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### Colorado: A Delightful Winter - Enterprise in the Arkansas

New York Times

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## COLORADO.

### A Delightful Winter - Enterprise in the Arkansas Valley—A New City—Review of the Past and Present.

From Our Own Correspondent.

DENVER, Col., Monday, March 3, 1873.

To invalids the Winter in Colorado has been remarkably mild and invigorating. Since October the days have been, almost without exception, clear and sunny, with only two or three flurries of snow and an occasional sand-storm. Often, at midday, during December and January, I have seen ladies out carrying parasols, consumptives sitting with open doors, and hatless children enjoying games of marble and croquet. Such is the Winter in Colorado. Yet old settlers, the "59ers," tell us this is about the average, and that last Winter, so well remembered for its snows, wind and cold, was a new thing for this climate.

As a result of the mild Winter, immigration has set in earlier and much stronger than last year. Some of the hotels are already comfortably full, although the hotel capacity of Denver has about doubled since last season. New colony enterprises are being inaugurated, miners are returning to their camps two months earlier than last year, and in every respect the "outlook" seems highly favorable for rapid growth and progress in city and country.

Denver has taken progressive strides that surprise even those who are most enthusiastic in her praise, and one cannot be absent a fortnight without finding some marked and pleasant improvement on his return. Building has been going ahead the Winter through, the material entering into construction being chiefly home commodity. There are ten brick-yards in the suburbs. The mills on the Divide, sixty miles south of Denver, supply the lumber, the kilns at Golden, Mr. Vernon, and Larkspur the lime, and the quarries of Jefferson and Douglas Counties the building stone.

The Arkansas Valley, which is now the theatre of important railway enterprises, is the oldest-settled and richest farming portion of Colorado. It lies at an altitude of from 3,500 to 4,500 feet, on a much lower plain than the valley of any other river flowing from the Rocky Mountains on the east. The Winters are mild and open, and the Summers long and pleasant. All the cereals flourish, and grazing is excellent. Nearly fifty years ago, St. Vrain, Bent, and others started a trading post near the mouth of the Purgatoire, and called it Bent's Fort. Routes were established to Santa Fé and Chihuahua, and a large business in furs, pelts, and other commodities was carried on, both with the Mexicans and Indians. Several auxiliary posts in other parts of the Arkansas Valley were started, and constituted then the only American settlements in Colorado. These posts were subsequently abandoned.

The Mexicans, in 1849, began to make settlements south of the river, and several flourishing colonies were formed. From that time until 1860 they were the chief population of Southern Colorado. The past ten years has brought some changes. Now there is quite an American element; but no great progress has been made, for along the whole 500 miles of the Arkansas in Colorado there are only about a dozen towns and settlements, and a total population of scarcely 10,000. But a new era is dawning. Population is flowing in along with, and in anticipation of, the railways. At the present terminus of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railroad, on the eastern border of the Territory, a new town has started up, called Sargent. Fifty houses have been put up there within a few weeks. At present it is chiefly a base of supplies and outfitting point for the graders and track-layers, but it is likely to be also a stock-shipping point of considerable importance. Sixty-two miles further up the valley is Las Animas, capital of Bent County, an old town, now gathering new life from the expectation of being an important railway junction, as well as the chief trading post of south-eastern Colorado. It is located on the south bank of the Arkansas River, one mile south-west of Fort Lyon. There are now about eighty buildings in the town, and work on others is going ahead rapidly. There are some five or six stores, a couple of hotels, and plenty of saloons. Many prospectors are on the ground considering the chances. The great expectations of the place are based upon the probability that the Kansas Pacific Company, which has graded a line from Kit Carson to Fort Lyon, will here form a junction with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé line, and build a joint road up the valley to Pueblo, ninety-two miles. Surveys with this end in view have been made, and a force of 200 men is now at work grading the line. Besides, a company called the Los Animas Valley Railroad Company, under the auspices of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé, has been formed to build from Las Animas up the Purgatoire to Trinidad, the most important place on the southern borders of Colorado, where the New Mexican trade will concentrate, and a large wool, hide, stock, coal, and grain traffic spring up. Thus Las Animas expects to be the distributing point for the Upper Arkansas and Purgatoire Valleys, and as the surrounding country has great productive and grazing capacity, vast herds and numerous and multiplying ranches, there is strong likelihood that the claims of this ambitious place may be realized. The rumor that the supply depot and department head-quarters are to be removed from Fort Leavenworth, to Fort Lyon greatly strengthens this confidence. The promise of this section of Colorado is certainly great, and it is probable that a large share of the immigration this year will turn thither. From Fort Lyon to the sources of the Arkansas, on Mount Lincoln, there is scarcely a waste acre. Between the fort and Pueblo are seen herds of fat cattle, often numbering 3,000 head belonging to one man; and there are many corn-fields that yield from 2,000 to 3,000 bushels every season. The numerous small settlements are chiefly the head-quarters of stock men and farmers. Such are Bent's Fort, Boggsville, Cramer's, Point of Rocks, Rocky Ford, and Spring Bottom. Bent County occupies the eastern portion of this vast area, and Pueblo County the western. Together they form an area larger than Massachusetts. An abstract of the last assessment for Bent County shows but 20,000 acres under cultivation, valued at \$55,575; 32,538 head of cattle, valued at \$485,721, and 14,425 sheep, valued at \$34,810; the total county valuation, \$936,778. The population is about 900. The old Spanish titles, or grants, have proved a great hindrance to the permanent settlement of this county. One of them, the St. Vrain, embraces 40,000 acres of the very best farm and grazing lands.

Pueblo County has much the largest development and promise, and has during the past two years received an enterprising class of settlers, who have done much to show up its great resources. Pueblo, the county seat, is the second city in the Territory, having a population of 3,500. It lies 120 miles south of Denver, at the present terminus of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, and has access, by a branch of the same road, to the Upper Arkansas Valley, as far as the Cañon coal mines, which supply 100 tons per day of the best fuel found in the Territory. Over 200 new buildings were erected in this place last year. Its trade exceeded \$2,000,000. It is the centre of a great wool-growing country, the adjacent counties reporting last year over 500,000 head of sheep, and a wool-clip of 1,385,000 pounds. It is the outfitting point for the new San Juan mining region, so fabulous in its reported gold and silver developments, and toward which prospectors are flocking with freighting teams loaded with machinery and supplies. It is at the crossing of the old trade routes from the Missouri to the mountains, and from Santa Fé to the Black Hills and the Oregon trail, designated by situation to command an extensive trade.

Between Pueblo and the sources of the Arkansas lie Fremont and Park Counties. Cañon City, capital of the former, is forty-seven miles up the valley from Pueblo, and is considered one of the most promising points in Colorado.

Its present population is about 700. The fall in the river affords ample and excellent water-power. The coal-fields are but five miles away. Valuable iron deposits, copper, limestone, variegated marble, and pottery clay abound. The oil-wells in the vicinity supply the town with light, and are now being developed with a view of supplying the whole Territory. A railroad route has been surveyed over Poncho Pass into the San Luis Valley. A good wagon-road has been constructed to Loma, the centre of the San Luis mining region. The South Park and Mount Lincoln mines are accessible and naturally tributary to Cañon City. Timber is abundant and near at hand.

We have thus traced the important settlements, and indicated briefly the resources of that portion of the Arkansas Valley lying within Colorado.

TRAVELER.