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Colorado Springs Real Estate.

It is not always easy to say anything worthy of even contemporaneous consideration. But when one is requested to write, on no matter what topic, for those who shall be alert and active in a world which shall have the advantage of a century—and that, the Twentieth Century—of discovery, of invention, of magnificent achievement, of general intellectual growth, the pen, that attempts compliance, is scarcely that of a ready writer.

The age, in which these lines are written, seems to those living in it not altogether slow. Its quickened pace is prophetic, however, of the rapid strides, the long leaps, the high bounds, the aerial flights, of the age that shall follow. The marvelous contributions by science, during the past thirty or forty years, to the world's stock of comforts and information inspire the faith that no vision of the most imaginative dreamer is impossible of realization to the century, on the threshold of which we now stand. What this paper shall have to say, when brought forth from its Van Winklian repose, may be to a people whose whole mode of life and thought is so different from that of the present time, as to make its utterances interesting, if at all, only as a relic of a well-nigh primeval age and its crude ideas. The point of view will be greatly changed.

The forms of property now termed "real estate" are so classified, perhaps, because of their supposed relative permanence of value. It is not impossible that the same category will, a century hence, have the same comprehension as it has today. But the circumstances then determining the gradation of real estate values in Colorado Springs may be totally different. The progress of educational, moral and religious ideas throughout the country in general may modify their influence on Colorado Springs real estate distinctively. The business center of Colorado Springs may no longer be at Pikes Peak Avenue and Tejon Street. Cascade Avenue north of Willamette Avenue and Earle's Court and its Wood Avenue extension may have ceased to be the fashionable residence streets. Improved modes of locomotion may traverse a dozen or a score of miles as quickly as many blocks are gone today on our electric transit system, and more comfortably. Relative proximity to the business center may not be as great an element of value as now. What is now the modern mansion, with seemingly little to be desired in the way of comfort or convenience, may then rank as the cliff-dwelling, the dug-out, the log cabin now ranks. Indeed, it would be rash to say that, with the solution of the problem of aerial navigation, the relative value of abodes will not be determined, not by their relative positions on the Earth's surface, but by their relative heights above it, or that men shall not, in winged dwellings, amid the comforts of home and in the society of their families, flit from place to place with less interference with their daily habit of life than is now attendant upon travel in one's private car.

Only the seer can gain the true perspective and focus the picture he seeks to unfold aright for the point of view of those yet one hundred years in the unknown distance. The writer of this article is, however, a matter of fact son of Mother Earth, engaged in the sordid pursuit of selling real estate for profit, and naturally without any extra-mundane prevision. The reader will, therefore, be good enough to, not merely “stop the sun in its course”, but turn the Earth in retrogression, around that luminary, for a hundred of its cycles, and look at Colorado Springs real estate as it is viewed by the writer in this year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred one.

There is probably no other city in the United States of the size of Colorado Springs, where the term “real estate” more correctly defines what it is intended to comprehend than it does here. Richness of soil does not necessarily determine the value of land. Millions of acres in the central West, much more productive from an agricultural standpoint, than the gravel bed on which Colorado Springs is built, can be had at from twenty-five dollars to one hundred dollars per acre. Nature makes other contribution than the phosphates and nitrates to the enhancing of Mother Earth, and supplementary offices of human intelligence and enterprise enter largely into realty values. Climate, available water, topography, mineralization, the intelligence to discern and rightly estimate these, the wit and enterprise to select and appropriate what these offer, decide whether land shall be worth one dollar per acre or many dollars per square foot.

For Colorado Springs, God and man seem to have wrought with unity of purpose. A broad mesa, sloping gently toward the south, skirted by a mountain range of marvelous grandeur and beauty, rich in mineral, and with vast resources of pure water flowing from the clefts in its rocks; an immense coal supply ready at hand; an atmosphere charged and surcharged with the elixir of life; sunshine, not perpetually but aboundingly present—this is Colorado Springs in a state of nature.

The first stakes of the town were driven by men who could, with appreciation, perceive most of these suggestions of the good Dame for the founding of a great city, and who stood attentive for the disclosure of others. Their conception was a broad one, and true. With fine discrimination they selected the exact site. They paralleled and cross-cut it with wide avenues and streets. They lined these with trees, and let in, from the adjacent hills, streams of water to quicken their growth, and soon there was grateful shade. Comfortable homes were built. All encouragement was given to learning and religion, and the temples of both were erected. Such safeguards, by legislation, as could wisely be placed around the morals of the community, were established. There was no place more inviting to the health-seeker. The intelligent and refined from all parts were drawn thither. With the rapid development of its schools and college, families moved to Colorado Springs for educational advantages. Nor was either the youthful or more mature Jack left to be a dull boy. Provision was made for play as well as work, and, with the growth of the city, clubs, both town and country, were formed, and a casino was built on a site of marvelous beauty. The superb roads, leading in all directions, over mesas, through valleys, into cañons of unfailling interest, afforded riding and driving amidst scenery nowhere surpassed.

Before this little city was two decades old, it became famous throughout the land and across the water as a sanitarium and a delightful residence town. It was not of boom growth. No town could rest on a more substantial foundation, or have had more wisdom displayed in guiding its constructive processes. It was not a manufacturing town. The building of manufactories, with their smoke nuisances was discouraged. It was not a mining town. It had more elements of stability and permanence than either.

It is not strange, then, that town lots soon commanded good prices, and the city's growth, which, for the past six years, has been phenomenal, has been constantly on lines that have strengthened values. The more modest homes of its infancy have been replaced by cottages and mansions of the highest types of architecture, with ample lawns and shade. Massive business blocks, most modern in their construction and convenience, beautiful churches, and school houses ornament the different sections of the city. Colorado College, with its magnificent buildings for the promotion of the arts and sciences, becomes more and more an institution of local and state pride, and has taken a place in the foremost ranks of the education institutions of the land. The clubs and the play are well-housed. First class hotels, whose number has recently been augmented by one of the finest in the country, abound. A fine water system, constantly being extended and improved; sewer mains, rapidly threading the city; companies for the development of light, heat, power and transit, simplifying and cheapening these necessities; an honest city government, with a public spirited constituency; an efficient board of health; an aggressive Chamber of Commerce; a persistent exclusion of the saloon; general business prosperity; a high average of wealth, of intelligence, of refinement, of morality—all these combine to promote an expansion in real estate.

That this expansion has not been an inflation, a bubble to collapse under the prickings of sharp financial crises, has been clearly demonstrated. There was almost no reaction during the panic of 1893, while other towns and cities experienced, at that time, well-nigh irreparable loss. Some values of outlying property, it is true, then suffered contraction. But property centrally located held its own, and all soon began again to advance. In the business section, land is worth twice as much, and more, per front foot, as it was ten years ago. It is said that two thousand dollars per front foot has been refused for business property at the corner of Pikes Peak Avenue and Tejon Street. On Tejon Street, a block north or south of this, land would bring half this price, and on Pikes Peak Avenue a block west of Tejon Street, five hundred dollars per front foot. On Cascade Avenue and Earle's Court, from a mile to a mile and a half from the business center, building sites are worth seventy dollars per front foot. These prices are all an advance of at least one hundred per cent within eight or ten years.

The discovery of gold at Cripple Creek in the early nineties has had an immense influence on Colorado Springs real estate. The larger portion of the wealth of that great mining district has contributed to the enriching of Colorado Springs. Many of her citizens, once poor, or in only comfortable circumstances, have become wealthy in mining. Money made in Cripple Creek has been spent freely with all the tradesmen and mechanics. The transactions in stock brokerage, an entirely new business—the product of Cripple Creek—are enormous. And real estate has felt the influence of all this to a

remarkable degree. Mine operators have bought or built for themselves fine homes, and professional men, tradesmen, mechanics, laborers, all—because of their betterment, directly or indirectly, by Cripple Creek—have been the more able to buy houses or land in Colorado Springs. And so the demand has increased, and prices have strengthened. The building of the new railroad to Cripple Creek, by Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek capital, will greatly intensify and perpetuate this influence, and will accelerate the growth of Colorado Springs, even more remarkable in the future than in the past.

Colorado Springs real estate offers a most safe and attractive form of investment. The writer bases this assertion on a ten years' experience in the real estate business in this city. There is no place where real estate is more readily marketable than in Colorado Springs—a very important consideration in making an investment. In these days of a plethora of money, there is nothing, not purely speculation, aside from a successful commercial venture, that nets a better percentage. Houses have for years been greatly in demand. Rent signs are seldom seen on good modern tenements, well located. Many applicants stand ready to take the houses as soon as they are vacated. There is no other town where values fluctuate as little as they do in Colorado Springs. Add to these considerations the fact of the steady advance in values for the last five years, and one readily perceives why capitalists are placing their money so freely in this western, but decidedly eastern town; this town—from the standpoint of business and building, of health, of wealth, of refinement, of social privilege, of intelligence, of morals—with no peer in the United States or elsewhere.

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