

DENVER'S MAGNIFICENT MANSIONS

tales of love, tragedy, and power

The night watchman threw open the heavy wooden doors of the old mansion and fled, terror twisting his face into a grotesque mask. Flailing his pistol in the cool, early morning air, he vowed never to set foot in *that* nightmarish house again.

Such fright-filled incidents are commonplace at the old house that stands brooding and glowering at the corner of East 11th Avenue and Pennsylvania Street. It is but one of many Denver mansions that have remarkable, unusual, or colorful tales associated with them.

Made possible by fortunes at first taken from Colorado mines and later made in business and industry, Denver's architecturally diverse mansions stand as distinctive monuments to their builders and owners. Within their great stone walls are to be found stories of love, success, and tragedy. Or in the case of the home at 11th and Pennsylvania, tales of evil, violence, and restive spirits.

By Jeff Waters

THE HAUNTED MANSION

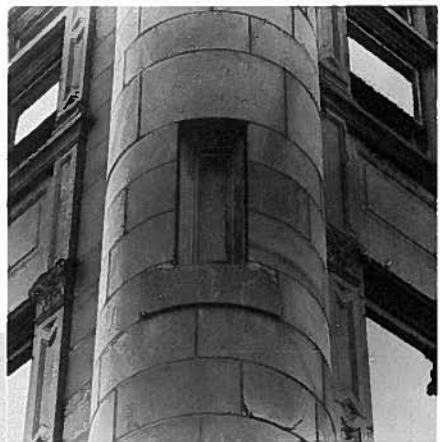
To the casual passerby, the old mansion on East 11th is just that — an old mansion. Yet, a number of Denverites are convinced that the building is haunted. Noted Denver realtor and one-time owner of the house, Mary Rae, is one who believes that spirits dwell in the residence. When she operated the house as an apartment building four years ago, tenants living on the third floor reported the sound of a woman's uncontrolled weeping at night. Two women tenants abruptly moved out because of this eerie wailing.

Another tenant, a man of Dutch descent, experienced a frightening display of psychokinesis. His young child woke up screaming one night, and as he and his horrified wife looked on, the heavy metal fireplace grate flew across the room and slammed into the baby's crib. There have also been reports of books and other objects flying off shelves, and another woman tenant, a TV news reporter, was startled one night to see a faint, ghostly

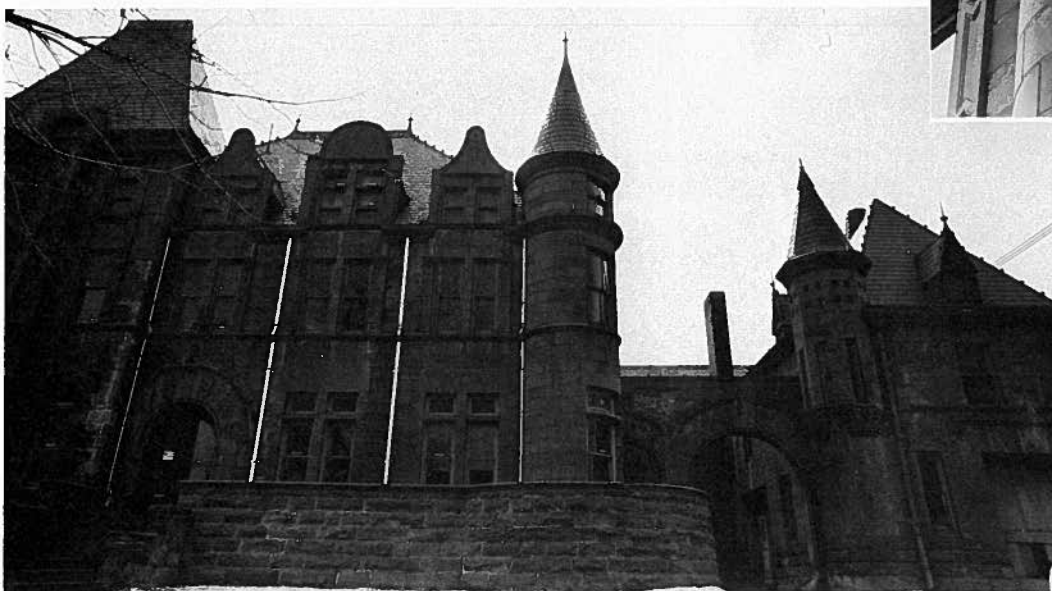
figure gliding up the main staircase.

The castle-like residence was built back in the late 1880's by Thomas B. Croke, an agriculturist and pioneer developer of irrigation in the region. Even at the time of its completion, people regarded the mansion as being quite unusual, if not downright strange, with its stark red sandstone walls, jutting dormers and forbidding steeples and turrets.

It was not long before Croke traded the mansion for a ranch and it became the home of Thomas H. Patterson — U.S. Senator, staunch Democrat and a former owner and publisher of *The Rocky Mountain News*. It was while



The Croke Mansion, located at East 11th Avenue and Pennsylvania Street, is said by many to be the home of restive spirits. A number of tenants have had psychic experiences or seen ghostly figures within its walls.



he was publishing the *News* that he was involved in a rather bizarre incident. Walking to work from the castle one morning, Patterson was overtaken in a field by F.G. Bonfils, owner of the rival *Denver Post*, and was viciously beaten by him because of a scurrilous anti-Bonfils editorial that had appeared earlier in the *News*.

Patterson died at the castle in 1916, where his wife had also met her end a few years before. Some maintain to this day that the ghost of Patterson still stalks the old hallways at night, perhaps brooding yet over the drubbing he took at the hands of Bonfils. Patterson's daughter and her husband, Richard Campbell, occupied the house for a time and it then became the home of their son, Thomas Patterson Campbell.

In the early 1950's the mansion was purchased by Dr. Archer Chester Sudan, a frontier physician of Kremmling, Colorado, and recipient of the American Medical Society's first Outstanding General Practitioner Award. Dr. Sudan moved his wife, Tulleen, and their infant daughter into the mansion. A short time later the child died of unknown causes. Mrs. Sudan, distraught and hysterical over the death, took her own life with cyanide.

The reports of strange nocturnal sounds and psychokinetic activity at the mansion have prompted interested individuals to hold several seances there recently, to determine if spirits are indeed present. After a seance sponsored by KMGH-TV, medium Jack Young and psychic expert Robert Bradley were convinced that the house harbored numerous spirits.

Two even more revealing seances

were conducted by Denver novelist and longstanding student of parapsychology, Jan Masoner. The first time she visited the mansion, she reported experiencing strong feelings of evil both in the basement and in the northeast corner bedroom on the third floor. Determined to learn more, she and a group of friends gathered in the grand foyer, with its gaping marble-and-oak fireplace, sweeping oaken staircase to the upper floors, and narrow flight of steep stairs to the basement, for two candlelight seances.

Seated with her friends around a table, Masoner allegedly made contact with a number of spirits, including those of a nursemaid and a young man

who had lived there, asking them yes-and-no questions about the mansion. Affirmative responses registered as movements of the table. Strangely enough, throughout the sessions all of the spirits seemed to be trying to direct attention to the basement — interesting, in light of persisting rumors that a young girl lay buried beneath its floor.

After receiving no response to a series of questions asking whether this or that was buried in the basement, Masoner asked if there were human remains there. At once, the table rocked violently, almost unseating several of the seance participants.

A later, careful examination of the basement floor turned up nothing unusual — it was smooth, uniform, and intact. One of the walls, however, attracted the attention of the investigators. Strangely, its center bricks did not seem to quite match those along its sides. Removal of the center bricks disclosed a hitherto unsuspected, tiny, secret room, bricked up in the past for unknown reasons.

Upon entering the narrow chamber, the investigators immediately noticed that its floor was unlike that of the rest of the basement. It was newer and much thinner. Removing a section of the concrete, the researchers unexpectedly found sand — clean sand-box-type sand. A geologist confirmed that it could not occur naturally in that location. Preliminary excavation has produced nothing of substance, but further digging is planned.

Jan Masoner remains convinced that numerous ghosts inhabit the mansion, as well as poltergeists, those mischievous, prank-playing "rattling spirits." In her view, the odd architectural configuration of the castle, with lines and angles that run contrary to elemental forces, just naturally attracts other-worldly spirits.



Baron Walter von Richthofen, uncle of the famous Red Baron, built his castle in east Denver in 1887.

Trenton Parker, current owner of the house, which is now being utilized as office space, is skeptical about the presence of specters, despite reports that he couldn't keep watchmen on the premises, and that guard dogs brought in as replacements leaped howling out windows on three occasions.

Ghosts or not, however, the Croke-Patterson-Campbell Mansion remains one of Denver's most distinctive and unusual landmarks.

RICHTHOFEN'S VISION

Another castle, less controversial than the one Tom Croke built but nevertheless fascinating, was the talk of Denver in 1887. Located way out on the eastern plains (four miles from downtown Denver), it was but the first step in an incredible plan envisioned by a German baron to create a lavish health spa and posh residential community on the site.

The baron, Walter Von Richthofen, was the scion of a famous German family. A kinsman of his was a noted geographer, and two of his female cousins enjoyed rather widespread reputations as a result of their tempestuous love affairs. He was also the uncle of Germany's most celebrated World War I flying ace — the Red Baron — Manfred Von Richthofen.

Walter differed from his famous nephew, however, in that he hated the regimented Prussian military life that Manfred thrived on. As a consequence, Walter left Germany for America and burst into Denver sometime in the early 1870's. Amassing a fortune by investing German capital in mining properties, he turned to real estate promotion only after dabbling in several unsuccessful ventures involving railroads, cattle raising, and

To provide an appropriate setting for his castle, Baron Von Richthofen constructed a ditch from Windsor Lake to his property and planted a veritable forest of spruces, box elders, and elms. Populating his forest were deer, antelope, and bear brought down from the mountains.

a monstrous beer hall.

The area he chose for development he dubbed "Montclair" (clear view of the mountains), and within a short time he was building a pretentious castle on the site. The "mass of colored glass and bad taste," as a later owner described it, was constructed of Castle Rock limestone and patterned after the baron's ancestral German home.

To provide an appropriate setting for his castle, Richthofen constructed a ditch (which he called a moat) from Windsor Lake to his property, and with water thus assured, planted a veritable forest of spruces, box elders, and elms. Populating his forest were deer, antelope, and bear brought down from the mountains. All that remained to complete his estate was a wife. And he had a lady in mind to fill the role.

She was a dazzling blonde named Louise Ferguson Davis, whom the baron had met while out riding in his pink hunting togs. Louise liked everything about the baron but his bears, so he disposed of them and imported 200 canaries to take their place. Apparently this did the trick, for she became his second wife in 1887, his first having been sent packing back to Germany some years before.

With the completion of his mansion, Richthofen concentrated on plans for his "Colorado Carlsbad." This was to be a half-million-dollar European-style health spa featuring a lavish

hotel, a grand casino, a pine-fume pavilion where asthmatic patients could relax and inhale health-restoring fumes, a "molkerei" or milkhouse, and a bathhouse with natural, hot mineral water. When skeptics asked where the mineral waters would come from, the baron's answer was simple. He would build a 40-mile aqueduct to bring the water down from Idaho Springs.

The only building to actually materialize was the molkerei. It was a two-story structure linked to Richthofen's castle by a 300-foot underground passageway. Tuberculosis patients on the second floor drank large amounts of milk from imported, \$1,000-a-head dairy cows, stabled in the basement. Grills in the floor allowed the patients to breathe the supposedly "health-restoring" odors rising from below. Evidently the "odoriferous milk cure" was not too successful, for the building became an insane asylum in 1902, and is today the Montclair Improvement Association clubhouse.

The silver crash of 1893 ruined Richthofen, who ended his days as a



The Stoibers decided to build the grandest mansion the Mile-High City had ever seen. Stoiber himself drew up the plans for a three-story, thirty-room Renaissance Mannerist Revival home.





Harry Tammen, publisher of *The Denver Post* with F.G. Bonfils, constructed his fabulous home at 1061 Humboldt Street. Among its features was a telephone room with a direct line to the White House.



travelling salesman peddling books from a wagon. After the baron's death in 1898, the house was sold to Edwin B. Hendrie, founder of a large mining machinery distributing and supply company. He spent some \$200,000 extensively remodeling the castle. Following Hendrie's death in 1932, the mansion passed to the John Thams family. Thams, a covered-wagon settler, was the owner of the old Elephant Corral pioneer campground and livery stable for 60 years. The home has had a number of owners in recent years.

Visitors to the residence at 7020 East 12th Avenue can still see the baron's coat of arms carved on the tower above the front entrance, and the three-foot-tall face of Barbarossa (King Frederick I of Germany) on the northwest wall, despite the passage of years. The baron's name lives on as the designation for two streets and a park — all reminders of one of Denver's most visionary pioneers.

THE GRANDEST MANSION

Although the annals of Denver history seem to concentrate on the deeds of men, they are punctuated by the exploits of remarkable and colorful women as well. Such a woman was Lena Stoiber, known chiefly for her fine collection of husbands and her mammoth home at 1022 Humboldt Street.

First making a name for herself in Grand Junction in 1884 as the wife of Marshall Webster, a Gunnison lawyer, Lena achieved her notoriety as a result of her battle with the Grand Junction postmaster over an undelivered letter.

Following the heated encounter, marked by flashes of her celebrated

Secreted among Lena Stoiber's papers was found a cryptic notation: "Today I refused to become Queen of Serbia."

temper and liberal use of a sharp-tipped umbrella, Lena left Grand Junction for the quieter surroundings of Silverton, Colorado. Her husband did not go with her and, in fact, was never heard about again. This didn't seem to bother Lena, however, for a short time after her arrival in Silverton she fell madly in love with Edward Stoiber and his million-dollar silver mine. They were married, moved to Denver, and there descended on Denver society. The city's social circles, generally impressed by money, welcomed the couple at first and then began to shun them because of Lena's abrasive manner and fiery temper.

Partly to "show those snobs" and partly because the Stoibers needed a place to live, they decided to build the grandest mansion the Mile-High City had ever seen. Stoiber himself drew up the plans for a three-story, thirty-room Renaissance Mannerist Revival home. Before the rigors of construction actually got under way, the couple decided to take a restful European trip.

It turned out to be more restful for Edward than he'd anticipated, for he died of typhoid in Paris. Heartbroken, Lena returned to Denver and built the great mansion to his memory. Stoiberhof, as it was known, was completed in 1906.

In 1909 Lena added a new feature to a home that already boasted the finest woods, marbles, tapestries and *objets d'art* available — a new husband. He was Hugh Rood, a millionaire lumberman from Seattle. Rood had hardly settled into his role of husband and master of Stoiberhof when Lena had a bitter falling-out with their next-door neighbor, Egbert W. Reed. To spite him, Lena put up a solid brick wall twelve feet high between the two houses. Reed was beside himself — the wall cast a shadow on his prized currant bushes and was stunting their growth!

Then, in a flash of inspiration, he consulted archives and surveyors and found that the wall extended an inch onto his property. He immediately obtained a court order commanding Lena (and her wall) to cease and desist
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SIXTH-GRADE-LEVEL COLLEGE STUDENTS WHY?

Sadly, today's college students simply do not write as well as their counterparts did ten and fifteen years ago.

"I enjoy thier friendship, I do not want to loose my buddies." Presumably his buddies are dangerous, since the writer, a sophomore at Colorado State University a few years ago, does not wish to unleash them on the general public.

Such confusion between "lose" and "loose," over how to join independent clauses (in this case the writer used the very common but very wrong comma splice), and among "thier" (incorrect), "their" (correct), "they're," and "there" typifies the problems that plague most entering, and in many cases graduating, college students today. Sadly, they simply do not write as well as their counterparts did ten and fifteen years ago.

At one time students knew the difference between "quantity" and "number," but this distinction has disappeared — and with it some useful nuances. Sentences like the following now crop up in college essays quite regularly: "The police surrounded the barn on two sides," and "I affirm a womens right to equal rights." The police, if they are worth their salt, can only "surround" on *all* sides; and "womens," of course, should be a "woman's." (The repetitious wording is an additional problem.) In the latter case, the student has not only omitted the possessive but has also confused one woman for two.

The most common error on essays by Colorado's college and university freshmen is spelling. Among women, "woman" and "women" are very often

interchanged, while men (being the hardy, outdoor type) claim "environment" as one of their most misspelled words (usually "enviorment").

But spelling is not the core of the problem. Serious deficiencies in punctuation, grammar, and usage top the list of impediments to plain English.

THE MOON YES, EDUCATION NO

Most high school seniors who plan to go to college take the S.A.T. (Scholastic Aptitude Test); Princeton's E.T.S. (Educational Testing Service) devises and scores this national, standardized examination of basic verbal and quantitative skills. In 1963, shortly after President John F. Kennedy had committed the United States to beating the Russians to the moon, and concomitantly to educational excellence in order to assure our long-term superiority over the U.S.S.R., the average S.A.T. verbal score was 478; now it is 429 — a significant drop of nearly 50 points on a scale which runs from 200 to 800. The mathematics score declined about 30 points in the same period.

We achieved only half of Kennedy's goals: We made it to the moon, but

by Heinz Woehlke

Heinz Woehlke, a Ph.D. in medieval literature, has been a lecturer for four years at the University of Colorado at Boulder and teaches courses in science fiction and critical writing about literature.

education has gone to hell. Colorado's high school seniors, however, fared somewhat better than the nation as a whole, scoring nearly ten points higher on verbal skills. Nevertheless, the fourteen-year decline is the same.

What has caused our public school system to turn out what many educators have called a generation of functional illiterates? Answers vary. A two-year, \$600,000 study commissioned by the College Entrance Examination Board and headed by former Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz concludes that too much television, lack of student motivation, shoddy educational practices, societal turmoil, and the addition of blacks and other minorities to the S.A.T. pool have been the primary factors.

According to E.T.S., blacks score approximately 100 points lower on both the math and verbal sections than do whites. The reasons for this disparity are multifarious. Many experts maintain that the tests are culturally biased, although Wirtz's panel claims that E.T.S. has made "special efforts" to avoid such bias; in fact, says the panel, whereas one would expect *verbal* scores to reflect a cultural prejudice in the makeup of the examination, the differentials among ethnic groups are greater on the *math* portion. In any case, the increased number of blacks and other minorities with disadvantaged educational backgrounds accounts "for no more than four or five points of the total decline." (Additional women have swelled the

scope of supply and demand. In a financial panic potential, supply and demand and long-term plans all go out the window. At that point property values depend on what desperate investors in need of immediate cash can get, and not on any of those other wonderful reasons.

Massive and intensive foreign investment may, then, tie us to a foreign economy in ways we might not wish to be tied, if we had a choice. If something sours in Alberta and investors find themselves faced with a liquidity crisis of their very own making, the downtown Denver instant boom could go instant bust.

One of the big reasons foreigners are here is that their own cities have become overbuilt. Is Denver different, or might it not also become overbuilt?

Needless to say, such a situation would not sit well with the local citizenry. We were much loved in Europe during the fifties when we came toting bags of money. But when things got tough, "those foreigners" were a mighty handy scapegoat, real or imagined. Which brings us right back to the secret ownerships, investment trusts, Swiss addresses and Liechtenstein *Anstalts*.

There is no sign of decay in Denver. The potential is great. Foreign capital is welcome. But things happen . . . Last year when the British pound was falling like there was to be no bottom, a joke went around that the Arabs, seeking bargains in Britain and buying everything in sight, might as well roll up the little country, tow it down to Abu Dhabi, and reroot it. A British editorial proclaimed, "We love the business, but we don't want to be the world's bargain basement." ■

MANSIONS Cont.

trespassing. The litigation dragged on from one court to another for months. Lena finally offered to cut off the offending inch, but Reed wouldn't let her workmen on his property to do the job.

Faced with further threatening injunctions, Lena finally said to hell with it, and with her husband in tow, left in a huff for an extended European tour. Unfortunately, Lena's trips to the Continent didn't seem to agree too well with her husbands. All was going well this time, until Rood decided to return to the U.S. ahead of his wife, and sailed off on the *Titanic*.

Rumors that Rood had somehow escaped a watery grave and was wandering across Europe persisted for

five years and Lena spent a fortune having these reports tracked down. At length, she gave up hope, sold Stoiberhof to ease old memories, and married Navy commander Mark St. Clair Ellis to console herself. He soon disappeared from the scene, however, amid vague stories of "another woman and a lawsuit."

Lena again left for Europe and journeyed to Italy where she purchased a lavish villa at Stresa. She lived out the last seventeen years of her life in virtual seclusion, surrounded by a few servants and seven pampered dogs.

It was after her death at Stresa that possibly the most unusual event in her colorful life came to light. Secreted among her papers was a cryptic notation in her handwriting: "Today I refused to become Queen of Serbia." Presumably Peter I, King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, narrowly missed becoming husband number five.

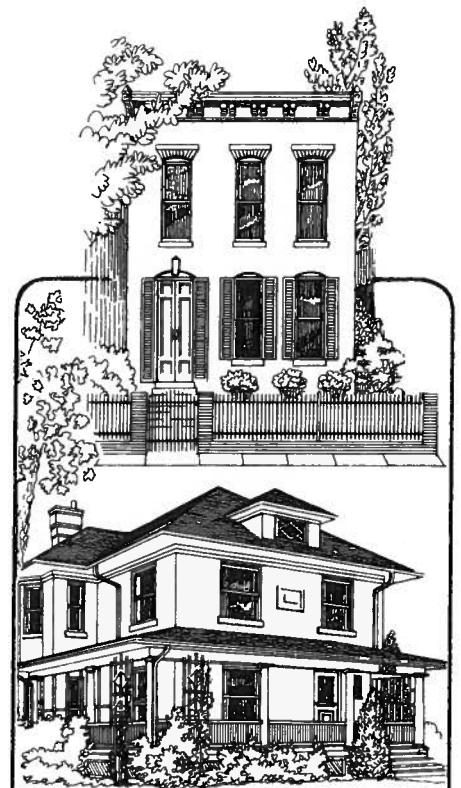
Stoiberhof, sold earlier to oil magnate Verner Z. Reed, was eventually purchased by engineer Albert E. Humphreys. Following his death in 1967, the home was sold to the Robert Flanigans, and then to art dealer Jim Economos, who resides there with his dog and several servants.

THE TAMMEN MANSION

Stoiberhof is not the only impressive mansion to grace Humboldt Street. Just half a block from it, at 1061 Humboldt, is a house as flamboyant as its builder — Harry Heye Tammen.

Tammen, a poor German boy, came to Denver in 1880 and got a job as a bartender at the then new Windsor Hotel. His goal was to open a restaurant, but from talking to customers in the Windsor, he found that a lot of people were very interested in Colorado rock and mineral samples and other Western souvenirs. Deciding there might be money in supplying items of this sort, he opened a small curio and souvenir shop in the Windsor. It was a great success right from the beginning.

Tourists desiring all manner of Old West and Indian artifacts could find them in abundance at Tammen's shop. They could purchase War Cloud's baby bonnet for a mere five dollars, or Sitting Bull's headdress for \$50. Judging from the number of "authenticated scalps" of foes "slain by Geronimo" that Tammen sold, the remarkable Apache chief must have depopulated the entire states of Arizona and New Mexico. Moreover, Geronimo's personal scalp (concocted on the premises) went for a high price



Mansions come in many sizes.

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The mansion had a first-floor telephone room with a direct line to the White House; a two-story solarium; and a master bathroom with fourteen-carat-gold-plated fixtures and a secret vault behind a full-length mirror.

many times. Tammen was also one of the first dealers to sell authentic Navajo blankets (made in New York) to gullible visitors. And certain of his arrowheads (chipped by schoolboys in his basement), it is safe to say, are displayed in museums of natural history across the country.

Tourists uninterested in souvenirs might stop by the store just to gaze at "Moon-Eye, the Petrified Indian Maiden" (an embalmed woman purchased from a bankrupt mortician) or other curiosities that lined the walls of Tammen's shop.

In 1895 another business opportunity presented itself to Tammen that he just couldn't resist — the purchase and revitalization of the moribund *Evening Post Newspaper* (later *The Denver Post*). Tammen didn't have the \$12,500 cash necessary for the purchase, and so teamed up with Frederick G. Bonfils, who did. With the joining of these two, there was born a publishing partnership the likes of which had never been seen before.

What they didn't know about publishing a newspaper (which was everything), they made up for in showmanship. Throughout the years, this devotion to sensationalism produced, among other things, the spectacle of dynamite charges and sirens going off on the *Post's* roof, Harry Houdini hanging upside down from the *Post* building in a strait jacket, and a strange episode involving a certified cannibal, the almost fatal shooting of the two

Post owners, two hung juries, and ultimately a bribery conviction which landed Tammen in jail.

It all started with Bonfils and Tammen's decision to champion the release of Alferd Packer, the celebrated Colorado cannibal, from the state penitentiary. A Denver attorney, William Anderson, with a similar idea and upon learning of the *Post's* interest, went to Canon City, told Packer he was a director of the *Post* and would get him freed if the prisoner would give him \$25 as a "docket fee." When Tammen and Bonfils heard of this, they were furious and summoned Anderson to their office. Once he arrived, Bonfils, and especially Tammen, began berating him with one of the finest expletive-laced diatribes ever heard in the Mile-High City. When Anderson had had enough, he sought to bring an end to the "discussion" by whipping out a pistol, blasting the two owners in their tracks.

Anderson was arrested and tried, but the jury could reach no decision. He was tried again, and again the jury was deadlocked, but this time there were whisperings that Bonfils and Tammen, now largely recovered, had bribed jury members. Anderson was tried a third time, promptly acquitted, and Tammen, a bailiff, and a police magistrate were indicted on bribery charges by the grand jury. All three eventually pleaded guilty and served an hour in the Denver County Jail before they were released.

As the *Post's* popularity increased, so did its owners' prosperity, and Tammen decided to spend some of his newly acquired wealth on a grand house. He purchased three lots on Humboldt Street, but for some reason couldn't seem to get a building permit. Then it dawned on him that the influential man next door, William E. Sweet (later to be governor of Colorado), wasn't anxious to have the former bartender and curio salesman as a neighbor. Tammen, undaunted, hired some workmen, who began to put up a fence around his property. When Sweet inquired, Tammen casually mentioned that since he couldn't get a building permit, he was going to use the land to house lions, tigers, elephants, and a python from the circus the *Post* owned. Two days later Tammen got his permit and then built one of the finest homes in the neighborhood.

The dining room was built for Tammen by his friend George Pullman of the Pullman Railroad Car Company. It featured inlaid Honduras mahogany panels and a gold-leaf ceiling. The house also had a first-floor telephone room with a direct line to the White House; a two-story solarium; and a master bathroom with fourteen-carat-gold-plated fixtures and a secret vault behind a full-length mirror. Tammen and his second wife, Agnes Reid, whom he'd met as she was stealing lumber out of his yard, moved in and entertained the great and near great, including Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft.



Throughout the years, Tammen's devotion to sensationalism produced the spectacle of dynamite charges and sirens going off on the POST'S roof, Harry Houdini hanging upside down from the POST building in a strait jacket, and a strange episode involving a certified cannibal.



Tammen died in 1924, and his wife lived in the house until her death in 1942. Her niece lived there for a time and then sold it to Joseph Minissale, who in turn sold it to E.W. Hewitt. The present owner is Denver attorney William J. McCarren.

THE MASTER OF SHANGRI-LA

Whereas it was a newspaper that enabled Harry Tammen to build his fine Humboldt Street home, it was another form of communication that provided the impetus for construction of Denver's most unusual mansion — Shangri-La. The story of this one-of-a-kind architectural masterpiece overlooking Burns Park on Leetsdale Drive in southeast Denver begins with a simple druggist.

In 1906, a man named Harry Huffman operated a drug store at West Colfax and Lipan Street. Chancing to see a "nickelodeon slide show," he decided to open a nickelodeon theater adjacent to his drug store. Called the Bide-A-Wee, it featured the latest in slide shows, accompanied by musical drug store clerks — hired as much for their good voices as their ability to dispense pharmaceuticals. Audiences regularly packed the Bide-A-Wee and the theater prospered.

In 1912, Huffman attended his first motion picture and thought he saw a future in the movie business. The Bide-A-Wee was converted to movies, and from this humble beginning, Harry Huffman became Denver's greatest "cinemagnate."

In the next 25 years, he either bought or built a chain of nine theaters. They included some of Denver's grandest entertainment palaces: the Bluebird, American, Rialto, Tabor, Broadway, Orpheum, Denver, Paramount, and Aladdin. The Aladdin, built in the style of the famous Indian mausoleum, the Taj Mahal, was one of the very first "sound houses" in the United States to be completely equipped for talking pictures.

Movies influenced more than Huffman's vocation, however. One show in particular was responsible for his home. In the mid-1930's Huffman and his wife had purchased a tract of land just off Leetsdale Drive and Alameda Avenue, but they couldn't decide on what style house to build.

They remained undecided until they went to see a screening of the movie *Lost Horizon*, James Hilton's story of an imaginary, utopian paradise. After seeing the film's beautiful monastery — Shangri-La — they knew that they'd found their home. They began at once to recreate it in Denver.

They contacted Columbia Pictures and received the plaster working model used in the set designs. Under the direction of Denver architect Raymond H. Ervin, the house was started in 1937 and completed in August of 1938.

The white adobe mansion, adorned with glass bricks and chrome, is an authentic reproduction of the monastery. The west side of the home is patterned after the facade seen in the film. Author Hilton gave the Huffmans special permission to use the name "Shangri-La."

Not content to rest on his laurels, Huffman branched out into yet another new field after completing his mansion. He formed Aladdin Radio and Television, Inc., bought KLZ Radio and applied for a television license. It was granted and KLZ-TV went on the air in 1953.

Throughout all of his various enterprises, Huffman, interestingly, believed in a special charm that brought him good luck — the number 13. Whereas many people exhibit, to some degree or another, triskaidekaphobia, or a fear of 13, Huffman went out of his way to make sure that a "13" was involved in all he did. He had 13 miniature elephants on his desk; his name, Harry E. Huffman, consists of 13 letters; he was born on Friday the 13th; he was engaged to marry on the 13th; he borrowed \$1,300 to buy his first theater on the 13th; he bought the Bluebird and the site of the Aladdin, signed the lease for the American, and leased the Tabor and the Rialto all on the 13th; closed the deal for the Orpheum on the 13th; became manager of the Denver and Paramount theaters July 13, 1933; served as president of the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau for 13 years, and built a 13-room mansion on a 13-acre site at 13 Leetsdale Drive.

Huffman died in 1969 and Shangri-La was sold. Today, the famed home belongs to William Daniels.