

FIRST DRAFT

Colorado Midland brochure touted, and also exaggerated, Grand Mesa

A trip to the top of Grand Mesa in the 1890s offered spectacular sights to visitors, and views weren't limited to Mount Sneffels, the Ragged Mountains and the Uncompahgre Plateau.

"Further along the skyline is the Sangre de Cristo Range," declared a promotional brochure for the Colorado Midland Railway. "Then, far beyond, are the Spanish Peaks, just pushing their noses above the dim distances."



BOB SILBERNAGEL

The problem is, to view either of those

mountain features, one would have to see over the West Elk Mountains and the Continental Divide. That would be difficult, even from 11,000 feet atop the Crag Crest Trail.

The author of the brochure was trying to win customers for Colorado Midland's junket to Grand Mesa Lakes Resort. He was hardly the first writer to engage in a bit of advertising hyperbole.

It's not clear when the brochure was written. But it had to be 1896 or later, because it says the resort was owned by William Radcliff, a wealthy English-Irishman, and he didn't purchase the resort until May 1896.

By mid-1901, Radcliff was gone and the resort burned to the ground. So, sometime in the final years of the 19th century, Radcliff and the railroad concocted the Grand Mesa excursion.

It began in Denver. The train departed in the evening, ran south to Colorado Springs, then northwest to Leadville. It crossed the Continental Divide through a tunnel near Hagerman Pass, just after dawn the next day. Then it dropped into the Frying Pan Valley, ran to Basalt, to Glenwood Springs and westward.

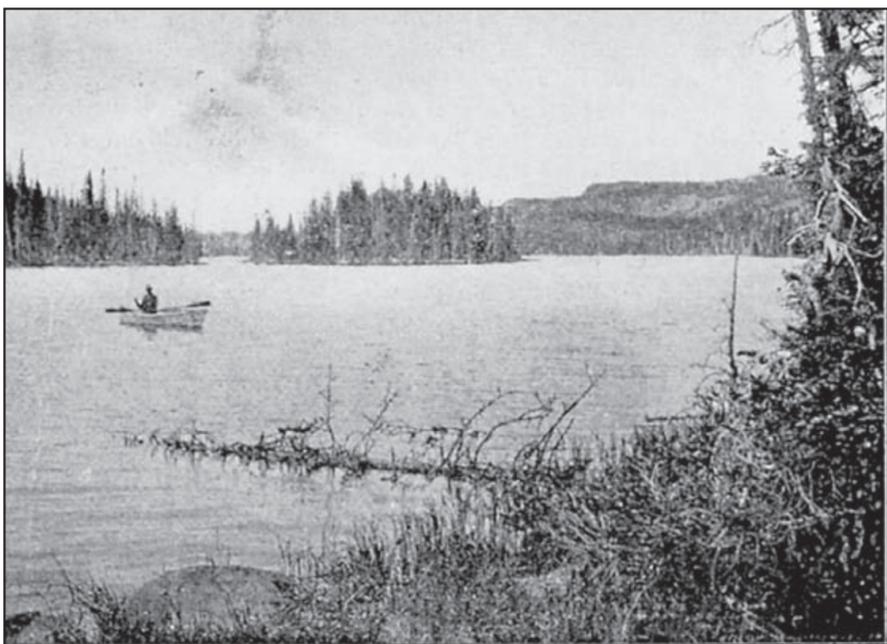
Because of that circuitous route, the small town of De Beque was listed as 345 miles from Denver in the brochure.

Passengers bound for Grand Mesa departed the train at De Beque, about noon on the second day. They were offered dinner at "a comfortable little hotel." Then they boarded a stage toward Grand Mesa, probably over the De Beque cutoff to Plateau Creek.

"About 5 o'clock in the afternoon the passengers are landed on the doorstep of a new hotel in the little town of Plateau" (now Plateau City), said the brochure. "The little settlement is in the center of a thriving agricultural community, in touch with the outside world by telephone," it added.

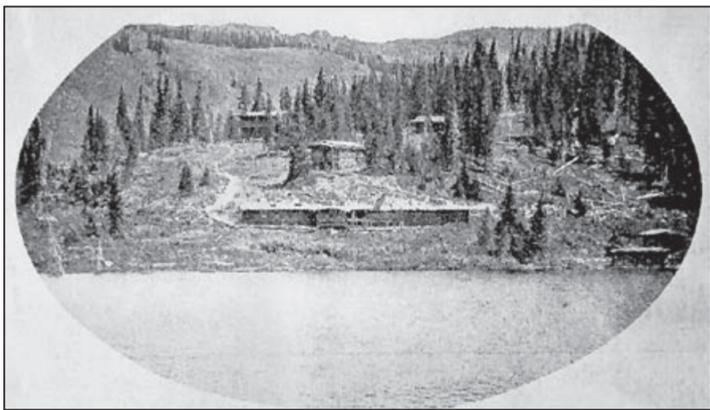
The stage headed out first thing the next morning, and a 20-mile trip "over smooth hard roads" brought it to the high point, from where passengers could supposedly see the Sangre de Cristos.

If they followed Big Creek up the north side of the mesa from Plateau City, past where Bonham Reservoir now sits, then on to Trickle Park, they would have traveled roughly 20 miles to arrive at the string of lakes then known as Grand Mesa Lakes. There they reached Radcliff's Grand Mesa Hotel.



PHOTOS COURTESY BARBARA SANCHEZ

Island Lake, as it appeared in the Colorado Midland Railway brochure.



Alexander Lake, as depicted in the Colorado Midland Railway brochure.

"The tourist finds himself in front of a cozy looking two-story rustic hotel," the brochure proclaimed.

After dinner "fit for a king," visitors chose a hotel room or nearby cabin and prepared for the next day's adventure.

There was fishing, of course: "And such fish! Izaak Walton's fondest dreams did not encompass such delicious, salmon-colored food."

The author of the brochure also repeated a dubious Ute story.

"The Great Spirit made the hunting grounds for his red children he placed the very best highest in the air, so they would be nearer to him as he sailed over the land in his canoe of clouds," the brochure said.

The problem is, Ute leaders whose ancestors once lived in this region say they never heard of "the Ute Legend of the Lakes," said Sally Crum, a retired U.S. Forest Service archaeologist who worked as a Ute Tribal Liaison.

It was no legend that Radcliff operated a fish hatchery to supply the lakes he controlled. William Alexander had built the first fish hatchery near the lake named for him. But Alexander disappeared in 1892, and Radcliff bought the resort from Alexander's partner, Richard Forrest.

Radcliff also imposed new rules for fishing on the lakes he controlled. He allowed the public to fish for free, but required them to obtain a permit from his employees at the lodge.

Such restrictions didn't sit well with people who had long

fished there without impediment. In July 1901, the dispute erupted in violence at Island Lake. Cedaredge rancher William Womack was killed by Radcliff employee Frank Mahany in a dispute over Womack fishing without a permit.

Mahany soon turned himself in, but angry friends of Womack went looking for Radcliff. The resort owner was out of town, so the mob turned its anger on the resort. Men and women burned the hotel and all of the cabins. Radcliff eventually obtained partial financial restitution for his loss, but he never operated the resort on Grand Mesa again.

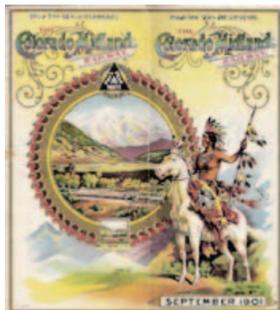
The Colorado Midland Railway, which was in precarious financial straits for most of its three decades of existence, ceased operating in 1917.

Still, in the late 1890s, the railroad and the resort joined forces to offer the trip to Grand Mesa. The cost could be as low as \$35.

A 1901 Colorado Midland rate schedule — the closest one I could find to 1897 — shows a one-way ticket from Denver to Grand Junction in a shared Pullman Sleeping Car cost \$2.50. A seat instead of a sleeper was \$1.50. So, round-trip train fare cost \$3 to \$5. Presumably, tickets to De Beque would have cost about the same.

Dinner at the De Beque hotel was 35 cents, the brochure said. Dinner and lodging at the hotel in Plateau City were 50 cents.

Meals and lodging at the Grand Mesa resort were \$3 a day or more, depending on accommodations. That included



The cover of a Colorado Midland timetable, from 1901.

fishing permits and "a generous mess of trout to take home."

Round-trip stage fare from De Beque to the resort was \$10.

So, assuming one didn't choose the most expensive options, but stayed a week at the resort, the trip would cost about \$35.

That sounds incredibly inexpensive by today's standards. However, when adjusted for inflation, the \$35 spent in 1897 would be worth approximately \$1,050 today.

Sources: "Grand Mesa Lakes," brochure issued by the Passenger Department of the Colorado Midland Railway, courtesy of Barbara Sanchez; "Murder and Mystery on Grand Mesa, by James K. Wetzel," "Official Timetables and Connections: The Colorado Midland Railway, September, 1901," "The Inflation Calculator, westegg.com/inflation."

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University took \$458K from eugenics foundation

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The University of Arizona has accepted years of funding from a foundation infamous for promoting research linking race and intelligence — even after other universities and organizations, including white nationalist groups, stopped receiving support from the group, records show.

A University of Arizona psychology professor used some of the Pioneer Fund's grant money to pay for recent travel to a conference in London that has included eugenics-themed presentations, according to documents The Associated Press obtained.

The eugenics movement has included theories about the controlled breeding of humans to "improve" the gene pool.

The Pioneer Fund was created by textile heir Wickliffe Draper in 1937 to — in the words of its original charter — advocate for "race betterment." The organi-

zation has promoted eugenics and financially supported "race scientists" who maintain that blacks are intellectually and genetically inferior to whites.

The private, tax-exempt foundation in Maryland gave nearly \$7.8 million to 48 organizations or individuals from 1998 to 2016, including nearly \$3 million to at least 22 universities in the U.S. and abroad. But the University of Arizona was the only U.S. university getting any money from the group from 2011 to 2016, tax records show.

The University of Arizona received a total of \$458,000 from the Pioneer Fund from 2003 to 2016. The foundation reported a contribution to the school in every year but 2013 over that span. Specifically, the funds were applied for and received by Professor Aurelio Jose Figueredo, who directs a graduate program for the study of human behavior and evolutionary psychology.

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BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Train hits stranded golf cart

In the early morning hours of Saturday, the driver of a golf cart in Palisade got stuck on the railroad tracks at Kluge Avenue, and tried to no avail to signal the train engineer.

While the man, who has not yet been identified, was not hurt, his golf cart was damaged, according to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office. Alcohol is "likely a factor," the sheriff's office said.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

- Whitney Williford, 28, and Robert Rus-

sell, 47, were contacted during a traffic stop in the 2500 block of U.S. Highway 6&50 Friday. Both were jailed on suspicion of possession of a controlled substance and drug paraphernalia.

- Robert Brannon, 41, was issued summonses Aug. 29 on suspicion of violating a protection order, obstructing a peace officer and public indecency near the intersection of 13th Street and Ute Avenue.

- Two unknown adult males entered a locked apartment building in the 1100 block of Horizon Drive on Wednesday and stole about \$300 worth of merchandise.

- Mark Collin, 49, was jailed Thursday on

suspicion of unlawful trespass into a motor vehicle, theft, possession of drug paraphernalia and use of a controlled substance.

- Robert Baker, 51, was jailed Friday on suspicion of domestic violence and physical harassment in the 500 block of 28 1/4 Road.

- Someone stole items from a vehicle valued at about \$2,000 Thursday in the 800 block of Rood Avenue.

- Trevor Dillen, 26, was issued a summons Saturday on suspicion of second-degree trespass in the 600 block of 24 Road.

- An arrest warrant was issued Saturday for Billy Carmichael, 38, on suspicion of domestic violence.

Pick 3 Midday Sunday: **8, 2, 1** Evening Sunday: **2, 9, 8**

Cash 5 Sunday: **1, 6, 8, 9 and 24**

For information, go to www.coloradolottery.com.

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