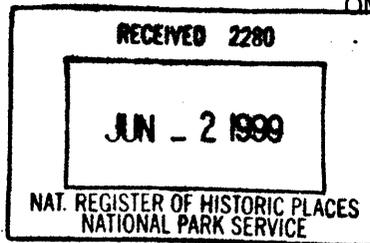


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



760

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building

other names/site number P.S. One Charter School; 5DV5338

2. Location

street & number 1080 Delaware St. [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Georganna Centuglia State Historic Preservation Officer 5/7/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- removed from the
National Register
- other, explain
[] See continuation sheet.

Edson R. Beall Signature of the Keeper 7-1-99 Date of Action

Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building

Denver County, Colorado

Name of Property

County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
[] public-local
[] public-State
[] public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- [X] building(s)
[] district
[] site
[] structure
[] object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: business
INDUSTRY: communications facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
roof Synthetics
other Copper
Terra Cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

Description

The 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building is a one-story, brick and terra cotta, Neo-Classical Revival-style building, built as a corporate office and industrial printing facility. Located on the southeast corner of West 11th Avenue and Delaware Street, the building's most notable architectural feature is a copper dome. The copper dome rises at the corner over bays that provide the main entry. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building has a rectangular plan and covers almost all of six city lots. Though one story in height, it is taller than most one-story buildings. The exaggerated height adds importance to its Neo-Classical Revival style. The building overlooks Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek. It is on the edge of a primarily residential neighborhood that also is home for several small businesses and professional offices. A mid-1950s addition to the building changed the building from its original square plan to a rectangular plan by infilling an adjacent parking area. Therefore, since the 1950s, the building abuts the two buildings that complete the one-story build out of the block. West across Delaware Street is a landscaped triangle of land that connects the building to its park-like setting along Speer Boulevard. Speer Boulevard runs diagonally from northwest to southeast on either side of Cherry Creek. Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek are a locally designated Landmark District and are part of the Denver Park and Parkway System, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The foundation of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building is concrete. The former basement storage areas in the southeast corner and along the perimeter of the building were sealed off during the 1998 Investment Tax Credit rehabilitation. The basement area is no longer accessible.

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building facade, on Delaware Street, is divided into nine identical bays. The northernmost seven bays are the facade of the original 1929 building. The two southernmost bays are the facade of a mid-1950s addition. The addition was so constructed that it is difficult to discern it as newer without very close inspection. The north elevation, on W. 11th Avenue, is divided into seven bays that repeat the facade bays in design and quality of material.

The two corner bays, one facing Delaware Street and one facing West 11th Avenue, each display the company name, "Rocky Mountain Bank Note Co.," etched into massive rectangular terra cotta panels. The two corner bays support the wood-framed, copper dome. The main entry is in the corner bay on Delaware Street, beneath a smaller terra cotta panel that displays the word, "Office." Stairs and a ramp lead to this entry door. Another entry is centrally located in the West 11th Avenue elevation. This entry has no signage.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

A horizontal, terra cotta band continues from the corner bays across the remaining bays along the parapet. All bays are divided by red brick pilasters executed in common bond pattern. Each pilaster has a rectangular, foliated terra cotta panel adorning the upper portion. Each bay has a lower section of brick laid to form a gradual slope inward, giving definition to the pilasters and forming the base for large multi-light industrial windows. Terra cotta lintels in each bay continue to the pilasters. Above the lintels, red brick is executed in common bond pattern, but set on angles to create a chevron effect around centered, diamond-shaped terra cotta tiles. Three corbeled brick courses rise above the chevron to meet the terra cotta banding at the roof line. Terra cotta is set into the corbeled brick to form dentils.

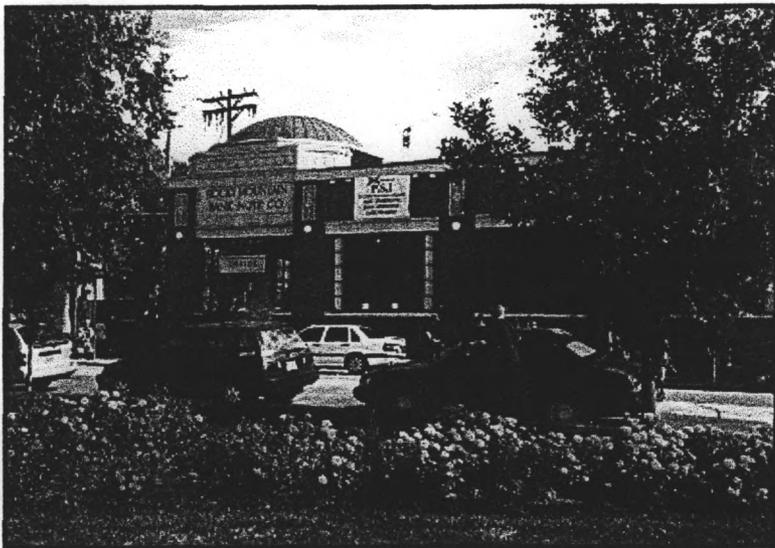


Photo: Nancy L. Widmann

A copper dome rests on a wood frame above the entry to the Neo-Classical Revival-style Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building. A landscaped triangle of land, foreground, separates Delaware Street from Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek.

the printing company. A door in the east elevation of the mid-1950s addition allows entry to the building from the alley. The loading dock has been removed.

Some Denverites remember large red and white awnings covering all facade and north elevation windows. They were removed. The awnings kept the building cooler in the hot, Colorado summer sun.

The roof is flat along the street elevations, but rises in saw-toothed expanses where the south-facing side of the angle is covered by a rubber membrane material applied in 1994. The north-facing side of the saw-toothed angle is a continuous series of wire-glass skylights. The great majority of roof expanse allows light to flow into the interior.

The alley elevation, on the east, is primarily common brick. The northernmost portion of the alley elevation, however, duplicates one bay of the facade, complete with red brick, pilasters, terra cotta, and fenestration. Most of the south elevation abuts the neighboring building. Part of the mid-1950s addition, it begins at the facade but terminates approximately three-fourths of the distance to the alley. This allows an open space which originally held a wooden loading dock and loading area for

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

However, awnings were not originally used for the building. They were added after 1948, and there is no plan to replace them.

Since the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building covers most of its own property, no space on the building's lots was available for landscaping. However, the setting appears well-landscaped since it was sited bordering one of Denver's premier City Beautiful Era parkways, Speer Boulevard. Across a landscaped triangle of land, the boulevard and Cherry Creek run diagonally from southeast to northwest. The construction of this portion of Speer Boulevard and the landscaping of the banks of Cherry Creek were accomplished by 1929 when construction began for the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building. Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek are a locally designated Landmark District and are part of the Denver Park and Parkway System, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Interior

The interior of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building originally housed both the corporate offices and a printing plant. The offices were at the north end of the building, while the manufacturing area in the central and south end took up the major portion of space. A floor-to-ceiling vault originally occupied a central portion of the office space

The original exposed, wood-framed copper dome greeted company owners, employees, and visitors inside the main entrance to the building with a soaring 21'-0" tall space. The main entry door originally accessed the corporate office space. Today it opens to the school's reception area, but the dramatic soaring space beneath the dome is now well-lighted drawing attention to its structural beauty. A quadruple-wythe, brick-walled, floor-to-ceiling vault is remembered in 1998 by two original vault walls retained to form a gallery for student artwork and displays. A glass "storefront" in interior office walls once separated the corporate office from the manufacturing area, allowing a view from the corporate office to the central printing and processing area. This glass wall has been removed.

The manufacturing area had no partitions. In the mid-1950s, a 2,000 square foot mezzanine was added. In 1998, as part of an Investment Tax Credit rehabilitation, some partitions were built in the 'manufacturing space' to accommodate the building's adapted use as a school. However, a large open space was retained for a common area. The mezzanine was retained in the open space. The original, large, wood-framed, saw-toothed skylights continue to flood the common space with natural light. The original undulation of the ceiling also continues to create a dramatic effect. Original, steel-framed 10-over-5 lights allow natural light into the partitioned classrooms, while continuing to provide views of Speer Boulevard, with Cherry Creek beyond.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**



The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building, in 1998, is home for P. S. 1 Charter School, which operates as a charter school of Denver Public Schools.

Photo Nancy L. Widmann

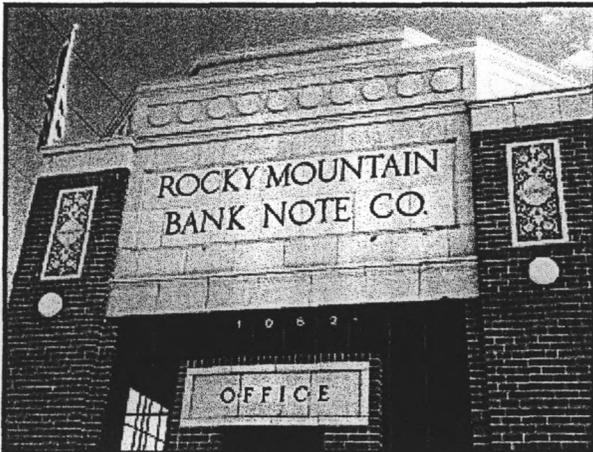


Photo Nancy L. Widmann

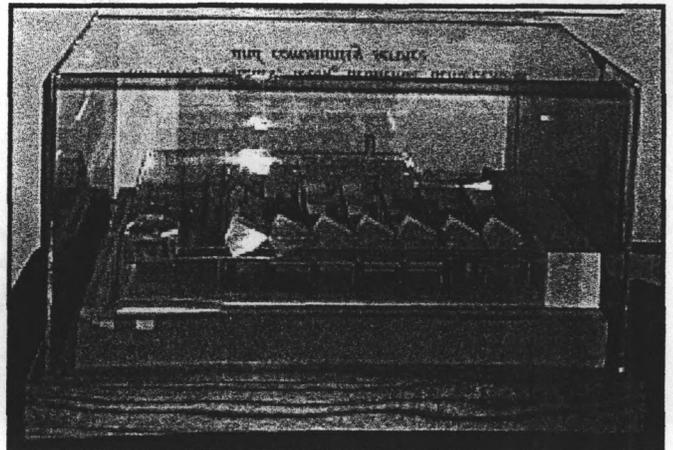


Photo Nancy L. Widmann

Terra Cotta panels announce the name of the company that hired architects Frank W. Frewen, Jr., and Frederick E. Mountjoy to design the 1929 building. At right is a building model displayed in the school reception area. It was prepared by David Owen Tryba, Architects, who adapted the building for school use in 1998.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

The wood window sills on the west and north sides are original. The alley side, or east wall, sills are of concrete. They likely replaced the original wood sills at some point. A 2,000-pound, Nock and Garside freight elevator was installed in 1941, mainly to lift finished product from the printing floor to the loading dock level. The elevator serviced the loading platform, the main floor and the small basement below. A trench-like "channel basement" extends beneath the perimeter of the building. It houses the steam pipes for the heating system. It also once was used for storage of limestone "litho stones" created by the printing company for lithography processes. The elevator and the basement are now sealed off.

Architectural Integrity

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building retains its original architectural integrity. The building has been beautifully maintained. The original integrity of the building's setting continues as well, as expressed by the landscaping along the banks of Cherry Creek and by the maintenance of Speer Boulevard. The neighborhood to the east continues to be a mix of residential and small business and professional buildings. Although some original residential buildings remain, several have been replaced by condominium, or "loft," development. This has raised the height of neighborhood buildings in general from one- and two-story buildings to a mix of heights up to four- and five-story buildings.

The period of significance begins in 1929, the year of construction, and ends in 1948, to meet National Register policy regarding recent history. Although the mid-1950s construction of the building addition falls outside the period of significance, the addition has only a minor effect on the architectural integrity of the original building. With the passage of years, the addition, unchanged since its construction, will become a character defining feature representing the evolution of the building while under the ownership and use of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company.

Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Name of Property

Denver County, Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Industry

Periods of Significance

1929 – 1948

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mountjoy, Frederick E.

Frewen, Frank W.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

Statement of Significance

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Commerce. The building is associated with the development of that part of the printing industry that created, developed, and provided bank forms to support the expanding needs of the banking industry statewide, in Colorado, and, later, in the West and Far West. The period of significance is 1929, the year of construction, through 1948, when the company had survived to meet the challenges of technology and rapid expansion as a modern enterprise. The building represents the business acumen of company founders and second generation company leaders who made decisions that provided early success and positioned the company to survive the Depression and the stresses of World War II. Three of these decisions were (1) to create a business culture within the company where management demonstrated a responsibility toward the interests of the employees, (2) to maintain plants in several locations, in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region, and (3) to build this building to provide sufficient space for employees and up-to-date equipment so that the company could quickly meet work demands. The Depression, an era notable for its bank failures, did not bring failure to this business whose main customers were banks. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building was both a main printing plant and corporate headquarters from 1929 to 1972.

The building is also eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a simple expression of Neo-Classical Revival style, an architectural style favored in early twentieth century Denver for bank design and for government and school buildings, and for its having been designed by important Colorado architects, Frederick E. Mountjoy and Frank W. Frewen. The body of work documented to Mountjoy and Frewen includes thirteen Colorado school buildings; two are designated Denver Landmarks. Other designated Denver Landmarks to their credit are the Fairmount Cemetery Mausoleum (1930) and an addition to the Denver Municipal Auditorium (1941, Mountjoy with C. Meredith Musick). Frewen designed the locally designated St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church (1921), which is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

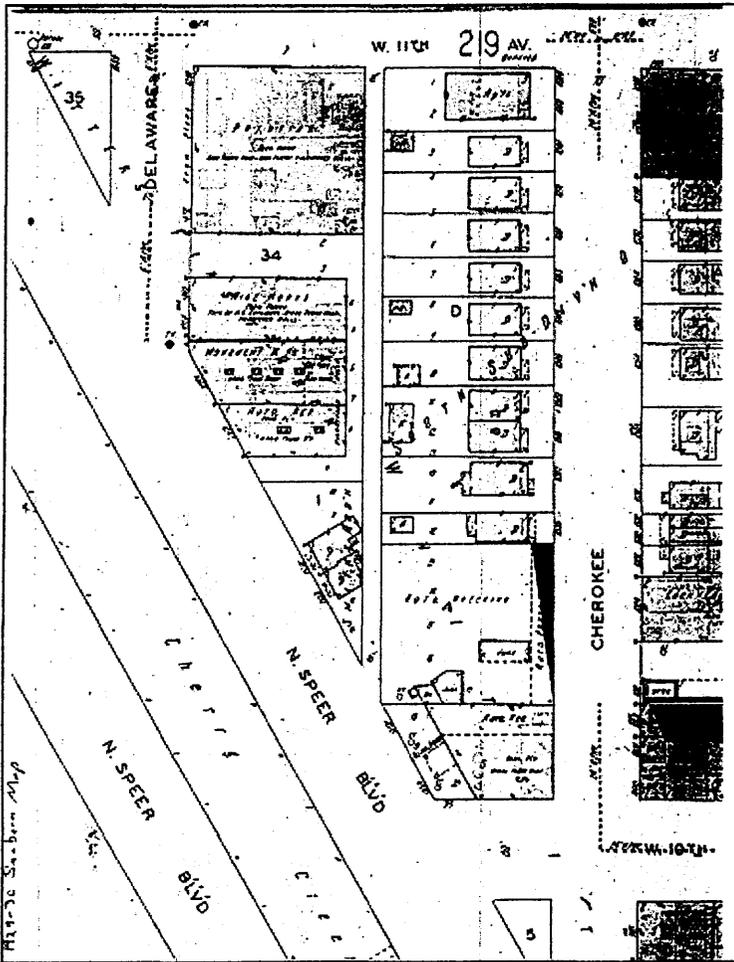
The Site of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building

The 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building was the first building on the site at 1080 Delaware Street, on Lots 1-6, Block 34, Witter's First Addition. (The building address has changed from 1080 to 1088 to, currently, 1062, the address being used by P. S. 1 Charter School.) The site is on a Denver block set in a north-south grid and crossed by Cherry Creek, which travels in a northwest direction to meet the South Platte River in downtown Denver, one mile to the northwest. The building

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**



1929-30 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building, located on the southeast corner of Delaware Street and W. 11th Avenue, looks over a landscaped triangle of land to North Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek.

site is on the northeast bank of Cherry Creek. The Smoky Hill Trail that brought the first pioneers into Denver in the 1800s ran along the banks of Cherry Creek and crossed the site. As Denver grew, Cherry Creek's periodic flooding found partial solution in the building of Castlewood Dam to regulate water flow. During the City Beautiful Movement--in 1909--new concrete banks were built to further contain the water. Denver's champion of the City Beautiful Movement, Mayor Robert Speer, envisioned a grand boulevard and a landscaped park-like setting along Cherry Creek. In 1909, Cherry Creek Drive was renamed Speer Boulevard in honor of Mayor Speer. Across the creek from the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building site is Sunken Garden, created in the heyday of the City Beautiful Movement. There was an elaborate 1910 pavilion bordering a shallow pool set in a Saco Reink DeBoer-landscaped park. The view from the pavilion looked across the creek, over the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building site, to the State Capitol dome. (Though the pool was removed and replaced with a sunken landscaped area, the pavilion was standing in 1929. Today, the pavilion is gone, but the park remains.) This stretch of Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard offered a prestigious location in the 1920s. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company needed a large site for its expanding lithography and printing business.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

Early History of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company was formed in 1907 when three existing printing companies joined forces: Rocky Mountain Lithographing Company, Denver; Franklin Press, Pueblo, Colorado; and Utah Lithography Company, Salt Lake City, Utah. The new company was incorporated on 4 September 1907, in Colorado Springs, under the name 'Rocky Mountain Lithographing Company.' Charles M. Dennison, Jr., known as C. M. Dennison, was the founder holding the largest share of interest in the company. Dennison had evidently become the owner of the Rocky Mountain Lithographing Company, Denver. B. F. Scribner, owner of the Franklin Press, and W. T. Benson, owner of Utah Lithography Company were the other two founders. Alexander Helmle, original owner of the Rocky Mountain Lithographing Company, served briefly as the first president of the new company, but was not a partner. Helmle left the company and, by 1910, was a vice president of the competing C. F. Hoeckel Bank Book & Lithography Company in Denver.

Soon after Dennison established the new corporation in 1907, the company name was changed to Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company. (This was also the original name of Helmle's Rocky Mountain Lithographing Company, established in Denver in 1901. This explains the presence of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company name in city directories dating from 1901.) The new corporation operated as a holding company with the three companies using their original names until 3 March 1909, when W. T. Benson was named president, and corporate headquarters moved from Colorado Springs to Salt Lake City. In 1911, C. M. Dennison became president and the headquarters moved to Denver, at 1729-31 Arapahoe Street. In 1912, the company relocated to 1834-40 Stout Street, where it remained until moving into its new building in 1929.

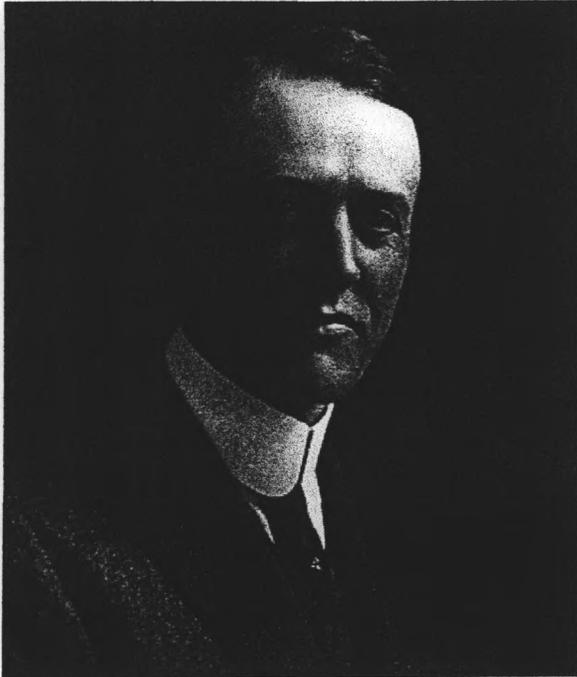
C. M. Dennison came to Albuquerque, New Mexico, from New York City in 1903. He was seeking a cure for tuberculosis. This was a sojourn taken by so many who made Western states their home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He retained an interest in the family business, Dennison & Sons, a New York City printing company established by his family in the 1860s. He kept his interest in Dennison & Sons until it was sold in 1922. Dennison & Sons existed at least into the 1940s.

Still searching for a more curative climate, Dennison moved to Colorado. His health improved, and he traveled to various Western cities to interest printing companies in forming a new, larger corporation. The partnership that formed the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company gave Dennison fifty percent interest. B. F. Scribner and W. T. Benson each had twenty-five percent interest. Fifty percent ownership and company leadership stayed with Dennison and his heirs until 1981.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

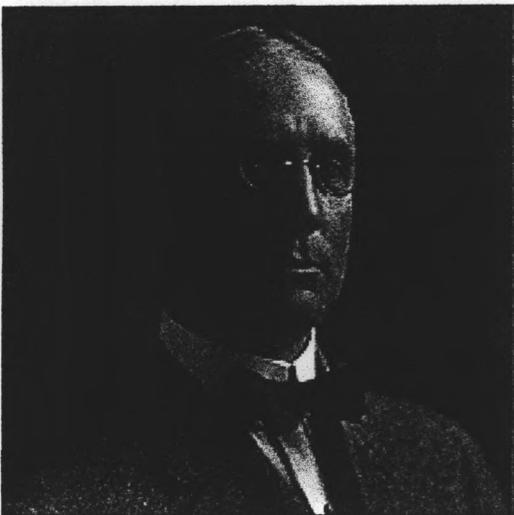
**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**



**Rocky Mountain Bank Note
Company Founders**

(Photos Courtesy of Olive Belcher, Pueblo CO)

Charles M. Dennison, Jr.



B. F. Scribner



W. T. Benson

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

The early years were a struggle for the company. Records of 1909, by example, showed earnings of only \$2,000. Dennison was remembered as aggressively leading the business to a position of prosperity by 1912. In 1912, the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company described its service in the Colorado Business Directory as “lithographers, engravers, bank supplies, and printers.” Though the business focus was in the financial printing area, the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company took on other business printing orders throughout its existence.

Before photographic printing technology became the norm, limestone engraving by master engravers was used for the lithography process. The company used only Bavarian limestone, imported from Germany through the Chicago litho supply firm of Fuchs & Long. It was the finest stone for quality lithography. When the company moved to its new building in 1929, the engraved, master stones were stored in space designed for them in the basement. Several of the company’s original limestones are displayed today in the entry to the John Harland Company plant in Lakewood, the last home of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company. In the early 1970s, before the move to Lakewood, John Alt, a Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company employee, estimated the number of stones stored in the 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Building basement to be about two thousand. In the early 1970s, forty stones were selected for display in the new Lakewood building, and Alt was in charge of distributing the remainder to company employees as mementos. Most lithography companies threw away the stones when new technologies made their use obsolete.

The last master engraver for the company, Ben Merlin, was still in company employ in the 1950s. Merlin was considered the lettering specialist while master engraver Ed Poth excelled in the production of vignettes and illustration. Merlin and Poth artistry helped establish the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company as one of the finest lithography companies in the region. Though technology had made the old process obsolete, the company had continued to supply high quality lithography to a dwindling number of old customers who favored the old master engraver skills. The company proudly displayed selected, old limestone engravings and old presses. Some longtime, loyal customers were given their engraved limestone masters when progress finally made lithography an impractical choice.

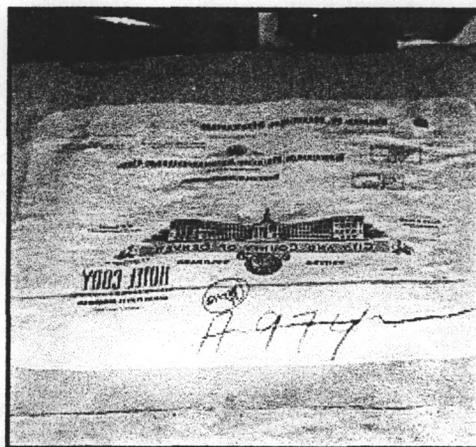
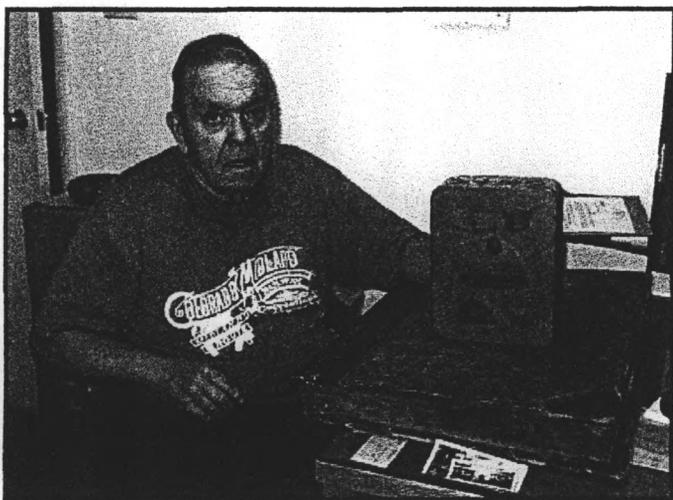
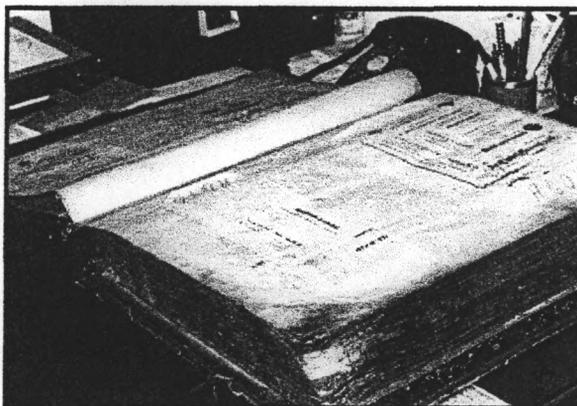
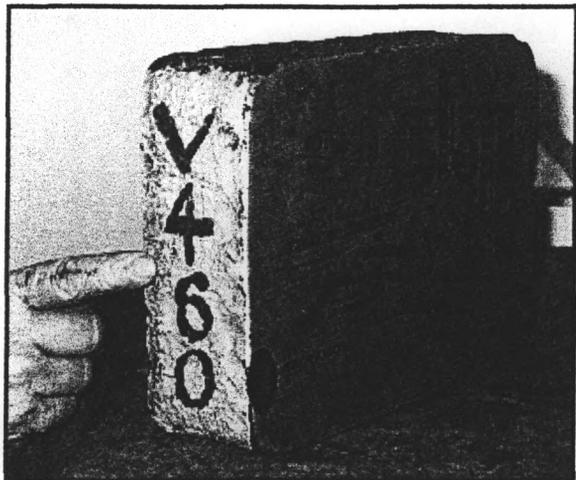
Employee Relations, Expansion, A New Building, and New Leadership

In 1920, the company weathered a printers’ union strike in Denver. The company had joined the Printers Industry Association [of manufacturers] and the strike was against all its members. C. M. Dennison blamed the strike on agreements worked out by that association. The strike was settled. The handling of this strike by management was the first documented and anecdotal evidence of the employer-employee relationship that would benefit employees and the company through the trying decades of the 1930s and

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**



Photos Nancy L. Widmann

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company used Bavarian limestone for its lithography process. Each stone held several different engravings and was catalogued. The stone's side recorded its alphanumeric control number. An impression was made in an album and the corresponding number was recorded with it. Clockwise from top left: an engraved limestone; one of four albums that worked as an index to the stone collection; Kenneth "Nip" Oliver, longtime company employee with an album and the stone he received from the company in the early 1970s; and an album page showing an impression of the Denver City and County Building used for city stationery.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

1940s. The tone for this management style was set by founder C. M. Dennison, but his son, C. Stuart Dennison, would continue to put employee considerations first when making difficult business decisions.

In the early 1920s, C. M. Dennison purchased a printing business in El Paso, Texas, thereby adding a fourth plant to the company. This was the beginning of a business expansion that would grow to encompass some Midwestern and most Western states. (A persistent rumor claims that the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company printed the scrip for Mexico's Pancho Villa, though no proof of this has been found. If true, perhaps it was the El Paso plant that negotiated with Pancho Villa or his representatives.)

C. M. Dennison died in 1924, and family leadership within the firm remained through two sons, C. Stuart Dennison and Malcolm M. Dennison. Both served in World War I, both received the Croix de Guerre from the French government, and both returned to Denver and joined the company. C. Stuart stayed in Denver to become company president in 1932, a position he held until 1971. Malcolm M. Dennison became vice president and worked in Denver until 1945 when he took over operation of the Salt Lake City plant. Malcolm M. Dennison had studied architecture at Harvard University and had apprenticed in the New York City architecture firm of Ethan Allen Dennison, his uncle. Spinal meningitis, contracted during the war, prevented him from continuing in architecture, but his training likely encouraged the company to build the new corporate office and printing plant in 1929 in exceptionally grand style.

The company prospered in the booming economy of the 1920s. Listed among their customers were the majority of the banks in all their plant locations as well as most of the banks in the small towns throughout Colorado. The company printed checks, deposit forms, registers, stocks, bonds, and stationery. Banks supplied all forms and checks to their customers free of charge. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company had high visibility among the banking community, but not among the general public. This changed somewhat in Denver when the 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building was constructed. The presence of the Neo-Classical Revival building, visible from well-traveled Speer Boulevard, brought recognition to the company. The building's design echoed the Revival styles of the City Beautiful Movement, and was far grander for its siting and design than was necessary for a primarily industrial building. The building was completed just before the 1929 Stock Market Crash.

The Depression of the 1930s was a challenge for the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company. The company operated in the red for most months in the early 1930s. Though stressed, the company continued a paternalistic attitude toward employees. The company cut back hours for employees, but did not cut back the work force. The company attitude was that the company and its employees needed to

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 13

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

weather difficulties together. This is reflected today in the memories of former employees. Kenneth "Nip" Oliver, a seventy-eight year old, retired typesetter, remembers C. Stuart Dennison as being especially kind. Oliver related personal and anecdotal examples of paid time off for sickness and family emergencies before there were any negotiated contract obligations in place. Oliver said he met Dennison in 1938 when Oliver worked for a typesetting and type supply company whose biggest account was the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company. Oliver related that Dennison's reputation as a good employer was well-known and that Bank Note employees felt a strong loyalty. In his case, Oliver said he was "hired for life" by Dennison. C. Stuart Dennison was also known to use his personal funds to help employees through hard times.

Throughout its history, the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company sponsored activities for employees which included, at different times, sports teams, picnics, excursions, and holiday parties. In Denver, specifically, there were baseball teams, softball teams, and annual picnics at Elitch Gardens. The company also published employee newsletters, company-wide and for individual plants. The last company-wide publication, starting just before the move of the corporate offices from Denver to Lakewood was the **Bank Noter**. It featured company news, but also devoted a great deal of space to coverage of employee personal accomplishments and interests.

In 1933, the Castlewood Dam collapsed and Cherry Creek flooded, with water coming up to the steps of the building. This was the last serious threat from Cherry Creek, but the company struggled on through the 1930s, with its sales picking up by the late 1930s. Then World War II years took their toll. During this period the company had orders to fill, but shortages of paper and supplies put a different kind of strain on business. Three years after the war, in 1948, the company was finally caught up on back orders and business was back to a normal pace.

1950s Through 1981

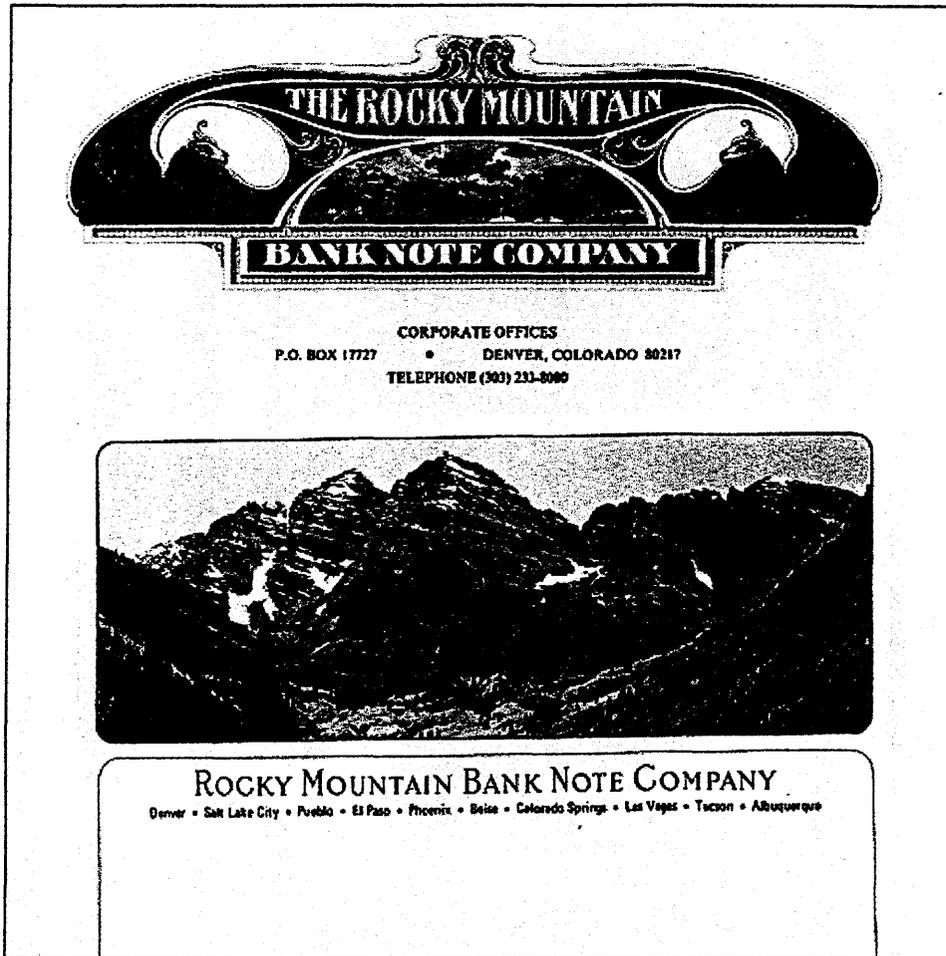
Business boomed during the 1950s. Increased business lead to construction of the mid-1950s addition. Improved printing technologies along with increased business required the purchase of new linotype machines and the space to house them. The company also built a plant in Phoenix, Arizona, at this time. Two of C. M. Dennison's grandsons, Alan White and C. Stuart Dennison, Jr., also grew to adulthood and joined the company in Denver. They would become president and vice president, respectively, in 1971 when C. Stuart Dennison retired.

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building addition was constructed in the mid-1950s. Great care was taken to hire expert craftsmen and remain faithful to the 1929 building in design and materials. Only very close inspection reveals that the two south bays on Delaware Street, in fact, are the addition.

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**



Two examples of letterheads that the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company designed for its own use.

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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Through the following decades, the company bought the apartment building across the alley, a few open lots, and several buildings north across W. 11th Avenue to provide extra storage and parking space. A fork lift was often seen running down W. 11th Avenue. (It was reported that the fork lift driver was once issued a ticket for speeding between the plant and a storage house.)

The development of magnetic imprinting and the adoption of magnetic ink standards in 1959 changed the check printing business forever. Suddenly, competition to supply personalized checks required plants to be located very close to both customers and bulk mailing centers. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company went through a period of very rapid expansion, building small plants throughout the western states to serve a growing number of banks. Part of the company expansion included the purchase of Key Business Forms in 1967. Many small bank note printing companies did not survive this expansion period. Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company became the primary check printer in the western United States.

Denver newspapers later reported that the first scenic checks were created at the company's Phoenix plant in the early 1960s. The checks pictured the Grand Canyon and a Kachina figure. A 1974 article in **Graphic Arts Monthly** reported that Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company, working with Wells Fargo Bank, was a pioneer in the scenic check business in the 1960s. By 1974, most of the nation's 14,000 banks were offering scenic checks. In 1971, a Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company check package, produced for a Great Falls, Montana, bank, won first place in a nationwide printing contest. The checks featured reproductions of paintings by Charles M. Russell and O. C. Seltzer. The Boise plant was commended in a 1974 issue of **Bank Noter** for its work on the celebrity checks created for daredevil Evel Kneivel.

Scenic checks were increasingly popular despite their higher cost. By 1974, Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company offered twenty-nine individual scenes, ranging from patterns to sunsets to sports to its best-selling scene featuring the Grand Tetons. The company's net assets were markedly increased by sales of scenic checks.

By 1971, the 27, 000 square foot Denver plant employed 400 workers and operated twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to keep up with orders. Unable to expand further, and having different space needs again, the company decided to build a new, 94,600 square foot facility on a seven-and-a-half acre site in Lakewood, Colorado, a western suburb of Denver. The company continued to expand and do well, but new technologies were threatening change again.

By the late 1970s, ATM machines and increased use of credit cards cut severely into the check printing business. Also, banks were now charging for checks. Businesses, like Colorado's Current Company in

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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Colorado Springs, began to sell scenic checks in catalogues. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company owners decided to sell the seventy-three year old business. In 1980-81, the heirs of the original three partners sold Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company to ROMO Corporation, owned by Dr. Russell Scott of Houston, Texas. ROMO ran the company under its historic name for ten years. In 1992, the company was bought out by an industry rival, the John Harland Company, of Atlanta, Georgia, for \$36 million. After eighty-five years, the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company name passed into history. Its plants are now run under the Harland name.

In 1974, **Colorado Business**, a monthly magazine, listed Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company among the top 250 companies in the Rocky Mountain Region. It was ranked 106 in assets and 63 in revenues. This was far above the only other printing company to make the list. In 1959, the Bank Stationers Association recognized 250 check printers; by 1992, there were only five. In 1992, Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company was one of the largest companies nationally, supplying forms and other products to the banking industry. At its height, as the third largest check printer and the largest privately held check printer in the United States, it operated 20 plants and sales offices throughout the West, with annual sales over \$75 million, and a twenty percent market share. Company-wide, employment peaked at 1,900. (Currently, Deluxe Corporation, St. Paul, Minnesota, is the largest financial forms printer; the John Harland Company is second largest.)

Architecture

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building was designed in a simple expression of Neo-Classical Revival style. Built in 1929, just before the Stock Market Crash, it was one of the last Denver buildings to convey the values of the City Beautiful Movement. Revival styles were brought to Denver following Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. By 1904, when Mayor Robert Speer was elected, the city was embracing Classical Revival styles. Speer provided strong additional and aggressive leadership to beautify Denver throughout his long years of public service. After Speer's unexpected death in 1917, Denver continued to plan new public buildings in Classical Revival styles. One example is the 1920s City and County Building. By embracing Classical Revival styles, Denver also reflected the national trends of the day. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building, though built to house a printing factory, expressed its perceived importance and community conscience through its design.

The site location was also an outgrowth of the City Beautiful Movement. The building is located across a small grass-covered triangle from Speer Boulevard and the landscaped banks of Cherry Creek. The boulevard that bears Speer's name was part of his vision of the grandeur of an important city. The taming, cleaning, and beautification of Cherry Creek was also in that vision. The waterway and the wide boulevard were meant to be embellished with grand architecture. The architecture of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building was perfect for its site.

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The building's most distinguishing feature is the copper dome which rests on a wooden base above the main entry. The symmetry of the Neo-Classical Revival style is not compromised by the corner location of the dome. Matching bays of brick and terra cotta repeat along both streets, orienting the building both to the boulevard and to the neighborhood at its edge. One additional bay, identical to the facade bays, is repeated along the alley. This was an elegant gesture to the surrounding neighborhood, where small homes and terraces once graced the early subdivision. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building, therefore, does not appear to offer importance only to Delaware Street and Speer Boulevard, but to E. 11th Avenue and to the neighborhood as well. It expresses grandeur without immense scale and without turning its back on its neighbors.

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building conveys its historical association with the banking community. The building exemplifies the preferred architectural style of the banking industry which it served. Banks favored Classical Revival styles for their dignity and sense of order and unity. The styles inspired confidence. The company's main customers were the banks of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region, and this building was the corporate headquarters and the largest of the company's printing plants. The building displays the important position it once held as a vital supplier to the region's financial institutions.

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company, previous to 1929, was well-known among the banking community, but not among the general public. Residents and visitors traveling on busy Speer Boulevard, became aware of the company through its architecture and siting. The company is remembered, and the building continues to be known and appreciated by Denver residents.

Architects

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building represents the work of architects Frederick E. Mountjoy (1870-1941) and Frank W. Frewen (1887-1937). Both were Denver architects who designed Colorado and Rocky Mountain region buildings during the City Beautiful Movement and beyond. They became partners when Frewen joined the firm of Mountjoy and French. The new firm, Mountjoy, French and Frewen, thrived until 1920 when Park M. French left the firm. (French was no longer listed in Denver city directories after 1919.) The firm of Mountjoy and Frewen lasted through 1931.

Frederick E. Mountjoy was born on 8 February 1870. Mountjoy was first listed living in Denver in 1900. He was a draftsman for the architectural firm of Gove and Walsh through 1908. In 1909, Mountjoy formed the firm of Eagleton and Mountjoy with Frederick M. Eagleton. After two years, that partnership dissolved and Mountjoy briefly practiced alone in 1911. The firm of Mountjoy and French was created in 1911-12. As mentioned, Frewen joined Mountjoy and French in 1917.

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Although Mountjoy practiced alone after 1931, he often worked with other Denver architects. His interests included an active membership on Denver's Municipal Art Commission. Mountjoy died on 25 October 1941 at age seventy-one, leaving two daughters. He died during construction of the addition to Denver Municipal Auditorium, which he designed with architect C. Meredith Musick. At the time of his death Mountjoy resided at 2901 York Street, where he had lived since at least 1916. He was interred in the Classical Revival-style Fairmount Cemetery Mausoleum, a designated Denver Landmark he designed with Frewen in 1930.

Frank W. Frewen, Jr., was born on 28 September 1887 in Denver and attended Manual Training High School and the University of Colorado. His father had come to Colorado in 1875 and was an insurance agent who was active in politics. Frewen, Jr., served in the Army's Engineering Corps. He married Jessie Pate of Savannah, Georgia, in 1920. By 1925, the Frewens were living at 144 Downing Street in the now-designated Denver Country Club Historic District. They had one son, Frank Walter Frewen III.

During 1910 and 1911, Frank W. Frewen, Jr., was a draftsman with the firm of Wagner and Manning in Denver. Frewen practiced briefly on his own in 1912, but by 1913, was a partner with Harry James Manning in the firm of Manning and Frewen. This partnership lasted until 1917, when Frewen joined Mountjoy's firm. It appears that Frewen left Denver during World War I when he served in the Engineering Corps, though the city directories continued to list his name in the partnerships. Frewen's longest association was with Mountjoy. Both men accomplished their greatest numbers of designs during their partnership, from 1917 to 1931.

From 1932 to 1934, Frewen practiced alone. In 1934, Frewen was appointed to direct the Colorado branch of the Home Owners Loan Corporation, a federal agency charged with reconditioning homes and providing work for carpenters, masons, and others. By 1935, Frewen joined architect Earl Chester Morris to create the firm of Frewen and Morris.

Frewen died of pneumonia on 16 December 1937 during the construction of the recently demolished Denver St. Luke's Hospital Nurses' Residence, which he designed. Like Mountjoy, Frewen was interred in the Fairmount Cemetery Mausoleum. Frewen served as president of the American Institute of Architects' Colorado Chapter. He was also on the State Board of Architectural Examiners. Frewen was a member of the Denver Country Club, El Jebel Shrine, and the Gyro Club.

Mountjoy and Frewen designed and directed construction of over eighty schools in Colorado and surrounding states. They also designed sanitariums and churches, department stores, offices, and residences. A selected list of their designs follows:

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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**Buildings Credited to Frederick E. Mountjoy and Frank W. Frewen, Jr.
A Selected Chronological List**

<u>Architect(s)</u>	<u>Building and Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Manning & Frewen (Henry James Manning)	Courthouse Annex (Saguache Elementary School) Christy Ave., between 6th & 7th Saguache	1915	
French & Mountjoy (Park M. French)	Littleton Creamery Addition 1801 Wynkoop St., Denver	1916	National Register
Mountjoy, French & Frewen	Vroman School 14519 W. US Hwy. 50, Rocky Ford	1918	
Mountjoy & Frewen	Del Norte High School SW Corner of Oak & 9th, Del Norte	1919	
Mountjoy, French & Frewen	Haskin Elementary School 550 S. Broadway, Center	1919	
Mountjoy & Frewen	Monte Vista Armory 15 Washington St., Monte Vista	1921	National Register District
Mountjoy & Frewen	Holly Elementary School Holly	1922	
Mountjoy & Frewen	St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church E. 23rd & York, Denver	1923	National Register
Mountjoy & Frewen	Ebert Elementary School 410 Park Ave., Denver	1924	Designated Denver Landmark
Mountjoy & Frewen	Governor John C. Vivian House 1 Orchard Drive, Golden	1925	
Mountjoy & Frewen	Blackstock-O'Leary Elementary School 225 N. Pine St., Gunnison	1926	

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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Mountjoy & Frewen	Bloedorn House 440 Sherman St., Fort Morgan	1926	National Register District
Mountjoy & Frewen	Central School 411 Clayton St., Brush	1928	
Mountjoy & Frewen	Colorado State Veterans Center (Infirmary) Monte Vista	1928	State Register District
Mountjoy & Frewen	Park Hill Elementary School Addition 5050 E. 19th Ave.	1928	Designated Denver Landmark (Eligible for National Register)
Mountjoy & Frewen	Fairmount Cemetery Mausoleum Denver	1930	Designated Denver Landmark
Mountjoy & Frewen	Municipal Building SW Corner Virginia & N. Wisconsin, Gunnison	1931	
Frewen & Morris (Earl Chester Morris)	St. Luke's Nurses Residence NE Corner, 19th & Pennsylvania St. Denver	1937	(Demolished 1998)
Frewen & Morris w/Glen Wood Huntington	Boulder High School 1604 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder	1938	
Frewen & Morris	J.V.K. Wagner Veterinary Building Colorado State University, Ft. Collins	1939	
Frewen & Morris	Shepardson Agricultural Building Colorado State University, Ft. Collins	1939	
Mountjoy w/6 Denver architects	State Capitol Annex Denver	1939	
Mountjoy w/ C. Meredith Musick	Denver Municipal Auditorium Addition 920 14th St., Denver	1941	Designated Denver Landmark

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company contributed to the history of Denver, Colorado, and the western United States. Particularly in Colorado, from its founding in 1907 until 1948, the company was the major supplier of financial forms to banks state-wide. The company stood by its employees during economic hard times. It was exemplary in demonstrating a management style that respected the rights of employees and placed company responsibility to employees as a major goal. The company reliably met its obligations to its customers with high standards in quality and innovative improvements in forms and record keeping. The growth of the banking business in Colorado and the West was enhanced by the business acumen and diligence of the owners and employees of the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company. Their 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building along Cherry Creek in Denver represents their contribution.

The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building retains its original architectural integrity. The copper-domed, red brick, terra cotta embellished building continues to relate its importance through its architectural style. It stands as a reminder of the City Beautiful Movement, the banking industry, and the self-conscious effort of Denver to attain a place of prominence among United States cities.

Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building—After 1972

In 1972, the 1929 Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building and the company's 57,000 total square feet of additional land and buildings sold for between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to a group of local investors. Though an attempt was made to transform the 1929 building into the Rocky Mountain Legal Condominium Center, this venture was not successful. The building's Neo-Classical Revival style and location offered the prestige and image sought by the legal community and others, but the economic climate worked against the conversion project. A restaurant, Monasteries Wine Cellar, was located in the building for a year, but it, too, failed. For many years the building has provided storage space for Gart Bros., a retail sporting goods store. The building has been adapted for use as P. S. 1 Charter School, with an interior design plan that respects and gives memory to the building's Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company history. P. S. 1 Charter School moved into the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building in Fall 1998.

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Section number 9 Page 22

**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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Denver, Colorado. Private Collection, Litho Stone #V460 and One Litho Stone Album, Kenneth "Nip" Oliver.

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Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Denver City Directories.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Grantor-Grantee Lists, Denver Subdivisions.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Map Collection.

Lakewood, Colorado. Private Collection, Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Litho Stones, Harland Company.

Pueblo, Colorado. Private Collection, Photographs of Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Founders, Olive Belcher.

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1-6, Block 34, Witter's First Addition

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company at 1062 Delaware Street, Denver CO.

Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building

Denver County, Colorado

Name of Property

County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 500670 4398000
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Widmann / consultant

organization date 11/25/1998

street & number 703 Ash St. telephone 303-322-6942

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80220

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Larry Nelson, Volker Building Partnership

street & number 126 W. 12th St. telephone

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80204

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

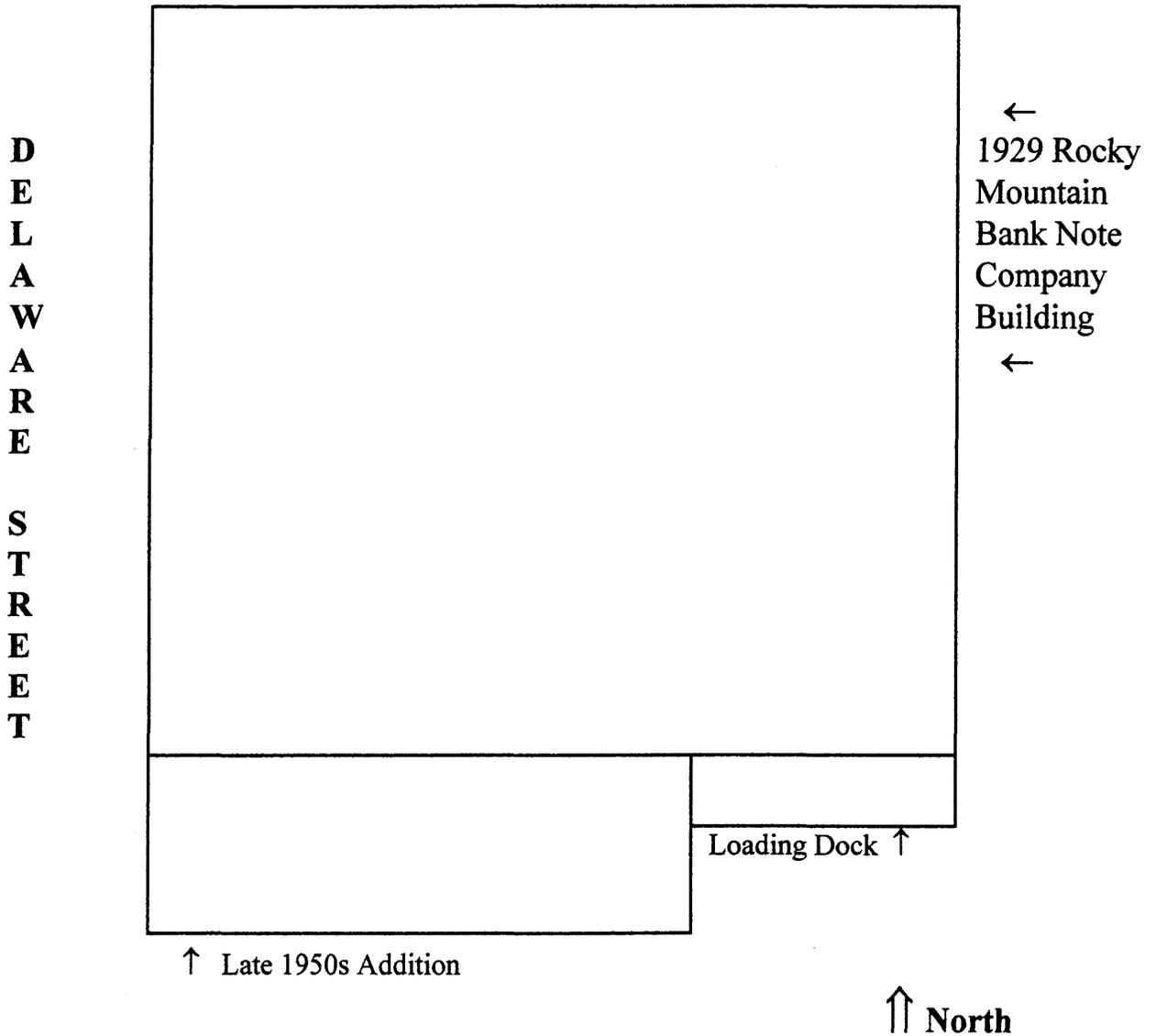
**National Register of Historic Places
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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
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[USGS Map is enclosed.]

W. 11th Avenue



**Sketch Map
Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building**

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Continuation Sheet**

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**Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO**

Photographs

Photographs 1-8 were taken on 21 November 1998. The photographer was Nancy L. Widmann. The original negatives are at: Nancy L. Widmann, Consultant
703 Ash Street
Denver CO 80220

Photo #	Description of View	Camera direction
1	Main entry and building.	Southeast
2	West facade along Delaware Street.	East
3	Facade detail: engaged brick column w/foiled terra cotta panel.	East
4	Main entry and corner bays under dome.	Southeast
5	North elevation.	South
6	East elevation along alley.	West
7	"Loading dock area" and east elevation.	Northwest
8	"Loading dock area"—note sawtooth roof.	West

Photographs 9-11 were taken ca. 1908-1915. The photographer is unknown. They are copies of original photographs from the private collection of Olive Belcher, granddaughter of Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company founder, B. F. Scribner. Olive Belcher lives in Pueblo, Colorado.

Photo #	Description of View	Camera direction
9	Charles M. Dennison, Jr., a company founder	n. a.
10	W. T. Benson, a company founder	n. a.
11	B. F. Scribner, a company founder	n. a.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

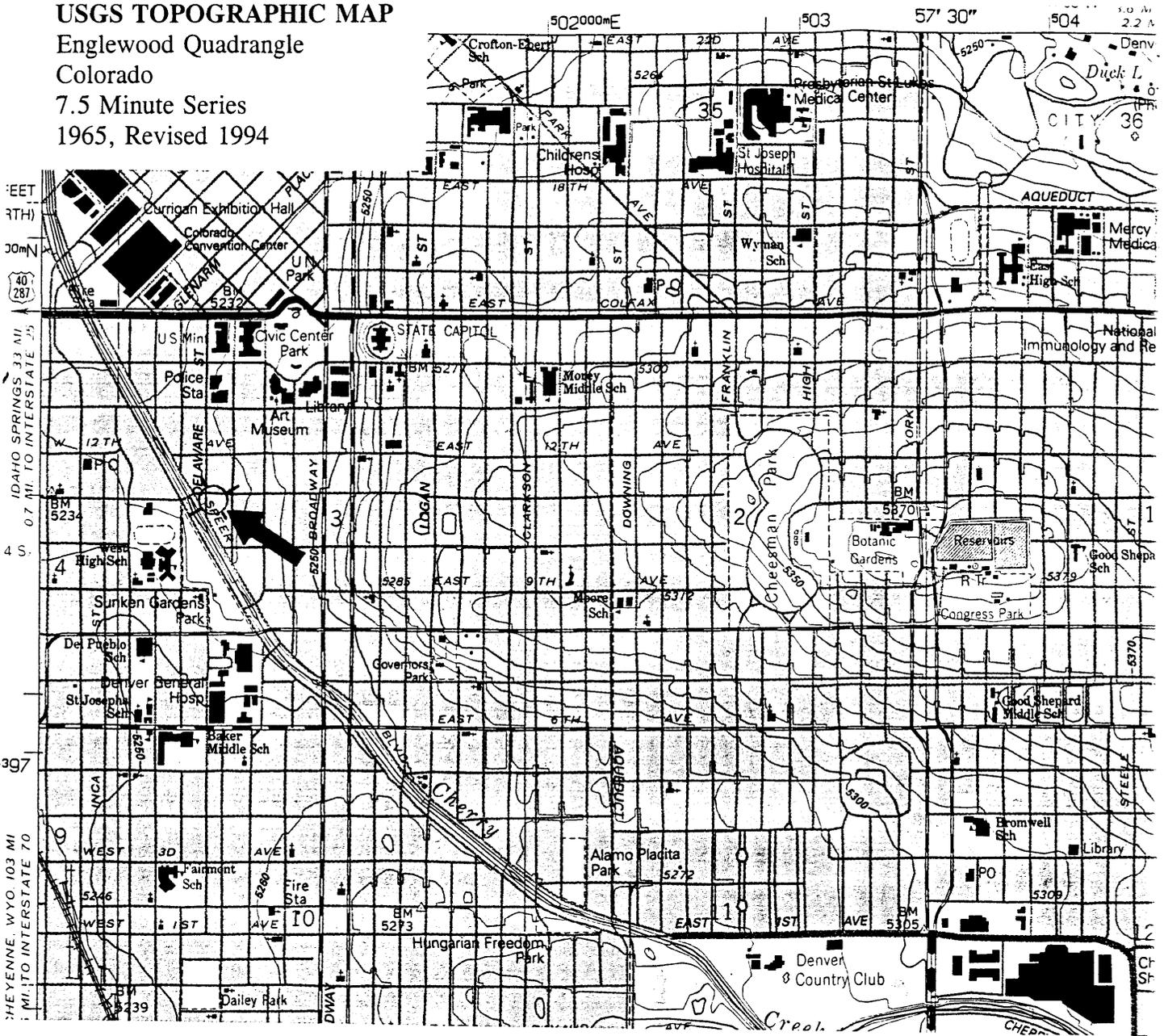
National Register of Historic Places
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Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company Building
Denver CO

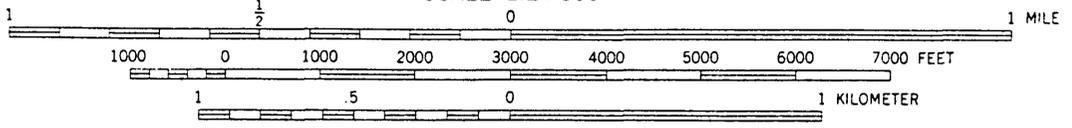
Section number _____ Page 26

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

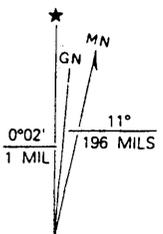
Englewood Quadrangle
Colorado
7.5 Minute Series
1965, Revised 1994



SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



UTM GRID AND 1994 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET