



To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the birth of our city, we present stories of eight people who shaped who we are today.

150 Years In Portraits

Text by Clay Turner
Images by Mark Summers

When *The Phantom of the Opera* hit theaters in 1925, audiences packed darkened

theaters, anxious to be scared out of their wits. They cowered when Christine, the beautiful opera hopeful, crept up behind her masked captor as he played his subterranean pipe organ. Ripping away the mask, she revealed a ghoulish face so horrible, it remains one of the most terrifying moments in Hollywood history and the highlight of the career of silent film legend Lon Chaney, *The Man of a Thousand Faces*.

Two years earlier, Chaney had seared himself into our memory as the misshapen, misunderstood Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He had already mastered the macabre in films such as 1919's *The Miracle Man*, in which he played a contortionist con man, and 1920's *The Penalty*, in which he played a vengeful double amputee by painfully binding his legs.

Chaney taught himself techniques to create extreme personas in a time when movie makeup consisted mainly of applying moustaches to villains. Incredibly, he was able to make us empathize with his monsters: "I want to remind people that the lowest types of humanity may have within them the capacity for supreme self-sacrifice."

The roots of Chaney's success can be traced to his childhood home in Colorado Springs. In 1874, Chaney's grandfather founded what became The Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. Lon

was born in 1883 to Frank and Emma, who met as students at the school; both were deaf.

When his mother fell gravely ill, Lon dropped out of the fourth grade to care for her and his siblings. Biographer Michael Blake writes, "For three years, Lon took care of his mother in the silence of her bedroom...using every dramatic technique

"... the lowest types of humanity may have within them the capacity for supreme self-sacrifice."

he could invent. He mimicked his friends and neighbors at play and work, and even performed an occasional skit. Through this

daily ritual, Chaney's talent of pantomime, with his graceful movements and his expressive hand gestures, began to grow and take shape."

To support the family, Chaney honed his talents by working as a tour guide on Pikes Peak. His older brother John got him a job as a prop boy at the Colorado Springs Opera House, where he first appeared onstage in *The Little Tycoon*, a play they wrote together. The childhood skills Chaney learned among the deaf eventually culminated in an extraordinary career that spanned more than 150 films.

To honor Chaney, the theater in the Colorado Springs Municipal Auditorium was renamed in his honor in 1986.

L O N C H A N E Y :

The Man of a Thousand Faces





150 Years In Portraits

Colo Spgs

COVER STORY

In September of 1862, two days after the Battle of Antietam, a contingent of Confederate artillerymen were guarding a dam over the Potomac River. Union Gen. George McClellan had allowed Robert E. Lee's army to escape south across the river into Virginia. It was critical to keep the state of Lee's weakened forces a secret.

Sometime after midnight, the rebels apprehended three men attempting to cross the dam back into Maryland. One of them identified himself as W.J. Peters, an engineer. Peters was hauled before Confederate general William Pendleton who, believing him to be a spy, delivered him to Castle Thunder prison in Richmond, where a large percentage of inmates never left.

Four months later, the Confederates freed Peters in a prisoner exchange. They never discovered that Peters was actually Col. William Jackson Palmer of the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry, who had been reporting on Gen. Lee's movements from behind enemy lines.

After the war, Palmer applied the quick mind that had saved him to the resumption of his railroad career. In the late 1860s, he came west with the Kansas Pacific line, and he cofounded the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, with service from Denver, Colorado Springs, and the mountain mining towns. Later, as president of the Rio Grande and Mexican National Railways, he built railroads to Salt Lake City and Mexico City.

In 1894, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for defeating a superior force at Red Hill, Alabama ...

Palmer founded Fountain Colony, the forerunner of Colorado Springs, as well as Manitou Springs, Salida, Alamosa, and Durango. He built the Colorado Coal and Iron Company's steel mill in Pueblo. He funded the first university in Colorado Springs, Colorado College, and the city's first newspaper, the *Colorado Springs Gazette*. He provided land and funding for the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind as well as a tuberculosis sanatorium. He built the Antlers Hotel twice, once in 1883 and again in 1898 after a fire.

Palmer donated 1,638 acres for our parks, churches, libraries, hospitals, and schools. He donated land for the city's first park, Acacia, as well as Antlers, Monument Valley, North Cheyenne Cañon, Palmer, Pioneer Square, Prospect Lake, and Bear Creek Cañon parks. He built a 22-room frame house for his wife, Queen, but ill health drove her from the high altitude. It was later remodeled as the stately Glen Eyrie Castle, now the home of The Navigators.

In 1894, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for defeating a superior force at Red Hill, Alabama, during the Civil War, capturing their cannon and taking about 100 prisoners without losing a man.

WILLIAM JACKSON PALMER:

A Courageous Captain of Industry



150 Years In Portraits

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COVER STORY

The assets that propel Colorado Springs to the top of multiple “Best Places to Live in America” lists cascade like the spring runoff from Seven Falls.

The Broadmoor Resort and Hotel is a world-class destination, hosting VIPs and international events for more than a century. Thriving at 6,714 feet above sea level, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo is the highest zoo in America. The Pikes Peak Highway enables the daring to experience America’s

most famous peak, and the second-oldest race in the nation, the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, is an international sensation. The Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo

is celebrating its 80th birthday this year. The Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun rings out from its eyrie above the Broadmoor, and the Broadmoor World Arena is at the center of figure skating and hockey excellence.

What you may not know is that each of these lasting legacies began with Spencer and Julie Penrose, Colorado Springs’ original power couple.

A scion of an influential Philadelphia family, Spencer appeared at first to be more prodigal son than golden boy. He graduated at the bottom of his Harvard class, more interested in “boxing, rowing, and drinking.” With \$2,000 in his pocket, he went west to seek his fortune. He lost it all before he was invited to Colorado Springs in 1892 by a childhood Philadelphia friend, Charles L. Tutt. The partnership clicked, and they made millions in gold and copper.

In 1906, he married Julie Villiers Lewis McMillan, daughter of the mayor of Detroit, a widow and mother. Together, they set out to change the course of the town.

Julie donated her former home to create the Broadmoor Art Academy, which ultimately become what is now the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. They contributed to the Colorado Springs Day Nursery, Fountain Valley School, St. Mary’s High School, and the Boys and Girls Club. Julie was an original founder of the Central City Opera House and spearheaded creation of the Pauline Chapel and the Pauline Memorial Catholic School, both named in memory of her granddaughter.

They funded the Glockner Sanatorium to an extent that Mrs. Glockner requested it be renamed Penrose Hospital in 1959.

Two years before Spencer’s death, they established El Pomar Foundation. With assets now totaling more than \$680 million, the foundation is one of the largest philanthropies in Colorado. Julie donated their home, now known as Penrose House, to the Sisters of Charity; El Pomar now operates it as a conference center for nonprofits. After Spencer’s death in 1939, Julie served as president of the foundation until her death in 1956.

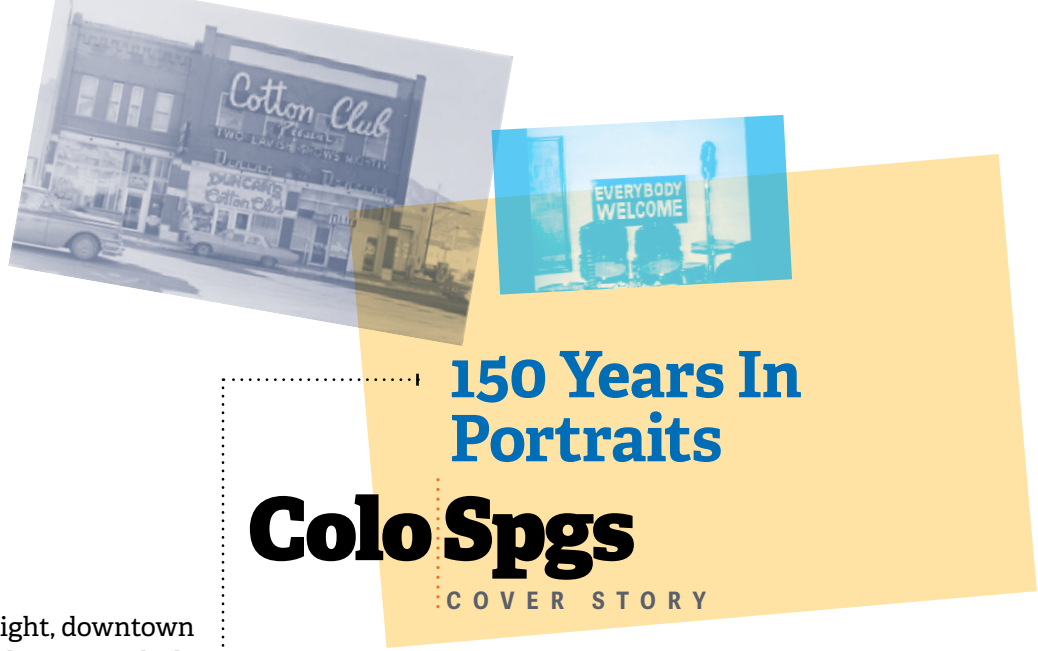
Wherever you step in Colorado Springs, you’re likely to walk in the outsized footprints of Spencer and Julie Penrose.

SPENCER & JULIE PENROSE:

The Original Power Couple



Two years before Spencer’s death, they established El Pomar Foundation ... one of the largest philanthropies in Colorado.



150 Years In Portraits
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 COVER STORY

On a warm spring night, downtown Colorado Springs thumps with the beats pouring out of its newest nightclub. Patrons crowd inside to hear the hottest hits, performed live by the biggest names. They jam the dance floor, lubricated by waves of beer and cocktails. The clientele is Black and White and Brown and in between; in pursuit of a good time, the colors run together.

But this isn't modern-day Colorado Springs; this is 1948, and Fannie Mae Duncan, the proprietor of the Cotton Club, is about to receive a visit from the chief of police.

He found that Fannie Mae was no pushover; rather, she was ambitious and determined. In 1933, her mother moved the family from Oklahoma to Colorado Springs to attend integrated schools. She dreamed of going to college, but it was too costly, so she worked as a maid. In '42, she got a job managing a soda fountain for Black soldiers at Camp Carson. She convinced the City to give her a business license and took over the café at a downtown USO center for Black soldiers. Fannie Mae parlayed that venture into an empire: Duncan's Café and Bar on Colorado Avenue, a barbecue, a barbershop and shoeshine stand, a beauty parlor, a cigar store, and a record store.

Above the café, she opened The Cotton Club, named for the famous Harlem haunt. It was an instant hit.

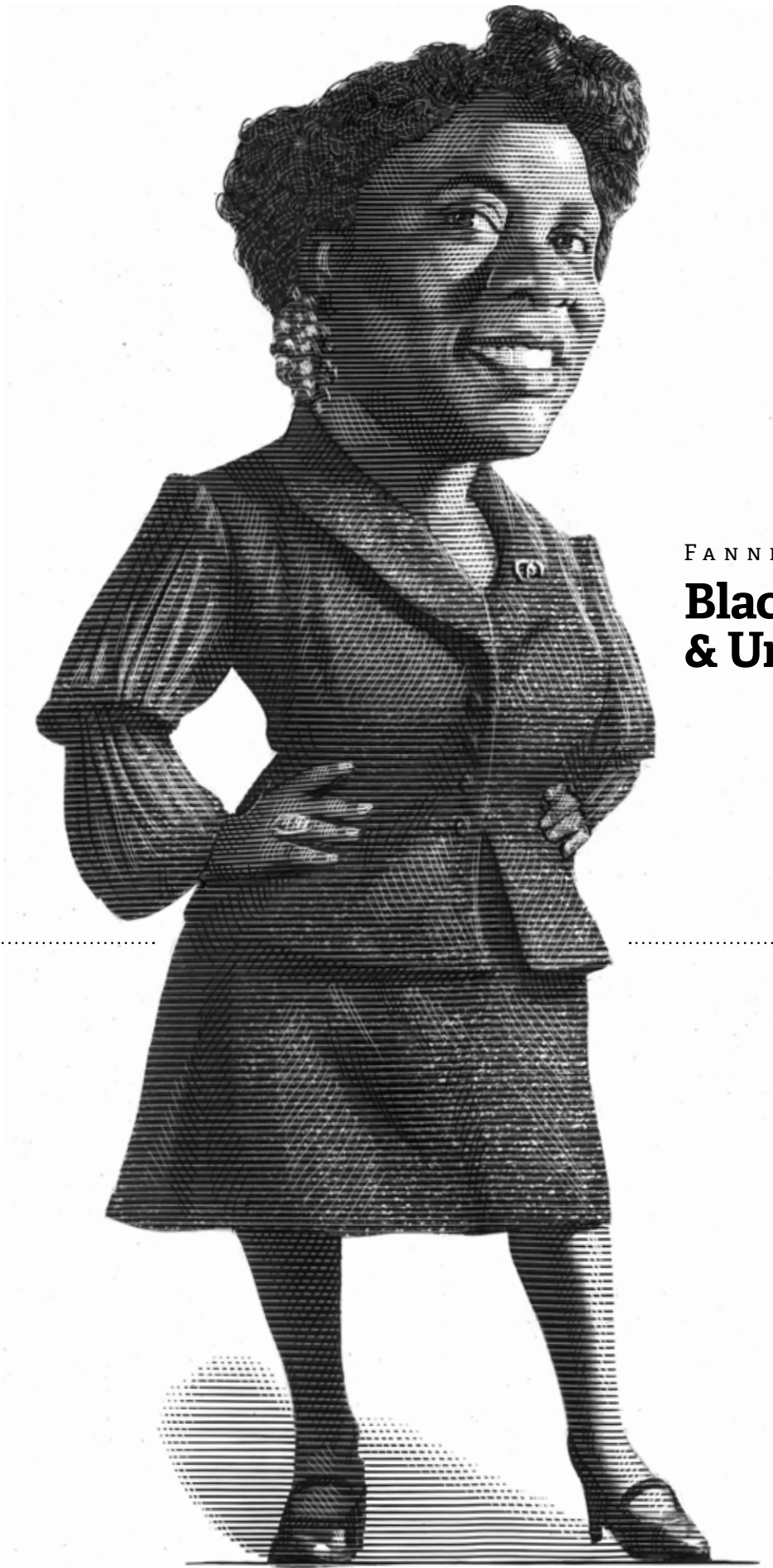
Duncan piggybacked on big national acts coming to Denver: Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fats Domino, Etta James, Muddy Waters, Louis Armstrong, and BB King. It's said that comedian

Turning the civil rights debate on its head, she argued that it would violate the constitutional rights of Whites to deny them entry.

Flip Wilson got his start there while stationed at Camp Carson. In order to accommodate Black acts denied lodging at city hotels, she bought a 42-room mansion and moved it to property she owned at 615 N. Corona.

When locals objected to Blacks and Whites being treated equally (and siphoning off business), the chief of police directed her to stop. Turning the civil rights debate on its head, she argued that it would violate the constitutional rights of Whites to deny them entry. Bowing to pressure from White patrons, the chief finally relented. A sign announced "Everybody Welcome," heralding the Springs' first fully integrated major business.

For her efforts in racial integration, she was inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 2012.



FANNIE MAE DUNCAN:
Black, Brilliant & Unbroken

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COVER STORY

150 Years In Portraits



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e donated the land to build Colorado Springs City Hall. He did the same for the Mining Exchange Building (now the Wyndham Mining Exchange Hotel), and the downtown Post Office. He funded the El Paso County Courthouse (now the Pioneers Museum). His Colorado Springs and Interurban Railway laid 38 miles of track for 56 electric trolley cars and 13 trail cars to shuttle passengers from Colorado Springs to Old Colorado City to Manitou Springs. It was also the first Colorado corporation to provide life insurance for employees; he financed homes for some employees and bought homes outright for others.

He built a stadium for the Colorado Springs Millionaires baseball team at the corner of Cheyenne Boulevard and South Tejon. He also donated \$25,000 to the Colorado School of Mines, the school's first philanthropic gift.

Yet, in 1872, Winfield Scott Stratton labored as a carpenter on the home of Helen Hunt Jackson for \$3 a day.

He studied geology and metallurgy at Colorado College and the School of Mines. In the summer of '74, Stratton began prospecting for gold and silver in San Juan County, Colorado, but went bust. Moving to the Cripple Creek Mining District, he founded the Martha Washington mine, which he eventually sold for \$80,000. He used the money to establish the Independence Mine in 1891.

In 1893, he finally hit paydirt: a gold vein initially worth \$3 million that went on to earn an average of \$1 million per year. In 1899, 25 years after his first hardscrabble beginnings, Stratton sold the mine

In 1872, Winfield Scott Stratton labored as a carpenter on the home of Helen Hunt Jackson for \$3 a day.

for \$11 million, becoming the first millionaire of the Cripple Creek Gold Rush. Through it all, Stratton never moved from his modest wood-frame house at

115 N. Weber St. Instead, he chose to use his money to transform Colorado Springs in ways that few cities have ever seen.

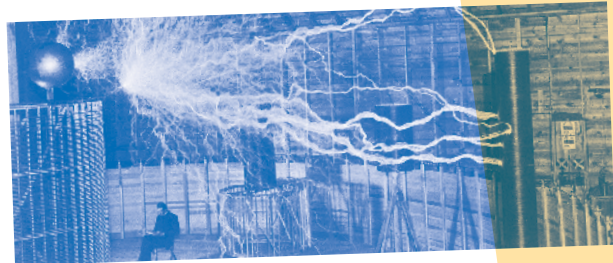
Stratton gave on a more intimate level, too. He gave money to down-on-their-luck prospectors, purchased bicycles for all the city's laundresses, paid for the education of a promising young violinist, and even fed and sheltered those left homeless by the Cripple Creek fire of 1896.

Upon his death, he bequeathed the bulk of his estate to build the Myron Stratton Home, a haven for indigent children and elderly, naming it after his father. More than 100 years after his death, Stratton is still striving "to improve the quality of life of those less fortunate."

WINFIELD SCOTT STRATTON:

From Miner to Millionaire





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COVER STORY

150 Years In Portraits

The darkness is blasted into shards by dancing bolts of lightning, but this is no spring thunderstorm over Pikes Peak. No, this astonishing display of galvanic mayhem is coming from inside a laboratory in Colorado Springs. Blinded by the light that emanates from everywhere at once, one can just see the outline of a human figure. Our instincts dictate that he should be incinerated, detonated, obliterated—yet he calmly strides forth, unaffected by millions of volts of electricity.

Is this a supernatural apparition or a being from another dimension? Upon encountering Nikola Tesla, some would say...both.

Tesla came to Colorado Springs in 1899 to take advantage of the high altitude for his experiments in wireless transmission of electricity. Investor John Jacob Astor funded Tesla as his mind leaped from one concept to the next as quickly as his manmade lightning. There were no limits to his imagination; he believed that the Earth itself could be used as a practical conductor of electricity, that he could transmit wireless signals from Pikes Peak to Paris, and that his receivers might actually have detected signals from Mars.

In 1928, he received a patent for a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft similar to the U.S. military's V-22 Osprey.

Tesla boasted impressive credentials. He made enormous strides in alternating current (AC), generators, dynamos, arc lighting, and electric motors. He worked (and competed) with Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, and General Electric. At 35 years old, he patented the Tesla coil in the same year he became a U.S. citizen.

At the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Tesla amazed audiences by spinning copper eggs in midair and lighting lamps without wires. He built a radio-controlled boat...in 1898.

Tesla is the definition of a visionary. In 1906, he built a 200-hp bladeless turbine engine that inspired automobile speedometers. He speculated that electricity could be used to detect submarines, a concept later translated into radar. In 1928, he received a patent for a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft similar to the U.S. military's V-22 Osprey. He conceived a network of high-altitude balloons for wireless electrical transmission, similar to how Starlink satellites provide global internet access.

The true scope of Tesla's influence might be found in the fact that his name represents a brand of electric cars that is changing the world—while Edison's name brands a nostalgic light bulb design.



NIKOLA TESLA:
Making Sparks Fly



Frank Macon always wanted to be a pilot. But, first, he had to overcome a massive obstacle.

Congress approved funds to train African American military pilots in April of 1939. In March of 1941, the War Department formed the 99th Pursuit Squadron, better known today as the Tuskegee Airmen. Later that year, Tuskegee Airman C. Alfred “Chief” Anderson took first lady Eleanor Roosevelt for a flight and made a believer of her.

In December of that year, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Frank Macon applied to the Civilian Air Patrol while still in high school and soloed from the airfield that is now the Air Force Academy. Soon, he was headed to join the 99th; in fact, Frank may have been the only pilot accepted to Tuskegee twice, having been sent home the first time for lying about his age.

However, although discrimination in the armed services severely limited opportunities for Blacks, the greatest obstacle to Frank’s dream of becoming a pilot was school.

Frank was a severe dyslexic, making reading and math nearly impossible. He had an intensely curious mind, but hated school; instead of the boring three Rs, Frank said, “I expected kindergarten to start out with the principles of flight or something.” He flunked the second grade.

In fourth grade, he and his friends fashioned a rocket sled by affixing a water heater to a wagon and filling it with carbide.

disassembling machines and toys. His babysitters took him flying at the age of four, at the Alexander Aircraft Company airport north of Fillmore. He drove a car at six; in fourth grade, he and his friends fashioned a rocket sled by affixing a water heater to a wagon and filling it with carbide.

At 10, Frank fashioned wings from bamboo poles and jumped off the chicken coop. At 11, he experimented with gear ratios by threading together spools nailed to the kitchen wall. He made a plane from orange crates and tried to fly it from Uintah Gardens.

Frank worked hard to develop techniques to be able to read and do math. Although he continued to struggle with dyslexia, he earned a two-year degree from the College of Tuskegee in less than four months. While there, he befriended George Washington Carver, the great agriculturalist. His prodigious flying skills, honed in the high winds of the Front Range, placed him in the pilot elite.

After accomplishing so much, Frank Macon, Tuskegee Airman, counted graduating from high school as his greatest achievement.

Yet Frank was brilliant when it came to mechanics. He was fascinated by how things worked, constantly



FRANK MACON:

The Tuskegee Airman

150 Years In Portraits

ColoSpgs

COVER STORY



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he novel *Ramona* hit bookstores in 1884. It followed the heartbreaking trials of a Scottish and Native

American orphan girl, buffeted by forces beyond her control as America's westward expansion swallowed southern California. Raised by a foster parent who withheld love from the mixed-race child, Ramona is beset by both discrimination and greed at every turn as she seeks the bonds of love and family. Misery shadows her and her Native American husband, Alessandro, throughout their vagabond existence, moving constantly in search of a place to call home. At the very end, having lost both a husband and a child in events tinged with racism, she returns home to marry and have more children. However, her favorite was the daughter she bore with Alessandro, also named Ramona.

The runaway popularity of *Ramona* swept the nation. Schools, cities, and a freeway (now the San Bernardino Freeway) were named for the tragic heroine. Rancho Camulos claimed to be the "Home of Ramona" and sold branded wine and oranges. The Southern Pacific Railroad stopped there to deliver throngs of tourists.

Estudillo House in Old Town San Diego claimed to be "Ramona's Marriage Place," selling so many pieces of the building that it threatened to topple. Tens of thousands of scenic postcards were sold depicting her birthplace, schools, and place of marriage in "Ramona Country." *Ramona* sparked a southwest tourism boom, and Mission Revival architecture gained national popularity.

Ramona was compared favorably to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and has since been reprinted more than 300 times. The *Ramona* Pageant in Hemet, California, is the longest running outdoor play in the United States in addition to being the state play of California. Between 1910 and 1946, *Ramona* was turned into a film *five times*.

Yet legal action, not tourism, was the intent of the author and Colorado Springs resident Helen Hunt Jackson. She had been spurred to write *Ramona* by an 1879 meeting in Boston with Standing Bear, a Ponca tribe member, who told how his tribe had been uprooted from its homeland and relocated

Between 1910 and 1946, *Ramona* was turned into a film five times.

by the government. She was shocked by his accounts of mistreatment, writing, "A fire has been

kindled within me which will never go out."

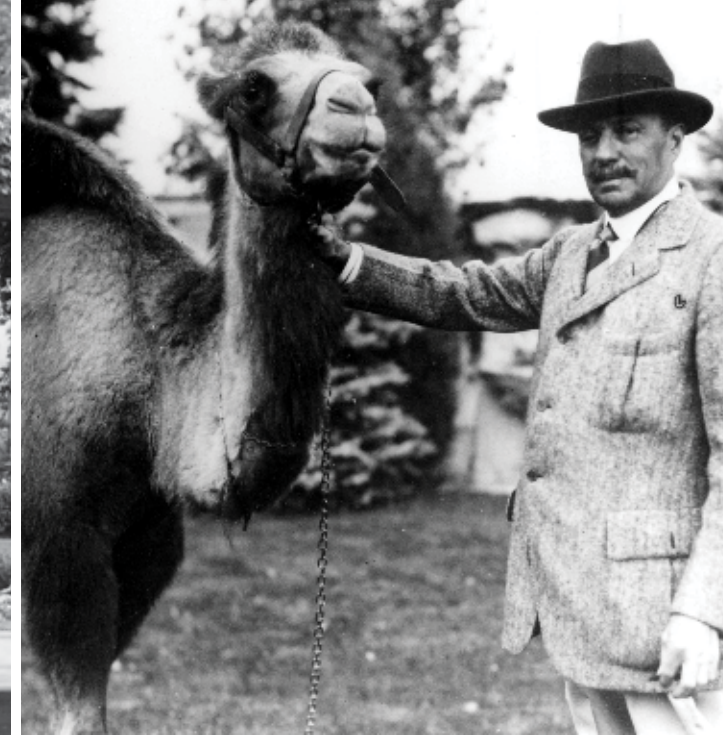
In 1881, she had published *A Century of Dishonor*, a nonfiction account of the injustices inflicted upon seven different tribes. At her own expense, Jackson sent a copy to every member of Congress; decades later, her book was still being used to address the abuses of the Indian Bureau.

However, it was the emotional account of the fictional mixed-race Ramona that touched the hearts of Americans.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON:

The Fiery Author/Activist





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El Pomar
Shea Chappell Homes
Red Noland Cadillac
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Includes Portrait Gallery Tour Info



It takes a community

Proudly continuing the legacy of our co-founders, Julie and Spencer Penrose, El Pomar Foundation is honored to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of the city that they helped shape and called their home.

It is El Pomar's greatest privilege to support and serve alongside our state's robust nonprofit sector – championing the invaluable work they do in service to our communities and in continued pursuit of the Penroses' original vision.

64 COUNTIES

20,300 GRANTS

\$1.3 BILLION IN GRANTS, PROGRAMS & ASSETS FOR COLORADO

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