



COLORADO POSTER STAMPS

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By John H. Bloor

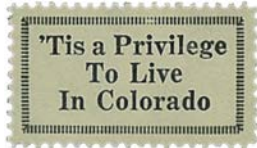


Figure 1

It's a beautiful day in Colorado. The sky is blue, the weather is mild, and there's no rain or snow. There are unlimited opportunities for outdoor sports, studying history, and watching nature. The words on a tiny little label (**Figure 1**) say it all. But how do you tell people about the wonders of the state? You want to encourage people to visit Colorado and to keep it (and your business) green – by bringing money! This was just as true 100 years ago as it is today.

Pictorial advertising was the answer but it needed to be in color to convey the most enticing image. Before World War II, most ads were black and white. Color posters and travel brochures were costly to produce and distribute. As an alternative, many businesses and organizations used interesting and colorful labels, known as poster stamps, to advertise their interests.

These miniature posters, often drawn by well-known artists, were eye-catching and inexpensive. They were paper ephemera, meant to be displayed then discarded. Some were saved, though, as souvenirs and they now provide today's collectors and historians a glimpse into the past.

Here in Colorado, as in other parts of the country, many groups printed poster stamps showing images related to their interests. Most of you probably have seen some of these and may have examples in your own collections.

This monograph shows a number of these labels and, to the extent that there is any information, tells something about them. A few examples of other types of paper ephemera will also be included. Most of the material shown here, as far as I can tell, is from before WWII.

A few are later and others are even being issued today.

COLORADO AND COLORADO CITIES

Tourism is an important industry in Colorado. People come here for the climate, the beauty of the mountains, and the variety of outdoor sports. The state advertised itself with several labels.

The phrase “Switzerland of America” is usually associated with Ouray, Colorado, although the poster

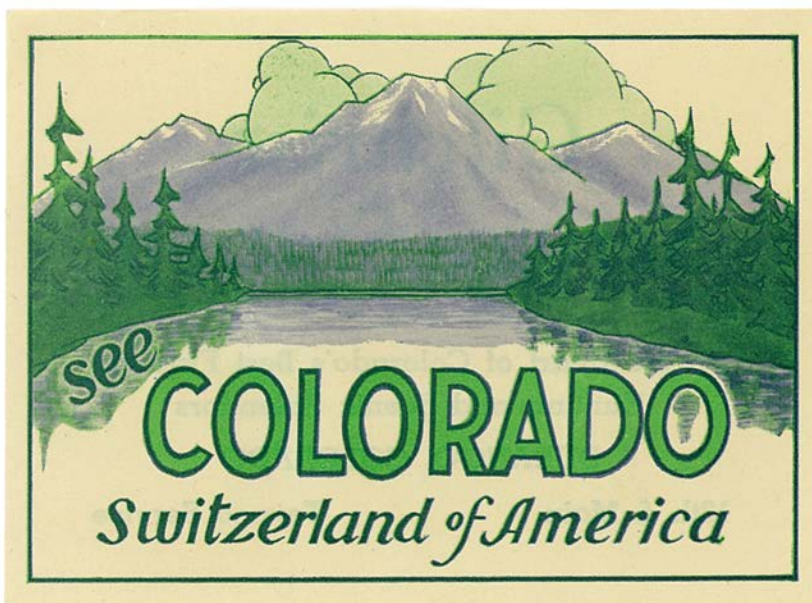


Figure 2

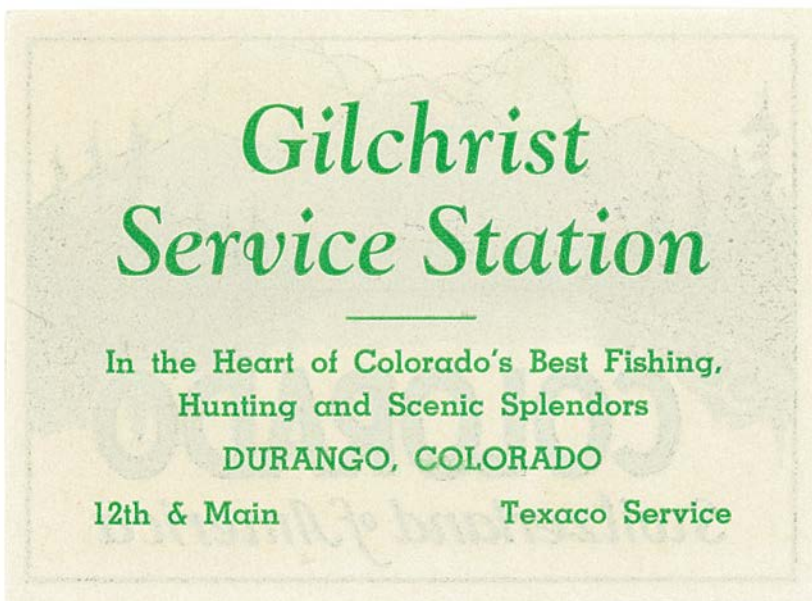


Figure 3

stamps in **Figures 2** through **4** suggest that it is also used to advertise the state as a whole. It is also seen on a number of postcards from the Argentine Central Railway in Colorado and has been used to describe Wind Cave National Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota. According to the text on the back of **Figure 2** (**Figure 3**), the label was sponsored by Gilchrist Service Station in Durango, near Ouray.

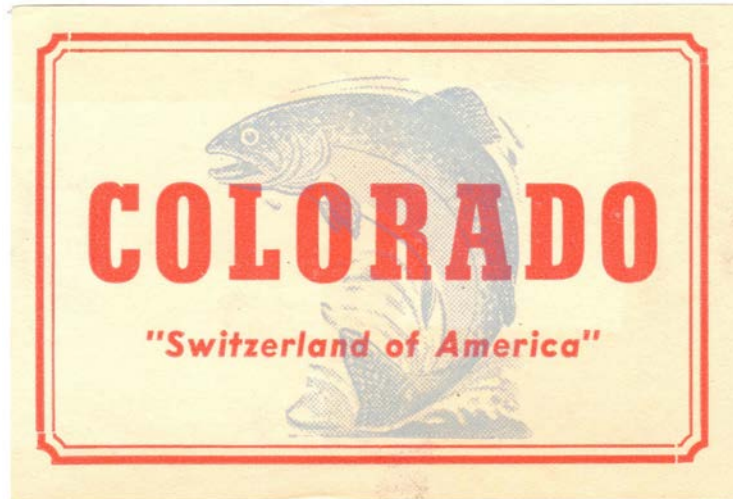


Figure 4



Figure 5

Figures 5 and **6**, which show visitors that Colorado is “The Scenic State,” are from two different sets of ten and eight stamps, respectively.

The town of Silverton, from a photograph taken many years ago, is an example of one in the set, all in the same sepia color, and each with a photo of a different town (**Figure 5**).



Figure 6

The stamp on the left (**Figure 6**) illustrates bronc riding and appears to have been done by a graphic artist. The other stamps in the set are images of other rodeo activities or of Native Americans in the same artistic style. The set was printed by the Ideal Art Shop in Denver in 1915.

Issuing a set of related stamps was fairly common.



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Another example, **Figures 7 through 9**, are the bathing beauty labels from Glenwood Springs. The hot mineral springs there make possible “Outdoor Bathing the Year Round.” There are eight stamps in the set, each featuring the same model in different poses.

Many cities in Colorado also tried to attract tourists. Their poster stamps include ones from Montrose (**Figures 10 - 12**) and Manitou Springs, with both blue and green mountains (**Figures 13 - 14**, page 6).



Figure 11



Figure 10

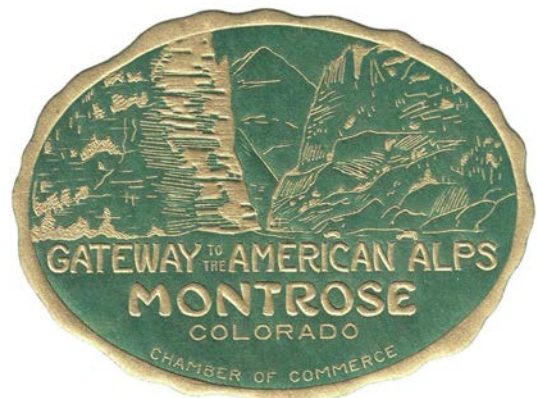


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

Other cities with poster stamps included Pueblo (Figures 15 - 16), Boulder (Figures 17 - 18), Colorado Springs (Figure 19), and, of course, Denver (Figures 20 - 24).



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

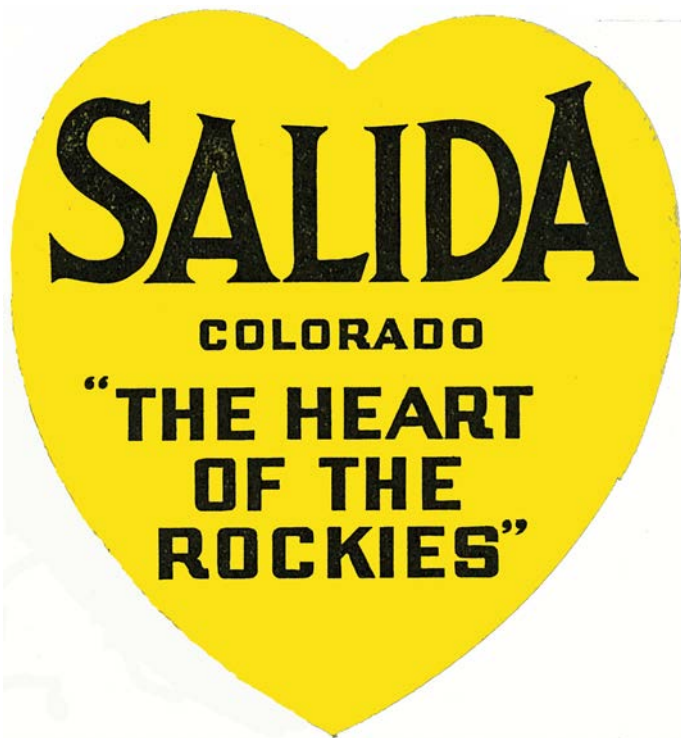


Figure 25

Salida, “The Heart of the Rockies,” had the same label in three different sizes (Figures 25 - 27).

Sometimes, though, it seems that the advertising wasn’t very successful. The Colorado Postal Encyclopedia by William H. Bauer (a copy is in the RMPL) says Greenhorn was a small town in Pueblo County between Pueblo and Walsenburg on old highway 85-87. It had a post office from 1866 to 1911. The town began in the early 1860s and was an important stop on the stage route from Pueblo to Santa Fe.

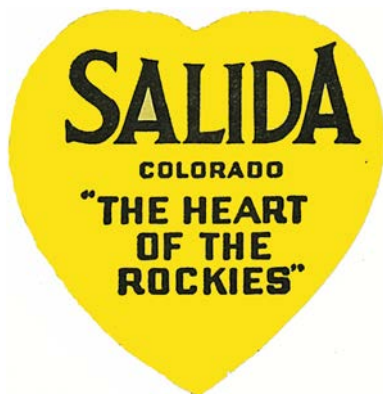


Figure 26

By the middle of the 20th century it had begun to decline. Construction of I-25 in the 1960s was the final blow, drawing business from the town to Pueblo and Walsenburg. Greenhorn is now a ghost town. A poster stamp advertising “Shady Greenhorn Colorado” was released, perhaps sometime in the 1920s or 1930s (Figures 28 - 29).

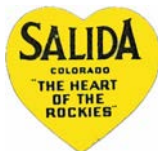


Figure 27



Figure 28

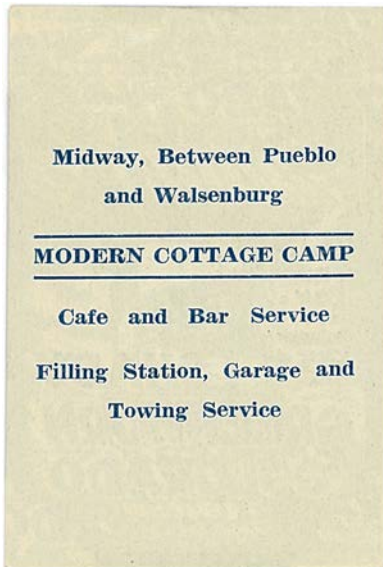


Figure 29

This was likely a window sticker for an automobile. On the back there's an ad for a "Modern Cottage Camp," probably in Greenhorn. The ad could be read from inside the car to remind the passengers that Greenhorn was a great place to stop for a rest or an overnight stay. It apparently wasn't enough to keep the town going.

The "Land of the Huajatolla" (pronounced Wa-ha-toy-a) refers to the Native American name for the mountains now known as the Spanish Peaks (Walsenburg World-Independent, 7/27/1954). The word means "two breasts," referring to the two isolated peaks southwest of Walsenburg.



Figure 30

Other labels also have text on the reverse. The backs the Denver hexagon (Figure 24, page 7) and the Manitou Springs half-moons (Figures 13 - 14, page 6) welcome visitors to the respective cities. The reverses are shown in Figures 30 and 31.

Idaho Springs, "On the Prospector's Trail," provided useful and interesting information about the town and the area around it (Figures 32 - 33, page 10).

Walsenburg had at least two poster stamps. Both again mention the Spanish Peaks; one also extolls the town's proximity to the San Isabel National Forest (Figures 34 and 36, page 10). The octagonal label was sponsored by the Trinidad Electric Co. (Figure 35, page 11).



Figure 31



Figure 32

ALTITUDE
7,549 FEET
IDAHO SPRINGS, COLORADO

- ★ Gold discovered here in 1859
- ★ \$2,500,000 metal produced in county last year
- ★ Over \$200,000,000 to date
- ★ Live, big little city, 2 miles long, 3 blocks wide, 1½ miles high
- ★ 35 miles west of Denver on U. S. 40
- ★ Gateway to Mt. Evans over highest paved auto road in the world—14,259 feet
- ★ Site of longest mining tunnel in the world
- ★ Radium health springs and Vacation Resort
- ★ At the foot of the largest and finest ski courses in the West
- ★ Fisherman's and sportsman's Paradise
- ★ Entrance to Arapahoe National Forest

COME ONCE AND LIVE IT
Forever!

Figure 33



Figure 34

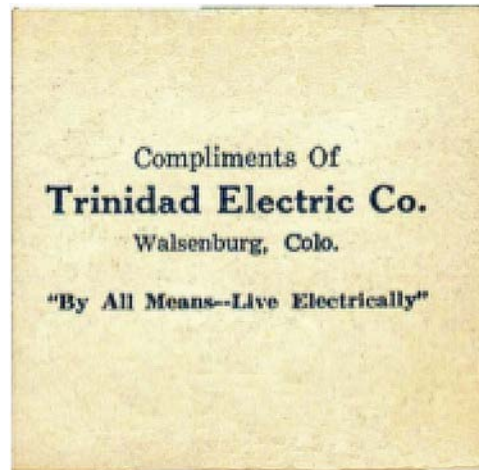


Figure 35

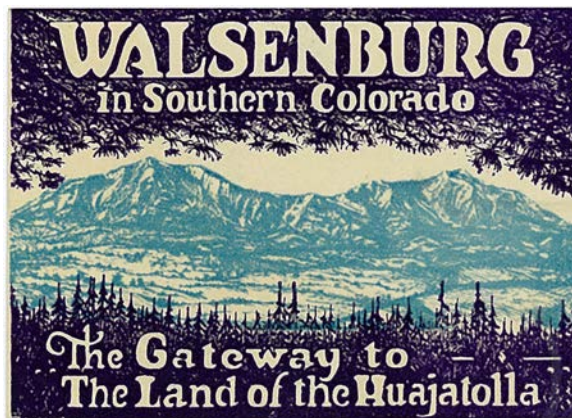


Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38

Cañon City is noted for Skyline Drive, shown on the labels in **Figures 37** and **38**. It is a three mile stretch of one-way road that begins off highway 50, west of Cañon City, and runs eastward along a hogback overlooking the city. The highway was constructed in the early 20th century by prisoners. It is parallel to US route 50 which extends a little more than 3,000 miles, from Ocean City, Maryland to West Sacramento, California. When the poster stamp was issued, before interstates 70 and 80, route 50 extended to San Francisco, making it an important coast-to-coast highway.

EVENTS IN COLORADO

Various groups selected Colorado as the venue for their meetings. To promote attendance, they distributed poster stamps, often using Colorado's climate and scenery as an attraction.

Figures 39 and **40** advertise an Electric Show & Home Industry Exhibition and a Mining Convention & Celebration.



Figure 39



Figure 40

According to *Electrical Review* and *Western Electrician* (Nov. 27, 1915) the Electric Exhibition took place in 1915.

The Mining Convention was held in 1947.

The attendees at the Mining Convention are invited to partake of a "world famous sow belly dinner". The *Weekly Register-Call* (aka *Gilpin County News*, *Black Hawk, CO*) for May 23, 2013, reported that sow belly is "the fat and meat portion from the belly of a female pig" and that the "George A. Jackson annual 'Sowbelly' dinner continues to be enjoyed annually by the Clear Creek-Gilpin County Metal Mining Association". The 72nd such event was held in 2013 at the Elks Club in Idaho Springs.

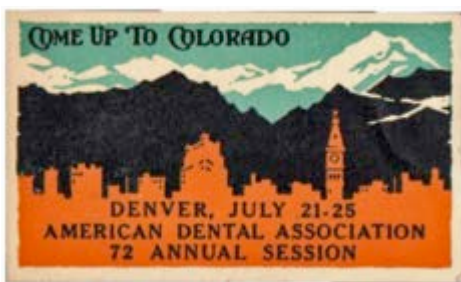


Figure 41

An invitation to "Come Up to Colorado" for the 72nd session of the American Dental Association convention in 1930 is in **Figure 41**.

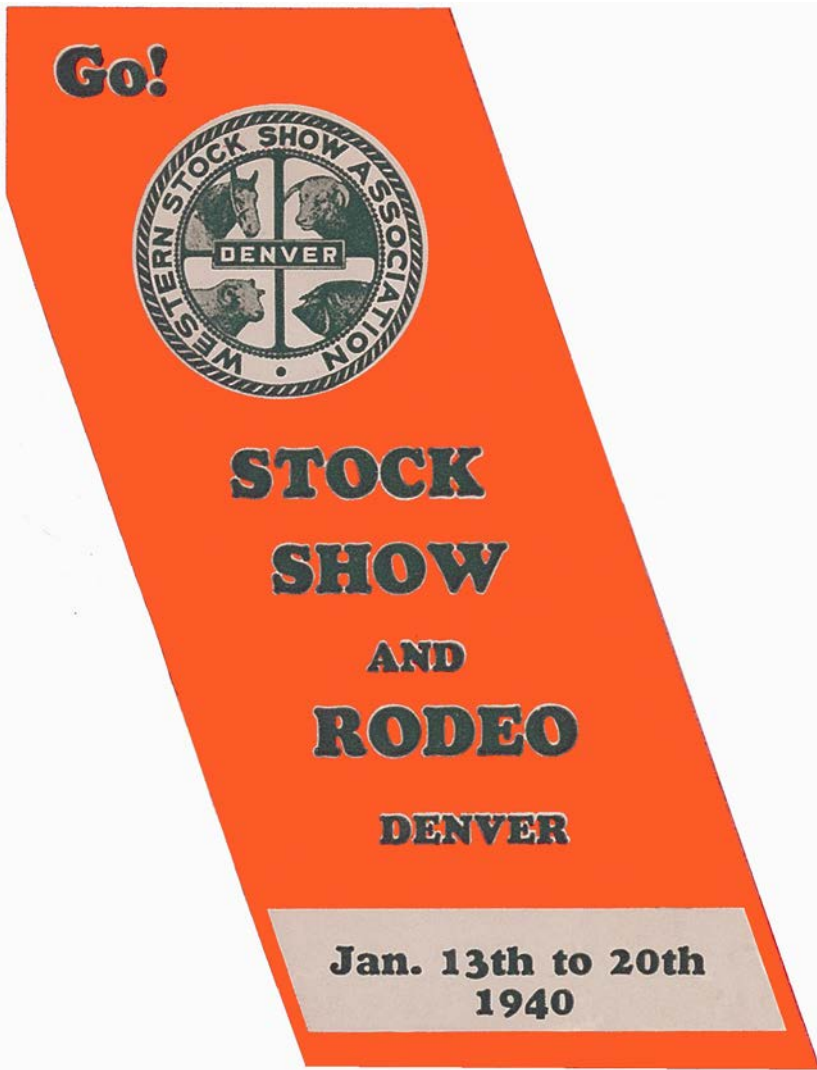


Figure 42

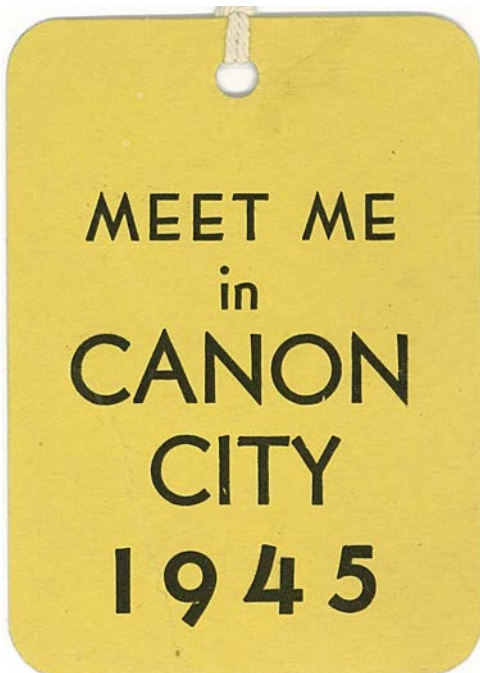


Figure 43

The 34th edition of the Western Stock Show and Rodeo was held in 1940 (Figure 42).

Then there's the invitation to "meet me in Canon City" in 1945, Figure 43. There's nothing, though, to indicate whom you would be meeting or why you would want to meet them!

The Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau also encouraged groups to have conventions there. Two of their labels were shown earlier (Figures 22 and 24, page 7, and Figure 30, page 9) and three more are shown in Figures 44 through 46. The label describing Denver as "The Ideal Convention City" has no attribution and may not have been issued by the Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46

WHERE TO STAY?

Visitors needed a place to stay while in Colorado. The poster stamp from Greenhorn shown earlier (**Figure 28**, page 3) suggested staying at a camp there but it didn't last long.

The Moon Glow Cottage Court advertised in the poster stamp in **Figure 47** is gone now, too. An internet reference says that in 1941 it was at 6990 West Colfax Avenue in what is now Lakewood.

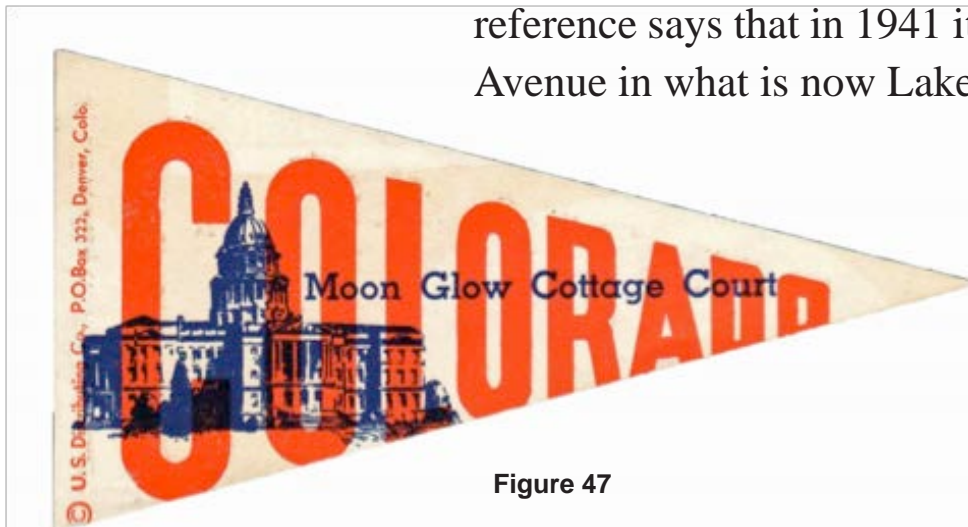


Figure 47



Figure 48

The Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs (**Figures 48 - 49**) provided elegant digs for those who could afford it.

Technically, the Broadmoor sticker in **Figure 49** and most of the other hotel stickers (**Figures 50-53**) aren't poster stamps but baggage labels. These were intended specifically for use on luggage brought by the hotels' guests. They certainly were paper ephemera, though, and are closely related to poster stamps.

Denver is represented by four well-known hotels, or at least hotels that once were familiar, on page 16.

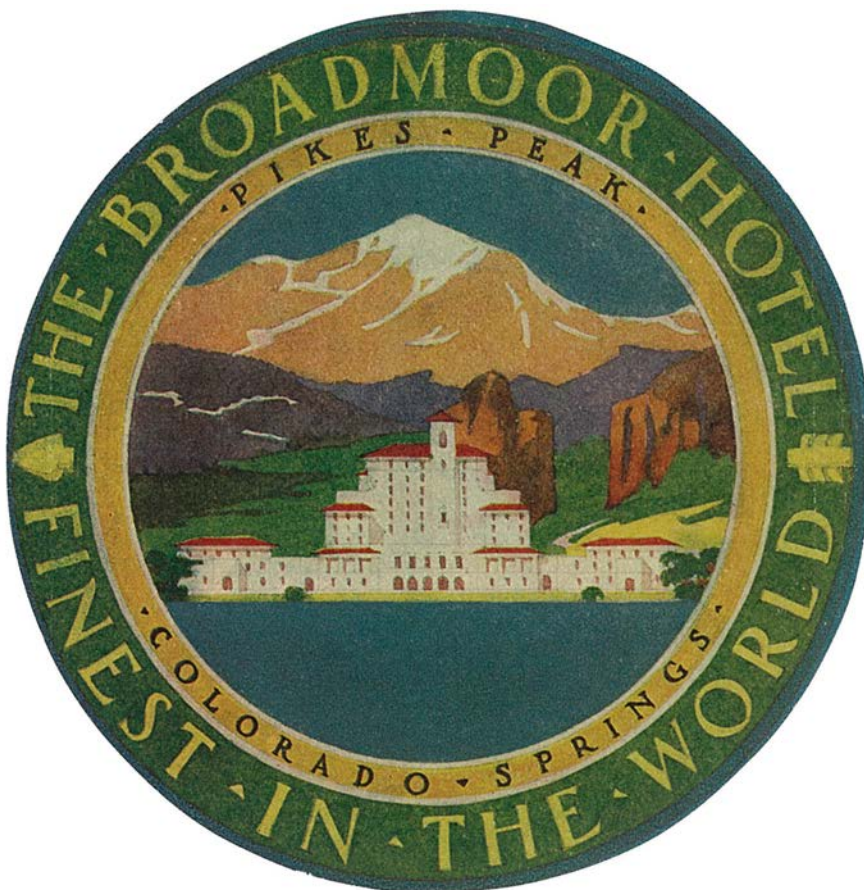


Figure 49

The Brown Palace “Where the World Registers” still stands at Broadway and Tremont (**Figure 50**). It continues to be one of the premium hotels of Denver.

The Oxford Hotel is located not far away at 1600 17th street (**Figure 51**). In 2012 it was voted the number one hotel in the west by Condé Nast Traveler.

The Park Lane and the Shirley Savoy hotels, sadly, don't exist anymore (**Figures 52 - 53**).



Figure 50

The Park Lane, which occupied the 400 block of South Marion St. from 1928-1968, has been replaced by high rise residential buildings.

The Shirley Savoy, really two hotels, was located at 17th and Lincoln. The Shirley was razed in the early 1960s



Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53

and the Savoy followed about ten years later. The Wells Fargo Center now occupies the space.

In past years the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Exhibition was held in the Shirley Savoy and the Brown Palace hotels.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHILE YOU ARE HERE?

The Stock Show and several conventions and their associated poster stamps were mentioned before (Figures 39 - 42, pages 12 and 13). However, these were rather specialized activities held in a limited amount of time. There were many other activities and events of more general interest.

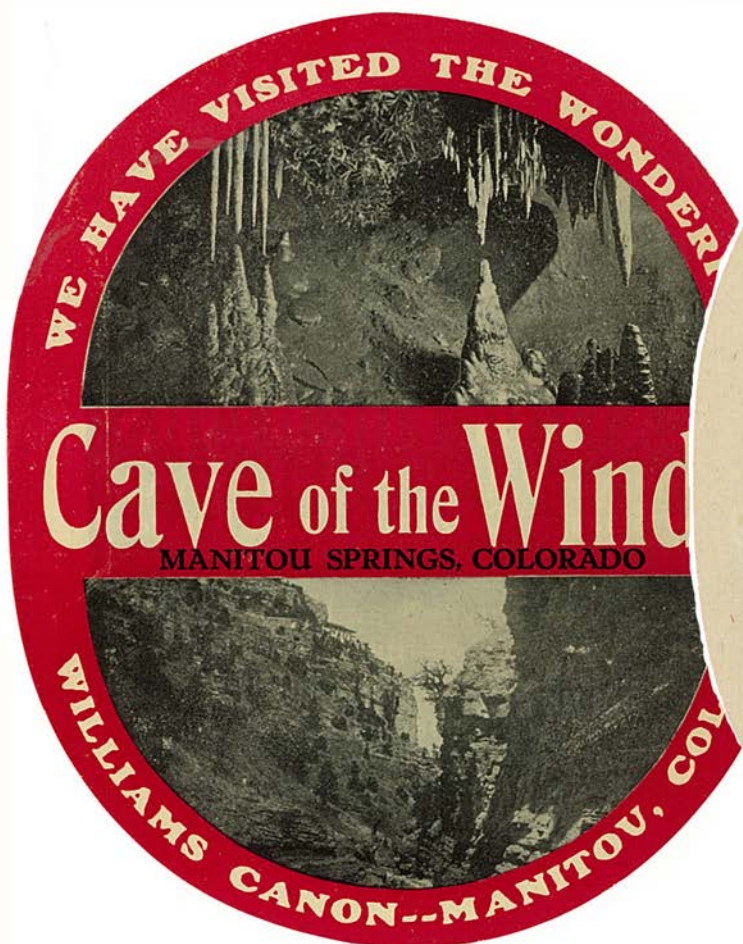


Figure 54



Figure 55

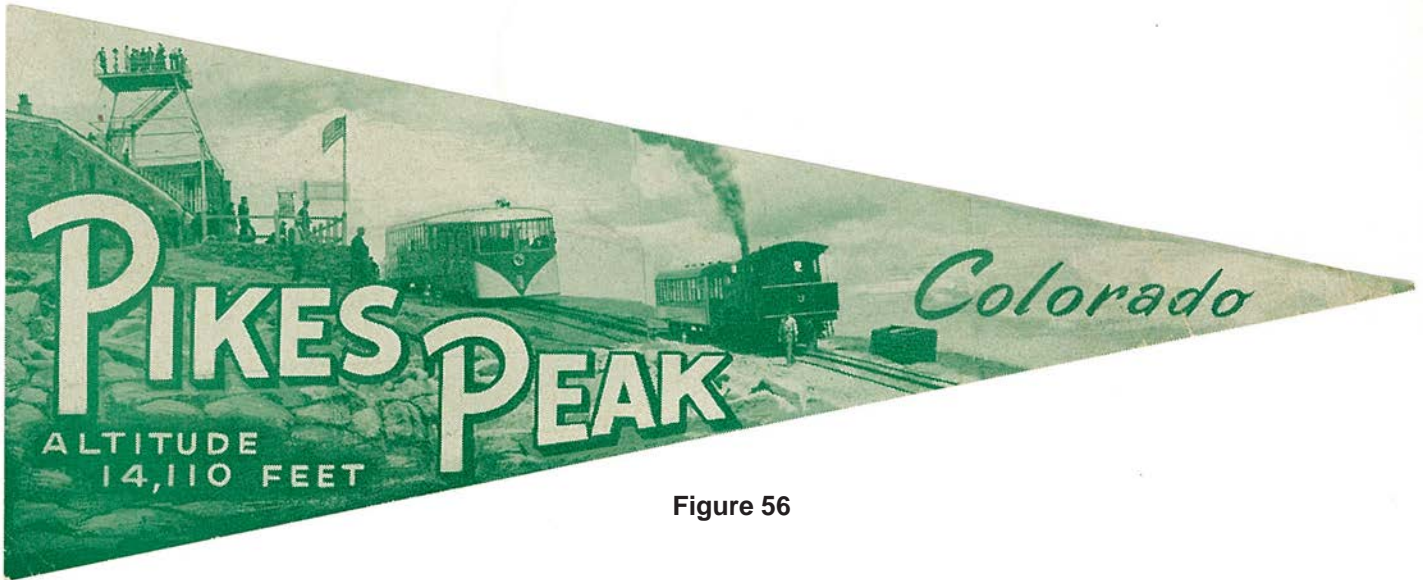


Figure 56

The Cave of the Winds near Colorado Springs is advertised on a red and black poster stamp (Figure 54, previous page) with information on the back about the road to the Cave (Figure 55).

Pikes Peak, near Colorado Springs, is one of Colorado's "fourteeners" at a height of 14,110 feet (Figure 56).

All of you are familiar with Rocky Mountain National Park, Grand Lake, and Mount Baldy (Figure 57).

KIMN radio was a place for visitors to find out about local

events or just listen to music while they were in the Denver area (Figure 58). As the label says, the station started in 1922, but with the call sign KFEL. It didn't become KIMN until 1954 but continued with that call sign until 1988, when the station shut down operations. There is now an FM station with the call sign KIMN on the air in Denver but it is



Figure 57



Figure 58

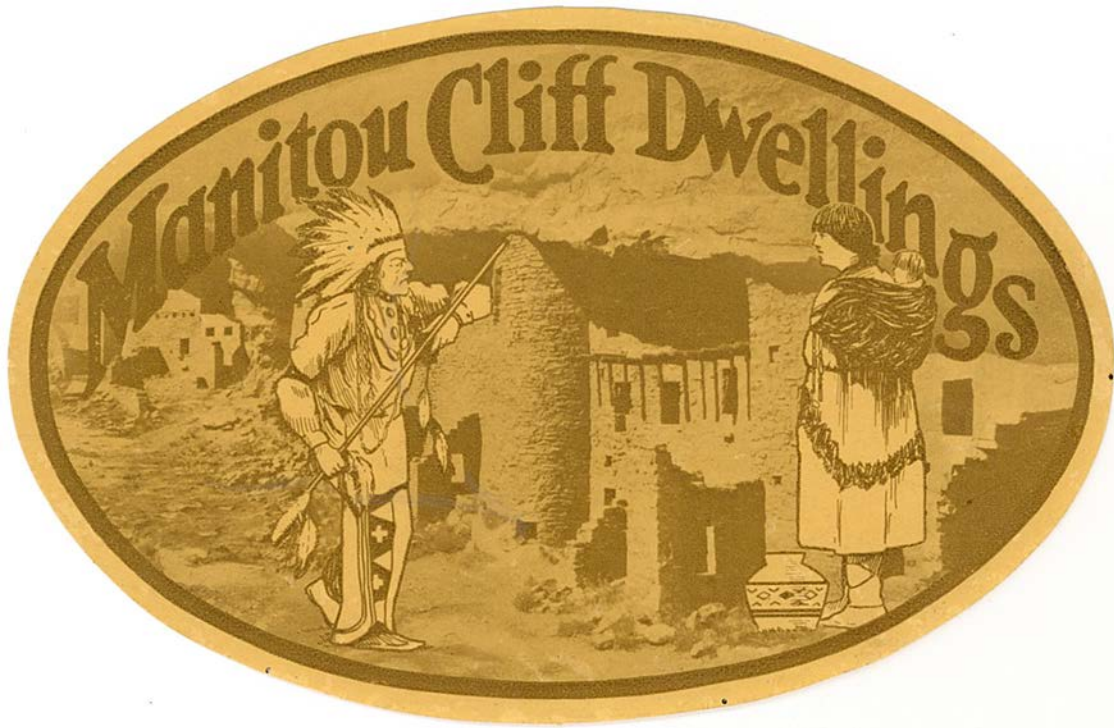


Figure 59

completely unrelated to the original radio station.

The Manitou Cliff Dwellings are located in Manitou Springs, a few miles west of Colorado Springs (**Figure 59**). They resemble the structures built by the Anasazi Indians who lived in the four corners area from 1200 BC to 1300 AD. However, according to Wikipedia, the Anasazi never lived near Manitou Springs. In the early 1900s, with the approval of anthropologist Edgar Lee Hewett, "... stones were taken from a collapsed Anasazi site near Cortez in southwest Colorado, shipped by railroad to Manitou Springs, and assembled in their present form as Anasazi-style buildings closely resembling those found in the Four Corners." These reconstructed cliff dwellings near Manitou Springs are a museum and tourist attraction.



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62

Colorado has been well known for its excellent skiing since early in the 20th Century, as advertised by **Figures 60** through **62**.

The first is generic, encouraging you to “Ski in Colorado.” The second two are more specific. By overprinting the generic version, they promote the ski slopes in Grand Mesa, near Grand Junction, and the Steamboat Springs resort in northwest Colorado.

Tourists – and residents – could learn about still other ways to spend their time from the poster stamps in **Figures 63** and **64**. Elitch Gardens, or just Elitch’s, first opened on May 1, 1890 as the Elitch Zoological Gardens at what was later 38th and Tennyson in the West Highlands neighborhood of Denver. It remained at that location for over a century and was nationally known for its theatre, gardens, roller coaster and carousel, and the Trocadero Ballroom. In 1994 it moved to downtown Denver, not far from the Bronco’s football stadium.

The Stone Age Fair (**Figure 64**) began in 1934 in Cornish, Colorado as a way to provide educational exhibits of stone age artifacts. The fair grew rapidly and in 1939 it was decided to move it to Loveland, Colorado which was better able to handle the large number of visitors. This poster stamp is from the second annual Loveland Fair in 1941. The fair continues to this day; the 2013 fair took place September 28-29. This information is from their web site, www.stoneagefair.com.

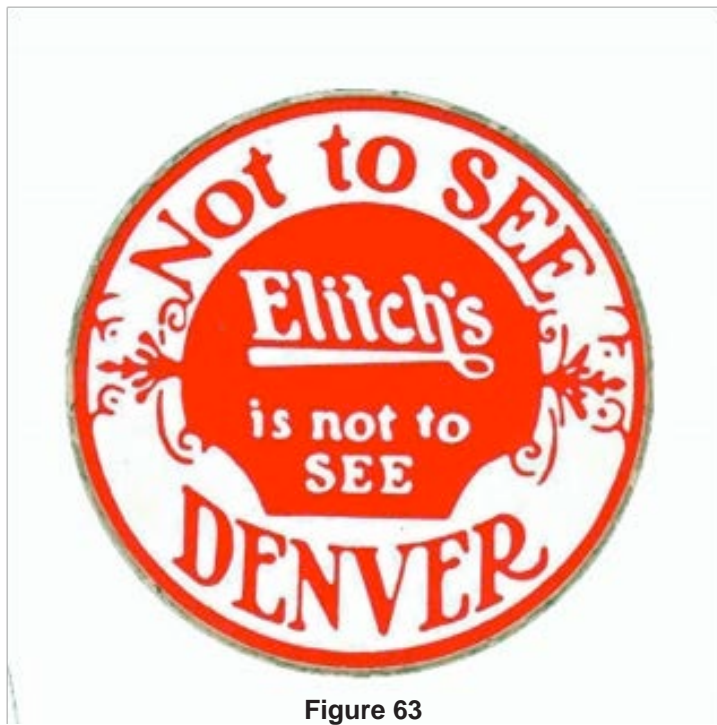


Figure 63

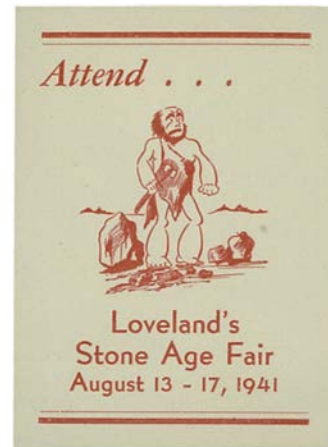


Figure 64



Figure 65

Roller skating was very popular in the mid-20th century and 1937 to 1959 is considered by some to have been “the golden age of roller skating.” There were roller rinks in most major and many smaller cities around the country. The sticker shown in **Figure 65**, from Skateland at 1990 South Broadway in Denver, is typical of those issued by many rollerdromes.

The National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, Nebraska has a large rink sticker collection which includes this one. It appears that other Skateland rinks were located in Cleveland and Belpre, Ohio; Ventura and Irvington, California; Muncy,



Figure 66



Figure 67

Pennsylvania; and Buffalo, New York. There may have been others. There certainly were many other rinks with a variety of names. Rink labels were collected and exchanged, in part, through the Universal Roller Skating Sticker Exchange which was founded in 1948.

Most of these rinks are now gone, including the one here in Denver on Broadway. Performance Cycle of Colorado now occupies the location.

Rodeos have long been popular in the Rocky Mountain West, with the first rodeo in history in the small town of Deer Trail in 1869. **Figure 66** advertises one held in Colorado Springs in August, probably many years ago. Whether this is one of the “Pikes Peak or Bust” rodeos isn’t clear. I could find no information about this particular event, including the year that it occurred. If anyone can help identify the date for the

rodeo, please let me know.

Back text on the label (**Figure 67**) states that it was “Furnished by Dana E. Wood Drug Co., in Colorado Springs, Colo., distributors of Cutter Laboratories products – since 1897 ...”. It is interesting to note that “Cutter Standard” can be seen in large, faint lettering on the shield behind the horse and rider. Cutter Labs wanted to be sure that everyone got the message, even if they couldn’t see the back of the label.

In 1869, about 2,000 people attended a horse exhibition in Pueblo, Colorado. From this event grew the Colorado

State Fair, held for the first time on October 9, 1872. The fair has been held every year since then except 1917. That year, during WWI, the fair grounds and stables were used as a training facility for the Army National Guard.

The first events were put on by the Southern Colorado Agricultural and Industrial Association. The

fair was incorporated on November 17, 1886. As it grew in size and popularity it moved several times, always to other sites in Pueblo, arriving at the present 102 acre location in 1901.

The poster stamp shown in **Figure 68** was used to advertise the fair, considered to be the largest summer event in Colorado. The year that it was released is not known. The next Colorado State Fair will take place in Pueblo August 22 through September 1, 2014.



Figure 68

TRAVEL TO AND THROUGH COLORADO

Railroads were of great importance to Colorado. They brought goods into the state and took minerals and metals, including gold and silver, to the coasts. They were also critical for taking supplies from Denver and other front range cities up to the mines and mountain towns and bringing ore back down. There are many post cards showing these railroads and their routes but relatively few poster stamps. At least, I haven't been able to find many of them.

Colorado was also important to the railroads. Tourism was big business for them and destinations included many locations in our state. To promote tourism and railroad ridership, railroads sold or gave away scenic poster stamps such as the two panes of eight each in **Figures 69 - 70**. These were in booklets with one or more panes such as these. In these two panes, sixteen different views along the routes of the railroads are shown. I suspect that others are available.

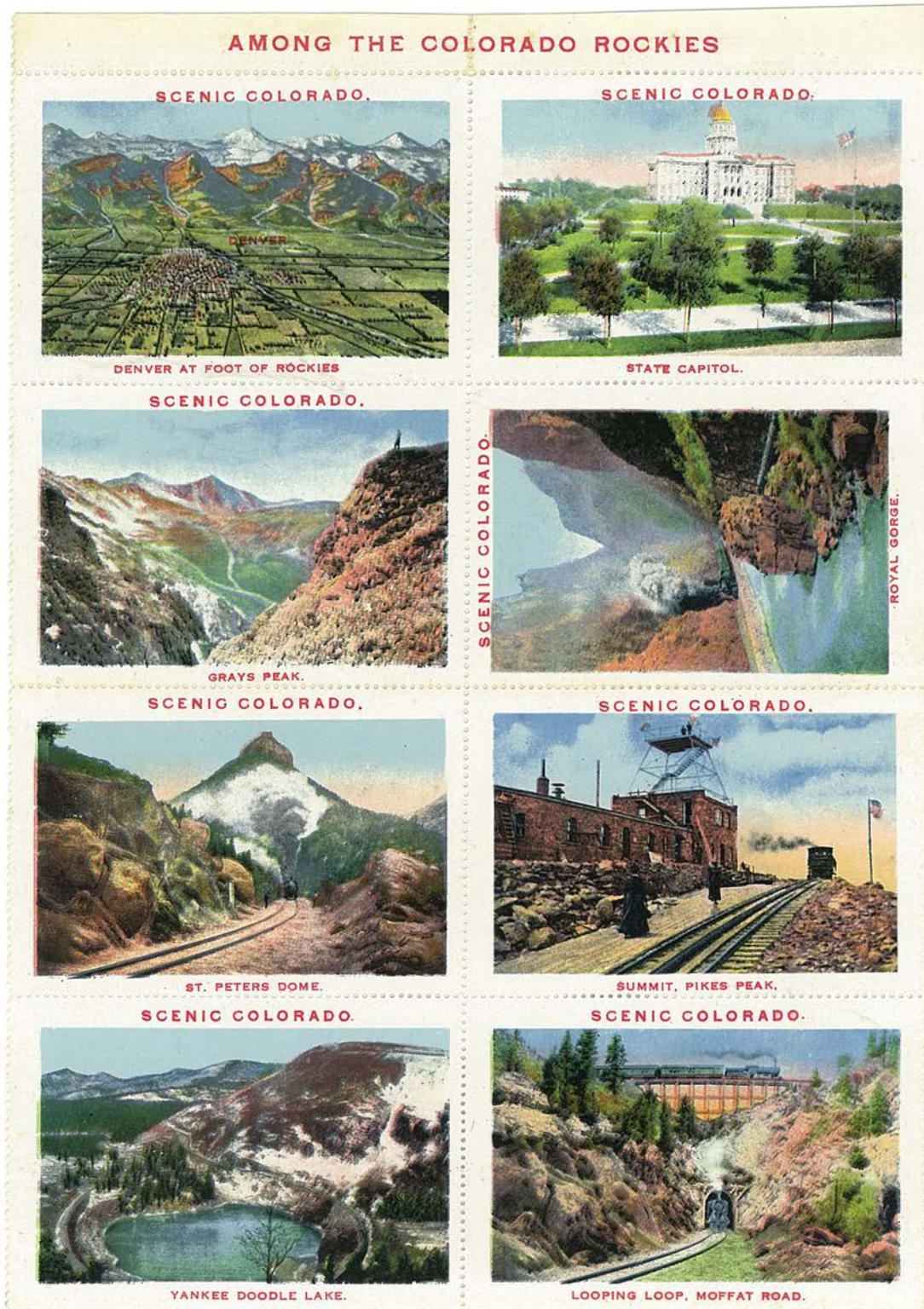


Figure 69

THRU THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES.

SCENIC COLORADO.



SKYLINE DRIVE

SCENIC COLORADO.



STATE CAPITOL.

SCENIC COLORADO.



GATEWAY GARDEN OF GODS.



SUMMIT PIKES PEAK.

SCENIC COLORADO.

SCENIC COLORADO.



MARSHALL PASS.



MOUNT OF HOLY CROSS

SCENIC COLORADO.

SCENIC COLORADO.



TOLTEC GORGE.



ECHO CLIFFS.

Figure 70



Figure 71

Besides railroads, there was a need for other, more local, forms of transportation. In 1907, Freelan Oscar Stanley who, with his brother, invented the Stanley Steamer automobile, formed the Estes Park Transportation Company to ferry tourists from the railheads at Lyons and Longmont to Freelan's new Stanley Hotel in Estes Park using steam powered buses. In 1916 Stanley sold the company to Roe Emery and the name was changed to the Rocky Mountain Parks Transportation Co. The

company expanded and Emery began offering "circle tours", taking tourists from Denver to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, then back to Denver. After WWII, increasing private automobile ownership greatly reduced the need for a large fleet of tour buses based in Estes Park and the company gradually faded away. Part of their legacy is the poster stamp in **Figure 71**. They issued at least one other similar label which I have seen but don't have.

BUY COLORADO PRODUCTS

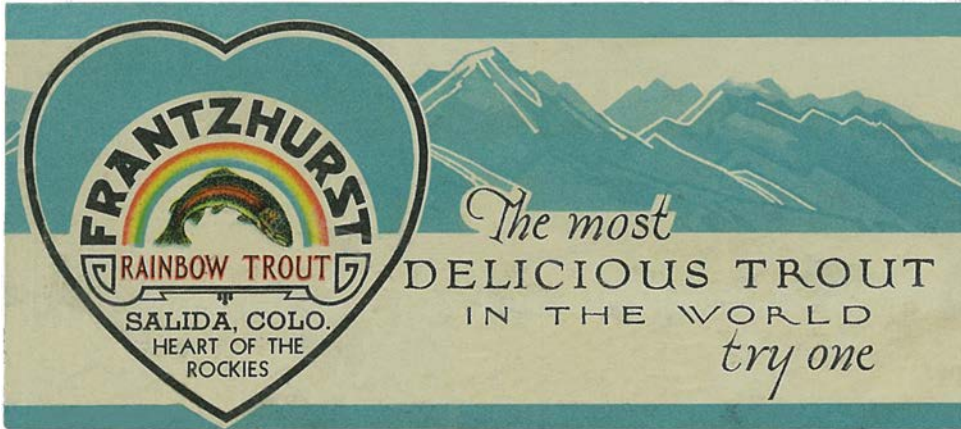


Figure 72

In addition to tourism, other businesses have thrived in Colorado. Labels from three of these are shown in **Figures 72** through **74**. An article in Colorado Central Magazine from 2012 describes how the

Frantzhurst Trout Farm in Salida operated from the late 1920s until 1953, shipping 2,000 pounds of fresh trout a year by refrigerated transport to restaurants and hotels around the country.

The article quotes lines from a poem titled *A Tale of Tessie the Trout* © Frantzhurst Trout Farm:

*“But Tessie weeks later shared a similar fate
And wound up one night on a Senator’s plate;
With lemon and spices and other things good
Our Tessie from Frantzhurst had now
become food.”*

The second label is from the Metropolitan Cigar Company, located at 17th and Lawrence in downtown Denver. The stamp is undated but Metropolitan Cigar ran a similar ad, also talking about Tom Moore cigars, in the Rocky Mountain Druggist for June, 1915.



Figure 73

Dr. Ed. Shimin was apparently a veterinary dentist who lived and practiced in Colorado Springs from at least 1909 to 1923. He is mentioned in the Colorado Springs

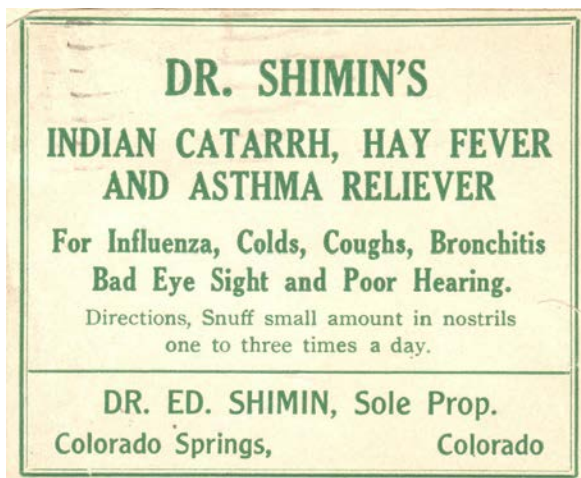


Figure 74

Gazette for April 18, 1909 and the label in **Figure 74** is on the back of a cover postmarked November 30, 1923.

This poster stamp advertises his product which he claimed would relieve “Indian catarrh” and other ailments, many of which produce similar symptoms. Catarrh is an old name for an inflammation of the mucus membranes associated with swelling, congestion, and an increase in mucus secretion. Perhaps this was an early antihistamine preparation or a decongestant – or it may have been nothing but “snake oil”, with no actual effect on these symptoms, which usually resolve spontaneously without treatment!

CONCLUSION

I’ve limited this monograph to poster stamps from Colorado. That’s the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Colorado-related paper ephemera, though, and there are many poster stamps from other places as well. I’m pretty sure that you could assemble a collection similar to this one from any of the 50 states and probably many cities.

There are likely many more Colorado stamps out there, just waiting to be discovered. Although Colorado’s western slope has many locations and activities worthy of a poster stamp, the only two that I’ve found are from Montrose and Glenwood Springs (**Figures 7 - 12**, page 12). It is also probable that more stamps advertising Colorado products will someday come to light.

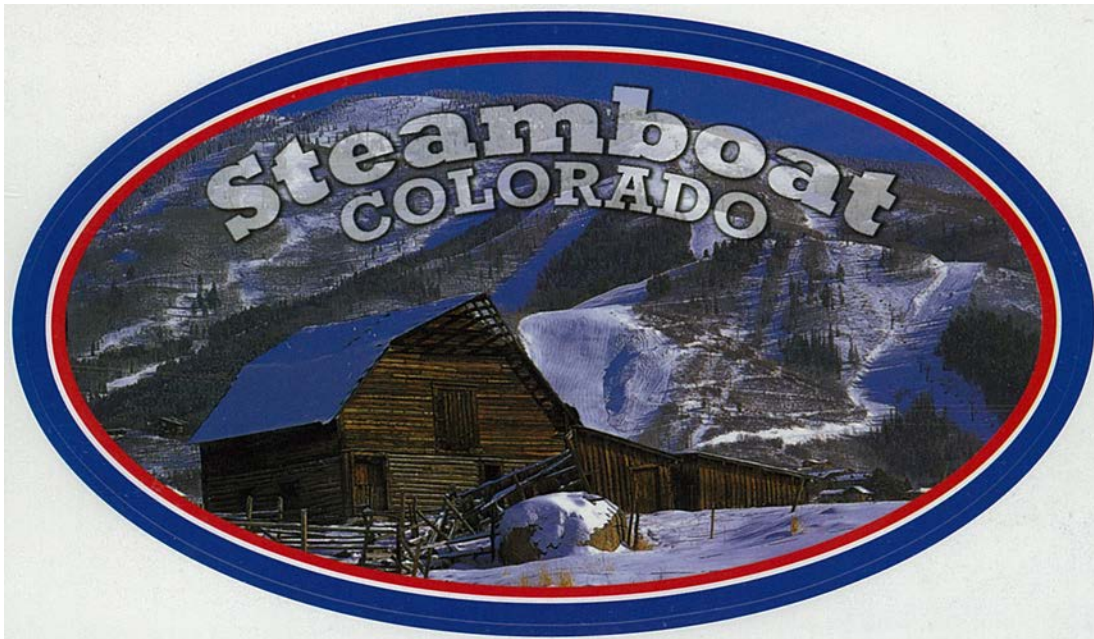


Figure 75

Poster stamps are still being produced, albeit in much smaller numbers than previously. One example, from Steamboat Springs, is shown in **Figure 75**.

I hope that you've enjoyed these brief glimpses of Colorado history. If you have more Colorado poster stamps, let me know. I can easily be reached through the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library. The library is also a good place to look for some of the books and journals (notably the *Cinderella Philatelist* and the *Journal of the Poster Stamp Collectors Club*) that can teach you even more.

Ask the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library's front desk volunteers for help, if you would like more information.