and the secretary/manager was a clerk at the court house.[45] Thus, Although Bessemer technically remained a company town at this time, the grip of CC&I must have been loosening as the company no longer controlled a monopoly on the heating fuel market as it previously sold coal to the residents at retail.

The result of expanded plant operations provided a boon to development in Bessemer. It is about this time that rumblings in Bessemer called for a more permanent city hall. A few citizens actually offered the town their building lots in order to capitalize on the building's construction, but town trustees did not accept any of the offers. Instead, the trustees purchased the lot at the southwest corner of East Evans and West Mesa avenues. Architect George W. Roe designed the building to be "built of brick, with white stone trimmings," with an estimated cost of $10,000. When the town received the bids, the low bidder was contractor B. Bradley at a cost of $13,150; the contract for the building was signed on July 11, 1890. Bradley finished construction in November as costs soared to nearly $20,000 with CC&I probably footing the bill rather than the local tax base as the *Chieftain* reported that the building "will be turned over to the municipal authorities of Bessemer."[46] Upon the annexation of Bessemer into Pueblo, the Bessemer City Hall building functioned solely as a fire station even though Pueblo city directories list the building as dual-purpose until 1914. The building at 1207 East Evans Avenue was demolished and replaced by a second then-modern fire department building constructed exclusively for that purpose in 1940.[47]

Subdivisions helped expand and settle the town of Bessemer in the 1890s, and all of them originated in the earliest part of the decade. Elwell and Smith's Subdivision was filed on January 28, 1890, and extended the northern portion of the 1886 plat eastward. The area was bordered by Box Elder Street to the west, Fairview Avenue to the north, Arroyo Avenue to the south, and the D&RG railroad tracks to the east; only remnants of this subdivision remain today, as the construction of Interstate 25 eliminated all but one and a half blocks of Currie Street. The second subdivision of the decade, the Steelton Subdivision, was filed March 21, 1890, and consisted of the four blocks bounded by Division Avenue, East Orman Avenue, Baystate Avenue, and East Routt Avenue. The Minnequa Park Subdivision, filed March 29, 1890, developed land north of Lake Minnequa while the Vauxhall Place Subdivision, filed July 19, 1890, developed land at the northeast corner of the lake. The City Hall Place Second Subdivision, filed July 26, 1890 developed four blocks at the northern edge of the Bessemer Works surrounded by Mesa Avenue to the north, the D&RG tracks to the west, Northern Avenue to the south, and present-day Santa Fe Avenue to the east; this area rests east of Interstate 25 today.[48]

The possibility of annexing the town of Bessemer into the city of Pueblo began by 1890 as well. It is unknown if any disagreements or altercations resulted from the idea of annexation, though the *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that:

> It is time for this nonsensical north and south side fight to end. Certain men in the community, who are here day-to-day and who previous to the consolidation by their continued efforts kept up a foolish sectional, suicidal fight, which delayed the progress of the city for ten years, are still at work creating mischief, but the advantage of the people of all localities pulling together for the common good has been so thoroughly demonstrated since consolidation was brought about that their numbers have been greatly reduced and the poison of their tongues de-

stroyed by the growing common sense of the people.[49]

The newspaper thus portrays those in support of Bessemer independence in the same negative light as those that protested the consolidation of Pueblo, Central Pueblo, and South Pueblo six years prior. Yet the annexation of Bessemer was still a few years away, and the town remained independent for the time being.

The seemingly never-ending cycle of prosperity and desperation at the Bessemer Works continued in the winter of 1890-1891. CC&I began construction of a third furnace in November of 1890, justifying the cost with a wealth of cheap fuel and ore; the furnace would also provide enough material to allow all mills to run at capacity. The economic hammer came down on the corporation again, however, as the Bessemer Works sat almost totally idle and mining at the company's coal fields ceased. This time the corporation blamed the failure of Baring Brothers Bank and the subsequent Panic of 1890 as the reason for operating losses rather than the D&RG.

Not all workers fled the town of Bessemer with this economic downturn however. CC&I invested money at the steelworks by making needed repairs and increasing capacity to reduce future costs. The steelworks kept enough workers employed and in town at least to keep buildings occupied, though there does not appear to be any residential or commercial expansion. With gas for heating and lighting in the homes and business, residents now began appealing for electricity to light the streets, "since the streets have been without other light than that of the wandering moon."[50] The light-up-Bessemer movement appears to have been rather unorganized. The first meeting of interested parties was supposed to occur on July 8, 1891, but the calendar showed July 17 before it was held. Attendance at the meeting was light, as it "was attended by only three of the gentlemen interested, the others being unavoidably detained by other business."[51] No matter how feeble the movement, the town made a deal with the Pueblo Gas & Electric Light Company, not the aforementioned Bessemer Gas and Electric Light Company, to outfit it with seven lights and it paid $15 a month for service.[52]

Bessemer received other services at this time as well. In 1890, the town not only granted the South Pueblo Water Company a right-of-way in the streets and alleys to equip water mains but also granted the Pueblo City Railway access to extend horse-drawn lines southward toward the mill. Town trustees granted a franchise agreement to the Colorado Telegraph Company to erect poles and string wire throughout the town. Also in 1890, the town allowed the Bessemer Ditch, which irrigated farms on the St. Charles Mesa just east of town, to snake through the area. The first United States Census of the town of Bessemer was taken in 1890, which counted 3,317 persons. This population allowed Colorado Secretary of State E.J. Eaton to certify Bessemer as a city of second class in early 1891. The town seemingly warranted the publication of at least two daily newspapers: *The Iron Hand* and the *Bessemer Indicator*.[53] In light of the new services and improvements in Bessemer, sentiment toward the town by residents of Pueblo changed dramatically. The *Pueblo Chieftain* noted, "In the five years after its incorporation as a town in May 1886, it had grown from a few shacks on the prairie west of [the] expanding Colorado Fuel & Iron Corp. plant, which was responsible for its founding in 1880, to a progressive small city."[54]

The issue of annexation was revived again in September of 1891, this time by the citizens of Pueblo. One of the aldermen of that city, George West, motioned that a board of three

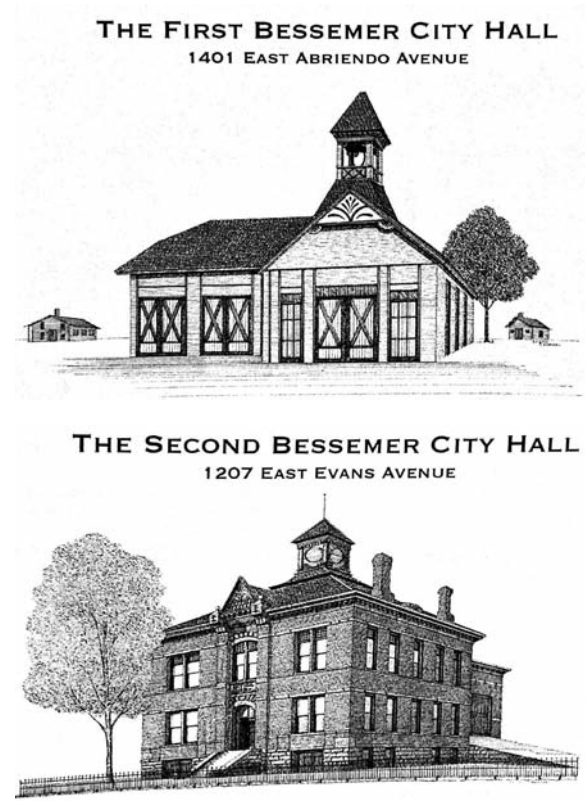


Figure 1.7. The first Bessemer City Hall, at top, was a small building that managed to house the municipal court, jail, fire house, and community meeting room. Architect George Roe designed the second Bessemer City Hall, at bottom, in brick with white stone trim. When the cost of construction soared, CC&I likely footed the bill. *(Pueblo County Historical Society,* Pueblo Lore*, October 2008)*

commissioners be appointed to meet with a similar board from Bessemer to discuss annexation. The motion passed, but the Pueblo mayor stated that he would not appoint the board without knowing if the annexation could be legally voted upon a few months later. The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported: "There is a good deal of diversity of opinion among our [Pueblo's] people as to the advisability of the proposed consolidation but it is probable that if fair and equitable terms can be agreed upon that it may be accomplished."[55] The residents of Bessemer do not appear to have made any indication as to the favorability of annexation, at least not in the Pueblo newspaper.

In late 1891, CC&I coordinated its production with the large steelmakers in the East, resulting in a $270,000 payment from the "Steel Trust" and prosperous economic times ensued. Joining the Trust provided an immediate revitalization at the Bessemer Works, as output at all departments returned to normal levels for most of the first ten months of 1892. The plant would record its first profit in four years at that time. Business was not all bad for the corporation, as the real estate and fuel departments generally provided profits greater than the plant losses. Income from the real estate department average $11,000 per year between 1880 and 1891, though it is not known how much, if any, of that profit came from land sales or rental houses in Bessemer. The income from all real estate sources averaged $50,000 per year from 1880 to 1888, though probably with wild swings, and declined dramatically beginning in 1891.[56]

As shown, the early workforce transformed the area immediately surrounding the steelworks. Even before Colorado Coal & Iron could incorporate a land development company, people began constructing makeshift housing. The corporation recognized this and reacted within a year to develop the land immediately west of the steelworks, which would eventually become a company town. Development in Bessemer until the early 1890s was largely dominated by development of CC&I subsidiaries, though a few builders and developers operated within the town unaffiliated with the corporation. The nearby smelters, which will be discussed later, contributed to the residential building successes within the town by supplying an economic boon from outside of the controlling corporation. Even within the first decade of existence, the economic influence of the steelworks in the town appeared obvious.

Chapter 2

"A Veritable City in Itself": The Minnequa Town Company

With a decade under its belt, the town of Bessemer would continue its economic and developmental swings for the next ninety years. The corporation in control of the company town would endure only a few years into the 1890s, the town would be annexed into the city of Pueblo. The resulting Bessemer neighborhood would sustain nothing short of explosive residential development around the turn of the twentieth century. Both neighborhood residents and the corporation would suffer through the Great Depression and revel in two postwar prosperity periods. Ultimately the corporation would see its economic impact within the neighborhood diminish to next to nothing. The architecture exemplified within the neighborhood reveals these drastic and sometimes abrupt changes in the economy, immigration, labor force, and national steel market, sometimes within a single block.

Colorado Coal & Iron merged with its archrival, the Colorado Fuel Company, to form Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) on October 21, 1892.[57] The merger ushered in a new era for the town of Bessemer, largely barren of expansive development. From the time of the merger until 1899, there were no new subdivisions to the town filed and one, the Lake Avenue Subdivision, was actually vacated December 3, 1894. Almost immediately following the merger, CF&I would have to contend with an economy in panic.[58]

Only seven months into the existence of CF&I, the first symptoms of the Panic of 1893 began to show at the corporation. Sales began slumping in the spring of that year, affecting the corporation's ability to meet its short-term debts. One of the larger factors of the economic crisis was the collapse of the railroad building industry—an industry CF&I supplied. By early May, the corporation abandoned all improvement programs at the mines as well as the steelworks in order to trim the fat. All mills at the steelworks closed for repairs in July and operated only briefly in August before closing again as railroads cancelled their orders.[59]

The merger of CF&I and the economic free-for-all coincided with the annexation of Bessemer into the city of Pueblo. In January 1894, 100 Bessemer citizens brought petitions to both the Bessemer and Pueblo aldermen asking for the annexation. There was no consensus among the residents of either city, with protests ensuing in both. Regardless of the heated debates, the Pueblo City Council ordered a special election for March 18, 1894. Pueblo real estate mogul Thomas J. Downen opposed the annexation, bringing an injunction to the district court questioning whether a law passed in April 1893 provided for special elections for the annexation of cities. The court dismissed the case three days prior to the election without ever ruling on the validity of the balloting. Both cities held their elections as scheduled; Pueblo residents approved the annexation 537 to 200, while Bessemer residents more narrowly approved it 212 to 176. The annexation was certified March 21, 1894, and Bessemer became the eighth ward of the

Figure 2.1. This image shows the Lake Avenue addition adjacent to the mill, whose stacks are blowing smoke away from the neighborhood. By 1894, the subdivision had been vacated. (Pueblo Chieftain, *February 5, 1890)*

city. Immediate improvements to the now Bessemer neighborhood amounted to better street maintenance and new sidewalks.[60]

In the midst of the annexation debate in February 1894, CF&I started one furnace at the Bessemer Works; another started in May. The Bessemer converter revived operations in March; the converter ceased operation again in July due to a shortage of materials as a result of striking coal miners. Not until 1895 did the Bessemer plant approach the production numbers seen before the economic crisis. That year CF&I joined with steel makers in the East in the "Rail Makers Association" to stabilize prices and guarantee production quotas.[61]

The "Rail Makers Association" (RMA) assured CF&I an operating profit, but this would be the first time in the corporation's history that profits did not provide a boon for the Bessemer economy. The steel maker, in 1896, agreed to stop production of all heavy rails while the RMA promised to pay it twelve monthly payments of $30,000 each. As a result, the plant needed fewer workers while investors still made money. CF&I circumvented the local labor force again that same year when it entered an agreement with the Illinois Steel Company to sell the latter company's products in CF&I's regional markets. Sadly, as CF&I historian H. Lee Scamehorn writes, "This enabled the Colorado producer to supply its regional customers while work in the steel department was suspended at Bessemer."[62]

Though the sales prospects of CF&I rail products dimmed, the corporation aggressively pursued its other namesake product: fuel. In the decade following the Panic of 1893, the fuel trade of CF&I "had grown until it almost completely controlled the production of coal and coke in Colorado outside of the northern lignite field and in the major mining districts of New Mexico Territory."[63] The expansion of the CF&I fuel market allowed the company to expand and modernize the Bessemer Works "to make it a serious competitor in the West."[64] The 1896 improvement program aimed to lower cost and reduce and eventually eliminate the corporation's dependence of outside rail suppliers. When the RMA collapsed in 1897, prices declined throughout the American steel industry and highlighted CF&I's outdated production methods at the Bessemer mills. Directly responding to this problem, the corporation developed a $500,000 plan to modernize its steel department; CF&I completed the plan the following summer. More improvements at the Bessemer Works began in September 1899, when stockholders agreed to an increase in capital stock of which the mills benefitted to the tune of $6,000,000. Construction and renovations at the steelworks began immediately, with the largest projects being the rebuilding of two blast furnaces, an expanded and modernized rail mill, and an enlarged water system.[65]

The Colorado Coal & Iron Development Company declared bankruptcy in 1896, liquidating ownership of its several real estate holdings in the Bessemer neighborhood. Ownership of the holdings did not revert to CF&I, the parent company, but rather to another CF&I subsidiary created in 1900, the Pueblo Realty Trust Company (PRTC). Prior to the bankruptcy, a portion of the holdings were transferred to the Suburban Land & Investment Company for later development.[66] The Pueblo Realty Trust Company marketed lots and houses to Bessemer residents, but it does not appear to have developed or subdivided any land. The PRTC got into real estate at just the right time, as rental revenues soared from $624 in July of 1901 to $3,584.50 by June of 1902. The value of the PRTC's holdings sat at $425,538.55 as of May 31, 1902 and likewise in-

creased to $1,120,538.55 as of June 30, 1902. Possibly the result of devious accounting, the one month increase could mostly be attributed to the bullish Bessemer housing market. PRTC ledgers also indicate the company began selling more real estate and slowed its rental business as the market exploded. Sales of PRTC holdings totaled $40,279.97 as of January 31, 1902, and reached a total of $151,009.59 as of December 31, 1903. By July 31, 1904, rental revenue slowed to merely $185 but real estate sales now totaled $152,284.59. As housing turned to a bear market later in the decade, the PRTC sales slowed considerably as the company reported only one $50.00 sale between July 31 and December 31, 1908, and sales continued at a snail's pace throughout the end of the decade.[67] The PRTC continued its rental business until at least January of 1920, but revenue decreased by that time to a miniscule $30. Also by that time, PRTC real estate sales totaled $666,796.85.[68] The PRTC also financed some of its housing sales, just like the Minnequa Town Company. Though the majority of payments were between $10 and $20 per month, at least one buyer paid the PRTC a $200 monthly installment.[69]

The attractiveness of the real estate holdings was not lost on CF&I officials. One official noted Bessemer "was 'dirty, in poor repair, and repulsive,' but with a modest investment could be made 'comparatively attractive.'" To these ends CF&I created another subsidiary, the Minnequa Town Company (MTC). The MTC was formally organized May 28, 1899 with $600,000 in capital and officers in senior positions at the steelworks.[70]

The $6,000,000 earmarked for improvements worked its way throughout Bessemer, mostly via the MTC, as evidenced by the nine new subdivisions to Pueblo in the neighborhood filed in the next four years. Only three of these were not the undertaking of the MTC and all were located near Santa Fe Avenue north of the steelworks. The non MTC developments were: the Wien Subdivision, the Agram Philadelphia Investment Company's Subdivision, and the Laibach Subdivision.

The Wien Subdivision, which was filed February 21, 1899, constituted two and a half blocks immediately east of the City Hall Place Second Subdivision on the east side of Santa Fe Avenue. The Agram Philadelphia Investment Company's Subdivision, filed July 5, 1901, was located directly east of the Wien Subdivision and just north of the Philadelphia Smelter. The third was the Laibach Subdivision, filed June 13, 1902, and located on the northern edge of both the Wien and Agram Subdivisions. One supplementary subdivision occurred north of the Laibach Subdivision: the Frances Subdivision, filed December 31, 1924.[71]

All remaining subdivisions and those west of the steelworks can be attributed to the MTC. The first was the Suburban Land & Investment Company's Subdivision, filed June 24, 1899; its boundaries were East Orman Avenue to the west, Jones Avenue and the Bessemer Ditch to the south, Division Avenue to the north, and Elm Street to the east (Interstate 25 would be the eastern boundary today). The second MTC development was the Lakewood Subdivision, filed July 24, 1899, which was platted much further west than the two previous subdivisions and skirted the Mesa Junction neighborhood. Its boundaries were the Bessemer Ditch (Small Avenue) to the north, Palmer Avenue to the west, Northern Avenue to the south, and Lake Avenue to the east.[72]

The next four MTC developments generally occurred in the area located between the steelworks and Lake Minnequa. These were the Minnequa Town Company Subdivision, filed September 24, 1900; the Minnequa Heights Subdivision filed May 13, 1902; the Steel Works Amended Subdivision filed May

Figure 2.2. Minnequa Town Company built 250 cottages. These houses were always constructed in pairs next to one another with corner lots reserved for later, and presumably larger, houses. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

2210 and 2214 East Routt

2219 and 2217 East Routt

TABLE 2.1. ADDRESSES OF CA. 1903 MTC HOUSES*

Minnequa	Orman	Cedar	Pine	Spruce	E. Routt	E. Evans
508	2210	2205	2210	2210	2210	2209
603	2214	2209	2214	2212	2214	2210
612	2224	2211	2216	2213	2215	2213
802	2228	2215	2220	2217	2219	2214
	2310	2224	2223	2219	2224	2216
	2314	2228	2227	2223	2228	2220
	2324	2305	2305	2224	2310	2223
	2328	2309	2309	2228	2314	2227
	2410	2310	2310	2310	2319	2310
	2414	2314	2314	2313	2323	2314
	2510	2319	2323	2314	2409	2315
	2514	2323	2324	2317	2410	2319
	2606	2324	2327	2319	2413	2324
	2610	2328	2328	2324	2414	2328
	2624	2405	2409	2325	2416	2405
	2628	2409	2413	2328	2420	2409
		2410	2414	2405	2423	2410
		2414	2418	2409	2427	2414
		2416	2420	2410	2510	2423
		2419	2423	2414	2514	2424
		2420	2424	2416	2519	2427
		2423	2427	2419	2523	2428
		2505	2509	2420	2605	2509
		2509	2510	2423	2606	2510
		2510	2513	2505	2609	2513
		2514	2514	2509	2610	2514
		2519	2515	2510	2623	2516
		2523	2519	2514	2624	2520
		2524	2524	2516	2627	2523
		2528	2528	2520	2628	2527
		2606	2605	2523		2605
		2610	2606	2527		2606
		2624	2609	2605		2609
		2628	2610	2606		2610
			2611	2609		2612
			2612	2610		2616
			2615	2611		
			2616	2612		
				2615		
				2616		

*not an exhaustive list, only those houses constructed south of Aqua Avenue and along Minnequa Avenue

19, 1902; and the Eastlake Subdivision filed March 30, 1903.[73] Twenty acres within these subdivisions were reserved for the CF&I hospital and another area reserved for an amusement park on the northern shore of the lake.[74]

The MTC began constructing homes on its land holdings in the first years of the twentieth century. These homes were marketed exclusively to steelworkers, Colorado's largest workforce, and the company financed the sales requiring monthly payments.[75] From 1900-1902, the MTC constructed 250 four- and five-room homes. Units that did not sell readily were rented by the MTC and later by CF&I.[76] The *Chieftain* provided Pueblo residents with insight to the housing boom in Bessemer at the beginning of October 1901:

> The Minnequa Town Company is having plans prepared for 30 new cottages and residences to go up in Minnequa addition, west and south-west of the steel works. Four of these houses will be of stone and brick, two stories, and face on Minnequa avenue [sic], south of the new CF&I Company's office building. There will be one two-story frame residence in this bunch, making five in all. The remaining 25 cottages will be scattered throughout the Minnequa addition. The two-story buildings will be modern in every respect, very roomy, with cellar, bath, porches, and verandas. They will be constructed in the most substantial manner and will be sold on the most favorable terms at about $5,000 each. The cottages will also be modern, containing four to six rooms. They will also be placed on the market at prices ranging from $1,000 to $1,500, at terms to suit the purchasers.[77]

Later that same month, the *Chieftain* updated it readers about the construction: "During the past week the Minnequa Town Company has sold 26 residences and 12 business lots in the Minnequa addition, west of the steel works, the aggregate consideration of which is about $7,000." *The [Bessemer] Indicator* also boasted of the town's phenomenal growth. Quoting O.B. Carroll, a Pueblo resident who recently opened a business in Bessemer, it wrote: "This end of the city alone will have 50,000 people in two years. It can't be helped....The growth of late has been wonderful, and the growth of the near future will be unparalleled." *The Indicator* noted that Bessemer was attracting visitors with its numerous improvements and that, "[p]eople who left a few years ago are straggling back." The presence of the MTC and other builders made Bessemer an attractive place to live.[78]

Interestingly, roughly half of the mortgages held by the MTC were owed by women. The reason behind this remains unclear, as the steelworks overwhelmingly hired men in all but office positions. Payments of the mortgages held by the MTC were slightly higher than those of the PRTC, with the majority of payments either $25.00 or $50.00; a few residents paid $100 and the highest payment appears to be $175.00. The higher prices indicate the MTC either built larger houses than the PRTC or provided better amenities.[79]

Though the land had been developed a few years prior, the enormous Bessemer housing boom occurred beginning about 1903 during the Rockefeller era at the plant. A change in command at the top of CF&I at the corporation's annual shareholders' meeting on September 2, 1903, formally relieved management who held control since the merger. At that time, CF&I was "stronger in terms of physical facilities than it had been at any time in the past" and "production had been favorably advanced by a reconstruction and expansion program that increased that capacity of the Minnequa Works, lowered production costs, and yielded a greater variety of products for the western market." The revitalization program commenced in the late 1890s at the steelworks resulted in five blast furnaces, two converters, six open-hearth furnaces, enlarged blooming and rail mills, and new machinery to manufacture rods, tin-

Figure 2.3. The map at left shows the Minnequa Town Company's land in 1908. *(map Pueblo City-County Library District, Western History Collection; photos by Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

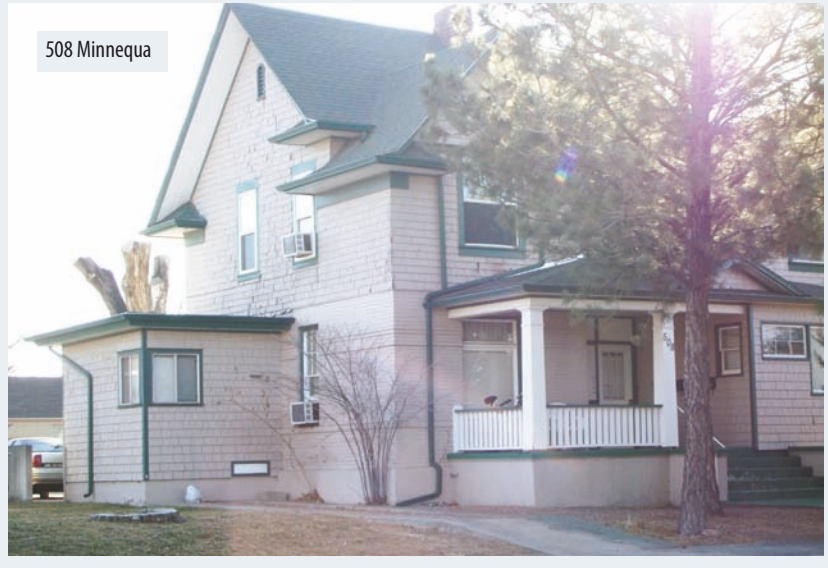
ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MINNEQUA TOWN COMPANY ERA COTTAGES, 1900-1905

- One or one-and-a-half-story
- Frame construction
- Often hipped roof boxes
- Four to six rooms
- Dormer windows
- Modest, covered porches
- One-over-one windows

Figure 2.4. The Minnequa Town Company's two-story homes on Minnequa Avenue were "modern in every respect." *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MINNEQUA TOWN COMPANY ERA HOMES, 1900-1903

- Two stories
- Finished in brick, stone, or siding
- Generous porch in the front
- Slightly flared, broad eaves
- One-over-one windows (originally)



plate, ties, wire, and nails by 1903. Upon the culmination of the program in 1907, blast furnaces numbered six, open-hearth furnaces numbered twelve, a second rod mill provided for the production of different sized materials, and water traversed a new conduit from the Arkansas River to water storage lakes south of the steelworks.[80] The population of Bessemer climbed accordingly, as the area included 4,000 residents at the time of annexation into Pueblo in 1894 and boasted 15,000 by January 1905.[81]

A flurry of articles indicative of the building boom began appearing in the *Pueblo Chieftain* in 1905 and lasted through the end of the decade. The beginning of the year 1905 began with the newspaper reporting:

> For a short time after the resumption of operations at the local plant of the C.F.&I. Co. and when the popular confidence in the future of Bessemer was just beginning to be restored a great many badly frightened people sacrificed their holdings and sold their homes at almost anything that they would bring. The purchasers have greatly benefitted and in a number of instances have again sold, making from 30 to 50 per cent upon their investments.…Rentals, say the dealers in Bessemer dirt, are now paying things, and every house worth anything in particular is eagerly snapped up. One dealer yesterday declared that more of the houses which he controls are now rented than any time during his residence in Bessemer of several years during which he has been in the realty business. A short time since none but the low priced houses contained tenants, but within the last month the demand for good houses has grown that practically every houses has its tenant. While it is to be expected that the houses of the Minnequa Town company, lying in the southernmost portion of Minnequa, should fill up slowly owing to their remoteness, still it is reported that the number of vacant houses even there are growing less and it is predicted that by spring it will be necessary to again begin the construction of houses for rental in order that the people may be sheltered.[82]

The newspaper also foretold "New Business Blocks Will Spring up in Surprising Numbers" and "Bessemer's Building Boom Will Be Sustained."[83]

The predictions proved accurate, as by the end of 1905 the image of the steel suburb had changed in the minds of Pueblo residents. "[T]hose who visited the steel works suburb a few years ago" the *Chieftain* stated, "would not know the place now. Then it was known as the home of hundreds of steel works laborers of every nationality living in small houses without trees and lawns, with no streets, no pavements, and dense volumes of smoke hanging over the scene. Added to this a number of small saloons furnishing a number of fights, furnished the average idea of Bessemer." The newspaper continued:

> But things are different now. Bessemer is a veritable city in itself, with its 150 business houses, with its fine residence sections, with its paved streets and well-kept avenues, with its first-class schools, churches and lodges and, best of all, with a progressive people, there is nothing to hinder its continuance advancement.

Numerous commercial blocks sprang up in the neighborhood, the most notable being the Erickson Block at the corner of Northern Avenue and East Evans Avenue at a cost of $40,000. Other commercial blocks constructed in 1905 were the George Ballard Block at the corner of East Routt Avenue and Northern at a cost of $7,000, the J.A. Ritchie Block on Northern, the T.H. Foley Block at the corner of Elm Street and Northern, the J.H. Roitz Block on Eilers Avenue. Indeed, the year 1905 "witnessed the most extensive improvements in the history of Bessemer, both in business and in residence sections, and general improvements in making that part of the city a better place to live in." Pueblo residents were pleased

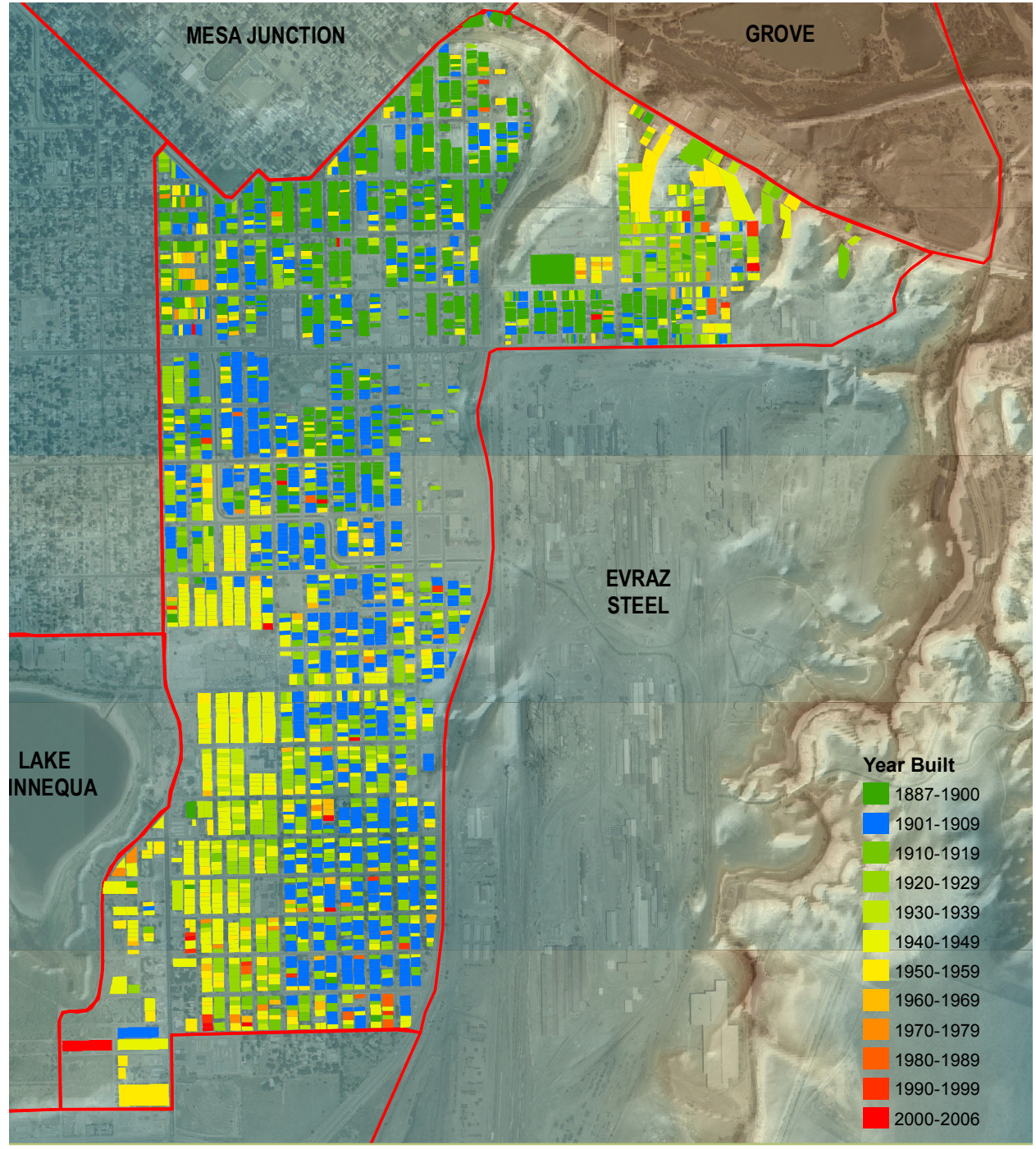
TABLE 2.2. ADDRESSES OF NON-MTC HOUSES IN MINNEQUA HEIGHTS BUILT FROM 1901-1905*

Cedar	Spruce	E. Routt	E. Evans
2411 (rear)	2411	2205	2215
2511 (rear)	2515	2207	2221
2605	2619	2211	2231
2609	2621	2216	2415
2615	2624	2223	
2619		2229	
2623		2309	
2627		2311	
		2320	
		2419	
		2516	
		2614	

*not a comprehensive list (29 identified)

Figure 2.5. From the beginnings of Bessemer, circa 1880, through 1900, a total of 914 buildings were constructed in the neighborhood, representing 25.49 percent of the current building stock. The percentage would have been proportionately higher in 1900 due to fewer platted lots in the area subdivisions.

After the MTC came along and the Rockefeller era at CF&I began, building in Bessemer nothing short of exploded. During the first decade of the twentieth century, 1097 buildings were constructed in the neighborhood; this decade accounts for 30.59 percent of the buildings starts, the most of any decade. Crews constructed houses in all parts of the neighborhood, with the exception of those buildings south of Minnequa Avenue and west of East Orman Avenue just east of Lake Minnequa. Astoundingly, 56.08 percent of the buildings in Bessemer are now over 100 years old. *(Figures from Travis Douthit, "Bessemer Housing Starts Spreadsheet" City of Pueblo, November 2, 2011, and map from Pueblo County GIS)*



with the Bessemer neighborhood, now thought of as "The most cosmopolitan spot on earth of its size."[84]

The building boom continued into 1906, not only with commercial buildings but single-family residences as well. It appears the housing supply could not keep pace with demand, as "Residences [were] going up in every portion of the steel works suburb. This building boom was centered in the Minnequa Heights Subdivision, "where on every street, homes in the course of erection are seen. Most of these are modern brick cottages. Some of them are being erected by capitalists for an investment, but in most instances they are the homes of employes [sic] of the Minnequa plant."[85]

The year 1907 proved to be "a most prosperous one" for building in Bessemer. As a sign of the progressive times, the *Chieftain* reported "One of Bessemer's old landmarks, the blacksmith shop of George Litz, 1421 Routt avenue [sic], is being torn down to make way for a strictly modern one-story brick structure 20x50 feet. The old building was erected twenty years ago [in 1887], and when first completed was occupied by John Kuntz as a cigar and tobacco store, and later, about 1893, was converted into a blacksmith shop."[86] Progressive building could not be thwarted by existing buildings; in another instance, a house occupying the chosen site of a gymnasium had to be moved.[87] Additionally in 1907, the *Chieftain* reported "The best signs of permanency that is to be seen about [Bessemer] are the many beautiful homes that are being built to take the places of the cheaper ones which were built several years ago. A number of old houses have been removed and new ones built on the lot." Other improvements in the neighborhood this year were the paving of several streets and the placement of stone sidewalks on several blocks.[88]

Bojon Town/Eiler's Annexation

The neighborhood surrounding East Mesa Avenue between the tracks of the DR&G and South Santa Fe Avenue, commonly known throughout Pueblo as Bojon Town, focused their desire to incorporate as an independent town in 1907. Bojon was a derogatory term for the Slovenian immigrants who settled in the area. The residents successfully petitioned Pueblo County to organize a special election in which eligible voters would simply choose "for incorporation" or "against incorporation." The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that "[t]he people living in the little community are said to be much in favor of incorporating." The town was to be named Laibach after the area subdivision of the same name, though annexation into Pueblo occurred instead.[1]

[1] "Foreigners To Vote On Town Incorporation," *Pueblo Chieftain*, June 11, 1907, 12.

Chapter 3

Our Town: The Long Decline

After the Minnequa Town Company Housing Boom, Bessemer's growth slowed. The remainder of the twentieth century saw limited housing starts. The 1950s represented the high mark for CF&I, though Bessemer's population remained stable. The neighborhood in the shadow of the steel mill, could not house all those employed by it. It was too easy to live across town. Still, those that remained held close ties to the mill and to each other.

From 1911 to 1920, housing starts slowed to nearly one-quarter of the previous decades' pace. During this decade, only 226 buildings were constructed in the neighborhood representing 6.3 percent of the present-day building stock. Labor turmoil in the mining regions of CF&I in the early years of the decade slowed production at the steelworks in Bessemer, though demands of World War I throttled production in the later years of the decade. All departments operated at nearly full capacity, and the company could barely keep up with orders from 1915 through 1919.[89]

As CF&I struggled throughout the 1920s, the number of new houses constructed in Bessemer dropped sharply. Only 470 houses were constructed from 1920-1930, or 13.11 percent of the present-day building stock. Beginning toward the latter part of the year 1920, a decline in many industries initiated another period of sustained financial hardship for the corporation. The mills at Bessemer operated at less than two-thirds capacity for several years, and commodities produced were limited mostly to rails and fasteners. With the mill operating well under capacity for most of the decade, strict U.S. immigration laws enacted in the 1920s had little to no effect on the workforce living in Bessemer; low production strictly limited the number of new jobs. The roaring twenties were not so in Bessemer.[90]

Expectedly, housing starts in Bessemer declined further during the 1930s. The number of new homes in the decade numbered merely 150, the least of any decade from 1880 to 1960; houses constructed during this decade amount to 4.19 percent of the present-day building stock. CF&I never fully recovered from the financial difficulties suffered the previous decade, and it continued to struggle during the Great Depression. Working capital evaporated and weakened the corporation's ability to borrow, resulting in a default in bond interest in 1933 and ultimately leading the firm into receivership. The corporation reorganized under the ownership of the bondholders on July 1, 1936, just in time for the firm to take advantage of an improving steel market. During the first quarter of the fiscal year that began that same day, the now svelte company realized net earnings two and one-half times greater than the year of 1935. An economic recession from late 1937 through early 1938 licked CF&I again late in the decade. Not surprisingly, most of the housing starts this decade happened between 1937-1940.[91]

The onset of United States' involvement in World War II

generated renewed prosperity for the nation's steel industry, including CF&I. The corporation began construction of a new forging plant for the manufacture of munitions at the Bessemer plant in July 1940 while increasing production of iron and steel for immediate wartime purposes. Postwar, a New York investment firm acquired controlling interest of CF&I from John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and merged the firm with Wickwire Spencer Steel Company in mid-1945 while keeping the name Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation. The mammoth steel corporation began a tremendous change in its product line, overhauling its outdated wire mill and moving away from its dependency of rail production. The war period and merger provided a small uptick in building construction in Bessemer, with 441 buildings constructed from 1941-1950; this amounts to 12.30 percent of the current building stock. Though building starts during the 1940s numbered more than the previous decade, they still could not match the 1920s when production at the mills was merely crawling along.[92]

Though some workers at the mills always lived in other areas of town, it was during the postwar era that the local workforce began to move away from its employer and into other Pueblo neighborhoods *en masse*. The workforce at the CF&I plant averaged 12,617 from 1941 to 1950, while all buildings in Bessemer (residential and commercial) merely numbered 3,298. Two large residential developments sprang up elsewhere in Pueblo at this time, Belmont and Sunset Park, with several mill workers choosing to live in Sunset Park due to its southern location within the city.[93] It was impossible for the neighborhood to house the entire workforce, cementing the relationship between CF&I, Bessemer, and Pueblo.[94]

From 1951 to 1960, CF&I enjoyed post-World War II prosperity but the company's influence on the Bessemer neighborhood continued to wane. The corporation ramped up production for another conflict, the Korean War, and produced 867,158 tons of pig iron in 1951, a record up to that date; two years later, the Bessemer plant produced more than one million tons of the base metal. The corporation corrected production in 1953 to peacetime levels, and "the Pueblo enterprise enjoyed a long period of relatively unbroken prosperity."[95] The increased production, coupled with a modernization plan at the mills, resulted in the largest numbers of employees at the plant. CF&I employed an average of 19,947 workers from 1951-1960, with a record average of 22,512 in 1957.[96] Proof that the corporation lost its neighborly influence: only 163 new buildings were constructed in the neighborhood in the decade, 4.55 percent of the present-day building stock, while new developments such as Belmont sprang up.[97] The only congruous building activity in the Bessemer neighborhood at this time occurred in the 1100 block of Eilers Avenue, as most of the other areas of the neighborhood were nearly filled in; Bessemer was, however, largely built out, preventing wide-scale postwar development.

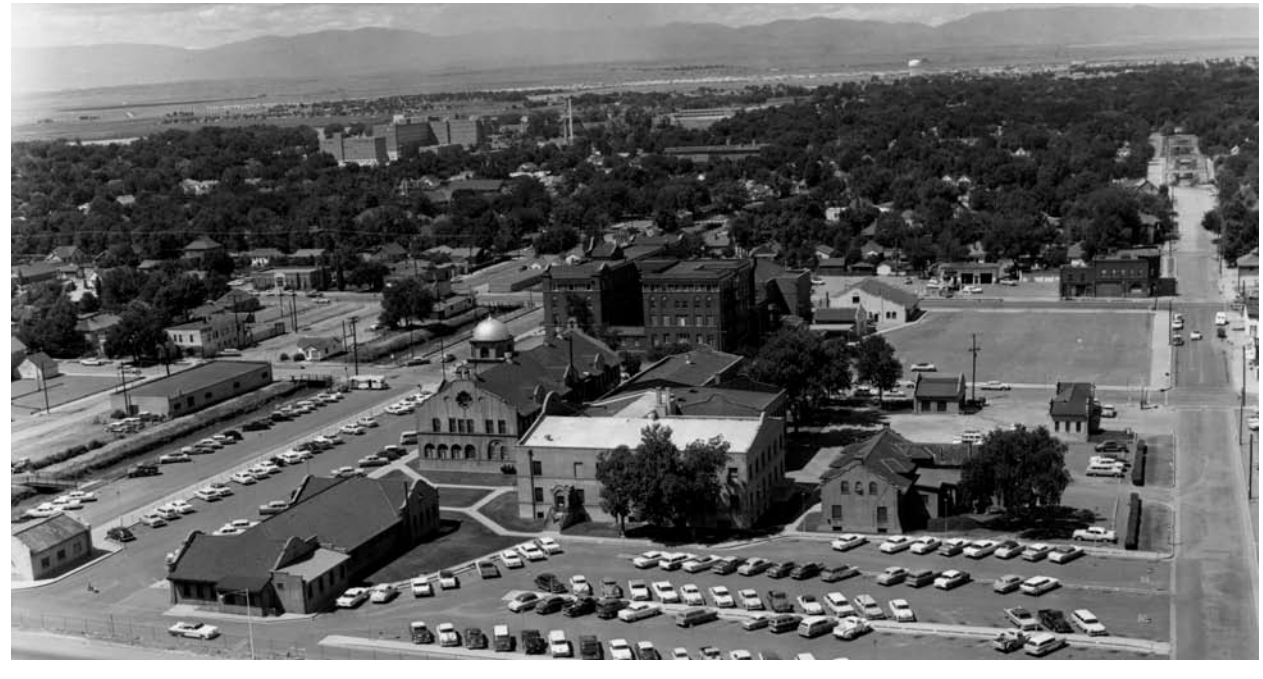
Though lacking in new development, Bessemer shimmered with prosperity. A reorganization of a previous neighborhood civic group, the Bessemer Business Men's Association formed in May of 1950 for "the improvement of the Bessemer district." Members numbered twelve during the group's inaugural year, and swelled to 115 in just over two years. Major achievements of the Association included improvements at Bessemer Park, grading of alleys in the neighborhood for the first time in twenty-five years, additional street cleaning, improvements in neighborhood storm sewers, and the alleviation of traffic congestion by changing East Abriendo Avenue to a one-way street north from the CF&I offices.[98] Future plans of

Figure 3.1. Despite rapid construction in the rest of the city, the most substantial building in the neighborhood between 1945 and 1960 was the 1100 Block of Eilers Avenue. Much of the housing stock in the Laibach area dates to the post-flood period, since the ground was the former smelter site. Residents moved up the hill from the Grove neighborhood to escape the possibility of a second devastating flood. Owners built some of the houses themselves; many of today's residents are first or second owners. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EILERS HOUSES,1945-1960

- One-story
- Architectural forms include Minimal Traditional (a transition between earlier bungalows or cottage forms and the earliest ranch homes) and Early Ranch (a compact form, usually less than 900 square feet, with no attached garage, built in Pueblo in the early- to mid-1940s)
- Brick or frame homes
- Small, covered porches or uncovered stoops
- Clay-tile roofs
- Picture windows
- Front lawns connected (no fences)

Figure 3.2. Housing starts in the neighborhood took a drastic decline after 1910, though CF&I remained productive through World War II. The top photo was taken before the 1952 Interstate 25 construction through the neighborhood. The bottom photograph is likely in the 1960s; the seven-story St. Mary-Corwin Hospital is visible in the background. Notice also the shrinking footprint of CF&I's headquarters. *(Photos courtesy CF&I Archives/Bessemer Historical Society)*



Minnequa Heights Annexation

The annexation of the Minnequa Heights area into the city of Pueblo had long been a topic of debate and agitation. Minnequa Heights is the southernmost area of this context study and surrounds Lakeview School, located east of Lake Avenue along streets such as Maryland Avenue, Illinois Avenue, and Iowa Avenue toward Interstate 25. The matter was first discussed as early as 1907, though it is unknown if the Minnequa Heights residents developed the annexation plan or if the residents of Pueblo did. The discussion began in the spring of that year, but nothing further in the matter happened by mid-summer. Several Minnequa Heights residents opposed the annexation because they did not want to pay city property taxes. Yet the area unfairly depended on the city for fire protection. In light of that, Minnequa Heights' residents formed a committee to arrange for fire protection with the "erection of a fire house, which would be equipped with all necessary apparatus."[1] Curiously, the matters of annexation and fire protection appear tabled for forty years, as the city of Pueblo announced in 1947 that "fire protection would no longer be available outside the municipal limits." On February 5 of that year, area residents packed Lakeview School to discuss their new lack of fire protection. Residents proposed three options at the meeting: incorporate as a town, annex into the city of Pueblo, or create an improvement district. Residents appointed a sixteen member fact-finding committee in order to recommend the most sensible option. The most sensible option was none of the previous three, as the committee recommended the formation of a fire protection district; this differed from the formation of an improvement district, which could have influenced building construction and utilities. The committee began petitioning residents for the formation of the fire protection district in September of 1947, but supporters of annexation into Pueblo began circulating petitions for their cause merely two months later. The largest issue between proponents of both issues was property taxes. A hearing in Pueblo district court on January 2, 1948, was set in order for the opponents of the fire protection district to voice their objections and to set a date for a special election in which residents would vote on the matter. The election was postponed, however, in order for the annexation vote to occur simultaneously.[2] Although an exact date of annexation could not be found, annexation probably occurred in the spring of 1948 even with some residents remaining soundly opposed.[3]

[1] "Another Plan Will Be Tried: Minnequa Heights May Yet Be Part of the City," *Pueblo Chieftain*, July 13, 1907, 9.
[2] "Minnequa Heights To Study Facts," *Pueblo Chieftain*, February 6, 1947; "Minnequa Heights Start Petitions To Create Fire Protection District," *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 13, 1947; "Annexation Facts Are Presented At Heights Meeting," *Pueblo Chieftain*, November 11, 1947; "'Battle' Of Minnequa Heights To Reach Court On January 2," *Pueblo Chieftain*, December 25, 1947.
[3] *Pueblo Chieftain*, January 9, 1948, 2.

Continental Oil

Though many businesses contracted in the years following the Panic of 1893, one company expanded its operation in Pueblo: Continental Oil.[1] In 1894, Continental oil began construction of its new Pueblo quarters west of the steelworks and just north of the present-day Evraz steel corporation offices, with the *Pueblo Chieftain* reporting the construction was necessary due to "the greatly increasing business of the company at this point, which, during the past year, has nearly doubled." The new location featured five buildings consisting of a 40-foot by 80-foot warehouse, an engine and boiler house, an office building, and wagon sheds and stables. The company also erected eleven storage tanks at the site with a capacity of 100,000 gallons, the largest tank storing 35,000 gallons, for their products. The layout of the building allowed for future growth at the site, and the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad even constructed a stub line to service Continental Oil.[2] When Continental Oil moved it operations back to its original site on West 'D' Street in the Union Avenue area in the 1950s, Colorado Fuel & Iron purchased the buildings. CF&I converted the warehouse into offices and dubbed it the Continental Oil Building, using it until the corporation filed for bankruptcy in 1993. Presently, Pueblo Electrics occupies the building.

[1]Continental Oil is the precursor to the present-day Conoco Company.
[2] "To Build A New Plant: Continental Oil Company will Locate West of the Steel Works," *Pueblo Chieftain*, October 17, 1894, 4.

the Association called for annual Christmastime street lighting on West Northern Avenue and East Evans Avenue, attracting shoppers from throughout the city by organizing monthly "Bessemer Bargain Days," providing bus service from Blende to the Bessemer business district, and continuing community fortitude through the area businesses.[99]

The peaks and valleys of CF&I's economic roller coaster lingered, albeit more sharply, throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. The company altered its moniker to CF&I Steel Corporation on August 1, 1966, dropping the spelled out "Colorado Fuel & Iron" and acknowledging the name no longer correctly identified the firm. In July 1969, the Crane Company announced it had purchased 82 percent of CF&I Steel Corporation's stock and placed its president on CF&I Steel Corporation's board. A change in management could not surmount the impact of foreign-produced steel, even as the firm celebrated 100 years of existence on January 11, 1972, leading the company to sell off plants nationwide and concentrate on its Pueblo operations in order to compete domestically. Expansion and modernization continued at the Bessemer mills throughout the 1970s, to the tune of $25 million in 1975 alone.[100] Ironically, CF&I Steel Corporation continued to modernize its Bessemer facilities even through the steel crash of 1982. The biggest blunder of that time at the steelworks was the construction of a new tube mill that was never used. The corporation actually posted an operating profit of $8.8 million in 1984, though net earnings for the year revealed a $48.7 million loss.[101] The massive effect on the local economy was not lost on the *Pueblo Chieftain*, as an editorial stated "thousands of jobs have been lost. CF&I, which now manufactures only rail, pipe, and wire, has become a shadow of its former self. Steel's heyday has passed in Pueblo…Still, like the warrior who emerges scarred but alive from mortal combat, CF&I has endured."[102]

An often forgotten consequence of CF&I's downturn is the effect on Pueblo County property tax revenues. The assessed value of the corporation's holdings in Bessemer amounted to $48.7 million in 1982, but dropped to $31.3 million and $30.6 million in 1983 and 1984, respectively. CF&I sought unsuccessfully to lower its assessed value to $17.5 million in 1984, a move that could have cost the County approximately $1 million in revenue.[103] It should also be noted that the entire grounds of the steelworks historically and currently resides outside of the Pueblo city limits.

Little new construction occurred in Bessemer after 1960 due to CF&I's economic instability and a finite number of buildable lots. In the five decades from 1961 through 2010, only 112 new buildings were constructed, or 3.12 percent of the total building stock today. This means 96.88 percent of the buildings in Bessemer are over fifty years old. Virtually nothing new was built in the 1980s. The City of Pueblo records indicate that the last new building in Bessemer was constructed in 2006, though 651 unimproved lots remain in the neighborhood.[104]

Not surprisingly, City of Pueblo records reveal a mass exodus of Bessemer residents to other parts of the city in the latter half of the twentieth century. Bessemer's population was around 10,000 in 1970, but it lost 21.7 percent of its population before 1980, even before the steel crisis in the early 1980s. In comparison, between 1970 and 1980 the city population grew by 17.1 percent. The decline continued, though not as sharply, from 1980 through 1990 when another 10.8 percent of the population fled. From 1990 until 2000, Bessemer's population grew slightly to 6,691 residents, an increase of 3.3 percent, while the city population grew 10.3 percent. Bessemer

shed 8.6 percent of its population in the ten years prior to 2010 bringing its total to 6,116, while the city of Pueblo's population grew by a scant 0.4 percent.[105]

A look at employment and housing statistics for Bessemer from 1980 through 2010 also reveals the impact of CF&I's decline on the neighborhood. While unemployment in the neighborhood numbered 14.5 percent in 1980 and dropped to 13.2 percent in 1990, the number of residents working in manufacturing fell from 600 to 385. Steelworkers no longer called Bessemer home. The number of residents employed in manufacturing positions fell to 233 and seventy-eight in 2000 and 2010, respectively. The number of housing units also declined each decade: 3,094 in 1980; 2,982 in 1990; 2,953 in 2000; and 2,944 in 2010. Vacant houses amounted to 8.3 percent of Bessemer's housing stock in 1980, while vacancies grew to 10.9 percent in 1990. Vacancies fell to 8.5 percent in 2000, while rising to a staggering 17.2 percent in 2010. All statistics from 2010 reflect the impact of the Great Recession that began in 2007, long after any lingering direct influence by CF&I.[106]

Upon the establishment of Colorado Fuel & Iron and the annexation of Bessemer into the city of Pueblo, the Bessemer neighborhood witnessed its greatest era of residential and commercial construction activity. Large tracts of land such as Minnequa Heights were developed by a CF&I subsidiary, the Minnequa Town Company, while other large tracts such as the Laibach Subdivision were developed by individuals and small companies unaffiliated with CF&I. With the ensuing population expansion around the turn of the twentieth century, these new areas to the Bessemer community coalesced with the older areas to forge a combined community that required recreational opportunities, an upgraded and modern hospital, and transportation and commercial corridors seen in all other areas of Pueblo. But Bessemer's growth stalled in the 1920s and 1930s, when CFI&I profits were down. Though World War II helped CF&I and Pueblo at large surge in the 1950s and 1960s, Bessemer entered a sharp decline. Residents were fleeing to new subdivisions outside of the neighborhood with curvilinear streets and shopping malls fronted by a sea of parking. Bessemer's housing stock was dated, its streets lined with bars. It did not have land available to develop anyway. By the 1980s, unemployment and vacancies surged and Bessemer seemed a place to avoid.

Chapter 4

"Rowdy Crowds" and "Enough Good Homes": Revitalization

Bessemer earned its reputation as a rough part of town from its early days when men dominated the neighborhood, with bands of ethnic minorities living in tight-knit communities. A majority of the housing stock was old, dating to the early 1900s, and run down. And though initially CF&I prohibited through deed restrictions the sale of "intoxicating liquors," Bessemer had its share of Pueblo's bars. Then there was the steel mill, pumping black smoke into the air day and night. These negative connotations forged a movement to revitalize Bessemer, an effort that endures into the present.

As early as 1947, neighborhood businessmen and residents recognized the need to portray their pride in their neighborhood. The Bessemer Merchants Committee, a division of the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, developed a list of needed improvements for the neighborhood in order to make the area radiate positively. The list entailed:

> 1. The large sign at the foot of the hill east of Bessemer on U.S. highway 50 [present-day Santa Fe Avenue] has been repainted by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corp. and directs traffic straight west to Bessemer.
>
> 2. The question of lighting Bessemer park [sic] is being studied and further work will be done.
>
> 3. A sub-committee headed by J.A. Gornick will confer with the Southern Colorado Power Co. in an attempt to improve bus service for Bessemer.
>
> 4. A sign at ground level identifying Pueblo will be painted at the municipal airport [historically located west across from the State Fairgrounds on Prairie Avenue] for the benefit of passengers arriving by plane.
>
> 5. Limiting of parking from the 100 block on Bay State to the north side as a safety measure is being considered by city officials.
>
> 6. Improvements on several Bessemer district alleys were recently completed. The committee expects more improvements to be made when labor and materials are available. Street improvements will probably be made first, however.
>
> 7. The city will try to solve drainage problems. In cold weather, water backs up, freezes and later runs over curbs on Northern avenue [sic].
>
> 8. City officials are considering providing greater police protection to Bessemer.

The committee also hoped to drum up support for "an extensive holiday street decorations program" that could be displayed annually. A follow-up report documenting the extent to which the list was accomplished could not be located.[107]

CF&I joined the Bessemer neighborhood beautification in 1973 when the corporation enhanced Northern Avenue along the northern boundary of the steelmaker's property. CF&I planned a "tree lined parkway" from Interstate 25 east to Harlem Place. CF&I planted at twenty foot intervals 200 pine trees that averaged eleven feet in height. Along with the then-state-of-the-art "drip-eze" irrigation system, the corporation spent approximately $22,000 on the project. If the beautification proved effective, subsequent plans called for similar plantings along both Interstate 25 and Indiana Avenue; but successive plantings never occurred.[108]

Minnequa Redevelopment Corporation

The next attempt at Bessemer neighborhood revitalization occurred in 1979. By that time, the neighborhood was calling itself Minnequa and boasted a namesake Minnequa Redevelopment Corporation (MRC). The MRC formed with a membership that counted twenty area merchants and paid monthly dues of $10. At the time of inception, the group formed no specific plans, though goals included "alley paving, various street improvements such as lighting, curb and gutter installation, and removal of some substandard structures that do not meet building code provisions." An early goal of the MRC was the reverting of East Abriendo Avenue between Northern Avenue and Jones Avenue to a two-way street; at the time Abriendo flowed north only. The MRC presented the city traffic engineer with petitions signed by sixteen of the twenty-three affected businesses but was denied because the petition was not unanimous; CF&I also opposed the two-way traffic. The MRC took the issue to Pueblo city council, where a resolution passed, reverting the street to two-way traffic.[109]

The MRC gained popularity with the Bessemer merchants within the next few years that the membership counted seventy-five by 1982. At that time, the neighborhood group partnered with the Pueblo Regional Planning Commission to develop a master plan for the area. Though the MRC concentrated its efforts on neighborhood cleanup, the group also boasted they had "convinced a number of merchants to remodel their stores and [had] pressed city officials to pave alleys and erect more street lights in the neighborhood." Neighborhood merchant and president of the MRC noted that "the neighborhood gradually is overcoming its image problem", due to the efforts of the group, but that "[n]onetheless, many Puebloans still stereotype the Minnequa/Bessemer area as a rough place."[110]

A rough place indeed, as within two years the MRC petitioned the Pueblo police department to revive foot patrols along the Northern Avenue business district. The police department previously discontinued foot patrols about 1970. The MRC presented the police chief, the city manager, and city council with petitions signed by 119 individuals who believed "the Minnequa commercial district is suffering because of a high incidence of vandalism and assaults. The revival of the foot patrols, the group understood, was unlikely due to the lingering effects of the steel crash in town and low city revenues. The city slashed twenty-five policemen from its rolls during the previous two years, making all nonessential duties obsolete. One corporal within the police department sympathized with the neighborhood merchants, stating "the bars today are "wide open"" with "an atmosphere prone to disturbances and crime."[111]

The Bessemer neighborhood betterment movement continued into the 1980s. The meltdown of the United States steel industry hit the neighborhood, and greater Pueblo, hard. Unemployment soared to over 18 percent in 1982, but the rate dropped to 11 percent in 1983 because a large portion of the workforce left town. Contrary to expectations, occupancy rates in Bessemer generally remained steady. A check of the Pueblo 1980 city directory reveals a 10 percent vacancy rate for buildings in the neighborhood, in 1982 and 1983 the rates barely budged to just under 11 percent.[112]

Neighborhood merchants believed the numerous liquor establishments, taverns, and retailers caused Bessemer's image problem. The president of the Minnequa Redevelopment Corporation in 1986 and neighborhood proprietor, Sam Corsi, believed the problem could be easily corrected and that the

Figure 4.1. The Eilers Tavern anchors the corner of Mesa and Eilers Avenues. The commercial building is attached to a home, a common feature in Bessemer. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

neighborhood could "re-establish its reputation as a district of family-owned shops and restaurants." In an interview with the *Pueblo Chieftain*, Corsi noted merchants were concerned about crime in the neighborhood and that parking meters were monitored infrequently leaving business patrons unable to find parking. The Redevelopment Corporation voiced its concerns to the chief of police, who responded with added foot patrols into the neighborhood taverns and increased parking enforcement. Robert Silva, Pueblo police chief, spoke of the results of the patrols: "We still have problems up there [in Bessemer] but the magnitude of the problems has decreased." Silva continued by noting that the problem of the "rowdy crowds" would survive, saying "I don't think that's going to change. I think we have, and always will have, people who enjoy that kind of atmosphere."[113] While the merchants tried to clean up Bessemer's image, the police department believed

the problems were there to stay.

The 1990s saw continued optimism for Bessemer, if not a skepticism from Pueblo residents outside the neighborhood. Two large projects occurred in the early years of the decade: the widening of Northern Avenue from East Orman Avenue west to Gaylord Avenue and a streetscaping project on Northern Avenue from Pine Street west to the Interstate 25 overpass. The Northern Avenue widening project occurred in two phases, the widening of the box culvert over the Bessemer Ditch near Stone Avenue and the installation of a left turn lane in the center of the street; the project started in earnest in March 1993. City officials justified the project by noting that an average of 300 accidents per year occurred on this stretch of Northern and the artery funneled 20,500 vehicles per day through the area. The addition of the left turn lane was expected to result in 40 percent fewer accidents and 60 percent fewer injury accidents. If the accident rate was achieved, city officials noted "this project will pay for itself in economic savings to the community in less than two years." The project came at a price for some Northern Avenue merchants, as one business lost landscaping and another was forced to relocate its front entrance door to the side; two neighborhood merchants noted that business dropped by 90 percent during the construction. The project cost $1.23 million and was completed in August 1993.[114]

The second construction project along Northern Avenue, the streetscaping, began in December 1992. Construction crews installed antique-looking lighting, planted trees, and installed a brick sidewalk in the Northern Avenue business district. In Bessemer Park, the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation sponsored a commemorative wall in which friends and families of steelworkers could purchase a tile with the steelworker's name; the wall was dedicated in September 1993.[115] During construction, merchants in the affected area noted a 50 percent drop in business and predicted that it would take a year before business would return to previous levels. The merchants appeared optimistic though, noting that "the streetscaping project should attract people who haven't been to Northern Avenue in years because of the poor reputation it had developed."[116] Members of the Bessemer Redevelopment Corporation remained "convinced that, if the area is beautified, people will stop and shop", but that "Northern Avenue still has one major problem: Bars. Rough bars. And rough customers."[117] Even Pueblo historian Joanne Dodds proved cynical of the project and likened it to putting lipstick on a pig, telling the *Chieftain*: "Union Avenue, that's historic. But Northern…you can't make something for which there is no market succeed. Streetscaping can help the avenue's appearance, but it can't create a market. You're not going to bring people back to shopping on Northern Avenue."[118]

Toward the end of the decade in 1998, the City of Pueblo, the Minnequa Redevelopment Corporation, and the group Concerned Parents of Pueblo organized a neighborhood survey to identify problems in the Bessemer ranging from "chronic garbage problems and broken sidewalks, to graffiti-stained houses." The survey polled residents in the area bordered by Summit Avenue to the north, Cypress Street to the west, Jones Avenue to the south and Elm Street to the east. Identified improvements did not receive any special funding from city coffers, though they did receive a priority status and were eligible for funding through Community Development Block Grants. Concerned Parents of Pueblo and Tabor Lutheran Church organized volunteers for graffiti removal and yard cleanup work, as well as assisting residents with city code violations.

Bessemer Association for Neighborhood Development

The twenty-first century seemingly energized the Bessemer neighborhood. At the end of the year 2000, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs selected Bessemer for "a pilot project in which the state would help local residents take inventory of their assets, develop a revitalization plan and find the all-important money to help make changes." Among the reasons the Department of Local Affairs chose Bessemer for the project was the number of organizations working in cooperation in the neighborhood; the organizations included the Bessemer Neighborhood Association, the Minnequa Redevelopment Commission, Minnequa Bank, and the Bessemer Historical Society, along with the University of Southern Colorado (present-day Colorado State University-Pueblo). The first initiative implemented by the pilot project was a University-sponsored survey of the neighborhood's residents. Among the survey's findings were that two-thirds of respondents felt safe in the neighborhood, that unpaved alleys were the biggest annoyance, and that the neighborhood lacked recreational facilities for adolescents and the elderly.[119]

A second initiative to culminate from the state-backed coalition was the "Bessemer neighborhood education and compliance program," a partnership between community residents and the Pueblo Police Department. The program intended to curtail crime in the neighborhood by a "multifaceted approach [to] include neighborhood cleanup efforts, analysis of crime in the area and stepped-up foot, bicycle, and cruiser patrol by police." Recognizing that "Bessemer Park and the surrounding neighborhood have been the backdrop for some serious gang activities in recent years, including several homicides, robberies, and drug trafficking," the police department, for its part, vowed to address the image problem by increasing drug enforcement, increased DUI patrols, focusing parking enforcers in the neighborhood, and continuing its school resource officer program. The coalition anticipated that a highly visible police presence would restore the safe image enjoyed by residents of the neighborhood in previous decades.[120]

In an effort to confront the negative stereotype imposed on the Bessemer neighborhood, the Bessemer Association for Neighborhood Development hosted a forum with regional speakers in 2002. A representative from a revitalization effort in Albuquerque's Barelas neighborhood spoke at the forum, encouraging Bessemer representatives to create short and long-term goals for their neighborhood. The Barelas representative told the audience, "There has to be a perception that this is a clean, wholesome neighborhood," and that, "If your neighborhood is not perceived as safe, you're not going to get any money" to counter the image problem. A second speaker from the Denver suburb of Englewood spoke about surmounting the image problem encompassing that city's Cinderella Mall and accompanying neighborhood. This speaker noted that it is essential to focus revitalization on a neighborhood anchor (the mall in Englewood's case) so that revitalization is visible and nearby businesses and residents will follow suit with their buildings. The speaker also told the forum that just as the steel mill was image of the neighborhood in years past, a contemporary and future image should use a neighborhood icon though not necessarily from the past.[121]

The next year, 2003, the Bessemer revitalization effort emerged from the planning stages. The Pueblo Neighborhood Housing Services, a non-profit agency, targeted a twelve-block

area for a yearlong project aimed at beautifying area houses. The area was bounded by Summit Avenue to the north, Pine Street to the west, Northern Avenue to the south, and Spruce Street to the east. NHS chose the area because it included "a mixture of well-kept and marginal homes," since the goal of the program was not to start from scratch, but to establish a baseline for future improvement projects with a "spinoff effect." Lionel Trujillo, Executive Director of NHS noted, "There are enough good homes in the neighborhood that we can address some of the eyesores," and that "we will be able to see the benefits pretty rapidly." The extent of the project included painting twenty houses, "refurbishing" twelve houses, and two unidentified commercial "fill-in" projects. Future goals of this type of revitalization included focus on Bessemer commercial districts, albeit one block at a time.[122]

Neighborhood Housing Services moved its offices to Bessemer in 2005. The agency purchased and upgraded the building at 1241 East Routt Avenue, just north of Northern Avenue and spent over $700,000 on the acquisition and subsequent construction project. The refurbished building included the NHS offices, two commercial spaces for lease, and a community meeting room where the agency hosted classes addressing home ownership and maintenance. In the successive years following the agency's move into Bessemer, it administered $500,000 of Housing and Urban Development money to refurbish houses in the neighborhood, completed a mural project in the 1100 block of Cedar Street, and purchased and renovated both a multi-family building in the 1100 block of Pine Street, to lease out, and a house on Mesa Avenue, to sell.[123]

In 2004, the Pueblo Planning Department partnered with two community planning firms along with various organizations to compose the Bessemer Neighborhood Plan in order to produce "a clear and concise document outlining the future of the neighborhood." In summary, the plan pointed to four chief reasons for the stigmas deriding the neighborhood:

1. The long-time homeowners are aging and the heirs to the properties have lost the interest or desire to occupy and maintain the properties.

2. Housing units are relatively small, and it is difficult to accommodate contemporary lifestyle amenities.

3. There have been relatively few efforts to update and maintain properties because the cost to upgrade the units in many cases exceeds the value of the home. This is a typical condition, but the situation in Bessemer is that the unit size detracts from its desirability.

4. There are numerous vacancies in the commercial buildings and there have been no recent efforts at rehabilitation and upgrades to accommodate contemporary retailing and office activities.

The Plan also listed Bessemer's strengths, noting the affordable housing and "Neighborhood Housing Service (NHS) commitment to rehabilitate housing and promote homeownership." Bessemer hosted major employers such as Rocky Mountain [now Evraz] Steel and St. Mary Corwin Hospital (along with the unmentioned Convergys Corporation). The Bessemer Historical Society was committed to "preserving the history of CF&I Steel Corporation" and helped "incorporate heritage tourism into the fabric of the neighborhood." The authors of the plan were not the only optimists. Residents and business owners too seemed hopeful. Jorge Ayala, owner of Jorge's Sombrero said: "Bessemer does not have the bad reputation it used to have." He continued, "There's not as many bars, and that's part of it. It's improving, but slowly." New resident Kevin Healey said, "We have a lot of faith in the potential of this neighborhood. I love Bessemer."[124]

Figure 4.2. Neighborhood Housing Services invested almost three-quarters of a million dollars when it moved its offices to 1241 East Routt Avenue. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

Though filled with "rough bars," Bessemer residents remained optimistic about their community. Bessemer, after all, was not trying to be Belmont or South Pueblo. Residents were no longer in mass exodus. Owners were not systematically tearing down older housing stock and rebuilding. In fact, they liked the grittiness. They liked the character. This, after all, was home.

Chapter 5

Recreational Hub: Parks and Recreation

Bessemer's residents were a hearty bunch. Living in the haze of the smokestacks, they managed to attend schools, shop, and raise families. The Bessemer neighborhood hosted not only the steel mill, but a plethora of recreational opportunities. These included formal parks, an amusement park, zoo, and man-made Lake Minnequa. Most impressive, however, was the YMCA building, dubbed the Steel Y, which served the neighborhood's white residents. CF&I also supported a black YMCA, and the Japanese had their own YMCA. Though all ethnic groups worked at the mill and lived in the same town, segregated recreation was the norm.

Bessemer/Minnequa Park

From the town of Bessemer's inception, the area was never intended to have as many parks per capita as South Pueblo. Because pioneering steelworkers had little leisure time and most of them were unmarried men without dependents, parks were superfluous. Nevertheless, William Jackson Palmer ordered the design of a centrally-located park in the new industrial town in 1882. The park never took off, though, until the Minnequa Town Company in 1899 pressured for the park as a marketing strategy tailored to the changing demographics of the neighborhood.[125] That year, the city of Pueblo formed two park districts: Park District Number One, located north of the Arkansas River, and Park District Number Two, located south of the river. In August of 1899, residents in Park District Number Two indebted themselves $10,500 by a vote of 127 to sixty-eight for the "cost of the grounds, planting grass and setting out the trees and putting all in good condition." Pueblo City Council purchased the land previously set aside in the original town plat from T.W. Robinson for $8,000. Until then, Bessemer residents walked over one mile to the parks in South Pueblo for recreational opportunities.[126]

The park received no improvements until 1905, when one section of the park opened to the public. Other areas of the park opened in phases, the next in 1907. At that time, The Central Park Association, a black citizen's organization, laid out a three acre tract named after New York City's Central Park. Plans for the "new" Bessemer Park included a bandstand and baseball diamond, but it remains unknown if these were ever constructed. The Central Park moniker did not endure for long as the *Pueblo Chieftain* still termed it Bessemer Park. The park eventually grew to encompass the entire block surrounded by Northern Avenue to the north, East Orman Avenue to the west, Central Avenue to the south, and Pine Street to the east and a total of seven and one-third acres. There is no evidence to suggest that this park was segregated.[127]

The next substantial improvements at Bessemer Park came during Great Depression of the 1930s courtesy of the Works Progress Administration. Crews constructed a 40-foot by 120-foot wading pool tapered to a maximum depth of six feet, a bathhouse, and a baseball diamond. On June 7, 1954,

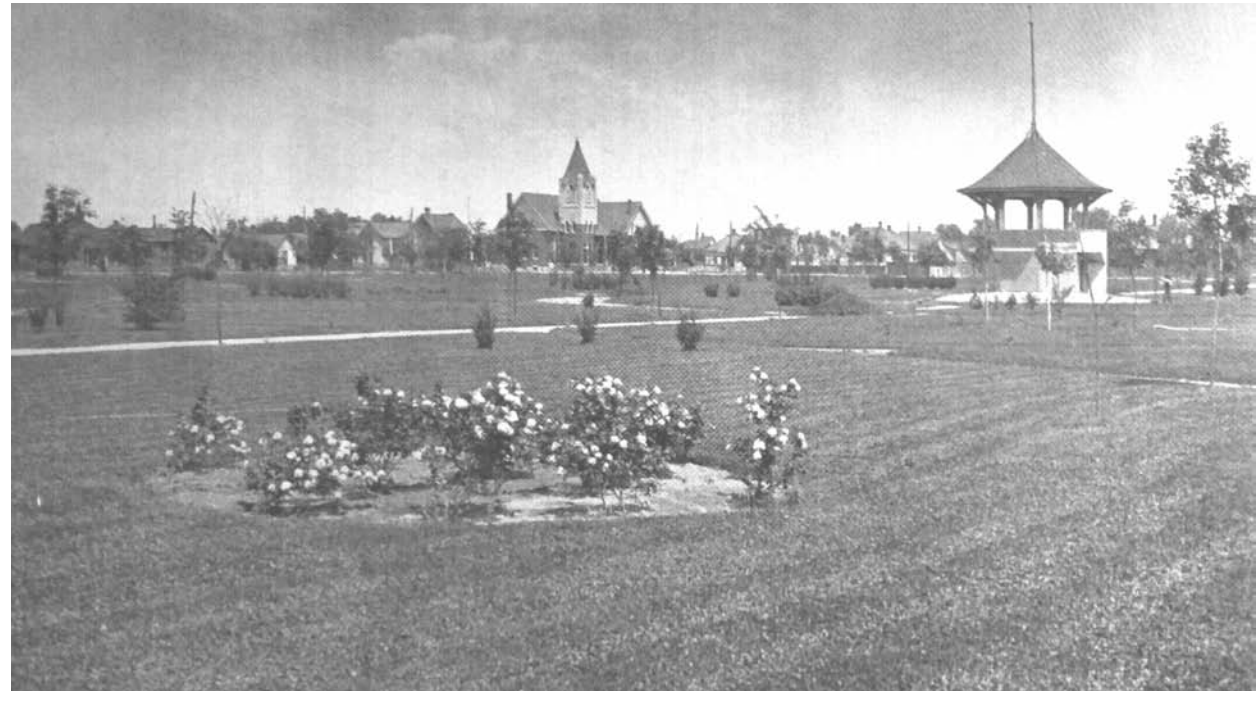


Figure 5.1. Far from the carefully designed landscape architecture of Pueblo's City Park, Bessemer residents, nevertheless, managed to create a useful and aesthetically-pleasing space, alternately called Central, Bessemer, and Minnequa Park. *(*Camp and Plant *September 26, 1903, p. 251)*

the Pueblo City Council passed an ordinance officially changing the park's name to Minnequa Park. The park is identified throughout Pueblo as both Minnequa Park and Bessemer Park today, though a large sign at the northwest corner terms the park "Minnequa Park" and "Old Bessemer Plaza."[128] Also during the 1950s, the owner of the Dairy Deluxe ice cream shop, located at the corner of East Eighth Street and Albany Avenue, offered to relocate his business to Minnequa Park from the East Side neighborhood. The proprietor offered to construct public restrooms in exchange for the right to place his business in the park and Pueblo City Council agreed to the terms. Minnequa Park became the third park in Pueblo to receive a swimming pool; and it is rumored that a nearby Northern Avenue merchant offered to finance construction of an indoor pool, but the terms of this deal remain unknown.[129] A major overhaul of Minnequa Park's facilities came in 2006, when the city of Pueblo constructed a $538,000 bathhouse and a $400,000 spray park.[130]

Far South/J.J. Raigoza Park

In 1970s, residents on the southern edge of Bessemer, in the Lakeview and Sunnyside areas, pleaded for a park to be located closer to them. Initially, the park was to be located one block east of Lake Avenue and south of Maryland Avenue, but city officials chose a larger site a few blocks east, bordered by Interstate 25. CF&I offered to donate the land for the park—because the interstate had effectively severed it from the steelworks—with the stipulation that the corporation perceive a joint creation effort by area residents and Pueblo City Council. To those ends, local Cub Scout Pack 7 carried questionnaires

Figure 5.2. The entrance to Bessemer Park features a statue of a steelworker. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

door-to-door asking about desired park amenities while city officials worked out a design. As a modern park, it included a basketball court, horseshoes, a playground, restrooms, and tennis courts. By the summer of 1974, the seven-acre Far South Park officially welcomed visitors. When the neighborhood organizer of the park movement, Johnny J. "J.J." Raigoza, died on September 14, 1994, neighbors saw fit that their park should be renamed for him. Friends and family of Raigoza, as well as neighbors of the park, raised $1,300 for the manufacturing and installation of a plaque in remembrance of his community-wide efforts, and Pueblo City Council voted unanimously to rename the park "J.J. Raigoza Park" in 1997. A rededication ceremony for the park was held November 29, 1997.[131]

The Bessemer neighborhood received a third park on the heels of the creation of Far South Park. In 1975, the city of Pueblo partnered with School District 60 to create parks adjacent to schools citywide. In Bessemer, this meant the creation of a four and one-half acre park at the western edge of the Corwin Middle School property. The school district pledged just over an acre for the park, while a grant written to the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation requested $20,000 to be combined with a match from local funding sources. The land the city and the school district wished to purchase was already in use as a football field, track, and open space area, and no further improvements were needed. The city and school district consortium executed the purchase of the parks citywide in 1975.[132]

Lake Minnequa Park

Bessemer's early major recreational attraction was not a common grassy area similar to Bessemer Park and Far South Park, but the resort-style Lake Minnequa Park. The man-made lake began when the developers of South Pueblo filled a natural depression approximately two miles south of town with water diverted upstream from the Arkansas River in 1874. The moniker of the lake, and the subsequent neighborhood, most likely derives from the boyhood home of South Pueblo magnate Captain Wood Townsend. Townsend spent most of his childhood in Minequa Springs, Pennsylvania, and in his adult life would assist in organizing the South Pueblo Water Company that filled the lake; it remains unknown why Lake Minnequa is spelled with two "n's," unlike Minequa Springs.[133] The town of South Pueblo passed an ordinance placing the lake within that city's limits in 1880, though it does not appear that any land was annexed between the lake and the southern limits of South Pueblo. South Pueblo's residents quickly gravitated to the lake and officially christened it Lake Minnequa in 1882. Lake Minnequa proved so popular, in fact, that during the early 1880s the city of South Pueblo planted trees around the entire circumference of the lake, maintained flower gardens and additional landscaping, graded a system of carriage driveways, and constructed a large pavilion for dancing and other social events. By the end of the decade, the lake's amenities included a man-made beach, a boathouse that rented rowboats or sailboats, and a concessionaire that offered rides on steam or naphtha-powered yachts.[134]

Lake Minnequa area also hosted statewide events. The precursor to the Colorado State Fair, the Southern Colorado Agricultural and Industrial Association, held its yearly competitions on 100 acres on the west edge of Lake Minnequa. Sometime before 1900, the Southern Colorado Association changed its name to the State Fair Association to identify its evolved competitions. The Fair's amenities included an exhibition hall, racetrack, and grandstand; organizers held events at the grounds throughout the year. The Fair moved to its current location between Beulah and Prairie Avenues in 1901.[135]

Lake Minnequa's prosperity continued into the early 1890s. The Minnequa University Club, a members-only group, purchased land on the east edge of the lake and constructed a building there in 1892. Also by that time, thirty acres on the northern edge of the lake were developed into an amusement park. Highlights of the amusement park included a roller coaster, Ferris wheel, and aerial railway. A pier extended 165 feet into the lake, and a nearby 6,500-square-foot hardwood floor hosted dances and roller skating; wide gravel pathways connected the enticements around the lake.[136]

Lake Minnequa Park seemingly fell into disrepair following the Panic of 1893, as a revival at the park occurred beginning in 1902. The worst recession up until that time took an immense toll upon the amenities at the lake, almost to the point of rebuilding it from scratch. The Lake Minnequa Park and Improvement Association recognized the park had become inadequate, and a "deficiency of grass and trees are lacking elements which disbar Lake Minnequa [from] being an ideal amusement resort. The Park and Improvement Association took up the cause in the spring of 1902, intent on opening the park by Memorial Day weekend. With such a short deadline in which to complete needed repairs, the *Pueblo Chieftain* noted the week before the deadline: "The song of the hammer and saw, the firm sweep of the paint brush, the hurrying of hand and brain to meet the requirements of the hour

Figure 5.3. Families could get to the Lake Minnequa amusement park by streetcar. The stop for the park was right at the gate, as seen here in 1912. (*West Plains Energy Collection, from Cafky and Morris*).

will all continue until almost the opening hour, but moments make history in critical periods, and the management guarantees readiness by the time the big gate swings open for the first time." Plans for the grand opening noted in the newspaper appeared as if read from a poster advertisement of the time:

> Boating, bathing, fishing, and kindred sports will be in evidence. This is not all. There will be the merry-go-round, the shooting gallery, the cane rack [illegible], the pop-corn, peanut and pink lemonade vendor in all his autocratic glory, and a strenuous time is promised to all who attend.[137]

Further pleasures included a theater show, a balloon race, a military band concert, acrobats, and fireworks.

The Lake Minnequa Park and Improvement Association, likely in conjunction with the Minnequa Town Company, began extensive and comprehensive maintenance, repairs, and upgrades to the park beginning in January 1903, hoping to transform it into "one of the most beautiful pleasure resorts in Colorado." Plans called for the construction of "an artificial beach, which will extend the entire north end of the lake, and front the proposed theater and dancing pavilion, already erected." To construct the beach, crews hauled 250 truckloads of gravel and sand dredged from Fountain Creek. The *Pueblo Chieftain* noted additional plans for the park:

> Early in the spring serpentine walks will be laid out, flower mounds built, the lawns platted and seeded in blue grass and clover, and flowers off every variety and hue planted. In the meantime work will be progressing on the new 1,200 seat theater, the boat house, bathing booths, landing pier and the building for the zoo. All this will take lots of money, but the company [Lake Minnequa Park and Improvement Association] has lots of it, and with the water system installed and pipes all laid, the lawning and parking work will progress rapidly. A blue print map of Lake Minnequa park [sic] as it will appear when the plans of the company are completed, shows it to be probably the handsomest suburban pleasure resort of its size in Colorado.[138]

The Lake Minnequa facelift proved extremely popular with residents across the city of Pueblo. On busy summer holiday and weekends when special events occurred, street cars arrived and departed from the lake's sheltered waiting station

every fifteen minutes carrying upwards of 8,000 people per day to the popular suburban resort.

Pueblo established Lake Minnequa as the place to see and be seen, arguably more than any other institution in town. Sure, Pueblo had several theaters and opera houses, but residents could take in a show, ride a miniature steam locomotive, stroll through a small zoo, take in a baseball game, view a boxing match, participate in foot and bicycle races, target shoot, or even view a political debate, in addition to all other previously mentioned activities, at Lake Minnequa Park. Highlights of Lake Minnequa's heyday include the first showing of a motion picture in Pueblo, the testing of a submarine manufactured locally, hot air balloon rides, and performances by renowned actress Sarah Bernhardt.

Perhaps the most notable of all the attractions of Lake Minnequa Park was, and still is, the 1911 carousel built by the C.W. Parker Company of Abilene, Kansas. The carousel was constructed in the "country," or portable, style and was returned to the factory in 1913 from its original location outside of Pueblo to add twelve horses to the outer row and replace a chariot with the "Lover's Tub." Lake Minnequa Park manager J.J. McQuillen seized the opportunity to purchase the improved carousel from the factory, and it began its run at the lake May 30, 1914.

But the great depression took its tool on Pueblo's beloved site of leisure. Crews locked the gates at Lake Minnequa Park at the end of the 1939 season with no intention of ever operating the park again. Coincidentally, the closing happened about the time that manager McQuillen passed away. City Park District Number Two purchased the carousel and moved it to City Park, just south of the east entrance. The carousel was moved near the zoo in the 1950s and to its current location at the northwest corner of Horseshoe Lake in 1980, where it was restored and sheltered by a permanent building. A second enduring attraction from Lake Minnequa Park is the curved and twisted mirrors from the fun house, known at the time as "Casa Loco." The circa 1890 mirrors were moved to a lodge at Pueblo Mountain Park near Beulah, Colorado, when the Park closed. The mirrors remained there until 2005, when they were installed in the carousel building and reunited with the only other extant attraction.[139]

CF&I closed Lake Minnequa to public use in 1976, though the Minnequa University Club operated until 1989. St. Mary-Corwin Hospital purchased and demolished the Club building in the 1990s for additional parking. In 2012, the Pueblo Fire Department constructed a new building just south of the Club site; the only visible signs that an amusement park and its accompanying buildings ever resided at the site are a few enduring foundations that remain between Corwin School and the northern shore of the lake.

CF&I continued to use the water at Lake Minnequa in its cooling processes, though recreational activities diminished. CF&I constructed a pipeline to transport water from its St. Charles Reservoirs to its Pueblo mills in 1984, effectively abandoning Lake Minnequa and leaving it to fill with stormwater runoff from area residential developments. In 2004, the group Great Outdoors Colorado awarded the city of Pueblo $2.3 million to acquire the lake and accompanying lands from then-owner Rocky Mountain Steel and begin developing the area for recreation. The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported the goals of the estimated $6 million project as:

1. Creating a major park and recreational opportunities on the South Side.
2. Improving stormwater drainage and water quality.

3. Providing wildlife habitat and urban open spaces.

4. Making ditch shares available for conservation easements and increase water storage.

5. Keeping water rights now owned by Rocky Mountain Steel Mills from being transferred outside the Arkansas River Valley.

The planned park is set to be 320 acres, forty-eight acres used for recreation and 272 acres preserved as open space (including the surface area of the lake). When full, Lake Minnequa itself is the size of City Park, 170 acres, so the entire planned park will be nearly twice the size of City Park. As of the time of this writing, a gravel pedestrian and equestrian trail encircling the lake has been graded, basketball courts have been installed at the southern boundary of the property, and a playground has been erected near Lakeview Avenue on the northern edge of the lake. Further plans call for picnic pavilions, a boat ramp and dock, tennis courts, swimming pool, skate park, and both soccer and softball fields.[140]

The Steel Y

Early Bessemer residents waited until 1920 to find indoor recreational opportunities. CF&I constructed the "Steel 'Y'" in direct response to its labor policies of the 1910s in both the mines and mills.[141] At the first meeting of employee representatives under the Rockefeller Plan, one representative voiced the need for a YMCA club building near the steelworks. CF&I labor historian Jonathan Rees notes: "While the company publicized the Rockefeller-funded building as a gesture of goodwill by the Rockefeller family, it was actually one in a long line of concessions management made to CF&I employees."[142]

Constructed in 1920, the mammoth Steel Y building was an "imposing four-story structure, 208 by 126 feet, [with] a brick and cut-stone exterior topped with a red tile roof."[143] CF&I historians H. Lee Scamehorn and Jonathan Rees disagree as to the cost of the building. Scamehorn writes, "The cost of construction and furnishings was $448,000, nearly twice the original estimate. Nearly one-third of that amount was contributed by the Rockefellers, father and son, for the benefit and enjoyment of employees and their families."[144] Rees notes that it was constructed "with a $500,000 gift from John D. Rockefeller Jr." and that "the building had been a significant drain on the company's finances ever since."[145] Either way, the building entailed an enormous expense for CF&I at the time, in both construction and operating costs, as Scamehorn writes "[t]he Steel Works club was not only the largest but also the most complete industrial Y in the country, if not the world."[146] The interior of the building impressed as well. The *Pueblo Chieftain* proclaimed:

> The lobby of the "Y" is noted for its spacious beauty and furnishings which excites the admiration of everyone. It is unexcelled by anything in the entire west, and is on par with the biggest hotels in the east. In the west portion of the lobby is a branch of the McClelland library [sic] and there will also be located the C.F.&I. Technical library [sic]. A first class fountain, cigar, and magazine stand with perfect service is located in the front part of the lobby.[147]

To patrons, the recreational opportunities at the Steel Y must have appeared limitless. The basement of the building included a twenty-by-sixty-foot swimming pool, an eight-lane bowling alley, a cafeteria, and dining rooms. The ground floor contained administrative offices, individual club rooms, a library and reading room, a lounge, a soda fountain, an auditorium, and gymnasium. The second floor included classrooms and was entirely devoted to education, while the third and fourth floors were entirely reserved for both short- and long-term residents.

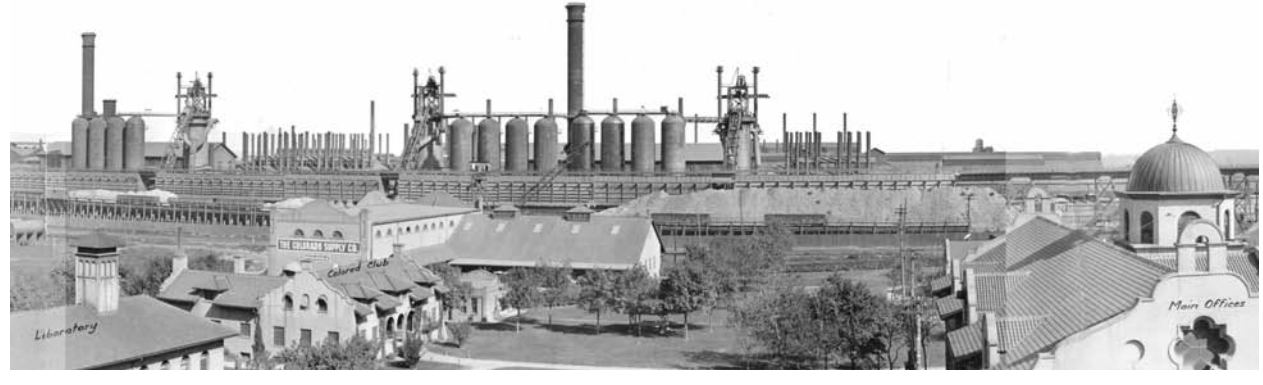


Figure 5.4. The Rockefeller-funded YMCA building, top, was four stories brick and cut stone with a red clay tile roof. Built in 1920, it offered seemingly unlimited recreational opportunities. It was razed in 1953. Though the lower photograph dates to before the construction of the Steel Y, someone later hand-labeled the buildings in the scene including the "Colored Club." It was much smaller than the Steel Y. *(Photos courtesy CF&I Archives/Bessemer Historical Society)*

The mission of the YMCA in Pueblo was to provide recreational and educational opportunities to all of the area's ethnic groups, though many of the local customs precluded fraternization between ethnicities outside of the workforce. To enforce this segregation, the CF&I devoted the former Superintendents Club building, near the Steel Y, as the club for black employees. Maybe as a reference to their second-class status in the corporation, CF&I named the black YMCA the "Steel Works YMCA Number 2", though it was known in Bessemer as the "Colored Y." Tiny compared to the Steel Y, the Colored Y building contained meeting rooms, a dormitory, and a small gymnasium, but considerably fewer recreational and educational opportunities. Separate was not equal.[148]

CF&I employees and Bessemer residents from all back-

grounds used the facilities the YMCA offered, at least initially. Upon opening, "[t]he Steel Works Y sought to serve all elements of the corporate community, including, women, young and old", as well as the families of employees.[149] In his book *Representation and Rebellion*, Jonathan Rees quotes an employee representative who said: "The CF&I Steel Works Y [meets] an important demand of thousands of steelworkers and their families in providing educational, social, and athletic diversion at a time when all other sources have failed."[150]

In a little over a decade, though, the demographics of Steel Y members changed. By 1933, the departments with the most memberships at the Y were the wire mill, office staff, and open hearth; these departments consisted of professionals and highly skilled workers, not the grunts and laborers in non-skilled positions. The Great Depression significantly restricted those who used the Steel Y's facilities to the "highly skilled workers and management staff [who] had the money to afford memberships for themselves and their families; workers desperate for hours did not." Furthermore, as Rees quotes CF&I President Roeder, "If the Steel Works YMCA was endowed so that it was free to all steelworkers and their families, we would immediately face the race and color problem and also the hoodlum element would get out of control." Reese explains, "These workers had not frequented the "Y" when steadily employed", and "management did not want them there while they were unemployed."[151]

Regardless of the social, economic, or ethnic makeup of its members, the Steel Y proved extremely popular. The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported in January 1926 that during the first five years the Steel Y was operational, CF&I invested $750,000 in programs. Along with being open twenty-four hours a day, the newspaper reported "eighty different organizations have used the building one or more times for entertainments" during 1925. Additionally, the building housed indoor basketball, baseball, and volleyball leagues, statewide swimming tournaments, boxing tournaments, bowling leagues, and cooking, sewing, dressmaking, and domestic planning classes.[152]

Sustaining such a lavish building proved impossible for CF&I. Almost nonexistent sales diminished the corporation's ability to fund programs at the YMCA, as well as its ability to afford its bond payments. In the wake of CF&I's bankruptcy filing in 1933, management shut down operations at both the Steel Y and the Colored Y in August of that year as a cost-saving measure. "Ironically," Jonathan Rees points out, "the money CF&I had used to run the building went to the company's bondholders instead—most notably John D. Rockefeller Jr., who had given the money to build the YMCA in the first place."[153] Members of the Bessemer community justifiably recoiled at the building's closing and exclaimed their angst in the matter, but were only able to stave off the closing until September 1. At that point, staff from the Steel Y established programs in the previous Colored Y building, without any financial support from CF&I. Staff curtailed many recreational, educational, and economic relief and welfare programs in order to fit into the much smaller "Little Y". Merely twenty-seven organizations utilized the building in 1933, less than one-third of the eighty organizations that utilized it in 1925. Both the Steel Y and the Colored Y reopened in 1936. Funding now came strictly from the sale of memberships, which greatly reduced the scope of programs; no funding came from CF&I. The year of closing for both the Steel Y and Colored Y could not be located, though the last city directory listing for either enterprise is 1948; the Steel Y was razed in the early 1960s to make way for the parking lot.[154]

Figure 5.5. The Japanese Y looked more like a boarding house than a place for recreation. *(photo courtesy Pueblo City-County Library District)*

The duet of the Steel Y and Lake Minnequa, and the opportunities they afforded, turned Bessemer into a recreational juggernaut and the envy of Pueblo. Only Bessemer residents could assert they lived in a neighborhood that not only contained the obligatory ball fields and park, but also a lake, amusement park, and an all-encompassing recreation center. Having presented a united front to both CF&I and the City, Bessemer residents time and again convinced both entities to support the expansion of its recreational facilities. Still, as evidenced by the YMCA that separated races and socioeconomics, recreation was a dance of unification and segregation.

Chapter 6

The Ride to Work: Transportation and Lake Avenue

Unlike the East Side, Mesa Junction, and Corona Park neighborhoods of Pueblo, the platting of Bessemer led to straightforward transportation routes and easy accessibility due to the neighborhood's traditional cardinal point orientation and several streets that led into and out of the neighborhood. The only hindrance was the early town's distance from Pueblo proper. This distance provided excellent entrepreneurial opportunities though, as Bessemer became self-sufficient. The neighborhood's residents and proprietors, therefore, forged an autonomous neighborhood that did not rely upon other areas of Pueblo for assistance. These circumstances led to the informal and a seemingly irrational hodgepodge of development along Lake Avenue, a street complete with some of the largest homes in the neighborhood, taverns and liquor stores, trailer parks, and, at one time, strip clubs.

Streets

As noted earlier, streets in Bessemer were platted with varying widths. Main Street (present-day East Routt Avenue) was platted eighty feet wide, and streets parallel to it seventy feet wide; the Map of Pueblo, South Pueblo and Bessemer, 1882, on display at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, also displays one street platted well west of the residential development: the so-called "Street to Lake Minnequa". Lake Avenue, as it came to be known, was also later platted seventy feet wide, even though it once carried traffic through town as Colorado State Highway 85. At the time the street was platted, it only extended as far south as Lake Minnequa. Northern Avenue, probably named because it skirts the northern property boundary of the CF&I mills, was platted 101.5 feet wide and the streets parallel to it eighty feet wide. As such, virtually all of the houses constructed within the 1886 plat of the town of Bessemer are oriented along the narrower north-south streets. The streets in Bessemer were also platted traditionally toward the cardinal directions.[155] This construction trend continued throughout the later additions to the neighborhood; the only small exceptions to this are the houses along Minnequa Avenue. The Minnequa Town Company built these houses larger than those surrounding them, and similar to size of the houses along Lake Avenue.

Following the trend in other Pueblo neighborhoods, some of the Bessemer street names have been changed. The streets that connect to and flow into the Mesa Junction neighborhood have been changed to reflect the street names used in Mesa Junction. As a result, Willow Street is now East Abriendo Avenue, Alder Street is East Evans Avenue, Main Street is East Routt Avenue, and Piñon Street is now East Orman Avenue. Oddly, these streets carry the "East" prefix even though the streets run north-south; these streets carry the "West" prefix as they run through Mesa Junction on a northwest-southeast plane. Presumably due to the importance of Lake Minnequa, Lake Avenue reserves its name as it traverses

Figure 6.1. Interstate 25 bisects the Bessemer Neighborhood, disconnecting the Laibach/Eilers area from the rest of the community. *(USGS)*

Interstate 25 corridor

Lake Avenue corridor

Northern Avenue corridor

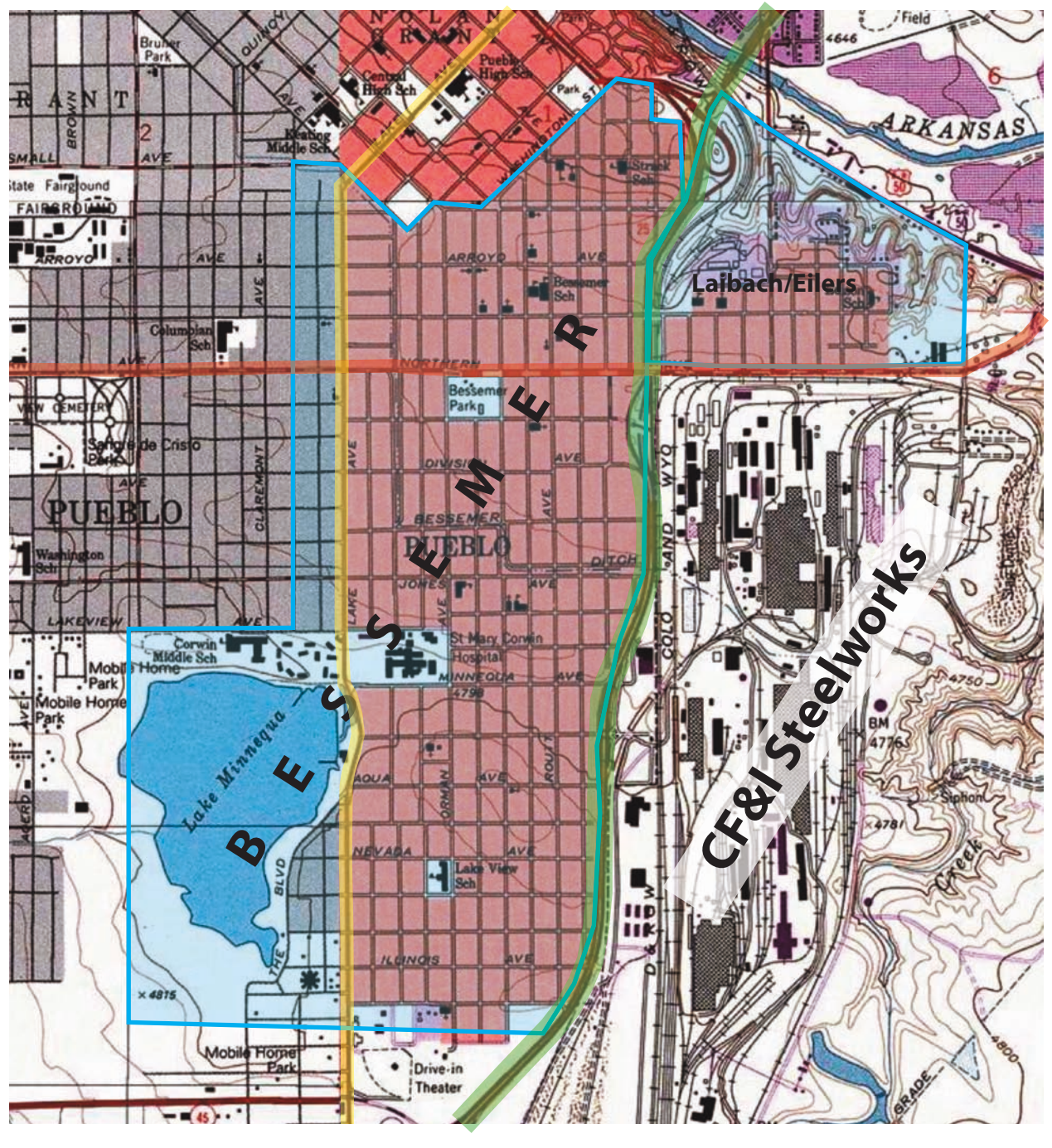


Figure 6.2. Modest houses lined the streets of Bessemer, here shown along Evans Avenue, looking north from Indiana Avenue. (*West Plains Energy Collection, from Cafky and Morris)*

through Mesa Junction; it remains one of only four streets oriented northeast-southwest that does not carry the surname of a United States President. As Lake Avenue and East Orman Avenue run parallel through Bessemer, interestingly, the same streets intersect only a few blocks into the Mesa Junction neighborhood. Other peculiarities in the platting of the streets of Bessemer are the slight bend to the west of East Evans and East Abriendo Avenues at their respective intersections with Northern Avenue. Additionally, Sprague Avenue and Division Avenue are offset at their intersection with East Routt Avenue, and Northern Avenue makes a slight bend to the north at its intersection with East Orman Avenue. Furthermore, Central Avenue is interrupted as it skirts the southern edge of Minnequa Park by a senior citizens living facility constructed in what was the middle of the street. Several of the north-south streets in Bessemer reflect the names of trees, while others in the southern portion of the neighborhood reflect the names of states.

The largest obstacle to modern-day traffic in the Bessemer neighborhood is Interstate 25. Constructed in the late 1950s, the interstate followed along the west side of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad's tracks south of the Arkansas River. As constructed, the interstate effectively divorced CF&I, Pueblo's largest employer, from Bessemer, home to many CF&I employees. The resulting freeway meant the destruction of several homes and businesses in order to construct the Central Avenue interchange. Further demolition occurred along portions of Currie and Box Elder Streets near their intersections with Summit Avenue. The west side of Rio Grande Avenue between Northern Avenue and Mesa Avenue was also razed to make way for the interstate and subsequent realignment of the railroad track. As such, utility meter-readers must ascent

onto the railroad right-of-way in order to complete their job for the remaining houses on the east side of Rio Grande Avenue.

A second hindrance Bessemer incurred due the construction of Interstate 25 was the severing of the Laibach area from portions of the neighborhood to the west. In an effort to circumvent this divide, bridges were constructed connecting East and West Northern and Mesa Avenues. Yet a sense of disconnection lingers in the Laibach area. Residents have always identified themselves as Bojon Town; as of November 2011, the Laibach area residents voted to call the area Eilers Heights in recognition of the smelter that once dominated the area north of Mesa Avenue and behind the present-day St. Mary's Catholic Church.[156] Reminiscent of Pueblo's East Side, Eilers Heights is connected to the rest of town via bridges to the west, but divided by streets to the south and northeast; most automobile traffic negotiates the neighborhood by traveling on East Northern Avenue or South Santa Fe Avenue.

Postwar highway development did not hasten commercial expansion in Bessemer as it did in most communities. In fact, Interstate 25 restricted automobile traffic in Bessemer by rerouting vehicles that would have traveled along Lake Avenue to the faster thoroughfare. When the Interstate opened to traffic in 1959, Bessemer became merely a blur on the side of the road. Stunningly, the neighborhood's only interchange with the interstate was not placed along the obvious commercial corridor of Northern Avenue, but one block south at Central Avenue. Needless to say, with the well-developed commercial district on Northern Avenue, a second commercial district at the intersection of Central Avenue and East Abriendo Avenue near the interchange failed to commence.

Streetcars

Preceding the automobile's dominance of the personal transportation market was the streetcar. The streetcar era in Bessemer began in 1881 and coincided with the construction of the steelworks. At that time, the Pueblo Street Railroad carried employees of Colorado Coal & Iron between the two towns on horse drawn omnibuses. As several CC&I employees lived in makeshift housing near the upstart mill, it is likely that much of the omnibus traffic carried mill workers into Pueblo to shop, not only to Bessemer to work. These omnibuses traveled a route from the intersection of 'B' Street and Union Avenue, southwest on Union and up the mesa to Abriendo Avenue, and southeast on Abriendo to probably Appleton Street (present-day Evans Avenue). The route then followed Appleton south to the mill. The Pueblo Street Railroad laid track on this route by the end of 1882, though the tracks ended at the intersection of Appleton and Northern Avenue; riders would then have to walk the next few blocks south to their work destination.[157]

Travel within Bessemer and to other Pueblo neighborhoods exploded when the reorganized Pueblo City Railway Company electrified its tracks in 1890. The Railway Company constructed two additional lines to service the Bessemer neighborhood, and extended its existing track along East Evans Avenue. The Bessemer-East Pueblo route commenced at the entrance to the steelworks at the intersection of Indiana Avenue and East Abriendo Avenue, where a loop turned the streetcars around. Streetcars then traveled on the double track one block west to East Evans, where they turned north followed East Evans out of Bessemer, into the Mesa Junction neighborhood, and eventually into the East Side neighbor-

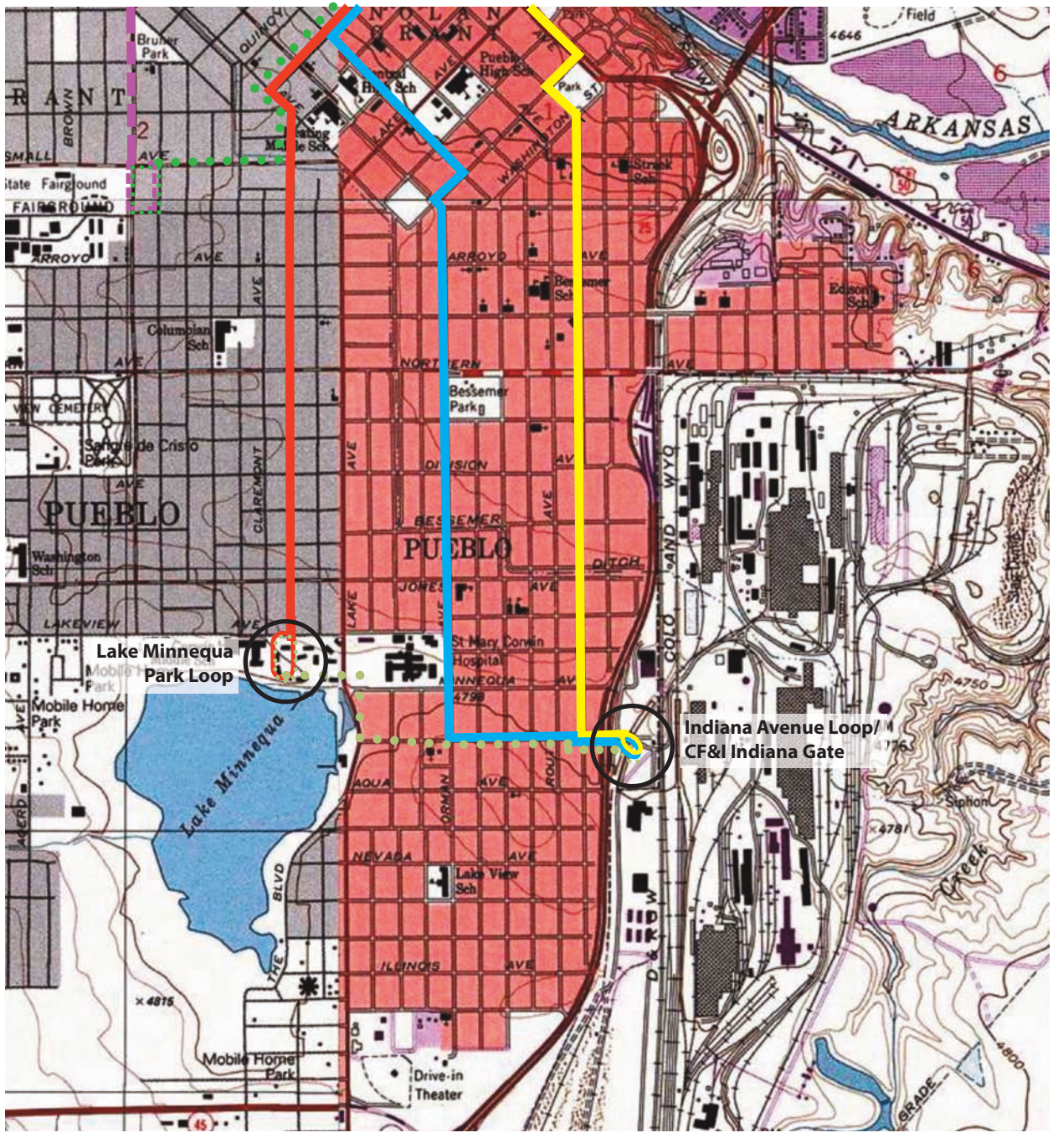


Figure 6.3. Streetcar routes serving Bessemer, circa 1921. The neighborhood enjoyed an unusually dense web of streetcar tracks designed to handle the demands of business—the masses of works traveling to and from CF&I—and pleasure—connecting Puebloans to Minnequa Park and the Colorado State Fairgrounds. *(Based on Pueblo Electric Street Railway System map as later drawn by Robert Houdek in Cafky and Morris; base map USGS)*

Crosstown Routes

- Bessemer-East Pueblo
- Lake Minnequa-Grand Avenue-Fairmount Park
- Irving Place-Orman Avenue

Stub (Shuttle) Routes (terminated at Mesa Junction)

- Beulah Avenue

Pleasure Routes (occasional, as-needed service)

- State Fairgrounds
- Lake Minnequa Connector

Figure 6.4. Looking north on Orman Avenue from Indiana Avenue, 1934 (*Pueblo Library District, from Cafky and Morris)*

Figure 6.5. Looking west on Indiana Avenue, at its intersection with Evans Avenue (*West Plains Energy Collection, from Cafky and Morris*)

hood. This route was easily one of the top two busiest routes in Pueblo's streetcar system, bringing residents from the East Side, and any stops along the way, to their jobs at the steelworks.[158]

A second route to traverse into Bessemer, and the other busiest, was the Lake Minnequa-Grand Avenue-Fairmont Park line. Initially, this line carried only recreational riders to and from Lake Minnequa and not the daily grind riders seen on the Bessemer-East Pueblo line, though an extension constructed shortly after the turn of the twentieth century traveled from the Lake Minnequa loop east to Minnequa Hospital (present-day St. Mary-Corwin Hospital), south to Indiana Avenue, and east to the steelworks. From the loop at the northern edge of Lake Minnequa, this double track line traveled directly north along Berkley Avenue to Adams Avenue, through downtown Pueblo and ultimately to Fairmount Park in Pueblo's North Side. This was the longest route in the Pueblo trolley system. Ridership on the route proved so popular on summer weekends and holidays, that it demanded the construction of the aforementioned extension to the Indiana loop in order to disperse riders onto the other lines. This route also accommodated a small spur line west from the intersection of Berkley and Small Avenue to the fairgrounds. This double track spur line circled the block around Small, Beulah Avenue, Violet Avenue (present-day Van Buren Street), and Summit Avenue before returning to Berkley.[159]

The third streetcar line traveling through Bessemer was the Irving Place-Orman Avenue line. Though this line saw only moderate usage, it connected three of Pueblo's largest employers: CF&I, Minnequa Hospital, and the Colorado State Hospital. The line terminated in a loop on the eastern edge of the Minnequa Hospital grounds on East Orman Avenue and travelled north along a single track to Division Avenue, where the line became double track and continued into South Pueblo and its northern terminus in the North Side neighborhood; the loop at the southern terminus was replaced with a single track from the hospital south to Indiana Avenue at the turn of the century when track was installed connecting the Lake Minnequa and Indiana loops.

While Bessemer certainly was not the transfer hub Mesa Junction grew to be, it was not only the choice destination for riders heading to work but for local families as well. As the grounds to Lake Minnequa Park lay at the far southern edge of Pueblo, it was far too distant to walk. The Steel Y was also located near the southern terminus of the Bessemer-East Pueblo Line, tempting members from across the city with its numerous amenities via easy transportation. Streetcars also transported Pueblo residents to the hospital.

Corner Commerical Buildings

Though the Bessemer neighborhood was platted complete with streets to allow the community's residents the ability to travel freely within and out of the neighborhood, the neighborhood is adorned with a substantial, and seemingly inordinate, amount of one-time grocery stores that urged nearby residents to ignore the call of spending their money outside of the neighborhood. Proprietors constructed these neighborhood markets without discretion at seemingly every intersection in the neighborhood, sometimes even more than one per intersection. Sanborn maps and city directories illustrate that most of these markets were constructed after the turn of the twentieth century, even in the older parts of the neighborhood, and simultaneous to the large surge in residential construction and the increase of ethnic enclaves as ev-

idenced by the neighborhood's churches.

Bessemer's neighborhood markets are peculiar in that the proprietor's quarters are almost always attached to the side or rear of the market, instead of above. Sanborn maps confirm that both the residence and commercial areas of the adjoining buildings were constructed at the same time. In such a blue-collar and humble neighborhood, even the businessmen were forced to construct homes and businesses inexpensively. The cost of land was thence sliced in half and any utility costs would have been driven down as well.

Today, only a small handful of corner markets remain in use in any fashion though the buildings still stand. The Zook Engineering firm occupies the two-story building with an added third story at the rear of the building located at 1001 East Evans Avenue; this building appears to be the only original two-story market remaining in Bessemer. One of the markets still in use is Zoelsmann's Bakery located at 912 East Abriendo Avenue. The Zoelsmann's Bakery building includes a former residence at the rear and northeast corner of the building. The other market still in use is Gagliano's Italian Market located at 1220 Elm Street. Historically named Gagliano's Bessemer Mercantile Company, the building includes a residence at the northeast corner. Curiously, both Zoelsmann's and Gagliano's are located in the middle of their respective blocks and not along any historic transportation routes such as streetcar lines.

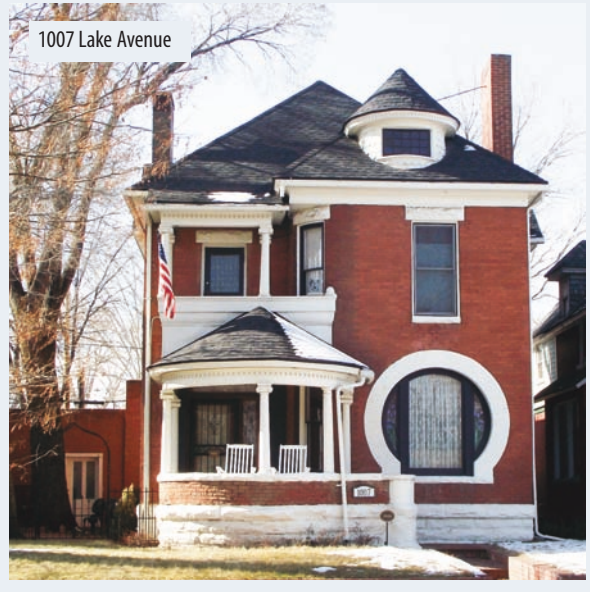
Both the Bessemer and greater Pueblo populī demanded early, easily accessible public transportation and routes throughout the neighborhood. Indeed, Bessemer residents could have easily depleted their free time within the neighborhood without ever having to leave due a surplus of markets, but the many recreational opportunities the neighborhood provided brought many residents from outside the neighborhood. Additionally, the steelworks employed such a vast number of workers, some strewn about the city of Pueblo, that these workers sometimes stressed Bessemer's transportation corridors. The construction of Interstate 25 effectively divided the neighborhood, with the steelworks and the Laibach residential area to the east and, quite simply, everything else to the west. Transportation throughout and within the Bessemer neighborhood was arguably the most important of any area of Pueblo, at one time prevailing as the human crossroads of the city.

Lake Avenue Residential and Commercial Corridor

While Northern Avenue had long been the focus of commercial development in Bessemer, Lake Avenue became a hot spot for two different types of development. White-collar residents constructed the neighborhood's largest and most stately homes on the northern portion of the thoroughfare, while proprietors capitalized on the steelworks' blue-collar workforce on the thoroughfare's southern portion with commercial development.

As the quintessential executive avenue in Bessemer and named because it skirts the eastern shore of Lake Minnequa, Lake Avenue is the only street to retain its name as it turns northeast into the Mesa Junction neighborhood. Though several other street names in Bessemer are trailed by the word "avenue," Lake is the only avenue that invokes the typical response of drivers motoring a street lined with prominence. The northernmost portion of the residential area, within a few blocks of South Pueblo, was initially developed by the Lakewood Land Company prior to 1889 through no affiliation with Colorado Coal & Iron, the later Colorado Fuel & Iron Corpora-

Figure 6.6. The northern part of Lake Avenue hosts the neighborhoods stateliest homes. The house at 1005 Lake Avenue may be the only historic residence in Bessemer never occupied by someone who worked at the steel mill. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*



tion, or the Minnequa Town Company. During the time the Lakewood Subdivision was platted, then-governor of Colorado, Alva Adams, served as the company's president. As such, the plotted lots were double the size of any lots in a CC&I addition to accommodate larger homes in hopes of attracting residents from Bessemer's and Pueblo's professional class.[160] The houses on Lake Avenue currently stand devoid of any known architect's motif, though the ones in the 1000 and 1100 blocks bear the marks of professional design.

The houses in the 900 block through the 1800 block of Lake Avenue are among the largest in the Bessemer neighborhood, but contradictory to the developer's expectations the area attracted professionals as well as proletariats as residents. Additionally, the houses along Lake Avenue appear to have been built at two separate times. One group was constructed immediately after the filing of the plat circa 1890, and a second group was constructed circa 1900 concurrent with the building boom provided by the Minnequa Town Company in other areas of Bessemer; the two groups along Lake Avenue were constructed indiscriminately along the thoroughfare.

The 1000 block of Lake Avenue is highly representative of this social class integration. The three stateliest houses on the block, 1005, 1007, and 1013 Lake Avenue, all endured a capricious first decade, though their façades boast tranquility. Constructed by an evangelist but first occupied by a sewer contractor in 1891, 1005 Lake Avenue lay vacant from 1893 to 1897 pending a court case probably the result of the Panic of 1893. Next door, 1007 Lake Avenue was constructed in 1900 and housed five families within its first decade, though the fifth family would continue residency in the house for sixteen con-

secutive years. At 1013 Lake Avenue, the house history proves even more tumultuous. Construction of the house was complete in 1891 for Mrs. K.M. Flynn, though she would never reside in the house. Foretelling the effects of an oncoming financial crisis, contractors filed a series of mechanics liens against the property due to nonpayment; Mrs. Flynn used the house as collateral to satisfy the liens with an indenture of $1,400 in July of 1891. The house's inhabitants remain unknown from 1891 until 1897, and ownership records of the house evaporate until 1958.

In testament to the myriad backgrounds of the area's residents, there appear to be no residents of 1005 Lake Avenue ever employed by CF&I. The first resident was the aforementioned sewer contractor, and the next residents would include the president of Iron City Fuel & Company and two proprietors of automobile repair shops. The first resident of 1007 Lake Avenue, J. Euclid Miles, worked as a real estate agent, and loan and insurance broker. Subsequent residents of the house worked in vastly differing positions: one worked as a superintendent for the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, one managed a lumber company, and another worked for a shipping company. The first resident of 1007 Lake Avenue to work for CF&I was William E. Berg, chief draftsman at the Bessemer Works; Berg and his family lived in the house for nearly twenty years from 1906 until 1924 before moving seven blocks south to 1715 Lake Avenue. The first identified resident of 1013 Lake Avenue worked as a bookkeeper for the Pueblo Smelter, followed by a railroad clerk, a physician and city coroner, and the proprietor of the American Novelty Works, an automobile repair and locksmith service. The first resident of 1013 Lake affiliated with CF&I was William Boyd, a draftsman, who lived there from 1913-1919.[161]

The evolution of the Lake Avenue business district in no way resembles that of the northern residential area. During the 1920s, the southern portion of Lake Avenue near present-day Pueblo Boulevard served as the gateway to the city for travelers along Highway 85 while the southern portion of the Avenue concurrently filled in with additional relatively large housing. Development along the thoroughfare ensued slowly, though, lacking any major growth until the postwar period of the 1940s when construction of the combined Highway 85/87 commenced. The expanded highway, along with Americans' new ability to traverse their country by automobile, brought higher traffic flows onto Lake Avenue. Savvy proprietors capitalized on exploding traffic with the building of nightclubs, restaurants, gas and service stations, and motels—anything that catered to the traveler.[162] This auto traffic also passed along in front of the houses on Lake Avenue just a few blocks north.

The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported that the 1940s and 1950s was "the golden age" of Lake Avenue, "when the strippers brought the noise of busy cash registers to the avenue."[163] The area's first two nightclubs moved in during that time, the 85 Club and the Broken Dollar (known by frequenters as the "Busted Buck"), as well as the area's first trailer court. The term "nightclub" is used loosely here, as when the sun went down the clothes came off. Two other establishments, the Flame Room and the Impala, found their way to the avenue by the late 1950s, marking a time when "[y]ou could, and visitors did, get blinded by the lights and other attractions." A former stripper at the Broken Dollar and proprietor of the Flame Room, June Linford, a.k.a. "Fabulous Flame Fury," remembered Lake Avenue as "one rip-roaring strip. After-hours clubs everywhere, a whorehouse over there (northeast of the Silver Saddle [the

LaPalma Night Club: 2506 Lake Avenue

Little Joes Bar: 2430 Lake Avenue

El Paisano Night Club: 2501 Lake Avenue

Broken Dollar: 2301 Lake Avenue

Lakeview Bar: 2330 Lake Avenue

Figure 6.7. The Broken Dollar was one of the first night clubs to move into the southern Lake Avenue commercial corridor. The area now hosts a high concentration of bars, night clubs, and adult entertainment venues. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BARS, TAVERNS, AND NIGHT CLUBS, 1940-1990

- One-story
- Architectural styles and forms vary
- Some adaptive reuse of former commercial and residential buildings
- Large painted or illuminated signs
- Small or no windows

present-day Felice's Pizzeria]), someone throwing a cat over the fence at the dog track [just to the south], something always going on. It was fun, fun, fun."[164]

Nevertheless, the prosperity proved short lived; when Interstate 25 opened in July 1959, traffic naturally followed that freeway. Very little development occurred along and near the Lake Avenue commercial district after the 1960s, though many unimproved lots remain. Business along the 2000 through 2500 blocks of Lake Avenue responded to the drop in traffic and business not by closing, but by appealing almost strictly to the 21-and-up crowd and the mill workers; proprietors replaced restaurants with liquor stores and taverns. By the mid-1970s, over ten taverns dominated a two block stretch of Lake Avenue.[165] Some of the establishments altered their business plans during the 1970s. On October 27, 1972, the Las Vegas Cinema opened at 2505 Lake Avenue with showings of *Casting Couch* and *Daddy's Girls* and with advertising that proclaimed "bringing you the best in adult films available." Located directly next to the 85 Club, the adult cinema operated until November 3, 1977, when "the Pueblo newspapers announced an agreement between the theaters and the District Attorney's office whereby the theater would close in exchange for not being prosecuted under Pueblo's new obscenity laws." The obscenity law seemingly changed by 1980 as the Las Vegas Cinema reopened as Roxie's on June 14, complete with a showing of *Tramp*, an adult book store, and nude dancing.[166]

About the only family-friendly entertainment that could be found on Lake Avenue was the Lake Drive-In Theater. Located at the northeast corner of Lake and Pueblo Boulevard, the drive-in operated from June 23, 1949, until September 5, 1988, though with annual seasonal closings.[167] The screen remained up until 1998, at which time developers purchased the parcel to create a "southern gateway" for Pueblo complete with "major commercial development." Development plans called for "a motel, car wash, video store and truck stop, with the truck stop being built south of Pueblo Boulevard." The developer requested a zoning change for the land of the former drive-in, leading residents to fear that the truck stop could be built on that site.[168] The zoning change passed the review board, but by voicing their opposition, the developer agreed to several of the residents' provisions including restricting access to the former drive-in site from the north and creating a vegetation barrier between the development and the surrounding houses.[169] As of 2011, only partial development has ever occurred at the intersection of Lake Avenue and Pueblo Boulevard. There is now a convenience store and small shopping center at the northwest corner and two hotels and a fast food chain at the southeast corner; a convenience store also operated at the southeast corner for a short time before closing and no development has occurred at the site of the former drive-in.

By 1990, warranted or not, the negative opinion of Lake Avenue by the rest of Pueblo began to take its toll on the area's residents. At that time, a few residents who lived on the avenue just south of Northern Avenue voiced their concerns in a story published by the *Pueblo Chieftain*. Twentysomethings Pat and Diana Cash, "thought they were safe and they wanted to give the neighborhood a chance" but were burglarized within six months of moving to Lake Avenue. When interviewed by the newspaper, Cash noted: "If we could take this home and transfer it down on Greenwood (Street) [in Pueblo's North Side], it'd be perfect. If it was in a different neighborhood I'd want to stay here all the time." Collectively, the couple's "perception of Lake Avenue ha[d] been ruined to the point where

they would just like to pack up and leave the area. They won't do that, at least not immediately. But at some point they plan to sell their home, as much as they hate to do it, and get away from Lake Avenue."[170]

The same *Chieftain* article noted additional problems in the area, "[w]ith St. Mary-Corwin Hospital located near the middle of the strip, it's nothing to hear sirens blaring all day and all night. Add the night life that the various bars along Lake Avenue bring to the district and you have the makings of a mother's nightmare." When interviewed, resident Leah Ahlin noted her concern that "[t]oo many cars are speeding along the road" and that "because of the traffic, [she and her husband] are ready to sell and move to a quieter area." At the time, the intersection of Lake and Sprague Avenues averaged about one accident per week, and one vehicle had to be cleared from the Ahiln's sidewalk following an accident. Other residents of the area, Roy and Karen Strait, concurred about the traffic problem but otherwise enjoyed living on Lake Avenue. Roy Strait told the *Chieftain* he "lived in several different neighborhoods in Pueblo and [he] like[d] it here the best. Bob Rice, proprietor of Dale Rice & Son Lumber Company, located near the corner of Lake and Pueblo Boulevard, held out hope that the area would turn around. Rice believed a Lake Avenue business association could revitalize the area and bring new business to the avenue. Rice optimistically told the : "Everything comes back around. Maybe in a few years the focus will be back on this side of town."[171]

The police force and city officials also felt comfortable with the disposition of the Lake Avenue business district by 1990. Police captain Ruben Archuleta noted in an interview by the newspaper, "I don't think we get any more calls there than we do on Northern of Santa Fe or Highway 50." Fellow captain Raul Prado agreed, "It doesn't seem to be the hot spot it used to be." When asked about the reputation of Lake Avenue, City Manager Lew Quigley replied "Reputation? I don't know…It's just a strip place in the community, like other strip places we have in the community. If there are any negative connotations there I'm not aware of them." The area's proprietors and managers felt it was a relatively safe place to conduct business, and that the Lake Avenue "strip is still a good time, but one where you don't have to duck between sips." [172]

It would be over a decade and a half later that the Lake Avenue commercial district would see a combined effort to rectify the image of the neighborhood. In development since 2008, the Lake Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Project began in the summer of 2011. To be completed in phases, the Project evoked a likeness of the redevelopment along Union Avenue almost thirty years earlier. The avenue was to be narrowed to a single traffic lane traveling in each direction, down from two lanes in each direction. The Project also included extending sidewalks, replacing curbs and gutters, installing a raised median, and landscaping. Though the original plan called for the installation of roundabouts at the intersections to slow down traffic, these were scrapped in order to keep the project within budget. The $1.6 million first phase occurred between Highland Avenue to the south and Indiana Avenue to the north, and included drainage upgrades for storm water runoff into Lake Minnequa. Future phases included the area between Pueblo Boulevard and Lakeview Avenue. The entire project was expected to cost about $12 million, depending on future funding. Phase two was expected to begin in spring of 2012.[173]

Chapter 7

Monuments of Steel: Lost Landmarks

The remaining stacks and buildings at the Minnequa Steelworks are Pueblo's most important monuments. No buildings ever constructed in the city match their scale or historic significance. They symbolize the city, and they define the Bessemer neighborhood. Nearby the former corporate headquarters of CF&I is a shadow of its former self; many of the buildings, including the company store and the Steel Y, have been razed. Standing in solidarity are the main office building, the dispensary, and the tunnel building. In Bessemer, there are no palaces of academia, such as Central High or Keating Junior High schools, no multipurpose cultural and commercial centers, such as the Broadway Arcade Building, and no regional hubs such as Union Depot. The churches are quite small compared to those downtown.

But this lack of monumental architecture in Bessemer is one of the neighborhood's strengths and most distinctive character-defining features. Perhaps as a response to the inhuman collossus of the mill, the neighborhood beyond the gates is decidedly smaller and friendlier—built to a human scale. There is an easy cadence to the architecture.

Yet this is not to suggest that Bessemer lacked prominent landmarks. Certainly there used to be more monumental structures, but most of them are long gone. Still, they are important to discuss because they helped forge the neighborhood's unique identity. Their stories serve as fitting examples of Bessemer's shaky beginnings, metoric rise, and long decline—of its transition from industrial center to residential neighborhood. Other landmarks, like the Bessemer Ditch and the Erickson Block still exist, but no longer look as they did historically, telling a similar theme.

New England/Massachusetts Smelter

Two smelters once joined the steelworks in dominating the Bessemer skyline. The New England and Colorado Smelting Company began the search for an ideal location to situate their planned New England Smelter and drummed up local support for the enterprise in 1883. By June of 1884, local pledges to bring the smelter to Bessemer reached $1,967 and the company purchased land from Colorado Coal & Iron. The land was located atop the bluff at the far eastern end of Northern Avenue, east of the Harlem Addition.[174]

This smelting enterprise never reached fruition, as problems occurred even before the construction finalized. On June 24, 1884, a severe thunderstorm toppled the nearly complete 150-foot smokestack. The estimated weight of the stack was 700 tons and only twenty percent of the bricks were salvageable. Construction of the stack was to be completed in thirty days, but reconstruction estimates amounted to upwards of forty days. The company finished reconstruction of the smokestack and construction of other buildings on the grounds in September 1884 but wished immediately to sell the property to the Massachusetts Smelting and Refining Company on Oc-

tober 1. The companies finalized the sale December 31 to the tune of $1,000,000; that amount of money never changed hands, though, as $200,000 was returned to financers of the buildings, $305,000 went to the payment of other debts, and the remaining balance was issued as stock in the purchasing company.[175]

The first shipments of ore arrived at the now renamed "Massachusetts Smelter" in October 1885. The first of two furnaces at the site was blown in on December 3, and the first lead bars rolled out that same month. Production proved extremely underwhelming, as the smoke billowed for merely six months. The plant sat idle for the eighteen months preceding January 1, 1888, at which time some of the machinery was sold, disassembled, and moved to the Arkansas Valley Smelter near Leadville. The Pueblo County Sheriff sold the property on March 3, 1889, for $321,000 to a group of investors with claims against it. A Pueblo investor purchased the property September 13, 1890, but the plant remained idle. All of the buildings and smokestack were razed during the 1890s and Colorado Fuel & Iron repurchased the barren lot in November 1904.[176]

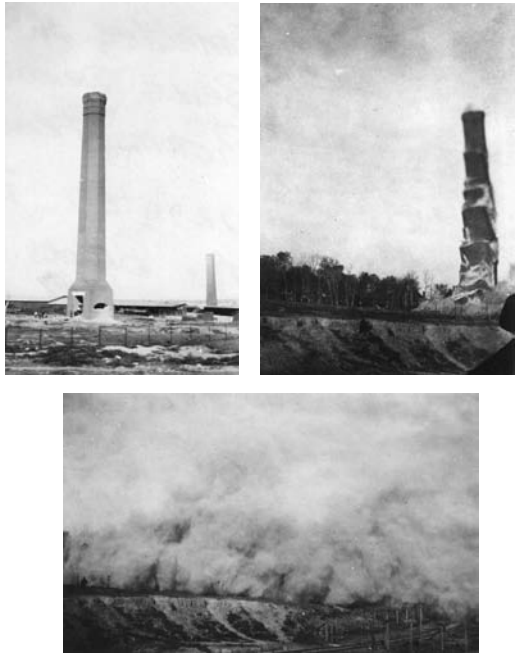


Figure 7.1. All three rail branches connected to the Colorado or Eilers Smelter, which was exceptionally productive and profitable between 1883 and 1908. In 1921, following the great Arkansas River flood, St. Mary's Catholic Church acquired the property to relocate its parish. The church used dynamite to bring down the smokestack in 1923. *(City of Pueblo)*

Colorado/Eilers Smelter

Perhaps the most important, and certainly longest lasting, smelter to be located in Bessemer was the Colorado Smelter. The enterprise of German immigrant Anton Eilers, the Colorado Smelter began when Colorado Coal & Iron donated thirty acres to Eilers and the industrialist purchased another three acres from Stanton and Snyder, the developers of the Laibach area. Eilers began building the smelter near the new extension of South Santa Fe Avenue, north of and including the grounds of the present-day St. Mary's Catholic Church, in 1883 and next to a ravine that supplied water for cooling the plant. Construction of the smokestack was completed by mid-August, with the first ore production beginning on September 6, 1883.[177]

The size of the operation was quite impressive, nearly rivaling the nearby steelworks to the south. In her book *Smelters of Pueblo*, Pueblo historian Eleanor Fry quotes the *Pueblo Chieftain*:

> The location is one of the best in the United States. The slag dump has a vertical height of not less than 38 feet above the bottom of the gulch and precludes the possibility of ever having to build artificial mountains of slag around the works as in Leadville and may later be in Denver. A three-rail branch connects the works with the main line of the D&RG in Bessemer. On entering the ground of the company the cars have to pass a 38-foot railroad track scale on which the incoming loaded cars and outgoing empties are weighed. Beyond the scales the main track forks into seven different branches for the proper distribution of incoming material.[178]

The Colorado Smelter property also featured a 400-foot long trestle bridge at the north end for the storage of loaded cars, a 45-by-127 foot blast furnace building that also reached thirty-nine feet high, an engine house, four boilers, a sampling works building, a second furnace building, a 73-by-113 foot water house building, numerous offices and outbuildings, a laboratory, and an assayer's office. The general manager also occupied a house on the property, complete with a barn, outbuildings, and a garden.[179]

Unlike the New England Smelter, the Colorado proved exceptionally profitable. From August 28, 1883, until January 1, 1888, the smelter company purchased more than $4.75 million worth of ore resulting in profits of $1.75 million per year from production. On top of that, the ore from that time period contained 4,436,099.53 ounces of silver and 11,887.25 ounces of gold with a value of over $7 million dollars. The smelter em-

ployed 120 men at the time, with an average monthly payroll of $10,000 per month. The company accomplished yearly upgrades at the plant throughout the 1890s, seemingly even in the down years following the Panic of 1893.[180]

Prosperity at the Colorado Smelter continued into the twentieth century, but could not last. By the middle of the first decade, the smelter employed upwards of 700 men with a monthly payroll of approximately $60,000, and the company purchased ninety acres directly east of the plant across Santa Fe Avenue to be used as a slag dump. An unexplained slump in business about 1907 forced the smelter to shut down in 1908. At the beginning of March 1909, crews recycled slag from the site for use as track ballast on Denver & Rio Grande Railroad lines in Fremont County between Cañon City and Florence, though no new production occurred at the site of the Colorado Smelter again.[181]

The Newton Lumber Company purchased the entire property of the former smelter, both east and west of Santa Fe Avenue. Newton Lumber sold thirteen acres on the west side of Santa Fe to St. Mary's Catholic Church following the disastrous Flood of 1921, in order for the church to relocate from the Grove neighborhood just below the bluffs to the north. The church demolished the smokestack via dynamite in July 1923; those bricks which remained in good condition were cleaned and used to construct the St. Mary's School. The house and grounds of the smelter general manager housed the convent for school teachers.[182]

Nuckolls Packing Plant

Another business that spent a relatively small amount of time near Bessemer was the Nuckolls Packing Plant. Technically, the Nuckolls Plant was not located in Bessemer or in the area of this context, but its first location was on the present-day grounds of Evraz Steel. The Nuckolls Packing Plant was incorporated on June 18, 1899, by Emmett Nuckolls and three of his sons: George Harvey, James Marshall, and Ezra. Emmett Nuckolls set the value of the initial stock at $100,000. At the time the operation began, the Packing Plant employed fifty men at a monthly payroll of $2,200 per month.[183]

The operation was located one-half mile east of the intersection of East Abriendo and Indiana Avenues. Buildings on the grounds included both a boarding house and a bunk house for employees, along with the featured slaughterhouse. The company outgrew the location by 1915, at which time George Harvey and Ezra Nuckolls purchased land at 303 South Santa Fe Avenue, again just outside the Bessemer neighborhood. The grounds totaled seven acres and the new plant consisted of four buildings: a four-story main building, an office building a stable and garage, and a mechanical building; cost of construction was estimated at $300,000. Operations at the new location began in March 1917, with the number of workers doubling to 100. These Nuckolls Packing Plant buildings still stand today, most recently used as an enormous cold-storage refrigerated warehouse.[184]

Man-Made River: Bessemer Ditch

Slicing through the neighborhood as if carving it in half is the Bessemer Ditch. Colorado Coal & Iron president A.H. Danforth, along with W.L. Graham and James B. Orman incorporated the Bessemer Ditch Company on May 31, 1888, though some of the corporation's water rights date to the 1860s. Stock value was set at $200,000, with 20,000 shares issued at a price of $10 each. CC&I held half of the initial shares, presumably with the notion of using the water to cool its steel mill. Con-

Figure 7.2. The Bessemer Neighborhood lacks a natural body of water. Since the 1880s, the man-made reservoir Minnequa Lake has provided recreational opportunities. The Bessemer Ditch substitutes for a river. It was built to irrigate farms on St. Charles Mesa, just east of town, a function that continues today. The ditch has proven problematic for its neighbors: spreading weeds, breeding mosquitos, and flooding basements. The chain link fence was supposed to protect neighborhood children. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

trary to popular belief, CF&I never used Bessemer Ditch water in its steelmaking practices; though the ditch route traverses the grounds of the plant, CF&I only used water from Lake Minnequa. The Bessemer Ditch Company Board of Directors met May 2, 1889, and increased the number of available shares to 30,000 in an effort to raise money for the construction of the ditch; at that time, the ditch consisted of a crude, crooked hand-dug waterway running reasonably close to its present-day location. In a meeting held May 20, the board authorized the sale of $200,000 worth of bonds, repayable at seven percent interest. Also at the May 20 meeting, the board passed a resolution that each stockholder was required to grant the ditch company a 100-foot wide swath of land measured fifty feet in each direction from the center of the ditch via a quit-claim deed. The land formed the collateral necessary for the issuance of the bonds, and the ditch company relinquished the land back to the stockholders when the shares were paid in full.[185]

The board opened bids for the construction of the ditch at a special meeting held June 19, 1889. Only two companies submitted bids: Orman & Crook and Carlile & Company; Orman, Crook, and Carlile were all members of the board and longtime friends.[186] The ditch remains in the channel constructed in 1889 through Bessemer. The ditch enters the neigh-

borhood at the offset intersection of Adams and Stone Avenues, running south parallel to Stone to Northern Avenue, where it makes a slight adjustment before continuing south to Baystate Avenue. At Baystate, the ditch curves east for four blocks before curving south again at Pine Street for one block. At the intersection of Pine and Canal Streets, the ditch curves east again before running onto the grounds of the steelworks. The ditch does not disturb present-day automobile traffic, as there are bridges that carry vehicles over the ditch at every intersection.

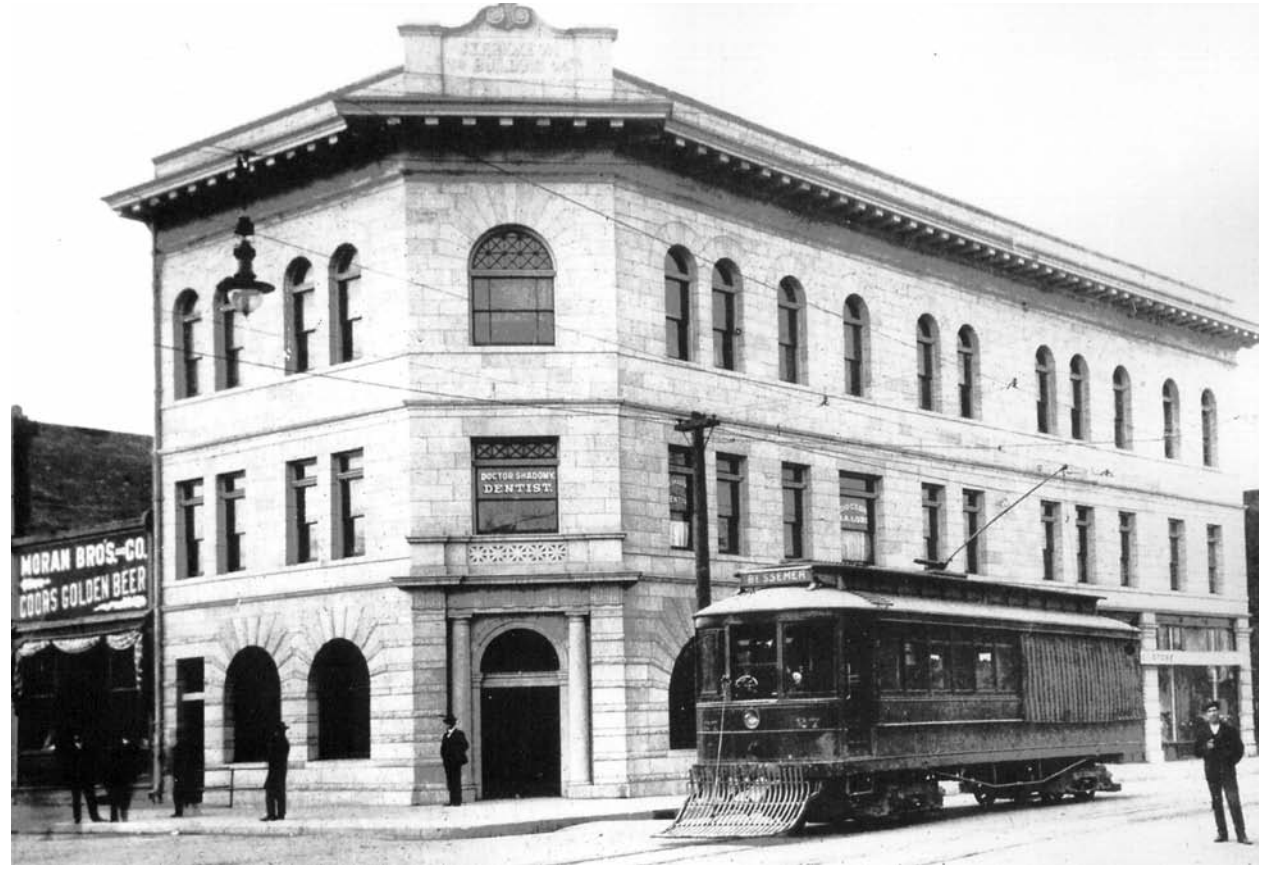
The ditch remained in a useful state without major improvements until the Flood of 1921 damaged much of the channel. The flood widened the ditch at several points, washed away much of the sediment liner, and destroyed several small wooden bridges. Reconstruction began merely one week after the flood occurred, with the goal of diverting water into the ditch once again by July 15 to irrigate the thirsty farmland east of Pueblo. The exact date that water was diverted back into the channel is unknown, although "rebuilding [of] the ditch proceeded rapidly."[187]

The Bessemer Ditch continued to wind its way through Pueblo and Bessemer seemingly without hindrances until the mid-1960s. In 1966, Bessemer residents who lived near the ditch complained to the ditch company that the wooden bridges were a nuisance because of the noise they created when vehicles passed over them and because nails used to construct the bridges "often stuck as much as three inches into the air." Additionally, the *Pueblo Chieftain* noted that complaints arose because "the ditch [was] a hazard to youngsters and a breeding place for mosquitoes." The ditch company addressed the unsafe bridge concerns by deferring the repair and replacement of twenty-one bridges to the City of Pueblo, though the bridges were the property of the ditch company. Bridge maintenance did not occur until early 1973, at which time construction estimates ranged between $205,000 and $250,000. To address the remaining complaints, the ditch company erected a chain-link fence on along both sides of the ditch, also in 1973, and pledged $12,765 annually to combat weeds and create a "beautification program" that amounted to nothing more than keeping the ditch area clear of weeds and litter.[188]

Problems persisted at the ditch company into the next decade, with the construction of the Pueblo Dam under the auspices of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project. With the construction of the dam, the headgate that served the Bessemer ditch became submerged in the waters of Lake Pueblo. The construction of a new headgate resulted in both good news and bad news. The good news was that the Fry-Ark Project contained funds for the building of a new headgate as well as a place for the storage of Bessemer Ditch water in Lake Pueblo during the winter months; the bad news was that once the headgate was constructed, the flow of natural sediment into the ditch ceased even though the ditch relied on the sediment as a natural liner. The resulting loss of the natural liner led to problems for both ditch shareholders and Pueblo residents, many in Bessemer, as early as the mid-1970s. The shareholders noticed they were not receiving the flows they were accustomed to and paying for, and the residents noticed severe water damage to basements, crawlspaces, and foundations due to water seepage. Estimates at the time noted that as much as forty percent of the water diverted into the channel became lost to seepage.[189]

Several houses along the ditch sustained substantial damage beginning in 1976, and the resulting damage was ex-

Figure 7.3. The Erickson Block at the corner of Northern Avenue and East Evans Avenue cost $40,000 to construct in 1905. The streetcar in this undated photograph is on Evans about to cross Northern. Notice the Coors Golden Beer sign on the Morgan Brothers Company store next door. Minnequa Bank encapsulated the old building when it expanded in 1973. *(Denver Public Library Western History Collection and Jeffrey DeHerrera)*



pected to rise before peaking in 1978 and continuing at that pace until the ditch could be lined. The Bessemer Ditch Company sued the Bureau of Reclamation, the agency in charge of the Fry-Ark Project "for losses incurred by the ditch company", mostly in water losses. Property owners where physical damages occurred saw no recourse and were forced to repair their buildings at their own expense. The federal government paid $1.5 million to line half of the Bessemer Ditch with gunite in 1982, and the same amount to line the remainder of the ditch in 1989; though a few residents continued to report problems from the resulting ground water.[190]

Erickson Block/Minnequa Bank

Brothers and Pueblo's most prominent entrepreneurs Mahlon Thatcher, Sr., and John A. Thatcher established Minnequa Bank at 1601 East Evans Avenue in the Bessemer neighborhood on March 3, 1902. Though the majority of banks throughout the country at the time focused on commercial operations, the Thatcher's recognized that an individual-focused bank could work well in the blue-collar neighborhood. The enterprise proved an immediate success, as the bank catered to foreign-born employees of Colorado Fuel & Iron by providing a favorable foreign exchange rate. By the end of the year 1902, the bank held $270,000 worth of deposits from its customers.

The Thatchers moved the bank's operations from the southwest corner of East Evans and Baystate Avenues to the northeast corner of Evans and Northern Avenues in 1906. By 1910, the bank once again outgrew its building when it purchased Bessemer Bank, and moved west across the street in the Erickson Block. Now at the northwest corner of Evans and Northern, the bank only occupied the front half of the first floor of the building. Minnequa Bank remodeled the first floor of the building in 1950, now occupying the entire first floor. About this time the Erickson Building also featured what would become nationally recognized bank building identifiers: a clock and thermometer.[191]

Minnequa Bank conducted its first major construction project to the Erickson Block beginning in 1972. Minnequa Bank purchased neighboring buildings to the west, 405 and 409 West Northern Avenue, in order to expand its building for "the largest business construction project in years in the Minnequa [Bessemer] area." The estimated $1 million expansion nearly doubled the bank's square footage while basically encapsulating the former bank building, much like St. Mary-Corwin Hospital did in the 1950s; the "new" bank building became totally unrecognizable. Construction lasted until late 1973, when Minnequa Bank held a grand opening from December 6 through 9. Seemingly, the only portion of the Erickson Block that remained untouched was the main vault door, purchased in 1918 and weighing 12,000 pounds. The bank also constructed its first drive-through lanes on the north edge of the building, with the entrance on Evans and the exit on Routt Avenue.[192]

Minnequa Bank purchased the remaining buildings in its block along Northern Avenue in 1985 in order to demolish them and expand once again. The bank constructed a 16,000 square-foot addition along the western portion of the building and a larger drive-through south along East Routt Avenue; at that point, Minnequa Bank owned approximately three-quarters of the city block in which its building rested. The bank averaged 1,250 cars per day in its drive-through, creating traffic problems on Evans Avenue. The new expanded drive-through's capacity increased to eighty-six vehicles, none of

Figure 7.4. The *Pueblo Star-Journal* ran this photo to show the Erickson Block under reconstruction in 1973. *(*Pueblo Star-Journal, *February 2, 1973)*

which were in the public right-of-way. Cost of construction was estimated at $2 million, but actual costs amounted to $3 million. Minnequa Bank hosted a public open house to show off its new amenities March 19 and 20, 1988.[193]

Mahlon T. White sold Minnequa Bank to Vectra Bank of Colorado in November 2001, marking the first time in the bank's history that it was not owned by a member of the Thatcher family; White is the great-grandson of Mahlon Thatcher, Sr. Vectra Bank operated a branch out of the Bessemer location a scant five years before closing operations out of the building in 2006. The main building lay vacant until Total Longterm Care, a local nonprofit agency, purchased it in 2009. Total Longterm Care spent approximately $3 million purchasing and remodeling the building for use as an elderly care facility. Total Longterm Care continues to operate out of the building, while Vectra Bank operates the drive-through on East Routt Avenue.[194]

Many of Bessemer's landmarks have been lost or severely altered. The smelters and packing plants are gone. The handsome Erickson Block was surrounded by a modern facade; the ditch is lined in concrete and fences. Though Bessemer hosted some impressive structures, the neighborhood monument would always be the steelworks. The lack of grand buildings in the Bessemer neighborhood perfectly suits its historic blue-collar nature; buildings were constructed to be practical, not flashy. Still, in 1957 another building penetrated the horizon: the St. Mary-Corwin Hosptial.

Chapter 8

Monuments to Health: Medical Care

Medical care has been available in Bessemer from the first year construction began at the steelworks, years before the area became a town or neighborhood. With the hiring of Dr. Richard Corwin, Colorado Coal & Iron was able to construct not only a small hospital to serve its workforce but also develop a pioneering and somewhat successful Sociology Department. The CC&I hospital grew from its quaint quarters on the grounds of the steelworks to the sprawling behemoth building near the northeastern edge of Lake Minnequa.

Bessemer's first institution of medical care can trace its roots to the year 1880, the same year construction began on Colorado Coal & Iron's Bessemer Works. CC&I dedicated Building Number 8 along "Furnace Row," the area of boarding houses fronting the Works, for the care of construction crews. Owing to the workplace hazards of the time, accidents and sickness forced CC&I to dedicate Building Number 7 to handle a growing caseload in 1881. Admissions at the makeshift infirmary spiked twice in 1882 when an outbreak of smallpox struck the steelworks ground in the springtime and a mild form of typhoid struck later in the year. To combat smallpox, CC&I constructed a "pest house" south of Bessemer to quarantine the victims while other employees could be vaccinated; the cases of typhoid peaked at 133.[195]

As early as April 1881, CC&I officials recognized that the growing workforce at the steelworks was quickly overwhelming the treatment facilities and partnered with the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in planning a full-fledged hospital to be constructed in South Pueblo a few blocks outside of Bessemer, and the outbreaks of the next year would affirm the decision. Dr. Richard Corwin, a fresh Chicago transplant and general manager of the CC&I medical division, instructed the Chicago-based architectural firm of Holabird & Simonds (precursor to world-renowned Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root) to design a building and complementary grounds that could be constructed for $9,000 with accommodations that were "absolutely necessary." The D&RG actually proposed an elaborate "Pavillion Plan [sic]" that called for detached wards arranged outside of the main hospital building, which management at CC&I opposed.

The contracting firm of Reinerston and Person began construction on the 30-by-100-foot building in the 500 block of East Abriendo Avenue. CC&I provided the land for the building, while the two firms shared all remaining costs to the point that "each corporation owned an undivided one-half interest in the structure, contents, and grounds. Each had the right to send employees to the hospital for medical care, and operating costs were shared in proportion to the number of people admitted from each firm." Construction costs raced past the budget Dr. Corwin specified, more than doubling to $19,076.44. CF&I historian H. Lee Scamehorn asserts CC&I's use of its own workforce as the principal factor in the cost overrun. Interestingly, the D&RG approved reimbursement payment to

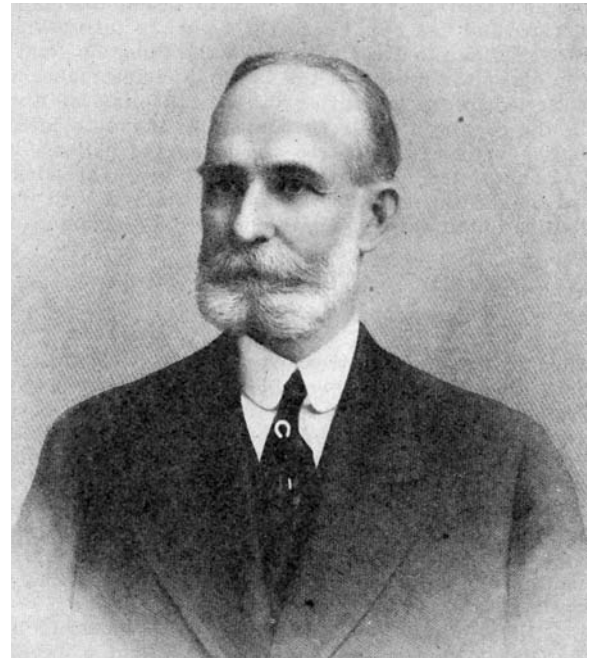


Figure 8.1. Dr. Richard Corwin, from Chicago, was the general manager of the CC&I medical division and quite progressive in his health care initiatives. (*Jerome Smiley,* History of Colorado Illustrated*, 1913*)

Figure 8.2. The remaining CF&I office complex buildings include the main office building, left, which now houses the CF&I archives of the Bessemer Historical Society; the dispensary, middle, which now houses the Museum of Industry and Culture; and the tunnel building, far right, which leads to a passageway underneath the interstate to the grounds of Evraz Steel. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

CC&I for its share of the construction costs, however the payment did not change hands for several years due to the resignation of General William Jackson Palmer from the presidency of the railroad. The thirty-bed hospital opened in December 1882, partially subsidized by a one dollar per month "medical fee" assessed to CC&I steelworkers and miners.[196]

As at seemingly every hospital site, the need for additional patient rooms and facilities caused hospital administrators to expand the still unnamed hospital building within a decade of its construction. Capacity increased from thirty beds to forty-five in 1890, and an operating room and dispensary were added in 1895 at a cost of $4,000. In 1897, the hospital added a large wing, almost doubling capacity to eighty beds. Within the next five years, construction projects at the hospital included, a kitchen "so arranged that the odors from the cooking could not penetrate the part of the building occupied by the sick", a patient dining hall, a conservatory for convalescents, a chapel, a lecture hall, a x-ray and electrical room, a bacteriology laboratory, and a small building for staff training.[197] The hospital nearly overbuilt the site, as "[a]t that point, further expansion was out of the question because there was no more land at the East Abriendo site."[198]

Room to spare or not, CF&I was forced to erect tents surrounding the hospital to accommodate a record number of patients in 1899, even though the number of beds had reached ninety-five. Aside from the main hospital building, CF&I erected a barn to house the horses and accompanying ambulance carriage prior to the turn of the century; the second story of the building housed living quarters for the male first responders. CF&I management, forced to take action, approached Dr. Corwin about the possibility of expanding across Abriendo Avenue and connecting the facilities via a tunnel. Corwin noted that, while although feasible, expansion at or near the established site was not ideal. Corwin convinced CF&I management of the desirability of a twenty-acre site near the eastern shore of Lake Minnequa for the new hospital, complete with plenty of room for future expansion. Management obliged Corwin with his desired site, and allowed him to study

hospital building plans throughout the country in order to find the best design for the firm's needs.

Upon touring hospitals around the country, Dr. Corwin brought his ideas to the local architectural firm Sterner and Williams, who concurrently designed the new CF&I office building that now houses the archives of the Bessemer Historical Society. Corwin worked specifically with Jacob M. Gile of the architectural firm, and awarded a construction contract in November 1900. Construction began in April 1901. Ironically, Gile designed the hospital "with the principal structures as a central cluster connected by corridors", reminiscent of the design sought by Dr. Corwin for the first hospital building.

Minnequa Hospital opened to public tours on August 2, 1902, and staff began transferring patients to the new 200-bed facility from the previous building the next day. Over 4,000 Puebloans toured the hospital and grounds in the first few days after opening. Gile designed all of the complex's buildings in the Mission Revival style, similar to the office building his firm designed for the office building near the steelworks. The stucco-clad buildings featured second floor balconettes adorned with wrought iron, arched parapet walls, and red tile roofs. The cost of constructing the thirteen buildings amounted to $300,000, while four buildings remained to be constructed at a later time: a nurse's home, a pathological and laboratory building, a convalescent's lodge, and a chapel. Buildings of which construction was complete included the main hospital building, three patients ward buildings, a surgical building, an administrative office building, physicians' residence, and maintenance facilities. A notable feature of the hospital and grounds aside from the architectural style of the buildings at the time they were constructed was the almost complete absence of stairs. In order to accommodate patients of all physical abilities and the transfer of patients within the hospital, Dr. Corwin instructed Gile to design ramps with a one-foot rise for every seven-feet of horizontal distance.[199]

Improvements to the hospital and grounds seemingly occurred even before the dust from construction had settled. Records indicate that CF&I planted 600 trees on the hospital grounds in 1903, bringing the total number of trees to 2,600 on the campus; it is unlikely that the corporation planted the number of trees needed to create a dense forest solely on the hospital grounds, possibly the trees were spread into the surrounding residential area or between the hospital and Lake Minnequa. Records also indicate that CF&I planted dozens of evergreen trees on the grounds during the autumn of 1904. Additionally in 1904, the CF&I commenced the operation of the Minnequa Hospital Farm which supplied the hospital with milk, butter, eggs, and poultry. Construction at the grounds resumed in 1913 when CF&I constructed a new building to house contagious patients. Concurrently, the corporation constructed a new power plant building at a cost of $2,500. CF&I added the previously designed nurse's home in 1917.[200]

Dr. Richard Corwin passed away June 19, 1929, and the CF&I Board of Directors voted to change the name of Bessemer Hospital to Corwin Hospital the following day.[201] Corwin Hospital appears to have been prepared for the number of patients treated for the next two decades, as CF&I merely updated the hospital to adapt to changes in treatments. Ostensibly tired of running a steel mill and hospital, CF&I announced that the corporation was transferring the operation and property of the hospital to the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati for a token payment of $1; the Sisters of Charity also operated St. Mary's Hospital in the Mesa Junction neighborhood and at the time was in the midst of a fundraising drive to solicit

Figure 8.3. John K. Monroe designed the Sisters of Charity's new hospital, St. Mary-Corwin, in 1957. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

$500,000 in pledges to erect a new hospital.[202]

The decision ignited a furor of controversy throughout Pueblo, with the *Pueblo Chieftain* reporting that the local sentiment was that the transfer of the hospital would only favor the treatment of injured or sick Catholics. To preclude the impending transfer of the hospital, the local Episcopalian Diocese offered to purchase the hospital and grounds from CF&I for $200,000, which the corporation rejected. The CF&I Board of Directors voted on February 17, 1948, to complete the deal with the Sisters of Charity. The transfer did not occur immediately, however, as "[i]t was decided that C.F.&I. would underwrite all of the operating expense of the hospital until such time as a complete cut-off date could be set when the Sisters would not be at a financial disadvantage because of the lack of accounts receivable, etc."[203]

The Sisters of Charity began the process of occupying and operating Corwin Hospital in the spring of 1948. Monsignor Miller from nearby St. Francis Xavier parish celebrated the first mass at the hospital on April 17 without a formal chapel. Miller conducted the mass in a storage room in the administrative section of the hospital. The officiant used a buffet as an altar and borrowed linens from St. Mary's Hospital as adornments.[204]

The Sisters of Charity exercised full jurisdiction of Corwin Hospital at the stroke of midnight, April 1, 1950. At that time, CF&I transferred all cash on hand to its corporate accounts and closed all bank accounts concerning the hospital; the Sisters of Charity collected payments for all remaining accounts receivable in effect at the date of transfer, turning the payments over to CF&I weekly. The Sisters of Charity "did not have a cent of money" at the time it took over Corwin Hospital, leading the organization to acquire a "substantial" loan from the Mother House in Cincinnati; none of the funds from St. Mary's Hospital were used at Corwin Hospital. The hospital paid back the loan in an undisclosed amount of time.[205]

CF&I left Corwin Hospital in need of repair, though the condition was far from destitute. Immediate changes occurred in the conversion of eleven double rooms into private rooms, the installation of new sinks, tubs, and showers, the installation of a new bathroom on the maternity ward, new paint throughout the hospital, and the installation of stairwells for staff use between the first and second floors to complement the existing ramps. In 1953, two beds were removed from double rooms adjoining the operating room, leaving these rooms with one bed each. The hospital also converted eleven other rooms to single-occupancy, resulting in a total decrease in the number of beds to 185 from the previous 200. Another modification at this time was the installation of plumbing to carry oxygen to every room.[206]

As the fundraising for the construction of a new St. Mary's Hospital failed by 1953, the Sisters of Charity announced plans for the construction of a new hospital building on the grounds of Corwin Hospital that could accommodate 450 to 500 patients. The number of beds at St. Mary's Hospital amounted to approximately 150, representing an increase in 120 to 170 additional beds for the Bessemer and Mesa Junction neighborhoods. The additional capacity was not without its price, as the cost of the new hospital was estimated at $7 million. The Sisters of Charity consequentially announced that any money contributed for the new St. Mary's Hospital building would be refunded at the donor's request, though it is unknown if any money was returned.[207]

The Sisters of Charity hired Denver architect John K. Monroe to design the new building. Construction costs gradually

passed the $7 million estimate, and peaked at $8.6 million. The Hill-Burton Act, which provided federal government grants and loans to improve the nation's hospitals provided $1.3 million, local donations amounted to $100,000, and the remaining $7.2 million was borrowed from the Mother House in Cincinnati. The Pueblo Catholic Diocese participated in the ground breaking ceremony July 2, 1955, and the first local steel used in construction arrived in October. Crews finished the first phase of construction in the final days of 1957, and the new uncompleted St. Mary-Corwin Hospital opened on January 1, 1957, although St. Mary's Hospital accepted admissions until July 5 and continued in operation until July 12.[208]

The Sisters of Charity and the local diocese celebrated the dedication of St. Mary-Corwin Hospital on June 8, 1957. The new building literally encapsulated the previous one, and the Sisters lauded the construction of the new building as "the first time in American construction history that a large hospital had been built around and over an existing institution."[209] The Sisters also exclaimed "[t]he hospital embodied many features entirely new in the hospital world and brought to Southern Colorado many facilities which never had been available for care of patients in this region. Availability of new equipment drew many new medical specialists to Pueblo."[210]

The new hospital soared into the skyline, now reaching seven stories high, along with the accompanying Medical Arts building. Patient amenities now included radios and televisions in each room, an intercom system to facilitate nurse-patient communication, telephones, a children's playroom, and an automatic switchboard to handle incoming calls. Personnel reveled in the use of all state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment equipment and the numerous upgraded rooms. The Medical Arts building featured an expanded hospital pharmacy and abundant offices available to doctors when first occupied on November 16, 1957. A dedication of the Chapel occurred May 4, 1958 and the entire construction project was complete in December of that year.[211]

With such an enormous building constructed, the hospital was relegated to the remodeling and reorganization of floors and departments. Though the hospital constantly upgraded equipment as new technology became available no new construction occurred until the 1970s. The hospital began construction of the two-story Medical Arts Annex directly west of the Medical Arts Building in 1971 at a cost of nearly $850,000, and connected the two buildings with a small hallway. The hospital announced a $4 million expansion drive at the end of 1973, intended to raise money for construction of an addition to fill in a U-shape just west of the main entrance. A groundbreaking for the new two-story addition was held April 24, 1975, and by this time the cost of the project soared to $5.7 million; after nearly eighteen months of construction, the addition was dedicated October 12, 1976.[212]

Construction continued at St. Mary-Corwin Hospital in the 1980s. The hospital broke ground September 11, 1984, on two additions: a new surgical unit for outpatient procedures and a building to house the Southern Colorado Family Medicine residency program. Crews completed construction of both buildings the following year. The hospital next constructed a vertical addition to the Medical Arts Annex in 1989, with construction complete in September of that year. The $2.8 million addition elevated the Medical Arts Annex to six stories from the previous two; the Medical Arts Annex was originally designed to afford future vertical expansion.[213]

The only construction at St. Mary-Corwin during the 1990s was a relatively small renovation in 1995. The hospital

Figure 8.4. St. Mary-Corwin Hospital underwent several major expansions, including this one in 2006. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

constructed no new buildings at this time, though the project cost was estimated between $9.5 and $12.5 million. The project included a staff wellness center, a new cancer treatment unit, a new radiology unit, a new psychiatric unit, and a new orthopedics unit. Construction lasted approximately six months. At first glance, this renovation and upgrade appears to have been a direct result of planned upgrades at Parkview Hospital in Pueblo's North Side. St. Mary-Corwin officials denied any competition between the two hospitals however, stating the upgrades as "hospital responsiveness rather than hospital wars."[214]

The hospital embarked on a major expansion and renovation project in 2003, although much larger in scope than the expansion of the late 1950s. The proposed $71 million project included "a much larger cancer center [constructed at the northwest portion of the building], expanded cardiac and disease management services, a new entrance, lobby and cafeteria and a new, larger emergency room." The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported the reasons for the upgrades in June of 2002:

> [t]he project also is concrete evidence of improvements made during the past three years since many physicians on the staff threatened to stop admitting patients to the hospital….The hospital was losing money; patients and doctors complained about dirty rooms and hallways; and the medical staff claimed that outdated equipment and facilities affected quality of care and made it difficult to offer services that patients needed and wanted.[215]

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on December 17, 2003, to celebrate the beginning of the $51 million first phase of construction; the remaining $20 million was later spent on equipment upgrades and renovation of the older parts of the hospital. When the first phase of construction wrapped up in early 2006, realized costs amounted to $60 million. The only surviving turn-of-the-century building is a maintenance shop located at the northern edge of the property near the intersection of Lakeview and Stone Avenues.[216]

Within roughly twenty years, the CC&I hospital grew from meager accommodations ordained with only elements

deemed "absolutely necessary" to Bessemer Hospital, which included buildings for certain types of specialized care. The renaming of Bessemer Hospital to Corwin Hospital revealed the high regard of which the hospital's board thought of Dr. Corwin, and the merger with St. Mary's Hospital reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to bring not only adequate but quality medical care to employees of the steelworks and the residents of Bessemer.

Chapter 9

Schools by the Stacks: Public Education in Bessemer

The history of public schools in Bessemer suggests that town leaders and school board members saw little need for formal education beyond the primary grades for the largely working-class community. After all, when other teenagers elsewhere in Pueblo went off to high school, Bessemer's young men were expected to seek employment in the steelworks or in an associated trade while young women took on more domestic duties, rendering secondary education an almost unnecessary establishment. Thus Bessemer shares the distinction with the East Side, Pueblo's other large, working-class neighborhood, of never having its own high school. Indeed, early in Bessemer's history there persisted a sense that the area did not require any schools at all. After all, most of the residents were young, unmarried men. Yet the story of public schools is also one of Bessemer families (and even CF&I officials) working together to demand better education, and subsequent opportunities, for their children, resulting in some of the most innovative school designs in the city and the most prominent landmarks in the neighborhood.

The town of Bessemer did not cater to youth as it did to men of a working age, but population of children numbered enough to justify public school classes in Bessemer as early as 1882. The town of Bessemer fell with the jurisdiction of South Pueblo School District 20. The school-age population of Bessemer proved to be just large enough that District 20 was compelled to construct a two room school house in the town. The construction of the school house suggests that although the number of school age children in Bessemer was not as great as South Pueblo or Pueblo, the population could sustain a school. Bessemer School, as it was called, was located at the northeast corner of West Mesa Avenue and Spruce Street, on the grounds of the present-day Bessemer Academy. The school opened November 29, 1883, at a cost of $4,850; the architectural firm Weston and Frost designed the original building.[217]

The students taking classes at Bessemer School proved quite young, as the school only taught the first and second grades. The town's family population seemingly stabilized, as District 20 constructed no new buildings in Bessemer. Eighty students were enrolled at Bessemer School by 1888, compared to 948 district wide; District 20 consisted only of the schools in South Pueblo and Bessemer. District 20 added two additional rooms to Bessemer School in 1889, but enrollment at the school was almost stagnant when compared to the growth at other schools within the district.[218]

The school-age population did grow enough by 1890, however, to warrant the construction of two additional schools in Bessemer. While city directories locate one of the schools on Abriendo, it is likely that this school occupied the southeast corner of East Abriendo and East Fairview Avenues which would put it on the same block as the future Strack School. The school board voted in June 1890 to name the school Danforth School, in recognition of A.H. Danforth, former District 20 pres-

ident and CC&I president; the school building cost $29,821 to construct and opened in 1891. The site of Danforth School was such that the school could draw students from nearby South Pueblo. The second school constructed at this time was Edison School. Located east of the Philadelphia Smelter in the Harlem area, the parents of Edison students likely worked at the both the smelter and CC&I. Architect George Roe designed the first Edison School building, named for Thomas Edison and nicknamed Harlem, and Frank Taylor constructed it; classes began October 23, 1892.[219]

The three Bessemer neighborhood school buildings proved adequate until the CF&I's rising tide of the turn of the twentieth century. School District 20 constructed two additional schools in the neighborhood shortly after 1900, their locations coinciding with the housing of the Minnequa Town Company. Minnequa School, constructed in 1902, was located northwest of Minnequa Hospital at the corner of East Orman and Jones Avenues. District 20 constructed Lake View (Lakeview) School directly south of Minnequa School three years later, at the corner of East Orman and Nevada Avenues and curiously not on Lakeview Avenue.[220]

Due to its location near CF&I, the Philadelphia Smelter, and the Colorado Smelter, the number of school-age children grew at a faster rate than at any other school in Bessemer. Enrollment outgrew the two room brick building east of CF&I and south of Northern Avenue. Expansion at the steelworks consumed the Harlem area for housing, leading District 20 to begin constructing the second Edison School east of the Colorado Smelter at the northeast corner of East Mesa and Russ Avenues. The new building was slightly less modest than the last; plans called for a large structural brick building, but the district settled on a one-story, nine-room, wood-frame building which opened in 1903.[221]

Within six years, the second Edison School building proved inadequate. Dr. Richard Corwin, manager and surgeon at the Minnequa Hospital, stated the "school was not sanitary and built for the convenience of right handed students [sic]." Corwin maintained that the lighting was a disadvantage to left-handers. Corwin also stated the six-year-old building was costly to maintain. Corwin commissioned architect J.M. Gile to design what the duo dubbed "The Pueblo Unit School House," in that the school consisted of a centered main building and classrooms connected by breezeways. District 20 constructed the main building first, with contractor F.C. Frieber wrapping up construction in late 1909 or early 1910.[222]

By 1910, all schools throughout Bessemer and the rest of District 20 were overflowing with students. Voters within the district passed a $190,000 bond issue in November of that year, but only Bessemer School received any expansion in Bessemer. At Bessemer School, the district remodeled and expanded the building at a cost of $7,633; the district hired architect J.T. Giles [J.M. Gile] to design the building. A fire at Minnequa School on March 12, 1916 forced the district to unexpectedly spend $11,487 at that location; this fire occurred merely two weeks after the fire at Central High School, also within the district. The Bessemer area schools of the district lay untouched until 1923. At that time, District 20 constructed the classroom "cottages" and adjoining breezeways at Edison School at a cost of $31,698. The district constructed a two-room building adjacent to Lake View School in 1929.[223]

When a portion of Carlile School in the Mesa Junction area collapsed due to a rogue windstorm on November 18, 1930, the residents within District 20 became concerned about the safety of other buildings in the district. Within a few days

Figure 9.1. There were three Edison Schools built in Bessemer (1892, 1903, and 1910). Corwin considered the second Edison School unsanitary, inadequate, and unfair to left-handers (due to poor lighting). The third Edison School, above, is the design of Dr. Corwin and Jacob Gile. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

of the collapse, the City of Pueblo building inspector singled out Bessemer School as the structurally worst building in the district. The district allowed engineers from CF&I to inspect the buildings district wide, who concurred with the building inspector. The engineers' report noted that Bessemer School "could be made structurally safe at small expense, but the general condition of the building was such that expenditures should be held to a minimum, with a view to replacement as soon as possible. Certain strengthening measures, together with frequent fire drills and inspections, were advised." The engineers found fault with several other District 20 school buildings, specifically Danforth School in Bessemer.[224]

District 20 called a special bond issue election for February 10, 1931, just over one year into the Great Depression. Before the election could be held, a "taxpayers' league" asserted that many citizens had trouble paying the current taxes and appointed local contractors to tour the facilities at Bessemer School and Carlile School. The league's report noted that both buildings could be renovated to current safe building standards without the expense of replacing them. The *Pueblo Chieftain* newspaper then hired a Denver engineer to tour Carlile School who reported, "Carlile School is in such condition that it should be dismantled, as it would cost more to make the old building safe than to build a new one." When the polls closed on February 10, 813 residents voted for the $250,000 bond issue while 466 dissented.[225]

The replacement of the Carlile School building held priority over construction of the new Bessemer School building due to the partial collapse, though the bid openings were held merely six weeks apart. District 20 opened the bids for Bessemer School on July 28, 1931 with the outcome that a bidder from Salida was low. Citing the poor economy, District 20 residents appealed for the district to use only local contractors and materials. The residents forced the district to reject all bids and start the entire process over. District 20 awarded the construction contract on September 15, 1931 to P.C. Croll in the amount of $77,500. Separate bids of $15,585 for plumbing and heating and $2,396 for electrical wiring brought construction

Figure 9.2. The school district instructed architect Walter DeMordaunt to modify his Carlile School building design for the Bessemer School, above, using brick instead of stucco and with slight modification on structural design. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

costs to $95,481. Coupled with the land costs, District 20 spent $99,316 at the facility. Contractor Frank C. Triebes demolished the previous building at a cost of $765, and was allowed to keep the materials. Interestingly, the district awarded Triebes the construction contract and Croll the demolition contract at Carlile School. District 20 hired local architect Walter DeMordaunt to design the Carlile School building, and acknowledging the lean economic times, instructed him to use the same drawings at Bessemer School "using brick instead of stucco and with slight modification on structural design, thus effect-

ing considerable savings in architect's fees at a time when economy was very much in demand."[226]

The next building project District 20 undertook in Bessemer was the replacement of Danforth School. The district razed the building in 1939, forcing the school's students to attend classes elsewhere within the district. The new building, located within the same block as the previous one, was built at the southwest corner of Elm Street and West Fairview Avenue. Construction of the new school building reached a discord in the community, with some taxpayers bringing a lawsuit against the district alleging it had no authority to construct a new building without a vote of the taxpayers. The suit eventually reached the Colorado Supreme Court, which sided with the district. The lawsuit appeared petty, as the Works Progress Administration provided most of the labor to construct the building and the district was only responsible for $9,690 of the paltry $27,105 total; the total expenditure amounted to just over twenty-five percent of the building costs at Bessemer School one decade earlier. Once complete and occupied in early 1941, District 20 renamed the school Strack School in honor of Caroline Strack, principal at the school since 1909 until her death January 6, 1941.[227]

The two Pueblo school districts, District 1 and 20, consolidated to form School District 60 in 1946, capitalizing on postwar economic prosperity. Enrollment at the Bessemer neighborhood schools appears to have held steady, with no new construction in the neighborhood in the 1940s. District 60 converted the Lake View School auditorium into three classrooms in 1950, while adding a new expanded gymnasium. District 60 opened Bessemer's first middle school in September of 1953, Corwin Middle School, at 1500 Lakeview Avenue near the north shore of Lake Minnequa. The district could not keep pace with overcrowding during the late 1950s, and constructed several new schools and additions accordingly, but shuttered Strack School in 1959. The *Pueblo Chieftain* reported the reasoning for the closure: "The Pueblo Freeway and the locating of a Catholic school nearby, Our Lady of the Assumption School, have drained pupils from the attendance area." As a result, Strack students transferred to either Bessemer or Central Grade Schools.[228]

The Bessemer neighborhood schools stood their ground throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, with no closures or expansion at any site. The District 60 voted to close Edison School in January 1974, appallingly in the middle of the school year. The District noted soaring utility costs, due to the fuel crisis at the time, at the school that equaled the same costs at Eastwood and Fulton Heights School combined. Edison School parents objected to the mid-year closure, convincing the District 60 Board to postpone the closure until the end of the school year. Ownership of the Edison School property reverted to the City of Pueblo, and the Pueblo Housing Authority converted the buildings into two- and three-bedroom apartments. Ironically, to combat overcrowding, the district constructed a new Minnequa School building in 1976. Minnequa School held classes in the previous building while crews concurrently constructed the new building right beside it. Conversely, District 60 dedicated the $1.2 million building November 13, 1977 before the previous building had been completely demolished.[229]

The completion of Minnequa Elementary School in 1977 was the last school-related construction project undertaken in the Bessemer neighborhood. Concurrent with the steel industry collapse, District 60 closed Lakeview School prior to the 1982-83 school year, shifting most students to Minnequa

Figure 9.3. The school district has not invested in the Bessemer neighborhood since the completion of Minnequa Elementary School in 1977. It was the design of HGF. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

School. The district immediately leased the Lakeview building to Saint John Neumann Catholic School, before finally selling it to the faith-based institution in 1994. District 60 has threatened to close schools in the Bessemer area, notably in 2001 and more recently, though none of those plans have reached fruition.[230]

The legacy of public education in this largely blue-collar neighborhood remains imprinted on—or rather, missing from—the built environment. The neighborhood did not receive its first middle school until the early 1950s, having been served by the distant Keating Junior High in the Mesa Junction neighborhood. More notably, Bessemer has never hosted a high school, with students historically attending Central High School or, more recently, South High School, far west of the neighborhood. Bessemer's elementary schools did experience slight overcrowding, but not nearly to the extent of the schools in the Mesa Junction, Corona Park, or East Side neighborhoods. The neighborhood also lost an elementary school during the height of the building boom within District 60, the late 1950s. Yet in many ways, the history of public education reflects the broader story of Bessemer, a neighborhood perceived from the outside as the domain of young, single steelworkers that was, in fact, home to diverse population that included innumerable families seeking better education and opportunities for their children.

Chapter 10

From Many, One: Ethnicity, Gender, Religion, and Migration

As the appetite of the Minnequa Works for coal and iron seemed insatiable, so too was its demand for cheap labor. As the original, native-born Anglo workers moved into the managerial ranks or onto other industries at the same time the demand for steel exploded, CF&I increasingly looked to immigrants and minorities to toil in the Minnequa Works. The mill and the Bessemer neighborhood provided a cultural and economic *entrepôt* for immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, Mexico, and Asia, as well as new opportunities for African Americans and women. The results were little short of spectacular, creating one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhoods in the Rocky Mountain region.

Yet as much as this cultural diversity was grounds for celebration, others greeted it with suspicion. To some, Bessemer was home to an alien, even dangerous, other. As seen in Chapter 4, the results were often a notable lack of investment and reinvestment in the neighborhood and, ultimately, the perpetuation of stigmas that become quite difficult to overcome.

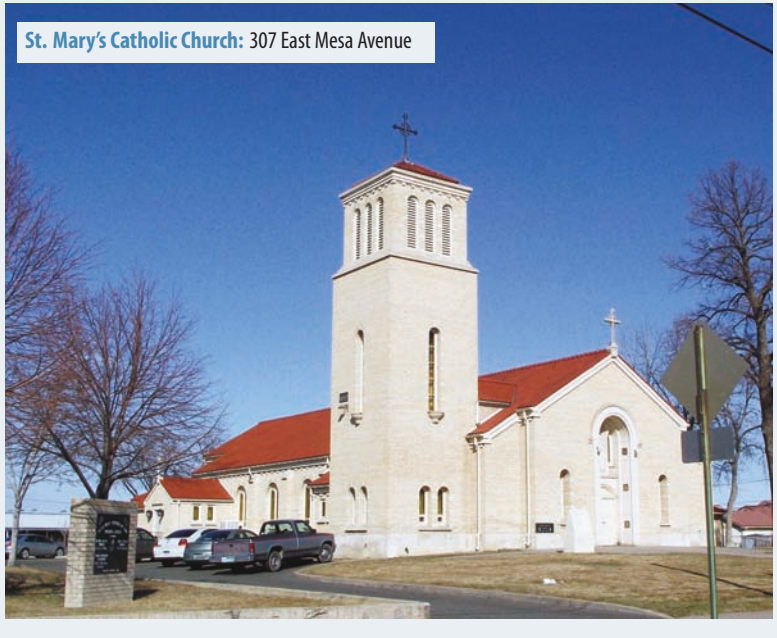
Unfortunately, ethnicity, race, and gender were extremely difficult to follow or even pinpoint within the constraints of this context. Following the names through years of city directories provides little help since few immigrants could speak English well enough to communicate with the directory's neighborhood canvasers. While the documentary evidence is lean, other means of assessing diversity in neighborhood are quite effective, particularly investigating cultural institutions: churches, newspapers, benevolent societies, and cultural landscape features.

Although ethnographic evidence of Bessemer's first residents is scarce, it is possible to trace ethnicity through employee rolls at the steelworks, even though not the entire workforce lived in Bessemer. It is known that nearly all of the initial mill workers hailed from Pennsylvania, though the numbers of foreign-born or first generation Americans is unclear.[231] Certainly several of these men were of European descent, and it appears few, if any, were foreign-born when the town of Bessemer was platted in 1882. In time, the cloudy demographics of Bessemer cleared, revealing "[t]he staple European workmen—i.e., Croats, Slovenes, Russians, Slovaks, Serbs, Poles, Greeks, Italians, and Czechs—were represented in the Minnequa Works as in the plants of the Midwest and East. Pueblo, however, seasoned its labor force with ethnic groups rarely or never seen in numbers in Chicago or Pittsburgh: an enduring population of New Mexicans joined by growing numbers of Mexican immigrants; African-Americans from the southern United States; and Asian laborers from Korea and Japan."[232]

Churches

Although Bessemer was originally settled in 1881, initially by single men, the first church in the town was not erected until the 1890s. No church buildings appear on the 1882 Map

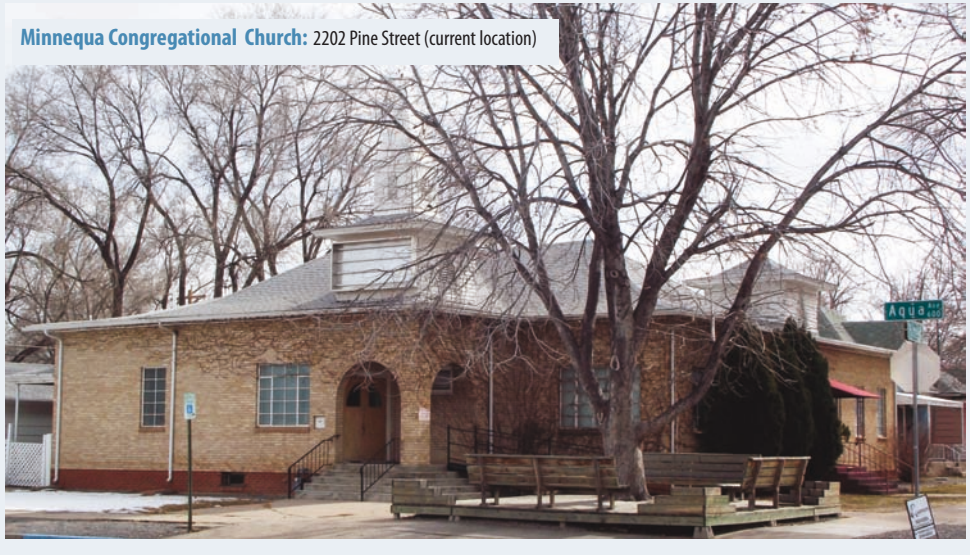
German Lutheran Church: 917 East Evans Avenue



St. Mary's Catholic Church: 307 East Mesa Avenue

German Methodist Episcopal Church: 1101 Cedar

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church: 611 Logan Avenue



Minnequa Congregational Church: 2202 Pine Street (current location)

Bessemer Baptist Church: 945 East Routt Avenue

Figure 10.1. Not many of the original Bessemer churches remain. Those that do have generally changed use. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church is the only congregation of the pre-1905 churches still occupying its original building. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCHES, 1880-1905

- Smaller scale than churches in the rest of the city
- Adapted into commercial or residential buildings
- Architectural features includes subtle Gothic and Romanesque features
- Steeple with cross on top
- Special windows that feature stained glass or Gothic arch shape

First A.M.E.: 613 West Mesa Avenue

TABLE 10.1. BESSEMER CHURCHES THROUGH 1905

Name of church	Year first listed in city directory	Address	Extant	Current use
German Lutheran Church	1891	917 East Evans Avenue	yes	site of unoccupied building of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church
St. James Episcopal	1891	SE corner of Central and Spruce (oriented toward Central Ave.)	no	currently a parking lot
Bessemer Baptist Church	1893	945 East Routt Avenue	yes	Masonic Eureka Lodge #2
German Methodist Episcopalian	1893	1101 Cedar Street	yes	Southside Church of Christ
Westminster Presbyterian	1895	1027 Spruce Street	no	house
Bessemer Methodist Episcopalian	1891	1042 Pine Street	no	house
"Sweedish Mission"	1893	807 East Abriendo	no	Taco Stop fast food
Bethlehem Baptist Church (Colored)	1896	Elm and Mesa	?	church in different location for first few years, exact location unknown
Pilgrim Baptist	1897	1201 Cypress Street	no	lot part of property at 1203 Cypress Street
Bessemer Christian Church	1896	Elm and Mesa	?	exact address unknown
United Brethren Church	1892	SE corner Pine and Northern (oriented toward Northern Ave.)	no	current site of McDonald's
Bessemer Presbyterian	1892	1301 East Abriendo Avenue	no	current site of convenience store
Minnequa Congregational Church	1904	2202 Pine Street, moved from 2323 East Routt Ave.	yes	Highest Praise Fellowship
Northern Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church	1903	1243 East Orman Avenue	no	current site of convenience store
St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church	1905	611 Logan Avenue	yes	Catholic church
St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church	1903	Pine and Mesa	?	exact address unknown
Scott Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church	1905	1100 Cypress Street	no	lot part of property at 1102 Cypress Street

of Pueblo, South Pueblo, and Bessemer, and there are no church listings for Bessemer in Pueblo City Directories until 1891. At that time, three churches were listed in Bessemer: the German Lutheran Church on west side of East Evans Avenue between Fairview and Summit Avenues, St. James Episcopal at the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Spruce Street, and Bessemer Methodist Episcopalian Church at the northeast corner of Pine Street and Arroyo. Seemingly all congregations were served by the churches in South Pueblo, although attendance meant travelling a few miles for those members who lived near the steelworks. Closest to the city limits of Bessemer in the 1880s and 1890s was St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, located at the intersection of Routt Avenue and Michigan Street in the Mesa Junction neighborhood.

Following its annexation into Pueblo and the economic turmoil of the early 1890s, Bessemer developed into perhaps the most diverse ethnic enclave in the Intermountain West. Evidenced in the number of churches that sprouted by 1900, ethnic communities began to establish themselves within the Bessemer neighborhood. The 1900 Map of the City of Pueblo, Colorado, on display at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Library Western History Collection, identifies seven churches in the Bessemer neighborhood: an unnamed Baptist church at the southeast corner of East Orman Avenue and Mesa Avenue, the German Methodist Episcopalian Church at the southwest corner of Cedar Street and Arroyo Avenue, the Westminster Pres-

Figure 10.2. St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, built in 1907 largely through volunteer labor, drew families from all over the region: Alamosa, Aspen, Canon City, Colorado Springs, Garden City (Kansas), Grand Junction, La Junta, Lamar, Leadville, Questa and Raton (New Mexico), Salida, Trinidad, Walsenburg and a host of other small hamlets and towns in eastern Utah and the southern Colorado region. Note both the American and Greek flags. The photograph shows a group gathering for the first church service in the church. *(Hellenic Orthodox Community Association, George Koustas family photograph)*

byterian Church at the northeast corner of Cedar Street and Arroyo Avenue, and "Swedish Mission" at the southwest corner of Washington Street and East Abriendo Avenue just inside Bessemer, along with the aforementioned German Lutheran Church, St. James Episcopal, and Bessemer Methodist Episcopalian.[233] The 1900-1901 Pueblo City Directory lists four additional churches in Bessemer not identified on the map: the "Colored" Bethlehem Baptist Church at the intersection of Elm Street and Mesa Avenue, Pilgrim Baptist at the southwest corner of Cypress Street and Mesa, Bessemer Christian Church at the intersection of Elm and Mesa, and the United Brethren Church at the southeast corner of Pine Street and Northern Avenue. Most interesting is the lack of a Roman Catholic church in blue-collar Bessemer; Catholics either attended mass at St. Patrick's Church in Mesa Junction or the Spanish-language Holy Family Church in Salt Creek.[234]

The number of churches in the Bessemer neighborhood grew expectedly within the next five years, coinciding with the building by the Minnequa Town Company and production at the mills. By 1905, five more churches located in Bessemer. The

Minnequa Congregational Church was located at the southeast corner of Aqua Avenue and Pine Street and nearest the new development of the Minnequa Town Company. The Northern Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church began holding services at the northwest corner of Northern and East Orman Avenues just west of the Northern Avenue commercial district. St. Francis Xavier Church, a mission of St. Patrick's Church in Mesa Junction and located at the northwest corner of Spruce Street and Logan Avenue, served Bessemer's catholic population. Two more churches also sprouted up to serve the neighborhood's African American population: St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at intersection of Pine Street and Mesa Avenue and the Scott Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church located at 1100 Cypress Street.[235] Bessemer would also add another church indicative of an ethnic group in 1907: St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church at 1010 Spruce Street.[236]

Migration and Immigration

The ethnic enclaves in Bessemer began to emerge after the turn of the twentieth century, although discernable patterns in ethnic division began earlier in other parts of Pueblo. Italians and Mexicans lived separately from other residents in town, in places such as Goat Hill or Salt Creek. When production at the mill rose dramatically and the Minnequa Town Company developed land and constructed houses for the additional employees, the established and tenured workers left their crowded, older houses and purchased the newly constructed ones. The resulting mass-movement of residents from older to newer portions of the neighborhood created a haven for those residents with similar ethnicities to live near one another.

During the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s, ethnic minorities tended to live in boarding houses in a seemingly communal setting; some ethnic groups boarded in places managed by their respective foremen at the mill.[237] While the Italians lived in the Grove neighborhood just north of the Colorado Smelter and the Mexicans lived in Salt Creek just east of the Philadelphia Smelter, African-Americans lived mainly at the Alabama Hotel southeast of the present-day intersection of Northern and Santa Fe Avenues; interestingly, many of these workers moved to Bessemer, Colorado, from Bessemer, Alabama, and Birmingham's massive steel industry.

The diversity of workers at the steelworks and, therefore, in Bessemer, began to increase around 1905. Italians, chiefly Southern Italians from Sicily, Calabria, and Campania. and the largest ethnic group employed by CF&I, began to purchase homes north of Northern Avenue and east of East Evans Avenue vacated by Anglo residents, resulting in a de facto segregated community there.[238] African-Americans congregated around Mesa and Northern Avenue, roughly between Spruce Street and Stone Avenue, evidenced by the construction of the African-American churches only two blocks apart. The Japanese moved into the Robinsonville Hotel, likely the former Alabama Hotel, when the African-Americans began their exodus.[239] Small numbers of other ethnic groups, such as Germans, Poles, and Slavs, resided in dwellings peppered throughout the neighborhood, though large concentrations of these groups continued to reside in boarding houses. Exact numbers and percentages of Bessemer-area residents who were immigrants do not exist; however during the Minnequa Town Company boom 55.3 percent of all Pueblo residents were either immigrants or first generation Americans and hailed from thirty-three different countries.[240]

CF&I began to expand its workforce shortly after 1900, resulting in labor shortages but also diversity. Many workers left the area to find employment opportunities after the previous economic downturn, including the foreign-born. Faced with rising labor costs from Anglo workers and shortages from increased production, CF&I recruited workers from areas such as Pennsylvania and Ohio. By 1904, CF&I actively engaged a Japanese employment contractor to recruit workers to replace Serbian and Austrian workers who left during the previous downturn.[241] In 1901 the corporation also began printing *Camp and Plant*, a monthly publication devoted to the social happenings throughout the company towns. Geared as a way to boost employee morale at the company, *Camp and Plant* was published in four languages: English, German, Italian, and Spanish. Though many Bessemer residents certainly spoke those languages, *Camp and Plant* also catered to CF&I's extensive coal and iron ore mining regions.[242] Two-thirds of all CF&I employees by 1903 were immigrants, and "[w]ether by accident or design, CF&I gradually increased its ratio of foreign to domestic labor."[243]

Another smaller ethnic migration into Bessemer was the result of the 1921 flood, although the waters of the Arkansas River never come close to the neighborhood. As residents moved from older parts of the neighborhood to the newer parts and Italians vacated the Grove for the older portion of Bessemer, Slavic peoples replaced the Italians in the Grove. When the river flooded the Grove neighborhood, residents there moved to the higher ground near the former Colorado Smelter north of Northern Avenue and east of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. Residents of the Grove neighborhood also moved one of their churches into Bessemer: St. Mary's Catholic Church.[244]

Pueblo's many newspapers also provide a glimpse into the city's astounding ethnic diversity. Over 125 different newspapers have been published in the city, with twenty-six of them printed in a language other than English. At one time or another, there were eight Italian, six German, five Spanish, four Slovenian, and one Serbian newspaper; among the English newspapers were three entirely devoted to African Americans. The first newspaper to cater to an immigrant community was *The Vox Populi,* a newspaper published in English for the Italian community. The earliest known foreign-language newspaper was the German-language *Freie Press,* published weekly from 1887 to 1891. The number of non-English newspapers dispels the myth that most working-class immigrants were illiterate; they simply could not read or write in English.[245]

For decades, the demographics of Bessemer have slowly changed to reflect a predominately Hispanic or Mexican-American population. Businesses such as Gagliano's Italian Market, Gus' s Place, and La Tronica's still serve the remaining Italian population and Eilers Place tavern caters to the self-proclaimed Bojon population, but restaurants that serve the Hispanic population dominate Bessemer's commercial areas. Pueblo-style Mexican food seemingly throws itself at the diner from every direction. Places such as the Mill Stop Café, the Grand Prix, Jorge's, El Nopal, and Lupita's (formerly the Bessemer staple El Valle) dot the Bessemer map. No matter what the flavor, Bessemer is a dining destination in Pueblo, drawing customers from throughout the city and the Southwest.

Demographics collected and compiled by the City of Pueblo illustrate the trend of the Hispanic community gravitating to Bessemer. In 1980 Hispanics made up 59.4 percent of Bessemer's population; also at that time, Blacks made up 6.5 percent of Bessemer residents, while the remaining 34.1 per-

Figure 10.3. St. Mary's School, built in 1924, is a Pueblo Historic Landmark. St. Mary's served a mostly Slovenian immigrant population. Some of the brick used in its construction came from the Eiler's smelter, which the diocese purchased and demolished in 1923. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

cent identified with another ethnic group. It is important to remember that the African-American population in Bessemer once justified the use of its own YMCA building. Hispanics consisted of 61.1 percent of Bessemer's population in 1990, while the percentage of Blacks fell to 6.1 percent and 32.8 percent identified with another group. The trend continued in 2000, when 63.5 percent of Bessemer residents identified themselves as Hispanic, compared to 5 percent Black and 31.5 percent other. Bessemer's Hispanic population nearly reached two-thirds of the total neighborhood population in 2010, with 65.4 percent of residents identifying with the group compared to 49.8 percent city-wide; the percentage of Blacks dwindled to 3.6 percent at that time, but still remained above the 2.5 percent city-wide.[247]

Strong ethnic ties remain in Bessemer. Beginning in the summer of 2010, the Bessemer Historical Society began hosting a series of "Heritage Days" in which one ethnic group celebrated their heritage during a day-long street festival. BHS held the first Heritage Day in August 2010 for mill workers and their decedents of Slovenian roots; the event coincided with the City of Pueblo hosting the Slovenian national convention. In the summer of 2011, BHS held Heritage Days celebrating Greek, German, Italian, and Hispanic cultures. Each Day featured speakers that previously worked at the mills. Each celebration was held in conjunction with appropriate neighborhood institutions such as churches or civic associations, and also boasted books, gifts, and food from each ethnic group.[248]

Women in Bessemer

It is also interesting to note the number of women residing in the Bessemer neighborhood throughout its history. As

noted previously, virtually no women lived in Bessemer until the boom period shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. The construction of many churches and schools at that time, and the YMCA building approximately one decade later, indicate a rising female population since these institutions catered to families. There was also a growing number of women's auxiliaries and benevolent societies. A handful of the neighborhood's female residents also worked at CF&I, though mostly in an administrative setting due to the location of the corporation's offices at the steelworks. Some women also worked at the Steel Y during its heyday, teaching domestic and social programs through groups and clubs such as the Spark Plug Club. The "Sparkies" organized in 1921 with current and former employees' at CF&I's Pueblo offices. The group proved so popular for members and patrons that it became "one of the most effective nonprofessional relief agencies in Pueblo" during the Depression years.[249]

Women took on an ever increasing role at the steelworks in the war years of the 1940s, when CF&I "for the first time, had to recruit large numbers of women for production jobs." Women moved to other capacities at the mills as the war years lumbered on, but their involvement in the Bessemer neighborhood held steady.[250] Civic organizations such as the aforementioned Bessemer Merchants Committee of the late 1940s were made up exclusively of men.

As the decades moved along, women began taking a larger role in the neighborhood, albeit indirectly. Statistics provided by the City of Pueblo show the number of married-couple families with children living in Bessemer stood at 656 in 1980, while the number of female-headed households numbered stood at 216 the same year; the number of female-headed households equaled 24.2 percent of all Bessemer households with children. The number of married-couple families dropped sharply by over sixty-six percent to 213 by 2010, while the number of female-headed households with children grew slightly to 279. Also by 2010, the number of female-headed households equaled 55.4 percent of Bessemer households with children.[251]

Benevolent Societies and Trade Unions

With the number of immigrants and first generation Americans in Bessemer at the turn of the twentieth century, an anomaly exists as to the number of ethnic societies and clubs in the neighborhood. A check of the 1900-1901 Pueblo city directory reveals only one organization in the city devoted to the preservation of cultural background: the Hebrew Benevolent Union, which had no regular place of meeting. The number of ethnic organizations increased only slightly alongside Bessemer's construction boom. By 1905, the city added three of these organizations: the Columbian Federation, the Italian Mutual Aid Association, and the Servian [Serbian] Benevolent Society. The two Italian organizations were located in the Union Avenue area, while Servian Society was located in Bessemer at 315 East Northern Avenue.[246]

Through the early 1920s, a relatively small percentage of secret and benevolent societies have met in the Bessemer neighborhood when compared to the city of Pueblo. In the first year of Bessemer's township, 1886, no societies met there yet twenty-six met in downtown Pueblo. The number increased to one society meeting in Bessemer by 1895, the Minnequa Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows, which met in their hall at the intersection of Mesa and Evans Avenues. Comparatively, sixty-six societies met in Pueblo. Societies meeting in Bessemer numbered eight by the turn of the twen-

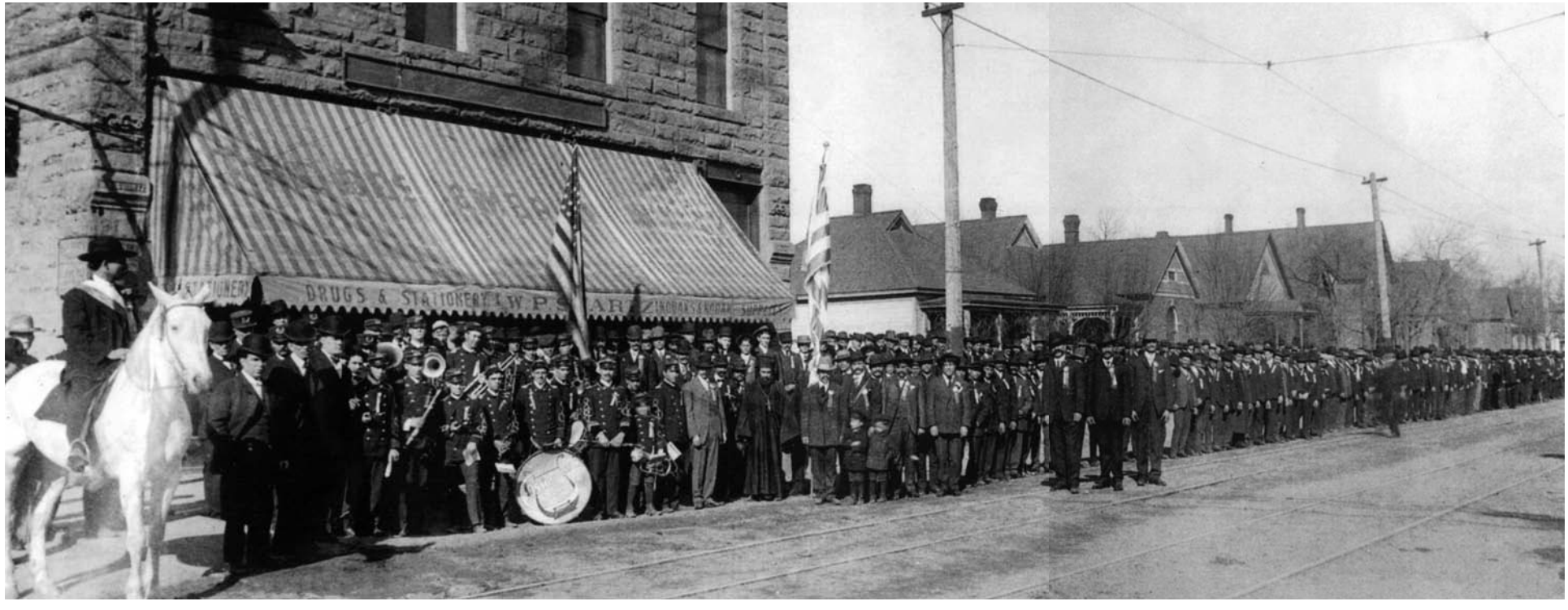


Figure 10.4. On May 26, 1907, the Greek community gathered in front of the I.O.O.F building to welcome their new priest, Father Kallistos (front row), and parade to the new church for its official dedication. *(Hellenic Orthodox Community Association, Tony Pitson and Tony Corcodilios)*

tieth century yet another fifty met in Pueblo. By 1910, fourteen of eighty-seven Pueblo societies met in Bessemer; both of these numbers represent their respective peak numbers. A decade later, the number of societies meeting in Bessemer fell to thirteen, while the number meeting throughout the city fell to seventy.

The number of trade unions meeting in Bessemer through the year 1920 never fluctuated; it remained constant at zero. This appears surprising at first glance for a working-class neighborhood, but no steelworker's union existed at these times and mostly steelworkers lived here. Throughout the city of Pueblo, unions numbered five in 1886, twenty-eight in 1895, twenty-six in 1900, fifty-two in 1910, and forty-seven in 1920; after the turn of the century, nearly every worker in seemingly any occupation could belong to a trade union from carpenters, electricians, and teamsters to bakers, butchers, and shoe repairmen.

Stucco, Fornos, and "Bathtub Marys"

The early ethnic and foreign-born population had a direct effect on the built environment of Bessemer today. The two largest ethnic groups, Italians and Hispanics, emigrated from regions where stucco was a common, if not preferred, exterior wall treatment, especially for domestic buildings. Though the population of descendants of early Italians in Bessemer has decreased, the population of Hispanics had increased from 59.4 percent in 1980 to 65.4 percent in 2010.[252] Although the evidence is inconclusive, the proliferation of stucco exterior

TABLE 10.2. BESSEMER BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES AND UNIONS

city directory year	total societies meeting in Bessemer vs. Pueblo	total unions meeting in Bessemer vs. Pueblo	name of society in Bessemer	meeting place
1886	0 of 26	0 of 5	N/A	N/A
1895	1 of 67	0 of 28	Minnequa Lodge No. 53 (IOOF)	in hall at the corner of Mesa and Evans Avenues
1900-1901	8 of 58	0 of 26	Crescent Lodge No. 10 (Degree of Honor)	Odd Fellows Hall, Bessemer
			Minnequa No. 53 (IOOF)	corner Mesa and Evans
			Lincoln Encampment No. 28 (IOOF)	corner Mesa and Evans
			Cactus Lodge No. 24 (Daughters of Rebekah)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Canton Pueblo No. 5 (IOOF)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Continental Council No. 2 (IOOF)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Temple Camp No. 131 (Woodmen)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Pansey Circle No. 42 (Ladies Aux. of Woodmen)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
1910	14 of 87	0 of 52	Minnequa Lodge No. 45 (Ancient Order of United Workmen)	Dempsey & Langdon Hall 1144 E. Evans
			Crescent Lodge No. 10 (Degree of Honor)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Ark Lodge No. 53 (IOOF)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Lincoln Encampment No. 28 (IOOF)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Cactus Lodge No. 24 (Daughters of Rebekah)	OddFellows Hall 1143 E. Evans
			Madonna del Monte Carmelo (Italian)	OddFellows Hall 1143 E. Evans
			Bessemer Lodge No. 115 (Knights of Pythias)	OddFellows Hall 1141.5 E. Evans
			Star of the West (colored Knights of Pythias)	corner of Routt and Summit Avenues
			Bessemer Hive No. 47 (Ladies of the Maccabees)	OddFellows Hall Mesa and Evans
			Ashby Lodge No. 2 (Masonic)	OddFellows Hall Routt and Summit
			Pueblo Lodge No. 1180 (Modern Brotherhood of America)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans
			Bessemer Camp No. 8664 (Modern Woodmen of America)	corner Mesa and Evans
			Temple Camp No. 131 (Woodmen)	corner Northern and Evans
			Pansy Circle No. 42 (Ladies Woodmen Auxiliary)	corner Northern and Evans
1921	13 of 70	0 of 47	Crescent Lodge No. 10 (Degree of Honor)	OddFellows Hall Bessemer
			Minnequa Tribe No. 17 (Redmen)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans
			Companion Court Minnequa No. 307 (Independent Order of Foresters)	314 E. Evans
			Pleasant Valley Lodge No. 4077 (IOOF)	1142.5 E. Evans (Knights of Pythias Hall)
			Pueblo Council No. 768 (Knights and Ladies of Security)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans
			Star of the West No. 4 (Knights of Pythias)	1142.5 E. Evans
			Pueblo Lodge (Knights of Tabor)	1142.5 E. Evans
			Ashby Lodge No. 2 (Masonic)	1142 E. Evans
			Bessemer Camp No. 8664 (Modern Woodmen of America)	1141.5 E. Evans
			Swedish (Order Vasa of America)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans
			Pueblo Lodge (United Brotherhood of Friendship)	1142.5 E. Evans
			Temple Camp No. 131 (Woodmen)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans
			Pansy Circle No. 42 (Ladies Woodmen Auxiliary)	Erickson Hall, Erickson Block, Northern and Evans

wall cladding in Bessemer and Pueblo may be linked to the growth of the Italian and, especially, Hispanic communities. Stucco application could have worked in two ways. First, it could have been applied by Italians and Hispanics as a familiar and therefore easily installed and maintained material. Second, builders and developers may have considered stucco wall cladding as a way to attract Italian and Hispanic home buyers. Such was the case in Great Western Sugar Company settlements in Colorado, in which company sociologists specifically recommended building affordable, stucco-clad houses to retain Mexican laborers through the off-season. [253]

While Pueblo's stucco may have cultural significance, the prevalence of stucco-clad exteriors in Bessemer and Pueblo is not limited to residential architecture; numerous commercial buildings have received the treatment as well. Commercial districts in the North Side, East Side, Mesa Junction, the Blocks, Bessemer, and the Union Avenue all have some buildings on which stucco covers the original brick. Thus, as explored in more detail in this report's preservation plan, the dominance of stucco in Pueblo may not be entirely a cultural phenomenon.

Exterior embellishments are not the only architectural item influenced by an ethnic group in Bessemer. Many Italian households in Bessemer, predominantly near Elm Street, constructed a forno in the backyard.[254] Upwards of fifteen loaves of bread were baked at one time, as baking was the primary use of the forno. Some Italian women would put a portion of the daily newspaper in the forno as an indicator of temperature preparedness; if the paper turned brown without igniting into flames, it was time to bake. Italian children prepped the forno with wood on Fridays, as the traditional baking day was Saturday. With any leftover dough, women prepared focaccia for the children. Families stored the loaves covered in a barrel for up to three weeks, and any bread that had turned stale would not be wasted but instead placed in cooked cabbage or mixed with a bowl of beans. Two extant fornos were identified at the time this context was written: at the back of the lot at the southeast corner of Fairview Avenue and Box Elder Street and behind the house at 1101 East Orman Avenue; their dates of construction are unknown.[255]

Another exterior embellishment adorning both the front and back yards of several homes in Bessemer is the "Bathtub Mary." Also termed Bathtub Madonnas or Mary-on-the-Half-Shell, these grottoes portray a homeowner's allegiance to the Catholic faith. The yard shrines are often constructed of half-buried cast iron bathtubs, with the inside painted light-blue, and sheltering a statue of the Virgin Mary or other Roman Catholic saint or scene. The grottoes began appearing in the United States when immigration was high shortly after the turn of the twentieth century and major purveyors of the shrines include the New York Italian community and Germans who settled throughout the Midwest from Missouri north to Minnesota and Michigan. In Bessemer, the yard shrines appear to be the work of the Italian community.[256]

Though many of the shrines appear to be one-offs, several different statue designs of varying sizes are commercially available at yard- and garden-supply stores and catalogs today. Upon their initial rise in popularity, shrines were constructed of a mass-produced depiction of a religious figure surrounded by locally available, and often recycled, materials. Residents constructed shelters made of wood, brick, metal, and the ever-popular bathtub. Very few of the grottoes remain unadorned, with several residents choosing to differentiate their shrine with the use of different colors of pain, the use of day and night

lighting and candles, the placement in the front or back yard, or the use of seasonal, i.e. Christmas, decorations. The shrines take a central role in the garden in other parts of the country; however this does not appear to be the case in Bessemer, where the shrines often rest independent of any vegetation other than grass. It is also common for neighbors to share the shrines, with one neighbor maintaining them and others providing seasonal ornamentation; it is unknown if any Bessemer grottoes fall into this category. The age of the individual shrines often varies with the number of years a resident has lived in a particular house, though some shrines persist from one resident to the next. Some occupants even believe it is bad luck or sacrilegious to remove them.[257]

The shrines experienced an increase in popularity, especially in the Midwest, immediately following a series of apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, and again during the 1940s after two apparitions in Europe.[258] None of the Bessemer shrines appear to be nearing the century-old mark, but could have been erected during the postwar period. In her dissertation, *Bathtub Shrines: A Stylistic, Iconographic, and Contextual Analysis*, art historian Suzanne A. Ford notes that most of the Midwestern shrines built during the postwar period were conceptualized by women members of the household but built by males. Ford also summarizes repeating characteristics of the yard shrines: the shrines are integrated with other yard ornamentation, they reside almost exclusively in front yards, and they face toward the street. Additionally, Ford recognized that the shrines are never built as a location for prayer or a replacement for attending weekly mass, but instead merely evoke virtues coveted by the builders; the shrines are also not evangelical and are not an attempt to convert passers-by to the Catholic faith.[259] All of the identified yard shrines in the Bessemer neighborhood follow these identified characteristics, even when maintained by someone other than the original builder.

Historically, Bessemer has been the melting pot of the city of Pueblo, the state of Colorado, and the inland portions of the American West. Large numbers of immigrants from seemingly every European nation sought employment at the steelworks, along with scores of African-Americans, Mexicans, Koreans, and Japanese. Though these people sometimes worked side-by-side in the mills, they often separated themselves into ethnic enclaves in boarding houses or small geographic areas of Bessemer. After its first century of existence, the Bessemer demographics changed to an overwhelming Hispanic majority. Some descendants of the first-generation Americans still reside in the homes of their relatives or their historic enclave, but the stronghold of the ethnic enclave has gone away; it is a mistake to declare one area as being occupied by strictly one ethnic group.

Conclusion

The Neighborhood that Put the "Steel" in the Steel City

In many ways, Bessemer was and is the quintessential Pueblo neighborhood: hardworking, blue-collar, diverse, and proud. And it remains one the most unusual neighborhoods in the United States, representing the seeming incongruity of blast furnaces, snow-capped peaks, and chili peppers—of the heavy industrialization of the Northeast, the expansiveness of the West, and cultural vibrancy of the Southwest. The combination is at first unexpected and disorienting but becomes alluring, even comforting. Imprinted upon this landscape are innumerable stories from innumerable people from innumerable places. Bessemer tells not just Pueblo's story, but America's story. And it tells it extremely well.

The stacks of the Minnequa Works and the rows of small, tidy houses lining Bessemer's gridiron streets are all children of the same mother. While all Pueblo neighborhoods benefitted from the success of CF&I, none was as intimately connected as Bessemer or so willing gave its sons and daughters to the noble task of steelmaking. The experience was decidely unique. Bessemer remains one of the few company towns in the American West devoted to manufacturing rather than mining.

Yet as much as Bessemer's history was tied to the mill, almost the opposite is the case today. In 1980, 800 Bessemer residents continued to work in manufacturing. By 2010, when EVRAZ Pueblo still employed a thousand workers, the number of manufacturing laborers residing in Bessemer dropped to just seventy eight. The construction of an automobile-based transportation infrastructure and the development suburban housing disconnected the neighborhood from the mill; workers no longer needed to live a short walk or streetcar ride from the gates of the Minnequa Works.

Yet investment continues in Bessemer. Two of the area's larger employers remain in the neighborhood: St. Mary-Corwin Hospital and Convergys telemarketing. Recent expansion at St. Mary-Corwin indicates the hospital's commitment to the neighborhood and the city as well. Revitalization along the southern portion of Lake Avenue has commenced, along with the construction of a new fire house. Lake Minnequa has reopened as a public recreational facility, drawing families and individuals from across the city. Bessemer is the foremost dining destination in the city—a great recipe for future success. The neighborhood is establishing itself as a driving force in Pueblo's economy even without the steelworks.

In terms of family income Bessemer is hardly Pueblo's most affluent neighborhood, but its cultural wealth is enviable indeed. It is arguably the city's most progressive neighborhood in terms of historic and cultural preservation. Bessemer residents fastidiously maintain their neighborhood. Moreover, the area hosts a world-class historical and cultural institution, the Bessemer Historical Society and its Steelworks Museum and CF&I Archives. In addition to preserving CF&I's extensive business and cultural history, the Bessemer Historical Society also

acts as the steward for neighborhood's and city's single most important feature—the Minnequa Steelworks.

Despite the decline of the industry, Bessemer's legacy will always be steel—or better, steelworkers. Bessemer was indeed the neighborhood that put the "Steel" in the "Steel City." Yet against the myriad of horrifying dangers, the incomprehensible complexity, and the inhuman mechanization of the steelworks, Bessemer was CF&I's human face. In the mill, people from an unimaginable array of places and circumstances found common cause producing steel and making a living. But beyond the gates in Bessemer they found something even more unifying and fundamental, something that made the dangerous, long hours at mill all worthwhile. In Bessemer, they found home.

Notes

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21. Ibid., 64.
22. Ibid., 64–65.
23. Ibid., 66.
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27. Don Prather, "'Artfest' Notes Bessemer's 100th," *Pueblo Star-Journal*, June 15, 1982, 1A.
28. Colorado Coal & Iron, "Plat and Map of the Town of Bessemer", n.d.
29. *City of Pueblo Directory 1886* (Denver, Colorado: James R. Ives & Company, 1886), consulted.
30. The portion of the map that displays the southern area is damaged, and quite possibly there could have been more buildings in the area.
31. We found no historic photos of these houses.
32. Edwards, "Bessemer's Growth Started With Building Of Steelmills," 2.
33. Colorado Coal & Iron, "Amended Plat of the Town of Bessemer", August 24, 1887.
34. Scamehorn, *Pioneer Steelmaker in the West*, 65.
35. Ibid., 66–67.
36. There are no references of CC&ID at the Bessemer Historical Society. The exact lots and land are unknown.
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38. Ibid., 65–66.
39. *South Pueblo Home and Building Association Addition [plat map]*, vol. 3 page 11, 1888; *Harlem Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 4 page 20, 1889.

40. *Lakeview Place Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 5 page 22, 1889; *College Hill 2nd Subdivision [plat map],* vol. 4 page 34, n.d.; *College Hill 6th Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 5 page 24, 1890; *Minnequa Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 5 page 19, 1889.
41. *Irondale Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 4 page 43, 1889; *City Hall Place Subdivision [plat map]*, vol. 5 page 11, 1889.
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68. *Journal B*, The Pueblo Realty Trust Company, book #35 GJ-2 1914, Ledger Collection, Bessemer Historical Society/CF&I Archives.
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Appendix A:

Guide to Architectural History in Bessemer, 1890-1990

Bessemer is a fascinating neighborhood. Its built environment reflects its blue collar roots. Its landmark is the steel mill, and the other buildings pale in comparison. Until you start really looking. There is the perfectly executed office building and dispensary of CF&I. At seemingly every turn is a small church tucked between two houses. The design of the schools demonstrate the evolution of pedagogy. Commercial buildings are literally attached to the house next door. Beyond the hospital, few buildings rise above two stories. The cottage homes are placed tightly next to each other in a marvelous array of decoration that makes each distinctive. Even though the homes in the neighborhood were built in a fairly narrow time period, these are not sterile developments but dynamic and interesting streets. The mature trees and fornos and Bathtub Marys add to the landscape. Even the bars are interesting. It is this diversity, this complete lack of repetition, that makes Bessemer so intriguing.

Architects

The Bessemer area remains largely devoid of any formal, high-style, architect-designed buildings. This fact is not surprising when factoring in the working class nature of the neighborhood. The majority of houses in Bessemer served the purpose of providing a comfortable shelter only; they were never intended to exude the flashiness and high styling of houses in the North Side or Mesa Junction neighborhoods.

As such, few records of residential architects have been found for the Bessemer neighborhood; even the designers of the largest houses on Lake Avenue have yet to be discovered. Records in the Colorado Fuel & Iron archives at the Bessemer Historical Society reveal that prominent Pueblo architect William White Stickney designed the houses in several CF&I mining towns, but there are no known records or him designing the houses constructed by the Minnequa Town Company. Stickney's work in the mining towns directly corresponds to the timing of the Bessemer housing boom and his designs appear familiar to the MTC houses in that they are simple box forms usually capped by a hipped roof with some type of ornamentation to distinguish one house from the next; this ornamentation could be parapet walls to evoke a certain style or brick or stucco wall treatments.

During the course of research for this context, some architects did emerge for a few commercial and institutional buildings. Those architects are as follows:

George Roe – Bessemer City Hall (demolished in 1939) and the original Edison School building near the Harlem Subdivision (demolished at an unknown time)

Jacob M. Gile – Erickson Block (built around by Minnequa Bank and now unrecognizable as the Total Longterm Care building), 1902 Minnequa Hospital building (built around by the ever-expanding hospital, only two buildings at north end of hospital site remain), and 1909 Edison

School building (now a National Register property)

Sterner and Williams – CF&I Office Building (likely the design of Jacob Gile who worked for the firm)

John K. Monroe – 1950s St. Mary-Corwin hospital renovation (built around again with subsequent expansions)

Weston and Frost – 1883 Bessemer School building

Walter DeMordaunt – 1931 Bessemer School; as Pueblo School District 20 seemingly exclusively utilized the talents of Walter DeMordaunt, it is highly probable that he designed the 1941 Strack School that replaced the Danforth School building

Hurtig, Gardner, and Froelich (HGF) – 1977 Minnequa Elementary School

The Question of Stucco

Stucco exterior wall cladding is ubiquitous in Pueblo, especially in Bessemer. In some cases it was applied as an original component of the building; in many more cases, however, stucco was a later modification installed over the original wall surface, which was usually brick but occasionally wood siding. Because stucco is so prevalent in Pueblo, the origins of its popularity are worth exploring. While numerous attempts to find a single reason for the material's wide use across the city have proven fruitless, the application of stucco was probably the result of one or a combination of the issues below.

Architectural Style. Particularly in cases in which stucco is the original wall cladding, the material was probably installed as a character-defining feature of the building's architectural style. Stucco is a key feature of two, broad groups of architectural styles: those of medieval and renaissance English origins and those to Mediterranean and Southwestern origin. Styles in the first category were not widely built in Pueblo and include Tudor Revival, Craftsman, Jacobean/Elizabethan, and English-Norman Cottage. The second category, styles of Mediterranean and Southwestern origin, were much more prevalent throughout Bessemer and Pueblo, and include Mission, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, and Pueblo Revival. These styles tended to evolve after wide-spread Anglo settlement in the previously Mexican Southwest and travelled west to east, creating hybrid, Mexican-American regional building traditions that defined the American Southwest.[1] Particularly relevant for Pueblo were the stucco-clad, hybrid styles that evolved in Santa Fe in the 1920s and came to define the architecture of the Southwest, particularly the Pueblo Revival.[2]

The popularity of these styles not only explains the prevalence of stucco as an original building finish but also may provide a reason for the installation of the material on the buildings that were not originally covered in stucco. Building owners may have chosen to clad their buildings in stucco as more and more neighboring buildings evoked Southwestern styles or were attracted to the stylistic precedent and wished to alter their façades.

Cultural Precedent. As mentioned earlier in this document, the popularity of stucco as an exterior wall treatment may have cultural implications. Stucco was a common cladding material in the Mediterranean and Central America. Thus the large blocks of immigrants from Italy and Mexico that came to Pueblo may have brought a preference for the material with them or may have found it an appealing way to modify their houses. Moreover, studies of Hispanic settlement patterns in New Mexico and Colorado suggest that these migrants would have been exposed to the Santa Fe building tradition as well and could have brought it to Pueblo.[3]

Pollution. Did the pollution from the mill have had any

effect on the local architectural scene? As buildings in the city age, they endure prolonged exposure to the pollution of the mills, and a supposedly subsequent loss of material integrity results. This loss of integrity is probably not the reason for an increase in stucco-cladded houses in Bessemer or greater Pueblo.

Weather plays an important role in the deterioration of building materials, even in the absence of pollution. The semi-arid environment in which the city rests has little effect on building materials when compared to other wetter regions of the country, and the atmosphere in Pueblo is largely devoid of the salinity that plagues coastal regions. Building materials are exposed to regular freeze-thaw cycles in Pueblo, however, and these cycles must have at least a marginal effect on the integrity of building materials.

A European study published in 2000, sheds light on the subject of pollution on building materials. The study states that brick used as a building material is at "very low" risk to air pollutants; however, mortar, used to adhere the bricks together, is at "moderate to high" risk to deteriorate due to air pollution. Painted materials such as wood siding vary greatly for their susceptibility to deterioration due to the type of paint used and the fillers and pigments in the paint. The study indicates that painted materials generally have an adequate resistance to air pollution to protect the material underneath.[4]

As for the specific effects of the mills' pollution on Bessemer's and Pueblo's buildings and the link to the predominance of post-construction stucco, there probably is not one. A study by the firm Stearns-Roger titled "Evaluation of Coke Oven Emissions Control Program" published in 1971 attests to the pollution of the Steel Works. CF&I commissioned the study to determine the feasibility of replacing coke ovens at the facility with Koppers-designed coke ovens.[5] The study came to three conclusions:

1. The existing coke ovens could be operated for an indefinite period, but replacement of these ovens was essential if a significant reduction in particulate emissions form the coke plant was to be achieved.

2. If CF&I constructed the new coke plant ovens to the Koppers design, the estimated particulate emissions from the coke plant would be reduced by 80 percent.

3. The Koppers' design incorporated the best, commercially proven technology then available for controlling emissions from the coke plant.[6]

The study recommended other modifications to the Bessemer plant as a way of strengthening emission controls, not only the coke ovens. The report states that a total reduction of 60 percent of emissions could be achieved with improvements to the sinter plant, replacing the open hearth furnace with an electric furnace, and improvements to the basic oxygen furnace.[7]

The report also creates a picture of the pollution situation in Pueblo. Transportation was the overwhelming cause of pollution in Pueblo, as CF&I accounted for only 24 percent of the pollution citywide. As for the composition of materials of the pollution, sulfur dioxide accounted for under 5,000 tons of the over 140,000 tons of yearly pollution; sulfur dioxide was also the largest culprit of damage to building materials attributed by the European study.[8] Stearns-Roger also unveils the geographic areas most likely to be affected:

> The pattern of [the] geographical area which is affected by CF&I arises because of the predominance of downslope drainage of air. That is the pie-shaped area extending generally westward from the CF&I plant. The pie-shaped area extending generally

> westward from CF&I arises because of upslope flow. These patterns of downslope drainage and upslope flow occur on a predominant number of days throughout the year. There are, of course, days when the dispersion is affected by other strong weather patterns: however, these days average between 20 and 50 per year.[9]

The map included with the report illustrates that most of the pollution settles near the Arkansas River; on most days, the Bessemer neighborhood, due to its location west of the plant, remains largely devoid of CF&I-attributed pollution. There are accounts, however, that on days when the wind blew just right, clothes hung out to dry in Bessemer achieved a rust color.[10] The area with the greatest risk of being affected by the steelmaker's pollution is the Salt Creek neighborhood though, downhill to the northeast and nearer the river than the plant. In light of these studies, the predominance of stucco as an exterior adornment in the neighborhood and city must be attributed to something else.

Economics. Whether or not it was pollution, the elements, age, or fashion, the application of stucco to existing buildings certainly was a low-cost, if not lowest-cost, alternative. Property owners throughout the city have consistently found that it was more cost-effective to cover aging and decaying brick with the rough-hewn alternative than it is to repair the brick. Today it can cost over $18 per square foot to replace a brick veneer, compared to merely $7 per square foot to install stucco.[11]

Regardless of cost, the installation of stucco may itself indicate a change in the socioeconomic circumstances of the property owner. As immigrants found steady, well-paying work at the steelworks, they may have invested in enlargements and remodelings of their residences, projects that often included the installation of stucco exterior wall cladding. Stucco, for instance, might have unified a brick house with its frame addition.

Local Materials and Installers. The proliferation of certain local building materials may have precipitated the widespread application of stucco. Given the composition of regional clays, locally made bricks may have been particularly susceptible to deterioration, and subsequent owners and contractors found stucco to be a low-cost, easily installed alternative. This was certainly the case in Colorado towns that produced bricks from the Platte River's particularly sandy clays.[12]

However, the success of Pueblo's brick industry, particularly the Summit Brick Company, suggests that locally produced bricks proved to be quite durable and probably did not require the application of stucco. Regardless, property owners should be aware that brick will continue to deteriorate even when concealed by stucco.

Another reason stucco spread across Pueblo may have more to do with the installers rather than building materials. As is often the case in small cities and towns, a particularly resourceful, clever, or influential stucco contractor may have promoted the material, although such a figure has not yet been identified. In the absence of a single, prominent contractor, it may have been a proliferation of installers. Some circumstantial evidence suggests that as the mill increasingly laid off employees from the 1960s onward, some of those workers found ready self-employment as stucco contractors.

The application of stucco in Bessemer and Pueblo was probably a combination of these factors, rather than just one. Careful analysis of both the building and its architectural, social, cultural, and economic context is critical when making landmarking decisions.

Form vs. Type vs. Style

Architectural historians use three terms to describe the built environment: form, type, and style. Form is the overall shape of the building, including its integral features such as roofline. Type relates to a building's original use (examples include air ports, gas stations, banks). Style is the exterior embellishment that decorates the building; many styles can be applied to a form (for instance Craftsman Bungalow, California Bungalow, or Chicago Bungalow).

In Bessemer, it is hard to point a finger at many of the houses and say "This house was built in the (insert any style) style" as most of the houses are constructed in forms and adorned with features evocative of a certain style or two. Even without houses following established architectural styles, Bessemer provides an abundance of architecturally significant vernacular houses. Selected forms, types, and styles that appear in Bessemer are highlighted here, representing both widely recognized styles and those that appear endemic to Bessemer. It is important to note that no intensive-level architectural survey was conducted in Bessemer, and the forms and styles listed may not be a complete listing. Much of the detail about the various styles and types comes from the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's *A Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering* (July 2008). Date ranges for architectural styles and building types do not necessarily conform to those generally established in national chronologies, but rather represent an estimate of when such buildings appeared in Pueblo.

Notes

1. For examples of the evolution of Mexican-American regional building traditions in the Southwest, see Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2006); and William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004).
2. Wilson.
3. Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).
4. P. Watkiss et al., "Impacts of Air Pollution on Building Materials", September 1, 2000, http://web.me.com/arirabl/Site/Publications_files/Buildings-PollAtmos.pdf.
5. Koppers coke ovens were designed by engineers of Koppers Chemical Corporation, a Pittsburgh-based company that produces coke and similar products.
6. "Evaluation of Coke Oven Emissions Control Program" (Stearns-Roger, October 1971), 1.
7. Ibid., 37.
8. Ibid., Figure 8.
9. Ibid., 34.
10. *Old Ties, New Attachments: Italian-American Folklife in the West* (Library of Congress, 1992), 148.
11. "Renovation and Building Costs", n.d., http://www.ontariocontractors.com/costs.htm.
12. For example see Adam Thomas, *Crossroads in Eden: The Development of Fort Lupton, 1835-2000* (Westminster: SWCA Environmental Consultants, 2003).

Minnequa Town Company Cottage Form (1900-1905)

This form is probably the most identified in the Bessemer neighborhood. The Minnequa Town Company constructed houses almost exclusively in this form in both one- and two-story designs. Bessemer examples sometimes received ornamentation to differentiate one house from the next, or sometimes two houses of the same design were constructed consecutively. The MTC constructed from 1900 to 1905. The description of this form covers only the MTC-built houses; similar homes of this era and form would be called Classic Cottages.

Classic Cottage Form (1890-1920)

This is a one- or one-and-a-half-story, square plan home. Typically, it hosts a hipped roof, and the porch is integrated into the main roof line. In Bessemer, several examples have turrets. Windows are one-over-one. Ornamentation can take this form from Classic Revival to Craftsman styles. In Bessemer, the Classic Cottage form is a non-MTC house built over a broader period, 1890 to 1920.

Bessemer Tiny Cottage Form (1890-1905)

The Bessemer neighborhood is filled with modest homes. One endemic form is this tiny house. It is one room wide and two rooms deep and hosts a hipped roof. Though the exact dates of construction for this form is unknown, it likely dates to the earliest Bessemer construction.

Hall and Parlor Form (1900-1950)

Another example of a small house form, the Hall and Parlor, is indicative of working-class neighborhoods, though it is quite rare in Bessemer. These homes are two rooms wide and one room deep, which makes it appear larger on a double lot. A side gable roof is a hallmark of the form. The Hall and Parlor house displayed here features a basement to which the stairs may be either inside or exposed at the rear of the house. This form usually dates to around 1900, but this example was constructed in 1949.

Shotgun Form (1880-1900)

This small house form is common to the southern United States. In Bessemer, this form is usually constructed before the turn of the twentieth century. The simple long and narrow rectangular shape easily suited the narrow lots in the oldest parts of Bessemer north of Northern Avenue. Houses constructed in the Shotgun form could either have steeply- or gently-sloped front-gable roof. A row of Shotgun houses in the 1200 block of East Orman Avenue all feature covered front porches. The front doors of these houses are usually offset to one side of center.

Foursquare Form (1900-1930)

The foursquare is a two-story, symmetrical form that was built after 1900 throughout Colorado. Examples in Bessemer are few. Roofs are usually hipped and have broad, over-hanging eaves. High styles include columns with ornamental freezes (sometimes with dentils). Bessemer examples tend to lack ornamentation.

The Bessemer Duplex Form (1880-1910)

Bessemer's distinct boom period necessitated the construction of multifamily homes. One form found in the neighborhood is this symmetrical, two-story duplex, which features two units, side by side. The front doors are covered with porches. Windows were originally two over two, and the duplexes likely originally hosted Italianate elements. It is not clear if they are brick or frame construction, though both have been covered with stucco.

Terrace Form (1890-1910)

This form of building appears in other areas of Pueblo, always as a multi-family residence. These buildings date to about 1900 and are constructed of brick, though one of the examples has been covered in stucco. Terrace form buildings feature a separate entrance for each residence, a flat roof, segmentally-arched windows, and corbelling along the cornice atop a parapet wall. Two-story versions often feature a second-story porch.

Early Ranch Form (1940-1960)

Ranch homes are one-story with low-pitched or flat roofs and wide overhanging eaves. Many feature picture windows, low chimneys, and minimal use of decorative wrought iron. Examples of the earliest ranch homes in Pueblo can be found in Bessemer and date to the early- to mid-1940s. These are compact, usually less than 900 square feet, and do not have an attached garage. Early Ranches in the 1100 Block of Eilers were typically brick with clay tile roofs. Over time the low, horizontal façade became increasingly more elongated and total square footage also increased. Later ranches also featured carports or attached one- and two-car garages. Minimal front porches emphasize informal patio living in the rear yard. The basic Ranch form was a perfect canvas for a variety of stylistic details such as scalloped gingerbread trim, weeping mortar, or Colonial Revival elements like pedimented entries, pilasters, and decorative shutters.

Minimal Traditional Form (1940s)

These economical, basic homes were particularly popular prior to, during, and immediately after World War II. These houses marked a transition between earlier bungalows or cottage forms and the earliest Ranch homes. The small buildings had simple roofs with closed eaves and feature few decorative details, although most have non-operative shutters. Minimal Traditional houses were built with a wide range of exterior siding options, including asbestos shingles, brick, wood, stucco, or metal. Within Pueblo subdivisions platted in the 1940s with homes constructed in the same decade, nearly all houses were Minimal Traditional in form.

Alley Home or Granny Flat Type (1900-1960)

During Bessemer's boom, housing was at a premium. Since there were few available building lots, secondary structures were constructed on the property alley to expand the number of housing units. Later, outbuildings and garages were also converted to housing. These building types are common in Bessemer. They are smaller than the main structure on the propert and often considered temporary. Their forms and styles vary widely.

Gas Station (House) with Canopy Type (1920-1930)

The square building connected to a canopy served a growing automobile-centered Bessemer. This type is found throughout Colorado, though examples are becoming more rare. This appears to be the only example that remains in Pueblo.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Commercial Building Type

In Bessemer, the formal commercial building is one store front wide and built deep to the alley. The few examples that remain are typically two-story (the second floor typically served as a residence for the shop keeper and family), though a one-story example exists. There also remains a false front commercial building. Larger front windows invited customers to shop. The buildings of this type in Bessemer have little to no ornamentation.

House with Commercial Addition Type (1900-1910)

Neighborhood markets appear in every neighborhood in Pueblo platted prior to about 1920, but nowhere else does this type appear so frequently as in Bessemer. In this neighborhood, the markets usually date between 1900 and 1910 and feature an adjacent, instead of second-story, residence. Though the commercial areas of the buildings are quite simple forms, the residence portion is usually constructed in an architectural style. The building at 849 East Evans is notable in that the residence, constructed in the Dutch Colonial Revival style, completely dominates the adjoining commercial structure (see page 142).

Edwardian Style (1890-1900)

This style of house is quite common in the historic neighborhoods of Pueblo, though less so in Bessemer, where these homes date between 1890 and 1900. They share the asymmetrical massing and multiple gables of Queen Anne houses but are more restrained and contain less ornamentation.

Shingle Style (1900-1910)

The style features exterior walls covered in wood shingles, which quite often appear above the first story with masonry below. Shingle houses have an asymmetrical façade, short overhanging eaves with eave returns, and a multi-gabled roof. This style is rare in both Bessemer and Pueblo and dates to around 1900.

Dutch Colonial Revival Style (1900-1920)

The Dutch Colonial Revival style is quite rare in Bessemer, as in other areas of Pueblo, and only two were located in the context area. The defining characteristic of the style is the gambrel roof, while other features include multi-light double-hung windows, wide overhanging eaves, and dormers. These houses date from 1900 to 1920 in Bessemer.

Mediterranean Style (1910-1935)

In Pueblo, the best example of this style is the 1931 Walter DeMordaunt-designed Bessemer School. In Bessemer, buildings of this style feature a low-pitched gable or hipped roof covered by tiles, arches over windows and doors, stucco-clad exterior walls, and sometimes a tower. This Sugar Cube House built in 1922 at 803 Berkley is constructed of concrete block and painted white in order to give the illusion of stucco.

Mission Style (1880-2012)

Bessemer featured two large complexes constructed in the Mission style of architecture: the original Minnequa Hospital buildings (all demolished) and the office buildings of Colorado Fuel & Iron (three of which remain). Features of Mission buildings include curvilinear parapet walls atop the gables, a tile roof, stucco-clad exterior walls, and arcaded windows and entrances. The John Newman Catholic School is a later example. The new Bessemer fire station is currently being constructed in a revival of the style.

Pueblo Revival Style (1900-1950)

In Bessemer, as in other neighborhoods, Pueblo Revival buildings were constructed over a number of years, namely from 1900 until the 1950s. Pueblo Revival buildings feature a flat roof with vigas protruding through the exterior walls and battered walls covered in stucco. In Bessemer, a few examples even include crude wooden ladders.

Tudor Revival Style (1910-1925)

Thanks to architect William Stickney, Pueblo has excellent examples of Tudor Revival. Bessemer, has more subtle interpretations of this style, which is dominated by false or ornamental half-timbering. Typically the buildings feature steeply pitched roofs. Windows in the pure form of this style are tall and narrow casements, with multiple lights. The Bessemer examples likely date to before 1925.

Colonial Revival Style (1900-1920)

Buildings constructed in Bessemer of this style are often quite simple interpretations. These buildings are symmetrical in shape and often feature pediments over entrances and windows, multi-light double-hung windows, shutters, and columns. In Bessemer, the Colonial Revival style dates from 1900 to about 1920.

Craftsman Style (1900-1945)

The Craftsman style of building is another quite rare style in Bessemer, though it often appears in working-class neighborhoods. Craftsman buildings showcase the builder's talent and techniques and defining characteristics include exposed rafter and purlin ends, bracketing under wide overhanging eaves, a clipped gable roof, and multi-light over single-light windows. The best example in the neighborhood is the house attached to the Eilers Tavern. The tavern itself displays elements of the Mission style.

Modern Styles (generalized) (1920-1990)

Modernism sought to make a break with the past, freeing architects from historical precedents and from traditional building methods. Modern styles appear in Pueblo as early as the 1920s and continue throughout the twentieth century. In addition to the styles shown here, in Bessemer there are several buildings constructed in the Googie style and the International style. There are also modern types, including trailer homes and trailer courts. For more information regarding these style, refer to: *In Pursuit of the American Dream: Pueblo in the Modern Age*, 1940-1982 by Mary Therese Anstey, Cheri Yost, and Adam Thomas.

Moderne Style (1925-1945)

Moderne style buildings, also known as Art Moderne and Streamline Moderne, reflected early- and mid-twentieth century excitement about technological advancements, high speed transportation, and innovative new construction techniques. In fact, many of the homes and buildings of this style look like trains or ocean liners, featuring metal details at the corners ("speed lines") or round port-hole windows. Moderne buildings have smooth, rounded wall surfaces often covered in stucco. They also feature flat roofs, steel corner windows, and use glass block ornament.

Appendix B:

Preservation Action Plan

Bessemer is an interesting neighborhood to study and to experience. The extant built environment reflects the history of steel worker immigrants forged together in this place. Bessemer's historic preservation opportunities are many. The following provides guidance for the neighborhood's stakeholders and may help guide preservation efforts.

Research

The time and constraints of this project did not allow extensive coverage of all the interesting aspects of the neighborhood's history. Specifically, a few items warrant further research.

R. 1 Granny Flats

Bessemer has a number of converted Granny Flats, or outbuildings and former garages converted to residential space. It is not clear when these conversions started to happen or if it was related to a city ordinance or another cultural or social trend. While it may not provide much detail, a search of the City permit files might reveal a pattern. Understanding this trend is important for zoning and planning review. A consultant can work with the historic preservation planner and History Colorado to research and examine this trend.

R.2 Oral Histories

Many of Bessemer's community members are second- or third- or more generation residents. While individual oral histories are very valuable, in Bessemer recording family histories—even in the less formal style of the Story Corps Project where family members interview each other—would be extremely interesting and valuable. Priorities for recording oral histories would be multi generation families who lived and worked in the community. The Bessemer Historical Society is already tackling this need.

R.3 History of Asian Culture in Pueblo

This research did not sufficiently address Chinese, Japanese, or other Asians in Bessemer, though a strong community Japanese community existed in Pueblo after the 1920s. The presence of a Japanese YMCA peeked interest in the subject and the possible connection to the Granada Relocation Center, in nearby Amache, Colorado. This subject is ripe for more research and might be included in other initiatives of History Colorado.

R.4 Benedict Park Information

Though Benedict Park is within the bounds of this

▼ **It takes a village.** Preservation is the work of many. Small actions combine to achieve great things.

- City planner (preservation)
- City Council
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Pueblo History Groups
- Neighborhood Associations and Institutions
- Owner Occupants
- Consultants
- History Colorado/OAHP

study and is listed on the Pueblo Parks and Recreation site, there was little information about it. It was likely part of the adjacent St. Mary's Church and records there may reveal more of its history. This would be a project suited for a student or planning department intern.

Document

Documentation involves the collection of geographic, historical, and architectural information about buildings, while not necessarily analyzing their historic significance. A key feature of historic preservation documentation is gathering basic information about a structure or landscape, including location, construction history, and photographs. Gathering such data should be an ongoing task, so as opportunities arise the information is organized and accessible to both city planners and citizens. In addition, other documentation tasks, such as organizing records, would make researching the neighborhood more efficient.

D.1 Index Ethnic Newspapers

One of the best sources of Bessemer's history is also the most difficult to research: ethnic newspapers. There were 125 newspapers published citywide, twenty-six of these in a language other than English. Having all of these newspapers translated, indexed, and/or digitized to make them more readily available to researchers would reveal a great deal about the amazing mix of people who have called Bessemer home. The Bessemer Historical Society, the Pueblo County Historical Society, and Historic Pueblo, Inc. would be ideal partners on this project, and grant funding may be available to tackle it.

D.2 Keep Ahead of CDOT

The Colorado Department of Transportation is once again planning to widen Interstate 25. This could greatly and negatively affect the Bessemer neighborhood, especially the Eilers area where 50 percent of the condemnations for the project are located. Now is the time for the City to collect basic information (photographs, construction dates, forms and styles) on each of the houses within the proposed zone, even those considered too modern to document under the National Historic Preservation Act's fifty year rule.

D.3 Church Survey

Bessemer is home to lots of churches, many of which have changed location over time. Since this project did not involve a comprehensive survey, it is appropriate to at least take an inventory of each and understand briefly the community it served and locations it called home. The churches themselves can contribute to this project, relying on expertise provided by the Bessemer Historical Society and Historic Pueblo, Inc.

D.4 Tavern Inventory

While everyone may not appreciate them, Bessemer certainly has a wide variety of bars, taverns, liquor establishments, and adult entertainment venues. From an architectural history perspective, these add a colorful note to the built environment. It is a good time to take a photograph and record basic

information on each for the historic record. This type of simple recordation can be accomplished by volunteers.

Evaluate

Bessemer has lost many notable buildings. There is no historic district potential around the CF&I Office Complex because so many buildings from the historic period have been torn down. There is also no historic district potential around the hospital because of the many modern additions and alterations to the complex. However, each of these sites has a few individual buildings that are either already designated or might qualify for historic designation individually. Beyond these sites, Bessemer, more than any other neighborhood in Pueblo, has a remarkable number of intact resources that contribute to a potential neighborhood district with many homes built during a distinct and short time span, offering a very specific period of significance.

E.1 Designate Local Landmarks

The City should invite the following property owners to consider local landmarking or National Register listing:

CF&I Tunnel Building. The tunnel building at the CF&I Office Complex is the only one of the three extant buildings that has no historic designation; it was excluded in the 2002 National Register nomination. The reason for this is not clear. It might be age, since the building was constructed after World War II. Still, it has strong cultural significance, since many Puebloans connect to it as the place where their grandfathers and fathers emerged after working their shifts at the mill.

St. Mary-Corwin Maintenance Building. This building

Bessemer's Designated Historic Resources

The following buildings are listed in the National or State Register of Historic Places or designated a Pueblo Historic Landmark:

Swartz Block/Odd Fellows Hall at 1143 East Evans
Bessemer Fire Station at 1201 East Evans
Gus's Place at 1201 and 1203 Elm Street
William J. Anderson House at 1005 Lake Avenue
J. Euclid Miles House at 1007 Lake Avenue
K.M. Flynn House at 1013 Lake Avenue
Hazelhurst-Berkley House at 905 Berkley Avenue
Saint Francis Xavier Church at 611 Logan Avenue
St. Mary's School at 211 East Mesa Avenue
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church 1000-1010 Spruce Street
First Congregational Church at 28 West Evans
Minnequa Steelworks Office Building and Dispensary at 215 and 225 Canal Street
CF&I Mine Rescue Car #1at 215 Canal Street
City Park Carousel (the original Lake Minnequa Carousel) now at 800 Goodnight Avenue
Edison School at 900 West Mesa

▼ **What Remains.** Most of the original buildings at CF&I and St. Mary-Corwin Hospital have been demolished. The one that remains at St. Mary-Corwin, below, is a small utilitarian building. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

▲ **Landmark.** The Eilers Tavern is just one property in Bessemer to consider landmarking. *(Jim Lindberg/City of Pueblo)*

appears to be the only original, non-altered building remaining from the Corwin Hospital. It might be eligible for local landmarking for its architectural merits and not necessarily its association with the hospital.

Eilers Tavern (326 East Mesa Avenue). The Tavern is a beloved landmark in the Eilers neighborhood and represents an excellent example of the Bessemer commercial-residential building. The commercial front is a loose interpretation of the Mission Style while the residential building is strongly Craftsman.

Gagliano's Deli (1220 Elm Street). According to the Bessemer Historical Society's driving tour, Gagliano's was built in 1900 and has "prepared and served Italian meats, cheeses and kitchen specialty goods, as well as Slovenian favorites such as potica" for generations.

African Methodist Episcopal Church (613 West Mesa Avenue). The Bessemer driving tour describes this property, built in 1917, as the second home of the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church. The parish merged with the Saint John A.M.E. church in 1976 at which time it became known as First A.M.E.

Zolesmann's Bakery and Deli (912 East Abriendo Avenue). The bakery is known for its "pizelles and specialty wedding cookies" according to the driving tour and occupies a building built in 1900.

Archangel Michael Orthodox Church (801 Summit Avenue). Originally founded in 1896 by Slovinian steel workers, the parish formed in 1901. After the 1921 flood destroyed the original church, the Rockefeller Foundation donated funds for a new church, dedicated in 1929. Its simple gothic exterior hosts a beautiful interior, both of which are worthy of National Register listing.

Bessemer School (1125 East Routt Avenue). Walter DeMordaunt's design for the Carlile School using brick instead of stucco is a the best example of Mediterranean Revival architecture in Pueblo.

▶ **MTC or Not MTC?** A comprehensive survey of Bessemer would reveal which houses were MTC houses and which were not. The house below is an intriguing example of a possible MTC cottage that may host original features or may have changed over time. The twin house next door (on right) would point toward an original design. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

United Steel Workers 2102 Labor Hall. Built in 1942, this building is a good example of the early International style and likely contributes to Pueblo's cultural history in support of labor.

St. John Neumann Catholic School (2415 East Orman Avenue). An excellent example of Mission Revival, the St. John Newman School is a candidate for local landmarking, especially for its association with education in Bessemer as the Lakeview and then St. John Neumann Catholic School.

E.2 Nominate Ethnic Districts

Ethnographic resources are those natural and human-made landscapes, sites, objects, and structures that reflect a shared identity. Bessemer's mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and leisure spaces provide a unique window on its past and present occupants and its multiethnic heritage. Moreover, the neighborhood provides a context for labor history beyond the more commonly designated company mining town. By studying and designating smaller ethnic districts within Bessemer, perhaps centered on the neighborhood store, church, and/or bar, Bessemer can continue to celebrate its ethnic heritage. Historic Pueblo, Inc. has been a strong advocate of local landmarking.

E.3 MTC Cottage Survey

The most obvious systematic historic preservation survey for the Bessemer Neighborhood is the Minnequa Town Company houses, 196 of which were identified during the research for this context. Their similar architectural forms host a multitude of style elements that make each cottage individually unique, while together communicating a vibrant whole. The City should seek funding for a formal survey through History Colorado's certified local government program.

E.4 Community Built Survey

Knowing that grant-funded surveys are difficult and costly, Pueblo seeks to reduce expenditures for survey while involving owners and neighbors. These recording efforts are modeled on the community-built park planning practice that engages citizens and creates strong buy-in and sustainability. These surveys should be designed to be small enough to be completed by local groups; and the priority should be set by where the greatest interest exists.

This innovative approach, first mentioned in the preservation plan for South Pueblo, has been initiated in the Eilers

◀ **Community built surveys.** Pueblo seeks to reduce the cost of survey by having neighbors actively participate in the research and inventory process. These homes in the Eilers neighborhood are a candidate for this kind of project. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

▶**Industrial Architecture.** Bessemer has buildings that defy traditional architectural styles. These two examples have subtle elements of several styles, but overall have a very industrial feel. Having a more robust style guide, based on a windshield survey, that includes these special buildings might help the community appreciate the neighborhood's unique character. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

Neighborhood, where homeowners have started documenting their history. This close-knit neighborhood features approximately twenty postwar homes, the Eiler's Tavern, and St. Mary's Church. The project will include an historic context, telling the story of the Eilers Neighborhood in Pueblo, and area residents will learn how to record the history and architecture of their homes and community buildings, likely incorporating oral histories. The City and Historic Pueblo have already committed time and funds to this project and the neighbors are engaged in fundraising as well. Though this approach is experimental, the advantages include flexibility, lower cost, and the ability to apply lessons learned in Eilers to similar neighborhoods interested in the future.

Monitor

Through a Certificate of Appropriateness review, Pueblo's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) monitors the maintenance and alterations to local landmarks. Since so few of Bessemer's buildings come before it, the commission can provide assistance to local property owners interested in the process.

M.1. Bessemer Style Guide

Creating even a quick style guide in the Bessemer neighborhood proved quite challenging. The buildings in Bessemer are rarely pure examples of any one style. As such, a more in-depth guide might define more Bessemer-specific styles and help classify the MTC cottages. This could help categorize and describe some of the buildings in the neighborhood that can not be found in typical architectural history books. It would also allow for efficient Historic Preservation Commission review, should Bessemer resources be designated in the future.

M.2. The Question of Stucco

In Bessemer, as throughout Pueblo, the application of stucco makes evaluating buildings for historic integrity challenging. Sometimes stucco is an entirely appropriate exterior wall treatment, particularly when it is a component of the original architectural style. More often, however, stucco in Pueblo represents a later modification, which well-meaning preservationists reflexively consider a distracting, even destructive alteration. However, the later application of stucco to any building in Pueblo should not immediately discount its physical integrity and, hence, automatically prohibit its eligibility for landmarking. As the discussion of stucco in the style guide section of this report demonstrates, the reasons property owners installed the material were not only varied but also could themselves be historically, culturally, and architecturally significant. The application of stucco exterior wall cladding should be considered on a case-by-case basis, with an analysis of the material linked not only to the immediate property history, but also to the larger historical and physical context. It is time for the HPC to reconcile its stance on stucco as a contributor to Pueblo's built environment. This would include establishing a period of significance that accommodates the introduction and widespread adoption of exterior stucco and differentiates between historic and non-historic applications.

Promote

Bessemer already celebrates its local history through a

▲ **Stucco is Bessemer.** Whether applied originally or after the fact, stucco is a staple of Bessemer architecture. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

▶ **Maintenance is Stewardship.** Simple maintenance tasks keep buildings useable and preserve the character of the neighborhood. *(Jeffrey DeHerrera)*

wide variety of promotional events and products. For example, for its Saints and Sinners fund raiser, the Bessemer Historical Society takes participants on a tour of bars and churches. It also recently received Colorado Department of Transportation enhancement dollars to create an outdoor exhibit park to host its larger items like the Mine Safety Car, a ladle, Davenport locomotive, and coal carts. Historic Pueblo, Inc. is constantly advocating for landmarking properties, including those in Bessemer. The neighborhood needs to continuously rejoice in these successes and promote its heritage resources.

P.1 Revise the Bessemer History Driving Brochure

Thanks to National Park Service Preserve America funding, the Bessemer Historical Society created a two-sided brochure to direct visitors and neighbors to the neighborhood's historic sites. Unfortunately, many of these are "the former site of" locations. There are plenty of extant resources to celebrate, and the next revision can expand the list to include the Minnequa Town Cottages and other important still-standing resources.

P.2 Steel'Bration

Bessemer stakeholders should join the Bessemer Historical Society's push to promote the neighborhood through its Steel'Brations. In 2011, BHS held a party in honor of the 125th anniversary of thews neighborhood; 2012 is 140th anniversary of mill. This one-day event offers music, tours, special exhibits, and ethnic foods. It brings visitors to the neighborhood and binds residents to their community.

Steward

Stewardship requires the effort of all the neighborhood stakeholders, especially owners and occupants. It is maintaining buildings in good condition, patronizing local businesses, and leveraging Bessemer's strengths.

S.1 Donate to the Neighborhood Repository

The Bessemer Historical Society and CF&I Archives host a nationally significant collection of museum objects. The archives make readily available its extensive collection of photos of the mill and its digital copies of newspapers and company publications such as *The Indicator*, *Camp & Plant*, *Industrial Bulletin*, and *The Blast*. Still, the collection lacks extensive photos of the neighborhood itself. The archives are an excellent repository for neighbors to share the history in locked in their attics and basements. Donating personal objects and photographs is an excellent way to give a face to the working men and women and their families.

S.2 Shrinking Cities - Shrinking Neighborhoods

Bessemer has lost around 50 percent of its population since 1960. The neighborhood was built for a much larger population with three times the steel-related jobs. Densely built neighborhoods like Bessemer, that have experienced population loss (sometimes as little as 10 percent) often have trouble maintaining the infrastructure built for the once larger population. The residents that remain take on a higher per capita cost of maintaining that infrastructure; decommissioning systems is costly as well. In addition, the cities are faced with too many homes and eventually host numerous vacant and unmaintained buildings. Public health and safety becomes an issue as buildings crumble. In 2010, Bessemer faced a 17.2 percent vacancy rate. The City of Pueblo must addressing these issues in all its planning and revitalization efforts in Bessemer and beyond.

S.3 Save the CF&I Stacks and the Mill

The Minnequa Steelworks, with its towering stacks and sprawling mill buildings viewable from nearly every vantage point in the city and visible for miles and miles on every approach into Pueblo, is indisputably the city's single most important landmark, both in the sense of a primary geographic reference point and the epitome of the city's cultural, social, and economic history. Though much of the mill has been torn down, now is the time to document what is left of the mill to Historic American Engineering Record standards.

When it comes to the preservation of the mill, all Puebloans and all Coloradans are stakeholders and, as such, must act unilaterally to protect it, especially from the planned expansion of Interstate 25. Too often in battles to preserve its landmarks, Pueblo has negotiated and lost. But the Minnequa Works is worth fighting for—and winning.

The story of CF&I and its Minnequa Works is not merely a local or regional phenomenon. This is a national narrative—a crucial yet largely redacted passage in the American story. The

importance of the steel mill in settling the west—in building the modern United States—cannot be overstated. Moreover, the mill brought together one of the most diverse labor forces ever assembled in a most unexpected place. It was also the center of pivotal struggles in the nation's labor history, reshaping labor and management practices across the country. Indeed, it may not be beyond reason to seek the creation of a national heritage area, particularly one that included the Minnequa Works, Bessemer, the mining towns (especially Ludlow), and all other CF&I properties acrosss the intermountain West.

Appendix C:

Project Methodology

The steelworks remains the most important development in the city's history, and still employs over 1,000 workers. Indeed, the history of Bessemer and the history of the steelworks are intertwined. For this historical context, the City of Pueblo asked that the story be about the Bessemer Neighborhood itself and not CF&I. There are very good sources for the history of the company; this history is about the company's town. For the most part, secondary historical sources remain largely devoid of information about the town and neighborhood of Bessemer; generally, the only mention of Bessemer in these sources occurs in a few sentences or a few short paragraphs. Thus, this history of the neighborhood is informed most by its still extant built environment.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to provide a detailed overview of Bessemer's architectural styles and thematic social and economic developments as well as examine historic district potential and facilitate local landmarking efforts. The study also provided preservation and survey strategies.

Funding

The National Park Service funded this project through History Colorado's Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) Certified Local Government (CLG) program. Through a competitive process, the OAHP granted funding to the City of Pueblo. Historic Pueblo, Inc. and the Bessemer Historical Society provided matching funds for this project. The total project funding was $29,000.

Project Area

For this historical context, Bessemer refers to the geographic area roughly bounded by Washington Street to the north, Interstate 25 to the east, Berkley Avenue to the West, and Streator Avenue to the south. The area also includes Lake Minnequa and the area surrounding the former Edison School and Eilers Smelter site north of Northern Avenue to the Arkansas River. Though the original plat of the town of Bessemer is not nearly as large as the study area, the boundaries make up what present-day Puebloans identify as Bessemer, the historically-named Laibach area (also known as Bojon Town and more recently Eilers Heights) and parts of Minnequa Heights.

Scope of Work as Proposed

a. Facilitate a kickoff meeting in the community to explain the historical and architectural context and preservation plan, answer questions, and to receive suggestions about local sources of information. Strategize with City staff and historic preservation commissioners regarding the preservation plan element.

b. Initial consultation with OAHP and SHPO offices.

▶ **Project Study Area.** For this historical context, Bessemer refers to the geographic area roughly bounded by Washington Street to the north, Interstate 25 to the east, Berkley Avenue to the West, and Streator Avenue to the south. *(City* of Pueblo)

c. Conduct archival and historic research in Pueblo and in any other pertinent repositories.

d. Submit a draft context report/preliminary preservation plan addressing the social, economic, demographic, and architectural changes in the neighborhood to OAHP and to the City.

e. Meet with City of Pueblo staff and HPC after a first review of the draft report for their input.

f. Incorporate revisions and recommendations from the above reviews and from OAHP into the final context and preservation plan and submit four bound copies and an electronic (PDF) version to OAHP to meet the requirements of the CLG grant contract. Submit to the City fifty hard-bound copies and an electronic version (PDF format) on CD-ROM to the City for dissemination and public outreach. Copies to be given to public library, repositories, public officials, and citizens.

g. Present the final context and preservation plan at a community meeting/workshop near the conclusion of the project.

Timeline and Deliverables

This project was to start in March 2011. However, the grant agreement between History Colorado and the City of Pueblo was not signed until May 9, 2011. The contract between the City of Pueblo and Historitecture was not signed until July 9, 2011. This delayed the start of the project from the original proposed schedule.

a. Historitecture and the City hosted a kickoff meeting in the community to explain the historical and architectural context and preservation plan, to answer questions, and to receive suggestions about local sources of information. (July 2011)

b. Historitecture, the City, and the OAHP met to discuss the project, specifically targeting research areas and established a research outline. (July 2011)

c. Historitecture conducted archival and historic research in Pueblo and other repositories. (August 2011 to May 2012)

d. Historitecture submitted a rough draft of the context to the City. (January 2012)

e. Historitecture submitted a draft context report/preliminary preservation plan to OAHP and to the City. (rough draft delivered to the City January 2012; second draft delivered to City and OAHP April 2012)

f. After review, Historitecture met with the City of Pueblo staff and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for their input. (June 21, 2012 and July 26, 2012)

g. Historitecture incorporated revisions and recommendations from the above reviews into the final context and preservation plan and delivered it to the City for approval. Historitecture provided OAHP with four bound copies and an electronic (PDF). The City received an electronic (PDF) copy and 54 print copies of the report for dissemination and public outreach. Copies were given to the public library, repositories, public officials, schools, and citizens. (August 2012)

h. Historitecture presented the final context and preservation plan at a community meeting. (June 21, 2012)

Deliverables Due from City to OAHP

In addition to the above milestones and deliverables the City was required to provide two sets of interim status and financial reports and minutes from meetings to OAHP.

HISTORITECTURE LLC

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post office Box 181095, denver, colorado 80218 • 303.390.1638 • www.historitecture.com