

A POSTCARD ADVENTURE

A Day in the Mountains Along the Lariat Loop

By Sally L. White,
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for Lariat Loop Heritage Alliance

On a chilly spring day in about 1920, Susan and Marjorie dressed for an outing with several gentleman friends—a day's adventure in Denver's new mountain parks. Their trip had a second purpose—William, an aspiring (or perhaps an accomplished) photographer, planned to finance the outing by selling his pictures to Harry Tammen's postcard company. He enlisted his friends to help, and Frank commandeered his uncle's Overland touring

car, complete with chauffeur! His uncle was persuaded to ride along, and took a spot in the back seat.

About mid-morning, the seven friends climbed into the silver touring car. As they drove out of Denver, they first detoured to Inspiration Point near Berkeley Lake to enjoy a distant prospect of the mountains, each identified by a painted sign reading, for example, "Mount Morrison," or "Mt. Evans." Though the view was already spectacular, wonders lay ahead, and they could not linger long

Piling back into their open car, our travelers returned to Colfax Avenue, which

bisected the growing city of Denver and extended east and west well beyond its limits.

Leaving Denver at Sheridan Boulevard, they found themselves on the new 8-mile concrete road

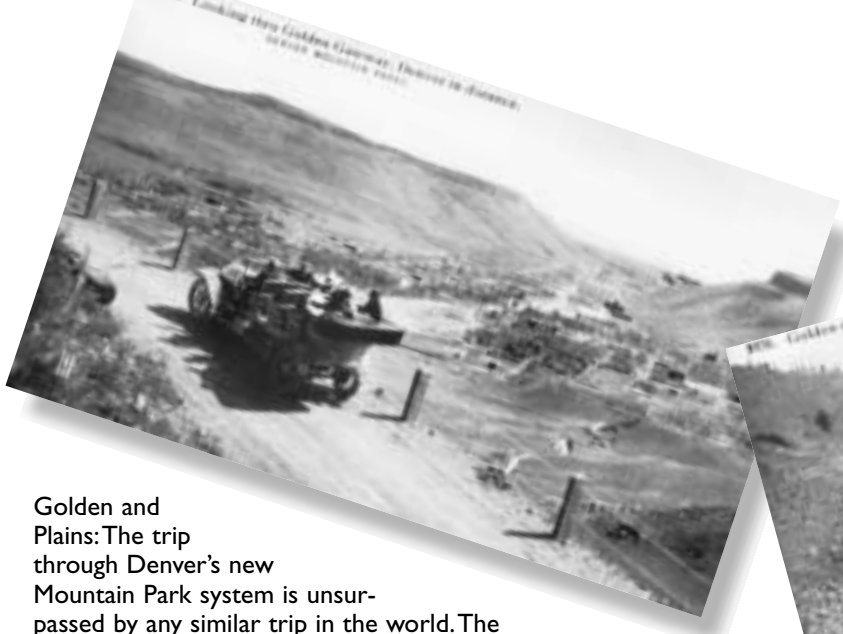
Gateway to Lookout Mountain Park, Colo. After passing over the eight mile concrete road between Denver and the little town of Golden, one comes upon two huge stone pylons built of rough hewn gray granite. This imposing gateway is the entrance to Lookout Mountain Park. This gateway, and a similar one at the Bear Creek entrance to the Denver Mountain Parks were presented to the City of Denver by Finlay L. MacFarland, one of Denver's prominent automobile dealers and a member of the Denver Mountain Park's advisory Commission.] C.T.American Art card.

started by the City of Denver and finished by the State Highway Department. At Wadsworth Boulevard, the group drove through several blocks of Lakewood's business district, then through the fields and small settlements along west Colfax Avenue. When they saw the State Armory shortly after turning onto Golden Road, they knew Rock Rest—the real beginning to their adventure—was near. One mile later, the concrete road quickly became a city street.

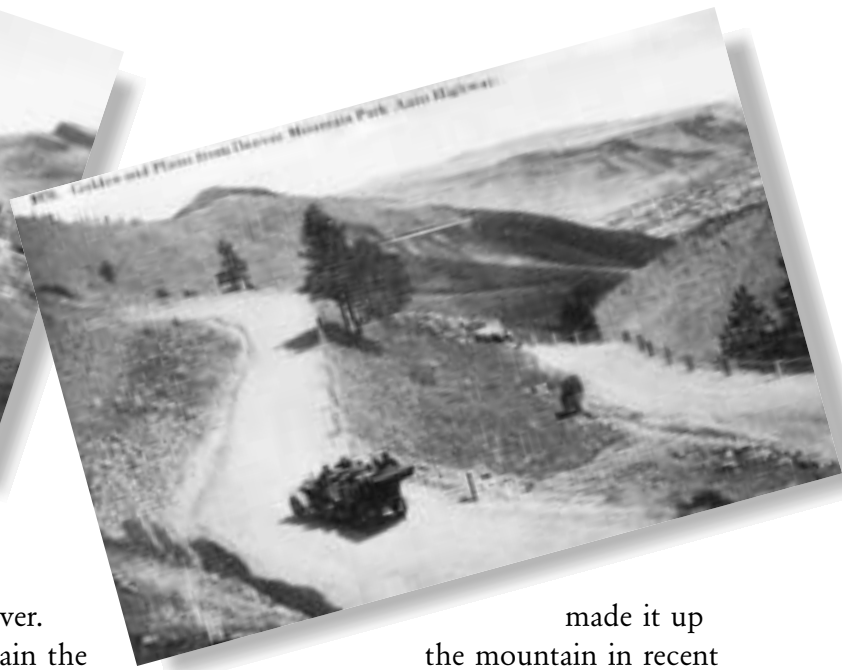
Soon the route made a left turn, zig-zagged from Ford Street to Washington to 19th Street in Golden, then began to climb, leaving the houses behind. Passing the pillars that marked the entrance to Lookout Mountain Park, the road became steeper, and frequent turns slowed their progress. They stopped often to take in the views, as William



Inspiration Point is one of the first attractions reached by the tourist on his way to Denver's beautiful Mountain Park system.



Golden and Plains: The trip through Denver's new Mountain Park system is unsurpassed by any similar trip in the world. The automobile road leading through this chain of parks is one of the best improved highways in the country



photographed each new vista.

Even on the lower slopes of Mt. Zion, the view back was entrancing, showing the passage of Clear Creek between the two Table Mountains, with Golden spread out below. They imagined they could see Inspiration Point, where their trip began.

As the car climbed through Engineer's Lariat and negotiated the Double Hairpin, the view of Golden receded in the distance. "So many interesting names along this route," exclaimed Marjorie. "I wonder who was responsible for creating them." At Windy Point, they were able to get a view westward along Clear Creek Canyon as well as back toward the plains. The Beaver Brook Trail beckoned, and they resolved to return some day for a hike along it. "Just imagine what photographs I could get from there," thought William. It was difficult to believe so many wonderful places existed

so close to Denver.

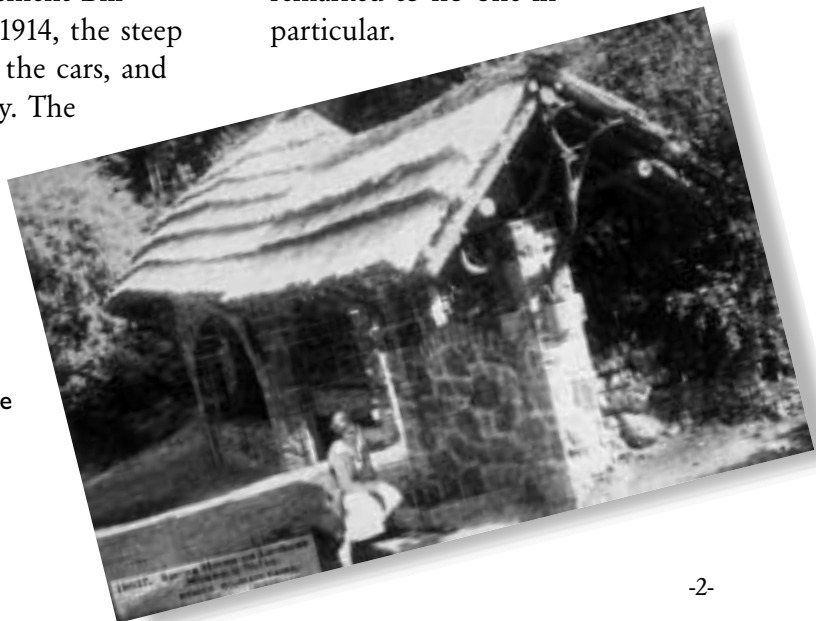
Again and again the friends stopped to admire magnificent views, and waited while William laboriously set up his camera and tried to capture the sights on film. "I hope he knows what he's doing," Henry mumbled, but he knew that even if the photographs failed to come out right, the day would hold many pleasant memories.

The travelers also stopped to rest the car, refilling its brass radiator at the conveniently spaced springs they passed along the way. Although this was an excellent road, built by "Cement Bill" Williams back in 1914, the steep curves challenged the cars, and they took it slowly. The friends were reassured to know that thousands of similar cars had

made it up the mountain in recent years, especially as, thus far, they were alone on the road. Why, in 1918 alone, more than 116,000 cars followed the circle drive, a 65-mile round trip from the State Capitol if you did the whole trip. Had it not been so early in the season, traffic congestion would surely have hampered their progress.

At a rock wall near the top, they finally saw several other travelers, some of whom were daring enough to climb out on the rocks to look northward along the foothills. "You can see all the way to Boulder from here," Henry remarked to no one in particular.

Spring house: For the convenience of the thousands of automobilists and excursionists that visit this beautiful region annually, the city of Denver has added several shelter and spring houses. This view shows a spring house near the crest of Lookout Mountain, which makes an ideal location for the picnicker, giving him abundance of scenery, cool mountain spring water and shelter from inclement weather.



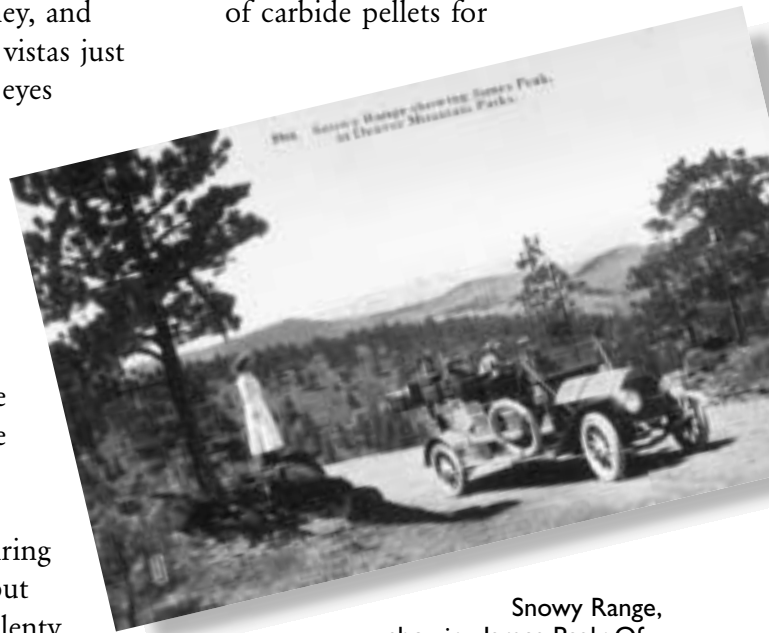


solid ground under her feet, so she could enjoy the views with the others, at last. A new-comer to Denver, she

“This will wow the girls back at the office,” he mused. “Let’s go,” Frank said— “time to explore the rest of this scenic drive!” Given the late hour, the young ladies, though dreading the trip back DOWN the Lariat Trail, voted for the known in preference to the unknown that lay ahead. Because it was already mid-afternoon, the men reluctantly agreed to return to Denver. When the chauffeur reported a shortage of carbide pellets for

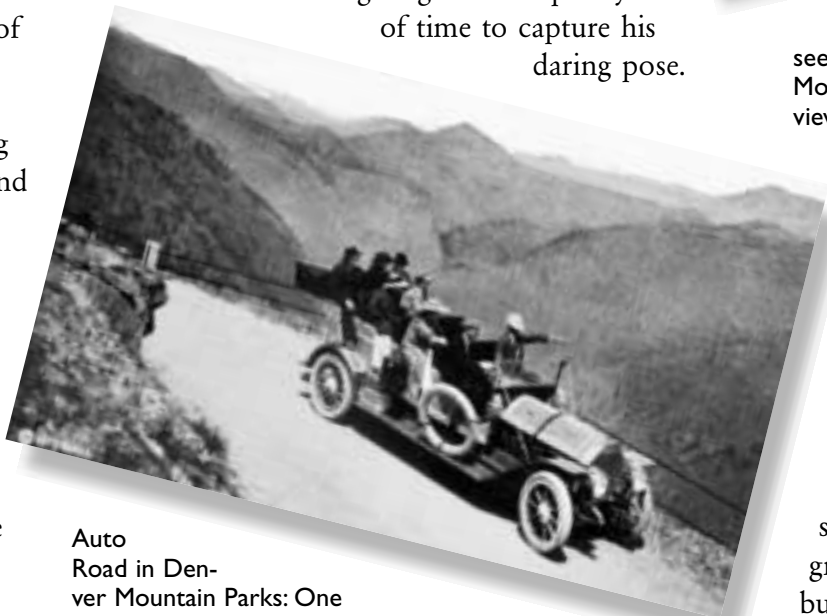
Once in a while, Frank had the temerity to point out new views without even asking the chauffeur to stop! The two tiny steel cables, stretched from one cut stone guardrail to the next, did little to reassure Susan and Marjorie. They knew what precipitous drops lay below—the group and the little car had just spent more than two hours making the trip up! Thank goodness the road was a full two lanes—eighteen feet—wide!

wasn’t as used to mountain roads as they, and missed several of the vistas just because she shut her eyes so tightly. While the others relaxed and rested at the funicular station at the top, Henry climbed out on a rock called Wildcat Point overlooking the entire Lariat Trail, the route of their ascent. There he stood for several minutes, admiring the incredible view, but also giving William plenty of time to capture his daring pose.



Snowy Range, showing James Peak: Of the many magnificent scenic features seen from the road in Denver’s new Mountain Park System, none surpass the view obtained of the Snowy Range, famous the world over. The view shows James Peak, one of the highest peaks in this range.

Finally the group reached the top, to find more glorious views of the mountains, canyons, and plains. The long ride safely behind them, William was able to persuade Susan to stand on a rock near the road, where there was no danger of falling. This she was glad to do, especially after her fears along the way. She was also glad to have



Auto Road in Denver Mountain Parks: One of the most popular trips out of Denver is through Denver’s new Mountain Park system, just completed. It probably carries more tourists than any other similar road in the State, and is considered one of the best improved highways in the country.

the acetylene headlamps, further persuasion was unnecessary. Despite a few white knuckles on the hairpin turns, the driver clung to the wheel, and they all breathed a sigh of relief at reaching level ground again. Happily tired, but refreshed by their day in the mountains, they hastened to be back in time for dinner.

Driving to Denver, as they

discussed whether to dine at the Savoy or the Shirley Hotel, Frank thought to himself, "Well, it was certainly a great chance to test the brakes."

Next in the Lariat Loop Adventure Series: The touring friends visit the Park of the Red Rocks.

NOTES: Although our characters and events are somewhat fanciful, all other information in this article is factual.

Captions are as printed on the original postcards; cards are in the Lariat Loop or Chambers collections. All postcards are by HHT Co., except where noted.

The Denver Mountain Park System could be considered "new" in about 1915-20, and was "completed" with the purchase of the Park of the Red Rocks (1928) and Little Cub Creek (1929).

As a transitive verb (meaning "to excite to enthusiastic admiration or approval"), the word wow dates to 1924, so Henry is a little ahead of his time here. As a noun, meaning "a striking success, a hit," wow was in use as early as 1920.

One of the more prolific of the early companies is identified on the cards simply as "HHT Co." and has a logo of a kneeling Indian, with an arrow forming the divide between the address and message areas. These cards were published by the H. H. Tammen Curio Company, owned by Harry Tammen of the Denver Post, whose facilities may have

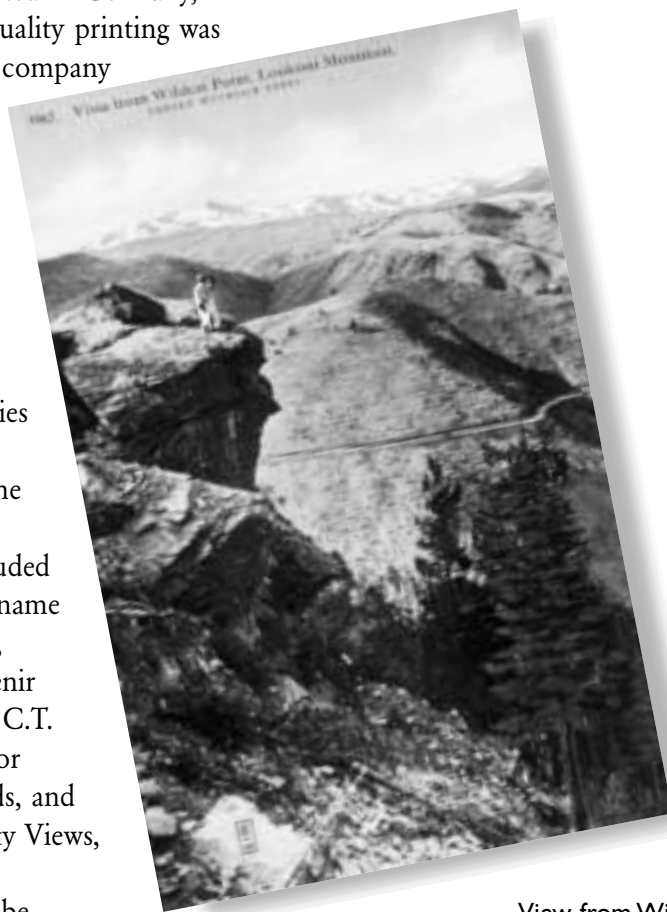


The Plains from Summit of Lookout Mountain: Lookout Mountain, 7,512 feet high and twenty miles west of Denver, is one of the most interesting scenic attractions in Colorado. The summit affords an unsurpassed view of the plains to the east, as well as the city of Denver, twenty miles distant.

allowed the cards to be printed locally. (Before about 1915, most cards were printed in Germany, where higher quality printing was available.) The company produced Colorado postcards between 1896 and 1953, according to the Colorado State Archives. Other companies appearing frequently in the Lariat Loop collection included Thayer Co. (a name used by HHT), Sanborn Souvenir Co., Curteich, C.T. American Art or Colortone cards, and Tichnor Quality Views, among many.

As best can be determined by Clint Raymond (of Morrison Carworks) and Sam Rizzo, the car enthusiasts consulted, this vehicle (except in images

2 and 7) appears to be an Overland touring car dating to 1910 or earlier. Our appreciation goes to them for providing details on vehicles from this time period. This luxury car may have been a special model custom designed for touring, and was perhaps used as an early bus for this trip. Other features include the wooden wheels, the cable or rope supports for the windshield, right-hand drive position, and the four entries on each side of the car. (The Willys-Overland Model SS Touring Car has only three entries per side.)



View from Wildcat Point, Lookout Mountain: Some of the most interesting scenic features in the state are seen from the road through Denver's new Mountain Park System, of which Wildcat Point is one of the most noted and affords an unsurpassed view of the plains to the east.