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April 1, 2025

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

**Town of Lyons Historic Context
Lyons, Colorado 80540**

Prepared for:
Town of Lyons
432 5th Avenue P.O. Box 49
Lyons, Colorado

Pinyon Project No.:
123161201



Figure 1. "Street Scene at Lyons, Colo. At the Entrance of the St. Vrain Canons, Sanborn, R.174." (Lyons area real picture postcards., c. 1930, 613-1-11, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)



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Prepared for:
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Lyons, Colorado

Pinyon Project No.:
123161201

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret G. Mulcahy".

Margaret G. Mulcahy

Reviewed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Fallon".

Sean Fallon

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Executive Summary

Pinyon Environmental, Inc. (Pinyon) has completed this Historic Context Report on behalf of the Town of Lyons (Town) with funding through a Certified Local Government grant. The activity that is the subject of this Historic Context has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior for History Colorado. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior or History Colorado, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or History Colorado.

This program received Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race color, national origin, disability, or age in its federal assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any project, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to:

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National Park Service
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Washington D.C. 20240

The Town of Lyons Historic Context concentrates on themes of settlement, industry, transportation, tourism, social groups, diversity, and cultural history. The Town seeks to implement forward-thinking strategies in preservation visions and update its understanding of its history to include underrepresented voices and foster working relationships with underserved communities including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and youth and older people. Historic contexts are those patterns, themes, or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (or significance) within history is made clear. Contexts provide the background necessary to understand why a resource may be significant. The intent is that this report will be a foundational and useable tool to support the Town's effort to advise policymakers, staff, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the broader community in their forward-thinking implementation of preservation visions. The report is also a tool to support community interest in local, state, or national listings.

The historic context was researched and written by Margaret G. Mulcahy and Autumn Haase. Pinyon Senior Historian Sean Fallon served as the task manager. Mr. Fallon and historian Daniel W. Gilbert provided technical oversight and review. Ms. Mulcahy, Mr. Fallon, and Mr. Gilbert

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meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Professional Qualifications Standards in the areas of History and Architectural History, and Mr. Gilbert meets the SOI Professional Qualification Standards in the area of Historical Archaeology (48 CFR 44738-44739). Florisel Patterson Rodriguez was responsible for translating the historic context into Spanish.

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

I. Introduction

Pinyon has completed this Historic Context Report for the Town of Lyons, located in Boulder County, Colorado. This report covers key developmental patterns in Lyons. The purpose of this report is to characterize the history of Lyons, Colorado, and to define the key elements and themes which shape its character. Although this history is not intended to serve as a complete recounting of the events relating to Lyons, background information will establish a useable tool to support the community's preservation visions as well as interest in local, state, or national listings.

In evaluating and justifying exceptional importance, it is especially critical to identify the properties in a geographical area that portray the same values or associations and determine those that best illustrate or represent the architectural, cultural, or historical values being considered. A historic context document identifies and explains in detail those patterns, themes, or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (or significance) within history is made clear. Historic context refers to all of those historic circumstances and factors from which the property emerged and was used. Knowledge of historic context permits us to understand the relative importance of the resource (a district, site, building, structure, or object) in question.

Research into the history of Lyons included existing surveys and historic context documentation; the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) COMPASS Database; *A History of the Lyons Sandstone Quarries* by Alfred Pace; the Denver Public Library (DPL); the Boulder Carnegie Library; Colorado Historic Newspaper Collections; Boulder County Assessor's Office records; Boulder County Clerk and Recorder documents; Sanborn Fire Insurance maps; historical aerial imagery; and other existing sources.

Initially attractive to settlers for the promise of striking it rich in the gold fields, settlers in the area quickly shifted focus to agricultural production. Following the discovery of an abundance of local sandstone—which had long been used by Indigenous peoples for activities like seed milling—the economic focus of the town again shifted. Ultimately, the sandstone industry in Lyons has provided a consistent economic drive for the town, allowing it to survive in the face of financial downturns and geopolitical events. The population of the town has remained relatively stable and has gradually increased since its incorporation in the late Nineteenth Century. This stability is owed in part to Lyons' central location in Boulder County and as the Double Gateway to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Lyons, like nearly every city and town across the United States, has historically grappled with social tensions arising as a result of race and immigration. From the town's inception in 1881 until today, the history of Lyons' residents has been intrinsically tied to the industries that helped to build the town. This historic context explores the early settlement, industry, diversity, and community development of Lyons.

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2. Historic Context: Themes of Development

2.1 Early Settlement and Development (Prehistoric – c.1930)

2.1.1 Native Americans and Westward Expansion

A cultural prehistory of the Platte River Basin has been previously prepared by Gilmore et al. (1999). A cultural history of Colorado (Church et al. 2007) and one for the Colorado Plains (Mehls 1984) have also been prepared. Research specific to the Platte River Basin was completed as part of this cultural history.

The earliest occupation of the Platte River Basin, which includes present day Boulder County, occurs during the Paleoindian stage with some evidence of Pre-Clovis sites. While Pre-Clovis sites have been the subject of much debate by archaeologists in the recent past, findings within the last few years have strongly established the viability of a Pre-Clovis occupation of the Americas. In particular, the footprints discovered at White Sands National Monument in New Mexico decisively place humans in the Southwest as far back as 20,000 years ago.¹ However, there is some debate over evidence of Pre-Clovis occupation within the Platte River Basin to, at most, 29,000 BCE. Cultural material from sites such as the Selby Site, Lamb Springs Site, and the Dutton Site consist primarily of modified animal remains falling into a “gray area.”² Considering this debate, the classification of Pre-Clovis in the Platte River Basin is still contentious.

The Paleoindian stage in the Platte River Basin (12,000–7,500 BCE) is characterized by highly mobile hunter-gatherers pursuing large game such as mammoth, horse, bison, sloth, and ox. However, the Paleoindian archaeological record is sparse, and chronological indicators are generally limited to diagnostic projectile points. As such, the Paleoindian stage is defined by three distinct projectile point types in the Platte River Basin: Clovis points, Folsom points, and Plano points.³

¹ “Fossilized Footprints,” National Park Service, accessed January 26, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/whsa/learn/nature/fossilized-footprints.htm>.

² D.J. Stanford, “Pre-Clovis Occupation South of the Ice Sheets,” in *Early Man in the New World*, ed. Richard Shutler (London: Sage Publications, 1983), 69.

³ Mark L. Chenault, “Paleoindian Stage,” in *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Platte River Basin*, ed. Kevin P. Gilmore, Marcia Tate, Mark L. Chenault, Bonnie Clark, Terri McBride, and Margaret Wood (Denver: Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists, 1999), 51-90.

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The Clovis period (12,000–11,000 BCE) is typically characterized by the presence of large fluted lanceolate projectile points used as spear points.⁴ Clovis sites in the Colorado Plains are primarily located in present-day Logan, Morgan, and Weld counties. Sites identified in the area and in regions adjacent to the Platte River Basin have also produced Clovis points. Other artifacts associated with the Clovis period include blades, bone needles, scrapers, knives, and hammers, among other bone and stone tools.

The Folsom period (11,000–10,000 BCE) varies from the previous tradition. Folsom points are generally smaller, precisely crafted, lanceolate projectile points with large flutes extending from the base to near the top of the point. The smaller points suggest a shift in resource strategies that focused almost exclusively on hunting bison.

The Plano period (11,000–7,500 BCE) occurred throughout the Great Plains and, like Folsom, represented a continued focus on bison hunting. Different projectile point styles appear during this period, showing a shift from the more uniform point styles crafted by Clovis and Folsom peoples to the more varied tools of the Plano people. The Plano period is more represented in the Platte River Basin than previous Paleoindian periods.

The Archaic stage is separated into three distinct periods: the Early Archaic (7,500–5,000 BCE), the Middle Archaic (5,000–3,000 BCE), and the Late Archaic (3,000–1,800 BCE [CE 150]). Each period is further divided by geographic area into the plains, hogbacks/foothills, and mountains.⁵ The Archaic stage is represented by further variations in tools, as well as changing subsistence strategies. People adapted their lifeways throughout the Archaic period to face shifting environmental conditions associated with climatic episodes. The increased presence of groundstones indicates an emphasis on gathering and processing vegetal resources, while bison and small game hunting were also practiced. Lyons sandstone was a popular raw material during this period and was used to create metates and manos, which are seed-milling slabs and their handheld counterparts.⁶ Adaptive subsistence strategies and seasonal camps highlight the seasonal movements of peoples from the plains to the mountains.

⁴ H. M. Wormington, *Ancient Man in North America*, 7th ed. (Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History, 1957).

⁵ Marcia J. Tate, “Archaic Stage,” in *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Platte River Basin*, ed. Kevin P. Gilmore, Marcia Tate, Mark L. Chenault, Bonnie Clark, Terri McBride, and Margaret Wood (Denver: Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists, 1999), 91–173.

⁶ Kevin Black and Alfred Pace, “Lyons Sandstone,” Colorado Encyclopedia, accessed December 10, 2024, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/lyons-sandstone>.

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The Ute, whose oral tradition places them in the Platte River Basin since the beginning of time, operated in large bands that could divide into smaller, more mobile family units.⁷ These units traveled from one location to another, alternating hunting and food gathering sites so that the environment had time to replenish what they harvested. From the early spring to the late fall, Ute men hunted large game such as elk, deer, and antelope in high mountain parks.⁸ The women trapped small game animals and gathered plants to supplement their diets. In order to hunt and gather, the Ute used basic tools and weapons such as digging sticks, weed beaters, baskets bows and arrows, and arrow heads. They traded with other tribes to acquire pottery and were adept at basket weaving and quill work.⁹ During the late fall, family units would travel down from the mountains for the winter. During this time, family units would live close together as a precaution against enemy tribes seeking supplies for the winter. This also allowed them time to exchange stories and reinforce tribal custom.¹⁰

During the Fifteenth Century, Spanish explorers, including Alvar Nunez Caveza de Vaca and Juan de Onate, were sent to explore what would become the western United States. Spain claimed vast swaths of land and encroached on Ute territory during the Sixteenth Century. They brought with them European customs, livestock, and language, as well as diseases like smallpox and cholera, which would decimate the Ute population.¹¹ Trade developed between the Ute and the Spanish. The Ute were renowned for their tanned hides and they traded those along with dried meat and weapons. Tensions between the Spanish and the Ute were high, and the Spanish captured Indigenous people from various tribes including the Ute to use for slave labor.¹² Several enslaved Ute escaped from Santa Fe during the 1630s, bringing Spanish horses with them. This made the Ute one of the first Indigenous tribes to acquire the horse, and they became experienced equestrians. Their skills with horses allowed them to travel further from their camps to hunt big game, specifically buffalo, which migrated over the prairies east of their mountain homes. Their newfound mobility also allowed them to raid neighboring tribes.¹³

⁷ "Southern Ute Indian Tribe: History," Southern Ute Indian Tribe, accessed December 9, 2024, <https://www.southernute-nsn.gov/history/>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

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The Arapaho's ancestral home was the Great Lake region in present day Manitoba, Canada and Minnesota.¹⁴ As European settlers began to move west, Arapaho were forced from their traditional lands and eventually settled on the Great Plains during the Eighteenth Century.¹⁵ Traditionally, the Arapaho were sedentary, relying on farming to sustain them. The forced migration prompted the Arapaho to adapt to a nomadic lifestyle, surviving by hunting buffalo, foraging and trading.¹⁶ They acquired horses during the 1700s, allowing them to hunt more efficiently. Because both the Ute and the Arapaho occupied the same territory for much of the year, they were almost always at war. During the early Nineteenth Century, the Cheyenne arrived in the area and formed an alliance with the Arapaho against the Ute.¹⁷

The Cheyenne, referred to by themselves as the Tsistsistas, originally inhabited the territory around present day Minnesota. Similar to the Arapaho, the Cheyenne were forced westward by the increasing population of white settlers during the Eighteenth Century.¹⁸ They made their way across the Mississippi River and settled in present day North and South Dakota. Their lifeways also shifted during this time. The Cheyenne had been hunters and gatherers; however, multiple bands established villages and began cultivating crops after their move westward. Other bands acquired horses and began nomadic lifestyles hunting buffalo.¹⁹ According to oral tradition, it was during this time that the Cheyenne prophet Sweet Medicine received the four sacred arrows and instructed his people in their sacred laws.²⁰ Sweet Medicine was responsible for organizing military societies led by war chiefs, establishing a judicial system, and creating the independent sovereign Cheyenne Nation.²¹ Moving into the Nineteenth Century, the Cheyenne established a hunting territory that extended across present day Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado. Their alliance with the Arapaho made them formidable opponents and the dominant traders on the plains.²²

¹⁴ Arapahoe Staff, "Indigenous Colorado," last modified August 1, 2024, <https://arapahoelibraries.org/blogs/post/indigenous-colorado/#>.

¹⁵ Loretta Fowler, "Arapaho, Southern," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, last modified January 15, 2010, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=AR002>.

¹⁶ Arapahoe Staff, "Indigenous Colorado."

¹⁷ Colorado Encyclopedia Staff, "Boulder County," History Colorado, accessed January 8, 2024, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/boulder-county>.

¹⁸ John H. Moore, "Cheyenne, Southern," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, last modified January 15, 2010, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=CH030>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joshua J. Mark, "The Life and Death of Sweet Medicine," *World History Encyclopedia*, last modified January 20, 2024, <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2355/the-life-and-death-of-sweet-medicine/>.

²¹ Moore, "Cheyenne, Southern."

²² Ibid.

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While European explorers had traversed the territory that would become Colorado and traded with Indigenous tribes in the area as early as the Sixteenth Century, it was not until the early Nineteenth Century that considerable Euro-American exploration occurred in the West. Prior to 1803, the French possessed a significant amount of land west of the Mississippi River. At the start of the Nineteenth Century, France, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, was engaged in a large and expensive war with Britain. At the same time, President Thomas Jefferson was eager for Westward Expansion to fulfill his yeoman vision for the country. In order to fund the war, France agreed to sell 530 million acres of territory west of the Mississippi River to the United States for \$15 million. This deal became known as the Louisiana Purchase, and nearly doubled the size of the United States.²³ While France had laid claim to this vast territory, they controlled very little of it, which was mostly inhabited by Indigenous tribes, including the Ute, Arapaho, and Cheyenne. The United States purchased the right to obtain Native lands without the interference of other colonial powers and without acknowledging Indigenous peoples' sovereignty.

Shortly after the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson established several expeditions to explore and survey the West. The first of these expeditions is known as the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which was led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark between 1804 and 1806. Jefferson tasked the expedition with exploring the northern Great Plains to the Pacific Northwest, specifically hoping for them to find a water route that linked the Columbia and Missouri rivers.²⁴ The second expedition was led by Zebulon Pike. The Pike Expedition was tasked with surveying the Central Plains and the American Southwest between 1806 and 1807. Pike's task was to explore the area, noting natural resources and negotiating with several tribes, including the Pawnee, Osage, and Oto. Additionally, Pike sought the headwaters of the Arkansas River and explored potential land routes across the vastness of the West, leading his expedition through the central and southeastern regions of present-day Colorado.²⁵

The American fur trade also played an important role in Westward Expansion and the development of the West. The trade of fur and hides drew many Euro-Americans, eastern Indigenous peoples, and people of Mexican and Spanish descent to the Rocky Mountain Region to participate. One such person was Ceran St. Vrain, who settled in what is now New Mexico. He became a naturalized Mexican citizen in 1831 in order to trade without restriction. St. Vrain

²³ "Louisiana Purchase (1803)," National Archives, last modified May 10, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/louisiana-purchase-treaty>.

²⁴ "Lewis & Clark Expedition," National Archives, last modified June 2, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/lewis-clark#background>.

²⁵ Jared Orsi, *Citizen Explorer: The Life of Zebulon Pike* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 130-133.

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partnered with the American trader, William Bent, and established the Bent, St. Vrain & Company, which traded across Wyoming, New Mexico, Kansas, and Colorado. Additionally, they constructed Bent's Fort in what is now southeastern Colorado, which was the only privately owned fort in the west.²⁶ The peak of the fur trade in the territory that would become Colorado ran from 1820 to 1840. The fur trade led to the establishment of strong transportation routes, facilitating increased immigration, commercial transportation, and enabling the settlement of the West.²⁷

In addition to the early transportation routes established by the fur trade, the Gold Rush of 1849 in California further solidified Westward Expansion, drawing tens of thousands of prospectors to the West.²⁸ As the mass migration westward occurred, the notion of Manifest Destiny took root in the consciousness of Euro-Americans, reinforcing the idea that the future of the United States relied on the settlement of the West. Following prospectors west, other settlers looking to profit off of the mining camps established commercial businesses and agricultural enterprises. Farming and ranching in the West was difficult due to the arid climate, which drove settlers to establish early irrigation networks. While settlers continued to flock to the region, it wasn't until the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 that there was a concerted effort to permanently settle the West.

President Abraham Lincoln passed the Homestead Act in the midst of the Civil War to enable the private acquisition of land from the public domain for a small filing fee. The act allowed anyone twenty-one years or older or the head of family to acquire up to 160 acres of land from the public domain. This included single women and formerly enslaved people. Requirements for successful homesteading included: residing on the land for five years, the construction of a dwelling, making improvements to the land, and cultivating the land.²⁹

The rapid expansion of the United States westward during the first half of the Nineteenth Century led to increased tensions between white settlers and Indigenous tribes, as white settlers continued to push into Indigenous territory. Treaties between Indigenous tribes and the United States government attempted to alleviate these hostilities. One such treaty was the

²⁶ "Bent's Old Fort: National Historic Site, Colorado," National Park Service, accessed February 25, 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/beol/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.

²⁷ "A Brief History of the Fur Trade," History Colorado, accessed January 8, 2024, <https://www.historycolorado.org/brief-history-fur-trade>.

²⁸ "Gold Rush Overview," California Department of Parks and Recreation, accessed January 8, 2024, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1081.

²⁹ Colorado Encyclopedia Staff, "Homestead," History Colorado, last modified May 19, 2020, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/homestead#:~:text=The%20act%20enabled%20anyone%20of,land%20from%20the%20public%20domain>.

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1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which assured Arapaho rights to the area around Boulder Creek in present day Colorado. However, settlers disregarded the treaty when gold was found near present day Denver in 1858. The Colorado Gold Rush, also known as the Pikes Peak Gold Rush, led to the establishment of the Colorado Territory in 1861 and the founding of multiple towns along the eastern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains.³⁰ Throughout the next several decades, the United States appropriated Ute territory in the Rockies and western Colorado through a series of treaties and wars. Gold rush related industries such as agriculture and coal mining replaced traditional Indigenous lifeways in the Colorado Territory.

In 1859, a group of gold prospectors led by Thomas Aikins discovered gold along Boulder Creek, founding the Boulder City Town Company and platting the town of Boulder in February of that same year.³¹ Two years later when the Colorado Territory was established, Boulder County became one of the original 17 counties. To further solidify white settlement in the Colorado Territory, the United States negotiated the 1861 Fort Wise Treaty with Arapaho leaders Niwot and Little Raven. The treaty surrendered the Front Range to the United States and relegated the Arapaho and Cheyenne to a small reservation in southeast Colorado. Refusing to abandon their land, a band of Arapaho led by Niwot moved to the Sand Creek camp in present day Kiowa County. In 1864, a force led by Colonel John M. Chivington attacked the camp and slaughtered approximately 200 women, children, and elders and killed Niwot. This tragic event is now known as the Sand Creek Massacre, and it resulted in the removal of the southern Arapaho to Indian Territory in present day Oklahoma. The trails used by Indigenous tribes to travel to reservations after their forced removal from their traditional lands are known as exodus trails. One such trail is located in present day Lyons and commemorated by sculpture titled “The Trail of Treaties” in LaVern Johnson Park (formerly Meadow Park). The removal of the southern Arapaho effectively ended widespread Indigenous presence in Colorado.

2.1.2 Settlement in the Red Rimmed Valley

The land that would become Lyons, in the valley of the St. Vrain River, was known as the Red Rimmed Valley due to its unique red sandstone deposits. The Lyons sandstone formation is a Permian age rock layer that has been quarried by humans for thousands of years.³² Its flat layers made it useful for constructing seed milling tools and later as a building material. Settlers were

³⁰ Colorado Encyclopedia Staff, “Colorado Gold Rush,” last modified June 21, 2023, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/colorado-gold-rush>.

³¹ Colorado Encyclopedia Staff, “Boulder County.”

³² Kevin Black and Alfred Pace, “Lyons Sandstone,” Colorado Encyclopedia, accessed December 10, 2024, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/lyons-sandstone>.

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drawn to the area during the 1860s for mining, but many also moved to the St. Vrain Valley to homestead.³³ Chester Lymon Smead, born in 1822, was one amongst the many attracted to Colorado for its mining prospects.³⁴ He officially began his move as early as 1859 and arrived in 1860. Smead settled and built a cabin south of the St. Vrain Valley in 1861, claiming he was the first white man in the area.³⁵ The gold rush tapered between 1860 and 1861, forcing many early settlers to turn towards stock raising and agricultural pursuits.³⁶ In 1862, a small unnamed settlement was established near present day Lyons. The settlement was composed of a grist mill, sawmill, fruit farms, sheep farms, and lumber operations. This early settlement laid the foundation for a promising town that would later be known as Lyons.

Edward S. Lyon was born circa 1843 in Putnam, Connecticut. In 1880, Lyon arrived in Colorado at the advice of his doctor who advised that the dry air of the Western United States would improve his health. Lyon traveled to Colorado in the company of several other men who were trying to strike it rich in the gold fields of Central City.³⁷ Lyon, however, came to the conclusion that the gold fields would not yield the wealth he and his associates had hoped for.³⁸ Lyon rented a house in Boulder City as temporary housing while he traveled around Colorado looking for prospective opportunities. Riding through the foothills alongside the south fork of the St. Vrain River, Lyon learned of a ranch for sale in the area. He purchased the 160-acre Sawyer Ranch along with Mr. Sawyer's stock, horses, cows, and farming tools.³⁹ While examining his property, Lyon discovered 40 acres of limestone and 40 acres of red sandstone within the boundaries of his property.⁴⁰ Believing in the potential profitability of sandstone and limestone quarries, Lyon, along with Hiram F. Sawyer and Griffith J. Evans, started the Evans Townsite Company and Lyon Lime and Quarry Company—which would be renamed several times—in 1882.⁴¹

³³ "Local News: The History of the Lyons Depot Library," *Lyons Recorder*, October 18, 1984, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

³⁴ Dianne Goode Benedict, *Birth of a Quarry Town: 1800s Lyons, Colorado* (Applications, Plus: Lyons, 2002), 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ M.W.Turner, "Story of Lyons: History of this Community, Its Early Day Settlers and their Trials – Gold Hunters and Later Turning to Stock, Ranches and City Folks," *Lyons Recorder*, December 22, 1921, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

³⁷ Mrs.Austin Smith, "Additional Lyons History: Mrs.Austin Smith and Her Father, E.S. Lyons, Who was Among the First Settlers in the Community, Add Their Bit of Memory of Early Lyons," *Lyons Recorder*, January 26, 1922, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

³⁸ Alfred Pace, *A History of the Lyons Sandstone Quarries* (Lyons, Colorado: Lyons Historical Society, 2006), 2.

³⁹ Smith, "Additional Lyons History."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Pace, 3.

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Hoping to find a buyer for their lime and sandstone, E. S. Lyon traveled to Denver, where he noticed the inferior quality of the rough white sandstone—which was quarried in Fort Collins—used in Denver sidewalks. Lyon believed his sandstone was of better quality, as it was smoother and the higher iron content made it more resistant to erosion.⁴² However, transportation of the sandstone to markets for sale turned out to be a problem for Lyon. His homestead was 20 miles from a railroad, while the quarries in Northern Colorado were directly connected to the Colorado Central Railroad. Not giving up on opening a quarry, Lyon purchased half interest in an additional 40 acres from Deck Smith.⁴³ Griffith J. Evans, one of the early settlers of the area and a co-founder of the Lyon Lime and Quarry Company, used his local influence to rebuild every bridge between Lyon's homestead and the town of Longmont in order to meet up with the new narrow-gauge railroad that connected Longmont to Denver.⁴⁴ Sandstone was transported via wagon before being loaded onto the train. This route would be used to transport Lyon's sandstone to the Colorado capital. Eventually, Lyon sold his share of the company to the English Company, of which Evans was a principal owner.⁴⁵

⁴² "Sandstone," Geology Science, accessed December 11, 2024, <https://geologyscience.com/rocks/sandstone/>.

⁴³ Smith, "Additional Lyons History."

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Pace, 5.

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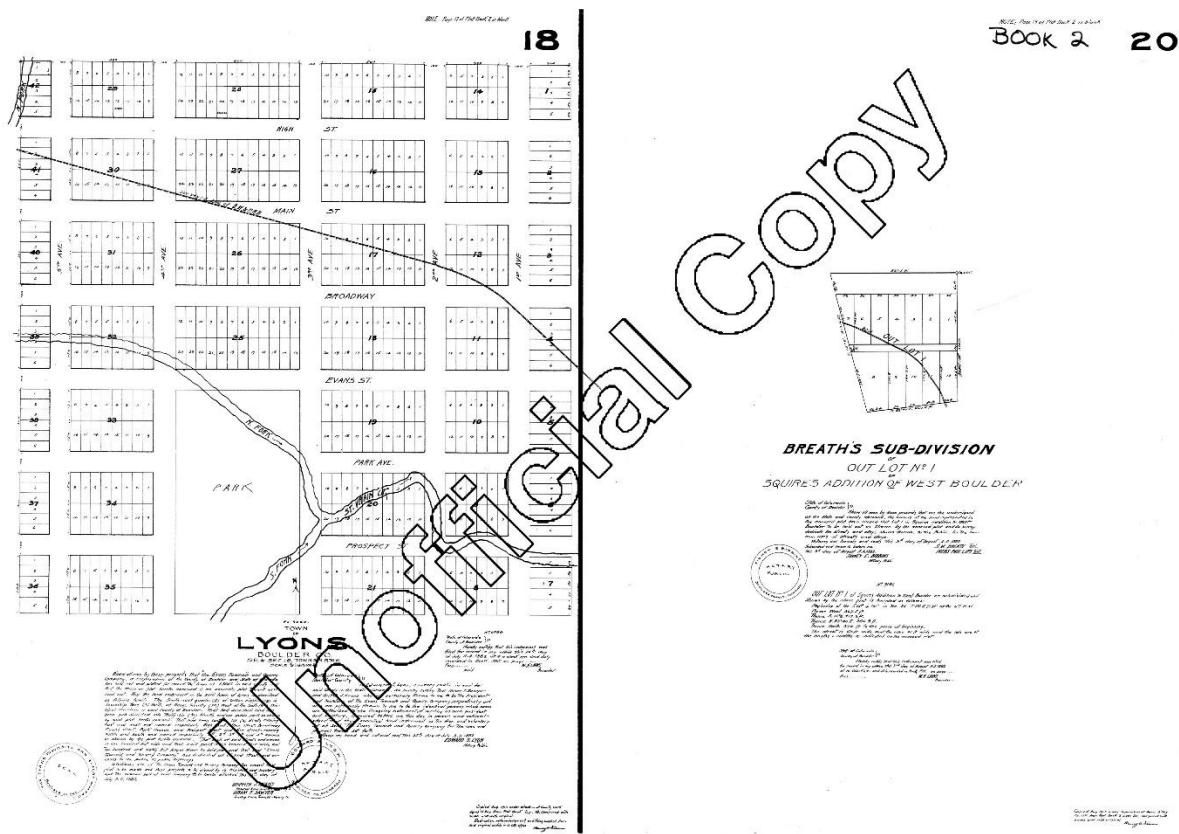


Figure 2. Evans Townsite and Quarry Company, Plat Map of Town of Lyons Colorado, 3/5" to 100', Boulder County, Colorado, July 25, 1882.

The Town of Lyons (originally known as the Evans Townsite) was platted in 1882 on the south half of Lyon's ranch.⁴⁶ The original plat was bounded by High Street on the north, Prospect Street on the south, First Avenue on the east, and Fifth Avenue on the west.⁴⁷ Lyon returned from the East, accompanied by his four children, and began constructing buildings utilizing the abundance of lumber and stone in the area. Additionally, construction materials from the quarries surrounding Lyons were transported to Longmont to be shipped to Denver for street paving. Lyon built a church as well as a school for local children where his wife



Figure 3. Main Street in Lyons (Lyons, Colorado, 1900-1910, HS 163-1-11, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

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Adeline Lyon taught.⁴⁸ Shortly after settling in Lyons with his family, Lyon served as postmaster. Lyon, like so many others, lost much of his wealth during the Panic of 1893 when silver became devalued as a result of President Cleveland repealing the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter, Lyon moved to California with little to his name. However, the town continued to grow.

In 1884, Hugh Murphy—an Irish immigrant who had originally worked as a bricklayer in Nebraska—bought the English Company's holdings. Murphy owned the St. Vrain Red Sandstone Quarry and absorbed the holdings he purchased into his business.⁵⁰ Wanting to increase the value of his investment, Murphy welcomed the construction of an extension of the Denver, Utah and Pacific Railroad to his quarry in 1885.⁵¹ This extension connected Lyons to the surrounding communities. That same year, Longmont contractor Mark W. Boyd constructed the Lyons Train Depot using Lyons sandstone.⁵² The railroad shuttled passengers and stone between Lyons and Denver from 1890 to 1915.

In 1885, the president of the Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry Company—Henry E. Norton—platted the townsite of Nortonville in the south half of the northeast quarter of section 18 in Township 3 North, Range 70 West. The townsite abutted the north end of the Town of Lyons and consisted of four blocks bounded by Reese Avenue on the north, Fourth Street on the east, Stickney Avenue on the south, and First Street on the west.⁵³ While Nortonville was platted as an individual town, historic newspaper articles refer to it as an addition to the town of Lyons and residences within Nortonville were recorded as part of the town of Lyons in United States Federal Censuses.

In 1891, a vote was held on the incorporation of Lyons.⁵⁴ Of the 167 individuals who voted, 128 of them voted for incorporation, which resulted in Lyons' official establishment as a town with elected officials and local government. By the turn of the century, Lyons boasted a burgeoning

⁴⁶ Evans Townsite and Quarry Company, *Plat Map of Town of Lyons Colorado, 3/5" to 100'*, Boulder County, Colorado, July 25, 1882. <https://boulder.co.publicsearch.us/doc/181239304>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Turner, "Story of Lyons."

⁴⁹ "Panic of 1893," Colorado Encyclopedia, accessed September 11, 2024, <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/panic-1893>.

⁵⁰ "St. Vrain Red Sandstone Quarry Records," University of Colorado Boulder, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://archives.colorado.edu/repositories/2/resources/354>; Pace, 5.

⁵¹ Pace, 5.

⁵² "Lyons Railroad Depot (Lyons Public Library)," History Colorado, accessed July 13, 2023, <https://www.historycolorado.org/lyons-railroad-depot>

⁵³ Lyons Rock and Lime Company, *Plat Map of Nortonville, 1" to 150'*, Boulder County, Colorado, November 27, 1885, <https://boulder.co.publicsearch.us/doc/181262728>.

⁵⁴ "The Election," *Longs Peak Rustler*, April 3, 1981, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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community made up of people from varying backgrounds. Immigrants from Sweden, Canada, Scotland, Ireland, and Finland, among others, were drawn to the area to work in Lyons' various industries. Additionally, people from across the country made Lyons their home. While there were people of many different ancestries in the community, the 1900 Federal Census recorded only one person—David Burton—as Black.⁵⁵ Census records indicate that many Lyons residents dwelled within the original plat of the town. Most residences, many of which are still standing, were located along Seward Street, Stickney Street, Evans Avenue, Park Avenue, and Prospect Avenue.⁵⁶ Three of the contributing resources to the Lyons Sandstone Buildings Historic District were constructed during the 1890s along Seward Street. These include the Chrisholm House (5BL.241.2) at 415 Seward Street, the Jensen House (5BL.241.3) at 413 Seward Street, and the residence at 409 Seward Street (5BL.241.4). A building boom occurred in 1903, when a significant portion of the residences located along Evans Street, Stickney Street and Seward Street were constructed.⁵⁷ Residential development continued to flourish throughout the 1910s and 1920s, slowing in the 1930s with the onset of the Great Depression.⁵⁸ Residential development would only increase after the end of World War II.

Commercial development along Main Street began with the platting of the town in 1882 and continued through the 1920s. The McAllister Saloon buildings (5BL.241.9) at 450 Main Street and the General Store building (5BL.241.10) at 415 Main Street were constructed during the 1880s and 1890s. The Turner Stevens building (5BL.241.11) at 401 Main Street was constructed in 1917. These buildings are contributing resources to the Lyons Sandstone Buildings Historic District and remain standing today. A lull in commercial construction occurred during World War II.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Lyons, Boulder County, Colorado*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900.

⁵⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Lyons, Boulder County, Colorado*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900.

⁵⁷ "Boulder County Assessor's Office Property Search," Boulder County, accessed December 12, 2024, <https://maps.bouldercounty.org/boco/PropertySearch>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

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2.2 Industries (1882 – Post-World War II)

2.2.1 The Many Fluctuations of Lyons' Sandstone Quarries

The sandstone quarries in and around Lyons are deeply connected to the town's history and legacy. E.S. Lyon's discovery of sandstone on his property led to the founding of the Lyon Lime and Quarry Company and the establishment of the town of Lyons. Throughout the mid-Twentieth Century, the sandstone quarries remained a key part of the local economy, even in the face of competition from the growing concrete industry. The stone business in Colorado saw many booms and busts throughout the years; however, Lyons' quarrymen were resilient, and the industry survives to this day. These quarries were the primary attraction for the town's early settlers and continued to play a central role in the lives of its residents.



Figure 4. A Lyons quarry being worked by hand (Lyons: Sandstone, 1953-1964, BHS 213-2-22j, A.A. Paddock Collection, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry was incorporated on February 20, 1882. The early directors of Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry were E.S. Lyon, Hiram F. Sawyer, H. Paul, John Parker, and S.H. Seward.⁶⁰ The company operated out of Boulder County and the main office was located in Boulder. The company had capital stock of \$50,000 in 1882.⁶¹ At the time, Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry owned 240 acres adjoining the townsite while Murphy's St. Vrain Red Sandstone Company owned another 240 acres, all of which contained outcroppings of Lyons' famed red sandstone.⁶² The unique appearance of Lyons sandstone resulted in its wide use in sidewalks, including the pavers and curbs, in Longmont and Denver, as well as throughout the state. Additionally, Lyons sandstone could be found on the trimmings of public school buildings, churches, and brick business blocks.

John C. Brodie, a Scottish immigrant from a long line of quarry engineers, was hired as the superintendent of Murphy's St. Vrain Red Sandstone Company in 1892.⁶³ Brodie worked as superintendent for over two decades before purchasing the quarry from Murphy in 1916.⁶⁴

According to the *Buena Vista Democrat* in 1887, the Colorado stone industry “[gave] employment, directly and indirectly, to fully three thousand men,” many of whom were Northern European, specifically Swedish and Finnish, immigrants.⁶⁵ Many of the men who worked in the stone industry resided within town limits. Census records indicate that quarrymen lived in residences along many of the primary streets in Lyons, including Seward Street, Stickney Street, Main Street, Evans Avenue, Park Avenue, and Prospect Avenue.⁶⁶ Quarrying for sandstone was so inexpensive that it could be affordably shipped as far as Indiana and Missouri, expanding the market of the stone business for Lyons quarrymen.⁶⁷ The Denver, Utah, and Pacific Railroad was constructed during the 1880s between Longmont and Lyons, resulting in 13 miles of railroad track.⁶⁸ This trackage connected Lyons to surrounding communities and the broader regional and national sandstone market. The boom was followed by fluctuations in demand. Asphalt became available for street paving during the 1890s,

⁶⁰ “Incorporated,” *Rocky Mountain News*, March 2, 1882, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² “The Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry,” *Longmont Ledger*, September 22, 1882, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁶³ Pace, 59.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ “Colorado Stone Industries,” *Buena Vista Democrat*, August 11, 1887, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>; Daniel Zantzinger, “Lyons Author Writes Fascinating History of the City’s Sandstone Quarries,” *Daily Camera*, last modified August 14, 2009, <https://www.dailycamera.com/2009/08/14/lyons-author-writes-fascinating-history-of-citys-sandstone-quarries/>.

⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Lyons, Boulder County, Colorado, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900.

⁶⁷ “Lyons Regaining Place of Prominence in the Region.”

⁶⁸ “Colorado Stone Industries,” *Buena Vista Democrat*.

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replacing paving blocks and cobblestone, impacting the stone business.⁶⁹ However, since Lyons quarries did not produce stone for street paving and instead produced dimension stone for sidewalks, crosswalks, and curbs, the Lyons quarries continued to prosper. As such, Lyons sandstone was and is still used extensively for sidewalks and curbs in Denver. Additionally, Lyons sandstone was used in buildings as steps, lintels, and coping. Lyons quarries also produced all grades of rubble, which was used to construct the middle wythe in wall compositions. At this time, buildings required three parallel walls, or wythes, to support their significant weight. The strength of Lyons sandstone made it a perfect material for the middle wythe.⁷⁰ The development of poured concrete during the 1910s however, did negatively impact the stone industry and Lyons saw a decrease in demand for their sandstone.

During the early Twentieth Century, the University of Colorado in Boulder (CU) saw an increasing student population. The rise in enrollment led to the need for additional infrastructure and educational buildings. CU's president at the time, George Norlin, hired the architectural firm Day & Klauder to head the expansion. Charles Klauder and Frank Day were known for constructing Gothic style buildings on the campuses of Princeton and Wellesley College.⁷¹ Prior to 1917, buildings on CU's campus were primarily constructed in the Gothic and Neoclassical styles, as well as several Victorian era styles.⁷² Klauder and Day chose not to use the Gothic style on CU's campus, and instead chose to design the buildings in a style later termed "Tuscan Vernacular."⁷³ They based the style on dwellings and barns in the hills outside of Florence, Italy and modified the Mediterranean style into "Tuscan Vernacular." The firm decided to use local Lyons sandstone to bring the style to life. Day & Klauder designed multiple buildings on the campus, including the gymnasium and Sewall Hall. The buildings feature limestone arches framing windows, carved cartouches, benches, column capitals, and fountains, as well as Lyons sandstone wall cladding.⁷⁴ The Tuscan Vernacular style became popular after people visited CU's campus, and the style began to spread through Boulder and broader Colorado. Lyons sandstone began to be used as cladding on residential buildings in post-World War II suburbs.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Pace, 21-25.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ "Campus Master Plan: Klauder Years (1918-1939)," University of Colorado Boulder, accessed July 13, 2023, <https://www.colorado.edu/masterplan/history/>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Pace, 76.

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The rising popularity of Portland cement as a building material during the mid-Twentieth Century led to another decline in the stone business and a decrease in population in Lyons. However, 10 quarries in Lyons remained in operation post-World War II according to newspaper records. Lyons red sandstone continued to be quarried from Brodie's St. Vrain stone quarry during the 1950s, which was managed by Brodie's children, Kenneth and Ron Brodie after his passing in 1940.⁷⁶ The Lyons sandstone quarried during this time was used for driveways, grave linings, and cladding for university buildings.⁷⁷ In 1954, architects considered using Lyons sandstone to construct the \$126 million Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, although other stone options such as Castle Rock limestone and granite were also considered for the project.⁷⁸ James D. Kelley, manager of Jacobson & Evans, one of the 10 remaining firms quarrying in Lyons, believed that around 100,000 tons of stone would be necessary for the project, which Lyons was capable of providing if given the opportunity. While Lyons was passed over for that project, Colorado State University (CSU) used Lyons sandstone to clad the buildings constructed during their Post-World War II campus expansion.⁷⁹ This success boosted the Lyons economy, with the sandstone business equating to \$1 million a year. Some of the producers in Lyons at this time were Dewey Summers—the director of the International Association of Stone Cutters—Art Ohline, Reino and Leonard Loukonen, Jess Vickery, Lester Stenette—who operated Colorado Stone of Longmont at the time—as well as Otto Brown and Norman Frank who specialized in quarry machinery.

The Lyons Rock and Lime Quarry, established in 1882, played a significant role in the development of the stone industry in Colorado, particularly through the extraction and utilization of its distinctive red sandstone. Initially thriving due to the demand for sandstone in construction and paving, the quarry adapted to changing market conditions despite fluctuations in demand caused by the introduction of asphalt and concrete. Notably, the architectural firm Day & Klauder's choice to use Lyons sandstone for the CU's campus buildings helped popularize the Tuscan Vernacular style, further embedding the stone in the region's architectural landscape. While the mid-Twentieth Century saw a decline in the stone business due to the rise of alternative construction materials, Lyons sandstone continued to find applications in various projects, sustaining local economic growth.

⁷⁶ "J.C. Brodie Dies on Trip to Coast: Pioneer Lyons Stone Quarry Owner"; "Increasing Sandstone Use Causing Activity at Old Brodie Quarry," *Estes Park Trail*, March 27, 1949. <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁷⁷ "Lyons Sandstone Unusual Formation, Thompson Tells Petroleum Geologists," April 15, 1954.

⁷⁸ "Lyons Sandstone May Be Used In Construction of U.S. Air Academy," October 22, 1954.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

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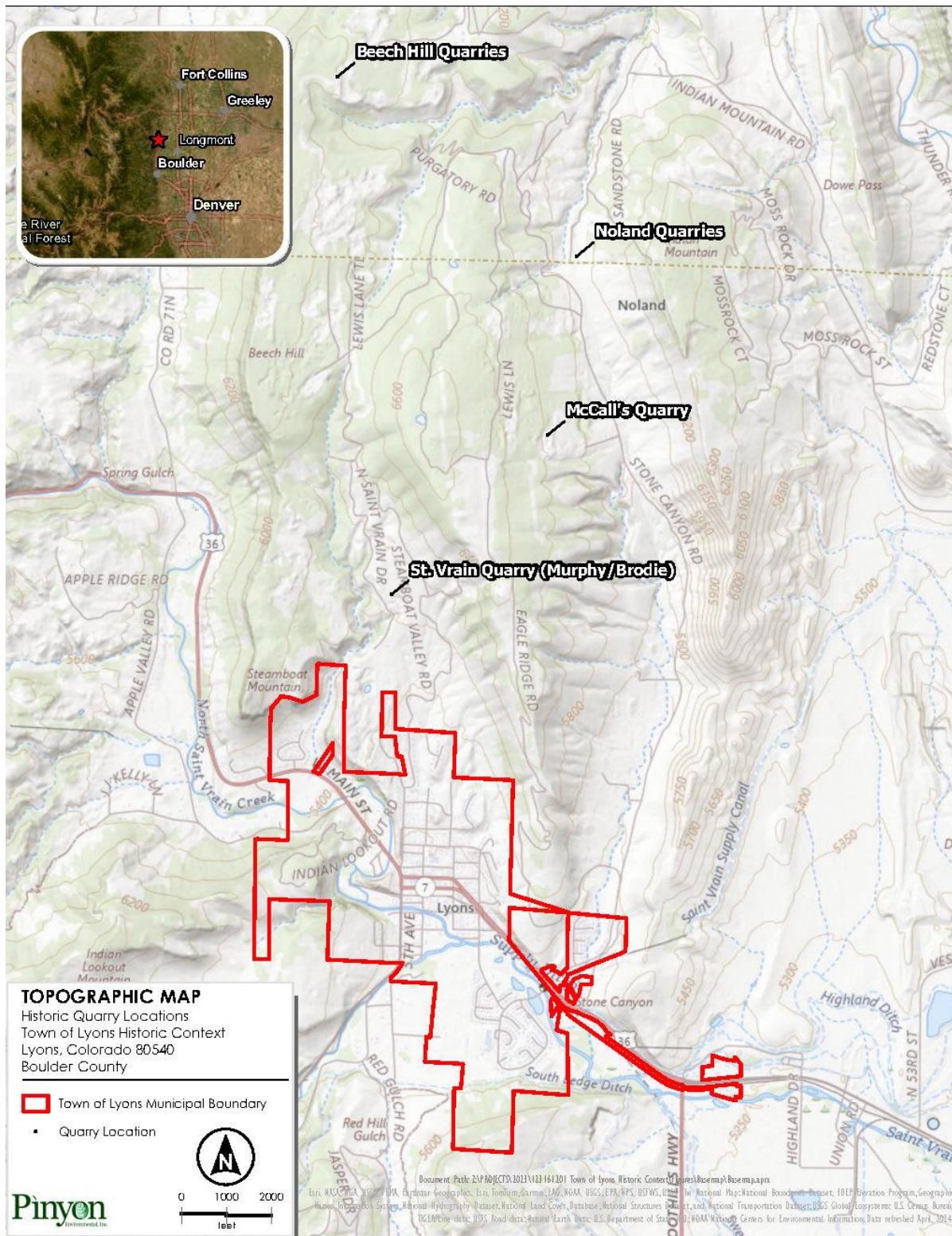


Figure 5. Map of historic sandstone quarries around Lyons.

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2.2.2 Mining

While the stone industry significantly shaped Lyons' architectural identity and economic landscape, mining also played a crucial role in the town's growth during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, drawing settlers and fueling development alongside the quarry industry. The original settlers of the St. Vrain Valley were motivated to move to the area because of mining prospects. Imbued in the belief of Manifest Destiny during the Nineteenth Century combined with the 1858 Pikes Peak Gold Rush attracted Euro-American prospectors from the Eastern United States, resulting in permanent settlements throughout Colorado and the displacement of Indigenous peoples living in the area.

During the 1860s, the original settlers of the St. Vrain Valley mined for copper, silver, and gold in the canyons along the Upper St. Vrain and Little Thompson Rivers.⁸⁰ In the late 1870s, Chester Lymon Smead discovered a copper lode in the area. According to a December 22, 1921 article in the *Lyons Recorder*, an unnamed company based out of Denver invested in Chester's mine and its prospects between 1881 and 1882.⁸¹ Mining in the area only continued to accelerate as silver was discovered in the St. Vrain Canyon.⁸² E.S. Lyon commented on the phenomena, stating in 1882 that "a number of good mines ha[d] already been discovered and located which assay from fifty to \$800 per ton of silver."⁸³ The mining and quarry industries worked hand-in-hand during the late Nineteenth Century, as Lyons sandstone was utilized in mining efforts. For example, sandstone was used to construct buildings to store dynamite. One such building remains standing in Lyons. The Dynamite Storage Building on High Street was constructed in 1890. The building is extant and is a contributing resource to the Lyons Sandstone Buildings Historic District.⁸⁴

Mine prospecting and development continued near Lyons during the early Twentieth Century.⁸⁵ The mining boom at the turn of the century prompted worries as to whether the mining industry in Lyons would cost Boulder County more money as development continued.⁸⁶ Beginning around 1905, the quarrying business in Lyons quieted, which spurred residents to

⁸⁰ Dianne Goode Benedict, *Birth of a Quarry Town: 1800s Lyons, Colorado* (Applications, Plus: Lyons, 2002), 13.

⁸¹ Turner, "Story of Lyons."

⁸² "A New Mining Camp," *Longmont Ledger*, September 8, 1882, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Manuel M. Weiss, "Lyons Sandstone Buildings," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form," February 27, 1979.

⁸⁵ "Will Soon be a Mining Center," *Lyons Recorder*, December 14, 1905, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

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continue prospecting in an attempt to recover from the economic downturn.⁸⁷ New veins and lodes were discovered which boosted the Lyons mining industry as a prominent aspect of the town's economy. According to the *Longmont Call*, Kansas officers and stockholders of St. Vrain Gold Mining and Milling Company promised to make Lyons a prominent mining center in 1906, demonstrating the stubborn success of the town's mining industry.⁸⁸ This vision was realized in the 1920s when the Smuggler Gold Mine, located 8-miles west of Lyons, became one of the richest goldmines in Boulder County.⁸⁹ Beam Process Company of Denver purchased the mine and reopened it on September 15, 1921, after it had been closed for some time. Elmer Warren employed a large mining crew, and the mine produced \$2.5 million in gold. The reinvigoration of the mining industry in Lyons was accompanied by the anticipation of another mining boom in the area. That same year, Beam Process Co. planned to construct a stamp mill and sank another mining shaft.⁹⁰ In 1922, the Smuggler-Ballarat Mining and Milling Company purchased the Smuggler-Ballarat Mine four miles north of Jamestown (around eight miles southwest of Lyons). They began hauling materials from Lyons to the mine to build a stamp mill.⁹¹

⁸⁷ "Mining About Lyons," *Lyons Recorder*, May 4-1905, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁸⁸ "Mining Activity Near Lyons," *Longmont Call*, September 29, 1906, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁸⁹ "Smuggler Gold Mine Near Lyons to Resume Operations," *Estes Park Trail*, September 23, 1921, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ "Smuggler-Ballarat Mine to be Re-Opened by New Company," *Lyons Recorder*, March 16, 1922, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Figure 6. Smuggler Gold Mine southwest of Lyons (Smuggler Mine (Balarat, Colo.), 1900-1910, BHS 219-8-10b, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

The discovery of valuable minerals such as copper, silver, and gold led to the establishment of permanent settlements and a booming mining sector, which sustained Lyons and Boulder County through various economic fluctuations. A majority of mines operated from the time of their establishment during the late-1800s until the 1920s. Mines like the Smuggler Gold mine shut down for a number of years before being reopened during the mid-1920s. Newspaper articles indicate that crude and inefficient recovery methods meant a significant waste in ore, which led to mine closures. Technology developed at the State School of Mines in Golden helped mines that reopened during the mid-1920s to be more successful.⁹² Despite the resurgence of mining in the Lyons area, the town's population did not significantly increase in response and census records revealed that few miners lived within town limits. It is likely that miners primarily lived in mining camps. Despite downturns, including a quiet period in the quarrying industry around the turn of the century, the mining sector showed remarkable resilience. The resurgence of mining in the 1920s, highlighted by the success of the Smuggler Gold Mine, underscored the enduring significance of mining to the town's prosperity.

⁹² "Smuggler-Ballarat Mine to be Re-Opened by New Company," *Lyons Recorder*, March 16, 1922, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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2.2.3 *Timber*

Alongside the stone and mining industries, the timber industry in Lyons became meaningful during the early stages of settlement. It flourished alongside the mining and quarry industries, which benefitted the town's economy and Lyons' residents. The timber industry relied heavily on the supply and demand of lumber, which led to fluctuations in the industry throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The earliest sawmill to operate in the St. Vrain Valley was run by John (Jack) King during the late 1870s.⁹³ Additional sawmills were constructed in the St. Vrain canyons throughout the 1880s.

The settlement of Big Elk Park was established in the late 1880s about 15 miles northwest of Lyons. Big Elk Park was known for its timber production and several sawmills, and a timber camp were set up in the area. The Lost Park Sawmill operated out of Big Elk Park during the early Twentieth Century. Newspaper advertisements indicate that drivers transported lumber from the mill to Lyons for \$5 a day.⁹⁴

⁹³ Frank Weaver, "A Look Back at Lyons," *Lyons Recorder*, January 8, 1981.

⁹⁴ "Wanted," *Lyons Recorder*, November 28, 1907, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Figure 7. Moffatt Tunnel constructed with local Lyons lumber (Moffatt Tunnel, 1920-1929, 503-1-25, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

In 1914, J. H. Hutchinson established a sawmill in Allenspark and Willie Billings began operating one from the Billings Ranch around the same time.⁹⁵ Timber milled in the Lyons area was used in the construction of the Moffat Tunnel, as well as used as supports in coal mines throughout Colorado.⁹⁶ In 1933, a sawmill was established on the Smuggler property which had served as a gold mine in Lyons for many years. The mill employed between 50 and 75 men who were paid \$2.50 a day, further contributing to Lyons' economy.⁹⁷ The success of the Smuggler sawmill sparked a wave of construction and renovation on various properties throughout the town. Several residences along High Street, Stickney Street, and Main Street were constructed during this time and census records indicate that many local men were contractors and carpenters.⁹⁸ As the sawmill produced lumber on the Smuggler property, ore continued to be pulled from the Smuggler Gold Mine. In 1936, another sawmill was established within the city limits of

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ "Lyons is Supplying Poles for Tunnel and Mine Building," *The Daily Times*, January 10, 1925, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

⁹⁷ "Smuggler Mill to Start May 1," *Boulder County Miner & Farmer*, March 23, 1933.

⁹⁸ "Boulder County Assessor's Office Property Search," Boulder County, accessed December 12, 2024, <https://maps.bouldercounty.org/boco/PropertySearch>.

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Lyons by Von and Dick Rowley.⁹⁹ Their sawmill processed timber from the Middle Fork Ranch at Raymond and Rowley Park north of Riverside. Immigrants from northern European counties such as Sweden and Finland worked in the timber industry, as well as men hailing from other U.S. states. Census records indicate that many Lyons men worked at timber camps and sawmills and as drivers transporting lumber to Lyons through the 1950s.

The timber industry emerged as a significant economic driver for Lyons, complementing the town's burgeoning stone and mining sectors. From its inception in the late 1870s with King's sawmill, through the establishment of multiple sawmills in the following decades, the industry played a crucial role in Lyons' growth. The success of sawmills like those operated by J.H. Hutchinson, Willie Billings, and the Rowley brothers bolstered the local economy by providing employment and stimulating construction projects across the town, including the construction of residences at 339 Main Street, 436 High Street, and 306 Stickney Street. The interplay between timber, mining, and quarrying industries highlights Lyons' adaptability and economic diversification during periods of both growth and economic fluctuation.

⁹⁹ Weaver, "A Looke Back at Lyons."

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2.2.4 Tourism

During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, the economy of Lyons was heavily supported by the production of raw materials such as stone, precious metals, and timber. However, tourism also played a crucial role. Lyons' location near Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) made it a key route to the Rockies. Moreover, the development of several resorts in the area attracted visitors, either as a stopover before reaching Estes Park or as destinations in their own right. This vibrant tourism industry provided Lyons with stability and support, helping to offset the fluctuations in its other economic sectors.



Figure 8. Casino Building on the Welch Resort (Welch Resort: Buildings, 1893-1946, 613-1-6, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

Colorado was popular as a destination for those with health issues, such as tuberculosis, due to its dry climate. Taking advantage of this, several resorts were established in the area during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, which further supported the tourism industry in Lyons and the surrounding area. In the 1860s, Joel Estes became the first white settler in Estes Valley to the west of Lyons. After finding the area's short growing season unsuitable for

farming, he sold his homestead to Griff Evans.¹⁰⁰ Evans, who also helped establish Lyons, began building guest cabins and opened the region's first dude ranch.¹⁰¹ In 1872, Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quinn, the fourth Earl of Dunraven and Mountearl, visited the area for a hunting trip. By 1874, he started acquiring land in Estes Park, eventually amassing 8,000 acres.¹⁰² The Earl established the Estes Park Hotel in 1877, drawing more tourists through Lyons on their way to Estes Park.

At the bottom of the canyon in Lyons, Kenneth Billings opened Camp Billings in 1887 and the Welch Resort, established by William Welch, opened on the North St. Vrain River north of Lyons in 1893.¹⁰³ The Welch Resort was originally a tuberculosis sanitarium catering to those suffering from the disease, later transitioning into a hunting and fishing destination.¹⁰⁴ By 1937, Oscar and Irene Shirk as well as Nettie L. Miller, owners at the time, redeveloped the resort as the St. Vrain Mountain Ranch Resort.¹⁰⁵ Buchan and Joseph F. Zunz of St. Louis bought the resort in 1946 from Mr. and Mrs. Almar Pugh and rebranded the resort as a guest ranch called B-Bar-Z.¹⁰⁶

The St. Vrain Cottages were located three miles north of Lyons and owned by J. B. Hall and A. E. Howe. Advertisements indicate that the St. Vrain Cottages provided first class amenities and excellent fishing, as the St. Vrain River ran through the property.¹⁰⁷ After the turn of the century, the St. Vrain Cottages began advertising itself as a health resort, likely targeting those suffering from tuberculosis.¹⁰⁸ In 1903, James Lowe and his wife established Steamboat Villa west of Lyons.¹⁰⁹ The villa operated as a resort until the 1920s, when it was purchased as a private residence by T.M. Freeman and his wife.

The St. Vrain House—located on Fifth Avenue half a block south of the train depot—was another popular establishment around the turn of the century. Maggie Smith was the proprietress and served homemade meals to guests.¹¹⁰ Smith was born circa 1866 in Missouri.

¹⁰⁰ "History: The Origins of Exploration in Estes Park," Estes Park, Colorado, accessed September 9, 2024, <https://www.visitestespark.com/plan/about/history/>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² D. Ferrel Atkins, "Earl of Dunraven," last modified March 31, 2012, https://home.nps.gov/romo/earl_of_dunraven.htm.

¹⁰³ "St. Louis People Buy Welch Resort," Estes Park Trail, May 3, 1946, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "Welch Resort is Being Developed," *Longmont Times-Call*, June 21, 1937, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ "St. Vrain Cottages," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 22, 1894, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁰⁸ "Summer Resort," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 5, 1901, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁰⁹ "Our Own Open Opinion," *Lyons Recorder*, May 28, 1903, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹⁰ "The Old St. Vrain House," *Lyons Recorder*, May 18, 1916, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Newspaper records indicate that the St. Vrain House was in operation through the 1920s. Additionally, the Burlington Hotel was a popular stopover in Lyons. The earliest mention of the hotel—which was originally a sanitorium—in newspapers occurred in 1903. A 1912 *Boulder Daily Camera* article advertised the hotel as being on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and on the auto route to Estes Park. The advertisement boasted the hotel's proximity to the St. Vrain River for trout fishing.¹¹¹ The hotel had multiple owners throughout the early Twentieth Century. In 1940, Mrs. W. R. Kincaid, Sr. sold the property to Paul Niles of Nebraska.¹¹²



Figure 9. Card advertising the Welch Resort (Welch Resort advertisement and menu, 1920-1940, 613-1-13, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

Additional resorts and hotels in the Lyons area included: Thornecroft owned by Lillie Thorn; Elkhorn owned by Jenks & Fisher; Carvelle's Ranch owned by L. A. Carvelle; the Lyon House owned by McAlpine; and Jenks Ranch owned by J. S. Jenks and R. W. Epley. Many of these resorts operated during the early Twentieth Century, and primarily brought visitors seeking outdoor activities and proximity to Estes Park.

In addition to being a destination for health seekers and outdoorsmen, Lyons' parks and open spaces drew tourists. The original plat of the town included a park bounded by Evans Street on the north and Third and Fourth Avenues on the east and west. The inclusion of a planned open space in the town plat illustrates the importance of outdoor recreation to the residents of Lyons. Around the turn of the century, Meadow Park was established west of Fifth Avenue within a curve of North Saint Vrain Creek. The park was popular with both local Lyons residents and tourists from elsewhere in Colorado. The park was owned by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company.¹¹³ Many

¹¹¹ "Burlington Hotel at Lyons, Colo.," *Boulder Daily Camera*, August 1, 1912, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹² "Burlington Hotel At Lyons is Sold," *Longmont Times-Call*, October 1, 1940, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹³ O.J. Ramey, "A Fund Started for Improving Picturesque Meadow Park," *Lyons Recorder*, June 19, 1920, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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tourists used the railroad to travel to Lyons and picnic and recreate at Meadow Park.¹¹⁴ With the increasing use of automobile travel, the railroad company chose not to maintain the park. The Town of Lyons began requesting to lease the park during the 1910s in order to maintain it themselves. In 1920, the railroad company agreed to allow the town to rehabilitate the park and advertise it as a place for automobile camping. The town officially leased the park in 1922.¹¹⁵ During the Great Depression, in 1932, the park saw the construction of the Meadow Park Shelter House through the Works Progress Administration (WPA).¹¹⁶ Lyons residents and those visiting from around Colorado continue to use the park, which has been renamed the LaVerne M. Johnson Park, today.

To support the increase in auto tourism in Lyons, several garages and gas stations were established. The Continental Oil Company constructed a filling station on corner lots on Main Street in 1920.¹¹⁷ Additionally, the Lyons-St. Vrain Garage was in operation as early as 1920 and offered general blacksmithing in addition to auto repairs.¹¹⁸

During the early Twentieth Century, Lyons competed with the Town of Loveland as the best route to take from Denver to Estes Park. A 1903 *Lyons Recorder* article stated that a member of the Lyons Town Council measured the distance from Lyons to Estes Park and the distance from Loveland to Estes Park, concluding that the Loveland route was 35 miles while the Lyons route was only 22 miles.¹¹⁹ The article further claimed that “Loveland will not be able to compete with Lyons for the Estes Park travel” due to Lyons’ closer proximity.¹²⁰ After establishing the Welch Resort in Lyons, William Welch alongside F. O. Stanley agreed to construct an automobile road through the Welch property to Estes Park.¹²¹ They planned for it to be a public thoroughfare partially funded by the state at cost of \$2,250.¹²² The men planned to make automobiles accessible from the train station to convey passengers to Estes Park, ensuring tourists could make it to Estes Park in two hours, further increasing interest in taking the Lyons route to Estes Park.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ “Meadow Park Leased by Town of Lyons,” *Longmont Ledger*, July 14, 1922, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹⁶ “Meadow Park Shelter House,” History Colorado, accessed December 23, 2024, <https://www.historycolorado.org/location/meadow-park-shelter-house>

¹¹⁷ “Continental Oil Company Commences Work on Filling Station,” *Lyons Recorder*, June 12, 1920, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹⁸ “Lyons-St. Vrain Garage,” *Lyons Recorder*, May 8, 1920, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹¹⁹ “Lyons vs Loveland Road,” *Lyons Recorder*, December 3, 1903, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ “Automobile Line From Lyons to Estes Park,” *Lyons Recorder*, April 4, 1907, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹²² Ibid.

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In the early Twentieth Century, a growing national interest in conservation, inspired by figures like Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir, further boosted tourism and appreciation for natural landscapes. In 1909, naturalist Enos Mills began advocating for a national park in the Rocky Mountains near Estes Park.¹²³ His persistent lobbying paid off when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Rocky Mountain National Park Act on January 29, 1915.¹²⁴ The creation of RMNP brought significant attention to the region and greatly contributed to the burgeoning tourism industry in Lyons with the National Park Service announcing that it would provide transportation to tourists travelling from the town to RMNP after its opening in 1915.¹²⁵ These trips would include frequent stops at resorts along the way. Five years later, Lyons was declared the new gateway to the scenic Long's Peak region by the Allenspark Commercial Club.¹²⁶ With this promotion, Lyons was recognized as the double gateway to RMNP. This development benefited Lyons and solidified the town's place as the best route for tourists traveling to RMNP. Burns Will, the elected secretary of the Allenspark Club in 1920 stated that "[b]oth Lyons and Allenspark will enjoy a wonderful growth, due to the natural advantages they both possess. The future prosperity of both communities will be increased and hastened by friendly cooperation, which will come naturally, as they have interests in common."¹²⁷ As a double gateway, the area became increasingly flooded with excited tourists leading to the need for improving local infrastructure. The state highway was improved up the South St. Vrain Canyon and north past the North St. Vrain, Copeland Lake, Wild Basin, Long's Peak, and Twin Sisters Peaks during the 1920s.¹²⁸

Rail service improvements were also undertaken, and by 1925 included a refrigerator car to transport meat to the many resorts.¹²⁹ Additionally, the improved railroad service would allow for more goods to be transported to the area, as two trains would be coming from Denver daily. The increase in goods and multiple trains a day served to boost the tourism industry as increased goods from surrounding communities meant Lyons' businesses could better support the ever-growing tourist population. Lyons' strategic location, historical resorts, attraction as a recreation destination, and its role as a gateway to Estes Park and RMNP allowed it to thrive as

¹²³ "Rocky Mountain National Park: Brief Park History," National Park Service, accessed September 10, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/romo/learn/historyculture/brief.htm>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ "Tourists to See National Park by Auto Touring Cars," *Lyons Recorder*, March 11, 1915, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹²⁶ "Allenspark Club: This Thriving Mountain Resort Organizes a Live Commercial Club of Prominence," *Lyons Recorder*, January 24, 1920, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹²⁷ "Allenspark Club."

¹²⁸ "Allenspark Club."

¹²⁹ "Lyons Anticipates Heavy Increase in Tourists," *Estes Park Trail*, May 22, 1925, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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a vital hub for tourism, ensuring the town's economic resilience and growth throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

2.3 Transportation

2.3.1 *Paving the Path to Prosperity: How Roads Shaped Lyons' Growth and Tourism*

The abundance of fur-bearing mammals attracted French and other Euro-American trappers to Colorado, including Boulder County and the area around Lyons, by the late 1700s. However, long before these trappers arrived, Native Americans had established travel routes in the foothills and hogbacks of the Front Range. These travel corridors, pioneered by Paleo-Indians and Indigenous peoples, became a network of frontier highways later utilized by Euro-American traders and trappers. The exchange of metal tools, guns, horses, beads, and more for beaver skins and other furs fueled some of the first encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in this region. These interactions marked the beginning of significant cultural exchanges and the integration of Native American routes into broader trade networks.

The movement of people, goods, and ideas through this region of Boulder County is an ancient theme. Indigenous people used these routes for centuries, and their paths laid the groundwork for the future development of wagon and toll roads, and eventually the modern highway system. The discovery of high-quality stone and timber in and around Lyons, along with the establishment of Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), led to the consolidation of travel on the most well-known and well-maintained routes through the canyons west of town. Today, the legacy of these Indigenous routes is still evident in the region's infrastructure and continues to resonate as a testament to the enduring significance of their contributions to the area's history.

As the region's tourism potential became increasingly recognized during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, the need for efficient transportation to and from Lyons became paramount. The strategic development of roads and railroads along long used routes not only facilitated access to increasingly popular tourist destinations, but also supported the town's

growth and economic prosperity. Transportation brought visitors—especially during the boom of the resort industry—via roads and railroads and encouraged traffic through the area. Roads were developed in the area around Lyons through local and federal funding. However, most were constructed by locals working on behalf of the town. With more convenient access to Lyons as well as Estes Park, the tourism industry was allowed to flourish.

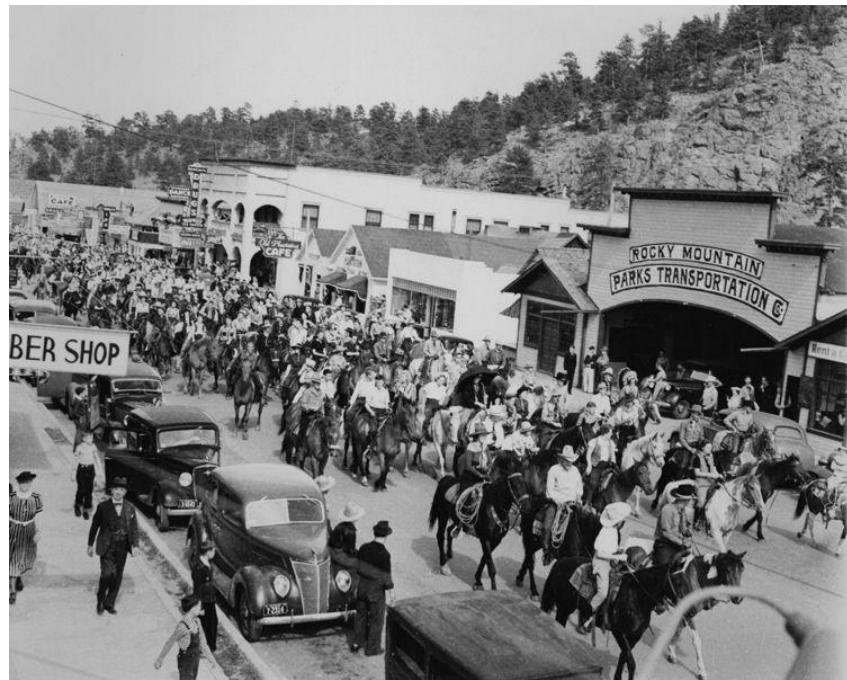


Figure 10. North St. Vrain Highway dedication in Estes Park (Lyons to Estes Park: North St. Vrain Highway dedication, 1939, BHS 213-2-22e, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

Historically, roads in Lyons were highly valued because they offered convenience in accessing the town as well as connecting Lyons to the broader transportation network in Colorado. One of the earliest wagon roads in the area was Alexander MacGregor's toll road, constructed in 1875, which ran along the North St. Vrain and Little Thompson Rivers leading to Estes Park.¹³⁰ The road brought some of the first tourists through the area via stagecoaches and wagons. The toll road was in operation for at least 25 years; however, many locals became increasingly incensed by the tolls levied on travelers between Lyons and Estes Park. In 1900, a pair of Estes Park locals—the Sosey brothers—pulled the toll gate off of its hinges in an act of protest. No legal action was taken against the brothers and the Lyons & Estes Park Toll Road Company ceased in their efforts to collect tolls shortly thereafter.¹³¹ The abolishment of the toll attracted more visitors, hunters, and fishermen to the area, since they could now travel between Lyons and Estes Park free of charge.¹³² In 1902, locals began the development of a new wagon road,

¹³⁰ Colorado Department of Transportation, "Colorado Historic Highway Inventory – Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance," 2016.

¹³¹ "Lyons Toll Road Abolished," *Loveland Register*, December 12, 1900, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

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which they planned to be four miles long.¹³³ The road was located down the ridge from the toll road and connected to Antelope Park Road near Coffin Top Mountain. The purpose of the road was to decrease the distance from Longmont to Lyons by about eight miles.

In 1911, businessmen from Boulder, Lyons, and Estes Park—including Alfred Lamborn, the manager of the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, and O. P. Lowe, the manager of the Stanley automobile service—organized to repair the road between the two towns to allow for automobile travel with the interest of spurring further tourism.¹³⁴ Lowe promised to run an automobile line ferrying tourists to Boulder should the road be repaired.¹³⁵ The connection of Boulder to Estes Park via Lyons would increase tourism in all three towns, greatly benefiting their local economies as well as the broader Boulder County economy. In 1917, the Longmont Commercial Association met with several committees from Lyons and Estes Park as well as the State Highway Commission to discuss improving roads linking Lyons to communities to the north such as Fort Collins.¹³⁶ The Association wanted the road to be double-tracked and improved overall so that it could be utilized as the main route to RMNP. These road improvements would make travel through Lyons more convenient, further contributing to the tourism industry across northern Colorado.

In 1913, construction began on Fall River Road, linking Estes Park and Larimer County, more broadly, to Grand County over Fall River Pass. The road was constructed with state convict labor; however, the treacherous route and steep grades continually delayed construction and the road was not completed until 1920.¹³⁷ Although complete, Fall River Road proved dangerous for travelers, who frequently had to negotiate steep grades and narrow stretches of the road leading to difficulties when having to pass oncoming traffic. Following the establishment of RMNP in 1915, the NPS sought to improve transportation to and through the area and came to the conclusion that it was not cost effective to rebuild or improve Fall River Road.¹³⁸ In 1929, NPS accepted a \$1.5 million bid for construction of a new road that would parallel the Ute Trail over Fall River Pass, which would come to be known as Trail Ridge Road.¹³⁹ Construction

¹³³ "Allen's Park," *Longmont Ledger*, February 7, 1902, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³⁴ "New Auto Road for Lyons: The Road Along the Foothills between Lyons and Boulder to be Made an Auto Road," *The Lyons Recorder*, May 4, 1911, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ "Longmont Bestirs Itself for Roads to the Park," *Boulder Daily Camera*, April 11, 1917, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³⁷ "A New Road Joins East and West," *Estes Park Trail*, April 29, 1983, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³⁸ "A New Road Joins East and West," *Estes Park Trail*, April 29, 1983, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

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began in October 1929 and was completed in 1932.¹⁴⁰ Following the completion of Trail Ridge Road, NPS restricted travel on Fall River Road to one-way traffic. Many of the tourists visiting RMNP traveled through Lyons on their way to the start of Trail Ridge Road in Estes Park, further cementing Lyons' place as the gateway to the National Park.



Figure 11. Road work on South St. Vrain Road (South St. Vrain Road work, 1900-1919, 508-4-20, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

In 1936, road improvements were made to the St. Vrain Highway—originally MacGregor's toll road—in the North St. Vrain Canyon between Lyons and Estes Park. Following the establishment of RMNP, the route was designated State Highway 66 (SH 66) by the Colorado Highway Department, and it became heavily traveled by an increasing number of tourists on their way to RMNP. The large number of travelers quickly degraded the quality of the road leading to necessary repairs. In order to make the repairs, the highway had to be closed to traffic,

and travelers were rerouted through the South Fork of the St. Vrain Canyon, which linked Lyons to Estes Park via Allenspark.

The South St. Vrain Highway, also known as State Highway 7 (SH 7), was established as early as 1922 and it was rebuilt in 1934 in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service to avoid steep grades and sharp curves present on the original route.¹⁴¹ In 1936, in anticipation of the increased traffic due to the closure of SH 66, the Colorado Highway Department, with assistance from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) completed a project to straighten, widen, and oil the road before the start of the summer tourist season.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Colorado Department of Transportation, "Colorado Historic Highway Inventory – Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance," 2016.

¹⁴² "Tourists to Estes Park will Find Better Roads this Year," Estes Park Trail, April 17, 1936, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Following the improvement of both SH 66 and SH 7, tourism continued to flow through Lyons to Estes Park until the outbreak of World War II. Wartime economic measures, such as fuel rations, decreased visitation to National Parks around the country, including RMNP. However, following the end of the war increased social mobility and rising incomes of average American families led to a dramatic rebound in the tourism industry. The number of tourists to RMNP doubled between 1945 and 1946, with over 800,000 visitors in 1946.¹⁴³ SH 66 was redesignated United States Highway 36 (US 36) during the late 1960s.¹⁴⁴ A series of Colorado Department of Highways Federal Aid Projects were completed between 1970 and 1972 on US 36 in Lyons to improve the infrastructure.¹⁴⁵

Roads have historically played a crucial role in the development and prosperity of Lyons, serving as vital links to broader transportation networks and enhancing access to the town. The construction of early roads, such as the toll road to Estes Park and subsequent improvements, was pivotal in attracting visitors and fostering economic growth. The abolition of tolls and the development of new routes, like the wagon road and later automobile roads, facilitated easier travel between Lyons, Estes Park, and neighboring towns, significantly boosting tourism. Key road projects, including the transformation of Fall River Road and the creation of Trail Ridge Road, further solidified Lyons' role as a gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. Ongoing road improvements in the 1930s and the redesignation of US 36 during the late 1960s, funded by both state and federal initiatives, underscored the importance of infrastructure in supporting Lyons' tourism industry. Overall, these developments not only enhanced connectivity but also contributed substantially to the town's economic vitality and growth.

¹⁴³ Daniel Gilbert, "The Changing Role of Visitors at Rocky Mountain National Park," in *Long Exposures: Repeat Photography & Parks and Portals to Learning* (Fort Collins: Center for Literary Publishing, Colorado State University, 2019), 29.

¹⁴⁴ Colorado Department of Transportation, "Colorado Historic Highway Inventory – Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance," 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Colorado Department of Transportation, "Highway Data Explorer," Online Transportation Information System, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/HighwayData#/ui/4/0/criteria/036B/0/20.657>.

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2.3.2 Railroads



Figure 12. Piles of cut sandstone beside the railroad track. (Credit: Lyons: Sandstone 1953-1964, A.A. Paddock Collection, BHS 213-2-22j, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

While roads played a critical role in connecting Lyons to surrounding regions and boosting tourism, railroads also significantly contributed to the town's development in various ways. Railroads served a variety of purposes in Lyons, including transporting both people and goods to the town. They also transported tourists interested in visiting RMNP which, combined with road improvement projects, helped promote Lyons as

the perfect stop during the trip to the park. Additionally, railroads assisted in the quarrying and mining industries, allowing more efficient movement of raw materials and the expansion of business overall. By facilitating the transportation of people, goods, and raw materials, railroads greatly contributed to Lyons' industries and its economy.

During the early settlement of Lyons, railroads were already present in more populous areas like Boulder and Denver. After the establishment of the Town of Lyons and its quarries, early residents pushed for railroad companies to connect Lyons to their broader networks. The Denver, Utah and Pacific Railroad consolidated with the Colorado Northern railroad company in 1884.¹⁴⁶ It was rumored that the company, which was called the Denver, Utah, and Pacific, was planning to use 50,000 ties to run a railway up either the St. Vrain Canyon or Boulder Canyon.¹⁴⁷ During the 1880s, the Denver, Utah and Pacific constructed thirteen miles of track

¹⁴⁶ "The Denver, Utah and Pacific," *Weekly Register-Call*, May 23, 1884, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

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between Lyons and Longmont connecting the town to Longmont's rail connection to Denver, making the transport of raw materials more efficient.¹⁴⁸

In 1885, an additional extension of the Denver, Utah and Pacific line was constructed to the St. Vrain Redstone Company quarry, owned and operated by Hugh Murphy. Murphy then began transporting his stone via railroad to Denver, as well as across the country. The extension was used for the transportation of Lyons sandstone for several decades until just before World War I, when downturns in the stone industry led to the removal of the trackage.¹⁴⁹ In conjunction with the construction of the railroad extension to Murphy's quarry, the Town of Lyons saw the construction of a rail depot clad in Lyons sandstone in 1885. Longmont contractor Mark Boyd was responsible for the construction of the depot, which was used by the Denver, Utah and Pacific railroad to serve passengers and freight until its closure in the 1940s.¹⁵⁰ The depot (5BL.241.12) is still standing and is a contributing resource to the Lyons Sandstone Buildings Historic District.



Figure 13. Lyons' historic railroad depot. (Lyons: Depot, 1975-1977, BHS 213-2-22g, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

Additional rail companies operating in Lyons included the Stone Canyon Quarry and Railway Company as well as the Burlington Northern Railway Company, which purchased the tracks laid by Denver, Utah and Pacific.¹⁵¹ In 1890, construction began on the Stone Canyon Quarry

¹⁴⁸ "Colorado Stone Industries," *Buena Vista Democrat*.

¹⁴⁹ "Increasing Sandstone Use Causing Activity at Old Brodie Quarry."

¹⁵⁰ "Lyons Railroad Depot (Lyons Public Library)," History Colorado, accessed July 13, 2023, <https://www.historycolorado.org/location/lyons-railroad-depot-lyons-public-library>.

¹⁵¹ "Holding the Canon: Moffat Road Makes Seizure," *Yuma Pioneer*, July 25, 1902, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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railway. The six-mile track would connect the quarry to the Burlington switch in town. The purpose of the set of tracks was to transport stone more cost effectively.¹⁵²

While essential to the quarry industry, the railroads also served to bring tourism to Lyons. Before automobile travel became the preferred transportation method, tourists would ride the train from Denver to Lyons before being bussed to Estes Park and RMNP. The National Park, as well as businesses like the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, provided car services to bring tourists from Lyons to Estes Park.¹⁵³ The relatively short train ride from Denver to Lyons and then the two-hour car trip to Estes Park served as a perfect day trip for Denverites seeking to explore the mountains with relative safety and ease.

The development of railroads was a pivotal factor in the early growth and economic prosperity of Lyons. Initially, railroads were concentrated in larger cities like Boulder and Denver, but the establishment of Lyons and its quarries led residents to advocate for improved rail connections. The consolidation of the Denver, Utah and Pacific Railroad with the Colorado Northern Railroad in 1884 and the subsequent extension of tracks to Lyons significantly enhanced the efficiency of transporting raw materials, such as stone, to Denver and beyond. This development was further complemented by the construction of a rail depot in Lyons, built from local sandstone, which facilitated passenger and freight services until the 1940s. Additional rail initiatives, such as the Stone Canyon Quarry Railway, also contributed to the efficient movement of stone. Beyond its industrial impact, the railroad played a crucial role in boosting tourism by providing a key transit route for visitors traveling from Denver to Estes Park and RMNP by way of Lyons. The combination of efficient transport and scenic travel routes through Lyons supported the local economy and established the town as a significant gateway for tourists exploring Colorado's natural attractions.

2.4 Diversity and Racial Tension

2.4.1 Immigrants and Racial Tension in Lyons

In the late Nineteenth Century, a significant influx of immigrants, including Mexican families and Europeans, arrived in Colorado, drawn by opportunities in agriculture and mining. This new wave of residents contributed to the local workforce and economic growth but also introduced social challenges and tensions, including the rise of nativist sentiments and the presence of

¹⁵² "Traffic of Lyons: A Railroad Now Building to Carry off the Immense Blocks of Stone Quarried," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 31, 1890, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁵³ "Tourists to See National Park by Auto Touring Cars," *Lyons Recorder*, March 11, 1915, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The interplay between these economic advancements and social dynamics marked a complex period of both opportunity and strain for Lyons and its surrounding areas.

After conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, Mexicans residing in what would become the Colorado Territory were given the option to move south or stay in the area and become naturalized as American citizens.¹⁵⁴ Given this option, many chose to stay in the region that had been their home while also bringing their families north. This was the first of several major migrations from Mexico to the United States.¹⁵⁵ It was later reported that 10% of Mexico's population had migrated to the United States within the first three decades of the Twentieth Century and this was reflected in the increased Mexican population in Colorado and Boulder County.¹⁵⁶ Many of the first Latino residents in Boulder County were interested in seasonal agricultural work as well as mining with the hopes of establishing deeper roots in the area for their families. Mexican families had lived in the area on land granted to them by either Spain or Mexico which were protected in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the Mexican-American War. However, the United States did not consistently honor this treaty, and disregarded Mexican families' claims to their land.¹⁵⁷ Despite this, many Mexican and other immigrant groups continued to migrate to the area. Into the Twentieth Century, growing industries like railroads, coal mining, and agriculture continued to attract Latino migrants.¹⁵⁸ During the Mexican Revolution which occurred between 1910 and 1920, over 50,000 Mexican workers sought refuge in Colorado where they worked in the mining and agricultural industries, providing a large work force that further boosted local economies. Racial diversity in Colorado increased over time, especially going into the Twentieth Century. At this time, Colorado had spent little effort to attract foreign immigrants into the state, focusing on internal migration from Eastern states.¹⁵⁹ Seeking to increase immigration to the state, Denver Chamber of Commerce conducted research on methods other states had used to attract immigrants.¹⁶⁰ The Chamber's research concluded immigration was beneficial to various industries, including mining and agriculture.

¹⁵⁴ Jefferson Dodge and Joel Dyer, "Eracism: Exploring the Roots of Boulder County's Latino Population," *Boulder Weekly*, February 6, 2014, <https://boulderweekly.com/news/eracism-exploring-the-roots-of-boulder-countys-latino-population/>

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ "Chamber Organizes Campaign to Bring Immigrants Here," *Rocky Mountain News*, October 20, 1910, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

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Over the course of the early decades of the Twentieth Century, the population of Colorado became increasingly diverse, with the growth of several different communities. In 1900, there were reportedly around 8,570 African Americans in Colorado.¹⁶¹ Ten years later, the population census noted that there were 21,467 African Americans in the Mountain West region of the United States, 11,453 of which resided in Colorado.¹⁶² The 1910 Federal Census for the Town of Lyons indicates that nine people from Japan and approximately five from Mexico resided in town, however, these individuals are not found in the 1920 census.¹⁶³ According to a 1911 article in the *Salida Mail*, between 1910 and 1911, additional immigrants, including individuals of African, Cuban, Japanese, Chinese, Irish, Jewish, Scottish, Syrian, Turkish, Welsh, Scandinavian, Danish, Swedish, English, Croatian, Slavic, and Italian descent migrated in droves to Colorado.¹⁶⁴ Despite this, there were only four non-white individuals, and nine “aliens” officially registered in Boulder County in 1918.¹⁶⁵ Although the state was increasingly interested in foreign immigration, Colorado courts were severe in their examination of applicants for citizenship.¹⁶⁶ According to *Salida Mail*, as of 1911 26% of those who applied for citizenship were turned down.¹⁶⁷ By 1930, Boulder County had reported a population of 32,456. Of that population, 27,792 were “native white,” 2,702 were white foreigners, 1,675 were Mexican, 133 were Japanese, 128 were African American, 7 were Chinese, and 7 were Native American. Records were unclear regarding the diversity in the Town of Lyons throughout much of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. However, newspaper articles do indicate a large population of immigrants from Northern Europe working in the stone quarries.¹⁶⁸

Following the Mexican-American War in 1848, many Mexicans opted to remain in what became the Colorado Territory, contributing to early migration patterns and further establishing roots in the region. This initial migration marked the beginning of a significant trend, with a notable increase in Mexican immigration to the United States throughout the early Twentieth Century, driven by opportunities in agriculture and mining. Despite the U.S. government's inconsistent

¹⁶¹ Walter F. Willcox, “The Negro Population,” accessed July 11, 2023, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/03322287no8ch1.pdf>

¹⁶² “Part I - Growth and Geographic Distribution: 1790-1910,” accessed July 11, 2023, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/black-population-1790-1915/00480330ch02.pdf>

¹⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Lyons, Boulder County, Colorado*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900.

¹⁶⁴ “Soil Survey and Map of Longmont Area Completed,” *Longmont Times-Call*, August 23, 1973, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁶⁵ “Local News Items,” *Daily Times*, June 7, 1918, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁶⁶ “Many Immigrants Come into Colorado,” *Salida Mail*, February 14, 1911, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁶⁷ “Many Immigrants Come into Colorado,” *Salida Mail*, February 14, 1911, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>

¹⁶⁸ Zantzinger, “Lyons Author Writes Fascinating History of the City’s Sandstone Quarries.”

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adherence to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which had promised protection of land rights, Mexican families continued to migrate into Colorado, enriching the local workforce and economy. By the early 1900s, Colorado's demographic landscape had diversified somewhat, with Mexican and other foreign immigrant populations, as well as African Americans, contributing to the state's economic development, despite facing social challenges and in some instances stringent citizenship requirements. This evolving diversity underscored the complex interplay between immigration, economic opportunity, and social dynamics in Boulder County and the Town of Lyons, highlighting both the opportunities created by an expanding workforce and the tensions that arose from shifting demographic patterns.

2.4.2 The Ku Klux Klan

As the demographic landscape of Colorado evolved with the influx of Mexican, African American, and other non-white individuals, new social dynamics and tensions arose. This shifting demographic environment set the stage for the rise of discriminatory groups, such as the KKK, which began to assert a more visible and oppressive presence in Boulder County and Lyons. During the early Twentieth Century, the KKK rose to prominence in Boulder County with a significant presence in the town of Lyons. White supremacist views manifested as harassment of non-white populations, especially the Latino families in the area because of their Catholic views and the presumption that they were immigrants, even if their families had been in the area before the Colorado Territory was established.¹⁶⁹ There is no evidence of lynchings in Boulder County, however the KKK did threaten and intimidate local Latinos and other minority groups they felt were acting too independently. Intimidation tactics included veiled threats printed in local newspapers, damage of property, and refusing service to people of color.¹⁷⁰

The KKK had a presence in Colorado as early as the 1920s.¹⁷¹ In 1921, the Denver chapter (Klavern) of the KKK was established and eventually boasted 35,000 members.¹⁷² In 1922 the Klan initiated around 200 people to Boulder's Klavern, which later grew to have between 300 and 500 members.¹⁷³ Around this time, the KKK gained power in Lyons and Longmont, and the

¹⁶⁹ Jefferson Dodge and Joel Dyer, "Eracism: A Dark Decade of KLAN Activity Aimed at Local Latinos," *Boulder Weekly*, February 27, 2014, <https://boulderweekly.com/news/eracism-a-dark-decade-of-klan-activity-aimed-at-local-latinos/>

¹⁷⁰ Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Latinos of Boulder County, Colorado: History and Contributions* (Palm Springs: Old John Publishing, 2016), 112-125.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² "Ku Klux Klan Enjoyed Lively and Powerful Existence in Colorado," *Aspen Daily News*, November 29, 1991, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁷³ Dodge and Dyer, "Eracism."

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first recorded Klan funeral was held for a KKK-affiliated mayor of Lyons.¹⁷⁴ In 1923, a Dr. Minor, a member of the KKK, gave a well-received speech in the Boulder courthouse, demonstrating the presence of the Klan's ideology in Boulder County.¹⁷⁵ However, the KKK's influence waned in 1924 as their ideology came under increasing scrutiny.¹⁷⁶ Further, internal strife within the Colorado Klan and the removal of Dr. Galen Locke as Grand Dragon in 1925, led 30,000 Klansmen to surrender their charters as participants in the KKK and organized a new white supremacist group, the Minute Men of America, which they established on July 17, 1925.¹⁷⁷ Those who left the Klan blamed disintegration of the group on traitors and Catholics for organizing against Dr. John Galen Locke.¹⁷⁸

While the Colorado Klan experienced internal strife during the 1920s, the KKK gained control of Longmont's City Council in 1925. They championed the construction of the Chimney Rock Dam above Lyons. The KKK maintained control of the City Council until they were voted out of office in 1927 and the dam project was abandoned.¹⁷⁹

Although the KKK saw a significant decline in membership during the late 1920s, there was continued Klan activity in Colorado through the 1940s.¹⁸⁰ Blatant anti-Black racism was rampant especially regarding the expansion of rights for Black World War I veterans.¹⁸¹ Klan members protested expansion of black civil rights by burning crosses at African American homes and businesses. Klansmen also became more active against Jewish people. The Klan's influence stretched across the state with Klaverns in Cañon City, Pueblo, Greeley, Grand Junction, La Junta, Trinidad, and Walsenburg. This state-wide influence was reflected in local politics resulting in disproportionate KKK representation in state and local government.¹⁸² In Lyons especially, the Klan activity continued. On February 28, 1939, a flaming cross was spotted on a hill east of town.¹⁸³ This cross was reportedly the second cross to be burned in Boulder County since February 18, two weeks prior. A year later, six men, four from Denver and two from

¹⁷⁴ Jefferson Dodge and Joel Dyer, "Eracism."

¹⁷⁵ "Lafayette People Hear Ku Klux Klan Speech," *Lafayette Leader*, June 29, 1923, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁷⁶ "Ku Klux Klan Enjoyed Lively and Powerful Existence in Colorado,"

¹⁷⁷ "The Minute Men," *Rocky Mountain American*, July 31, 1925, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ "History of Longmont," City of Longmont, accessed February 25, 2025, <https://longmontcolorado.gov/museum/historic-collections/history-of-longmont/>.

¹⁸⁰ "Ku Klux Klan Enjoyed Lively and Powerful Existence in Colorado."

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Dodge and Dyer, "Eracism."

¹⁸³ "Flaming Cross Seen at Lyons," *Longmont Times-Call*, March 8, 1939, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Longmont, were detained for burning three crosses in Longmont.¹⁸⁴ From Denver, the participants were Ed J. Bartholic, Walter F. Lawler, W. O. Keys, and William W. Wilson. From Longmont, the participants were T. J. Hancock and B. Froland. When asked why they did it, the detainees replied, “[t]he boys up here needed some help, so we came up,” inferring that they were Klansmen.¹⁸⁵ The last recorded cross burning in Colorado was reportedly in 1940.¹⁸⁶

The Ku Klux Klan's influence in Colorado, including Lyons, was marked by a significant presence and activity from the early 1920s through the 1940s. Initially growing rapidly with substantial membership and local chapters, the Klan's impact was felt in various towns and cities, including Lyons, where their ideologies were openly expressed and supported by some local officials. Despite a decline in membership and internal conflict within the Klan in the mid-1920s, the organization persisted in its activities, particularly targeting Black, Jewish, and Catholic communities. The Klan's visibility in Colorado was underscored by events such as cross burnings and public demonstrations of their racist beliefs through the middle of the Twentieth Century.

2.5 Post World War II Development (1945-1970s)

The onset of World War II left the United States reeling as industries shifted to wartime production and much of the workforce left to fight on the frontlines. Like the rest of the country, Lyons did its part to support the war effort. A 1943 *Lafayette Leader* article reported that 79 men from the Lyons and Allenspark area had joined the army.¹⁸⁷ Wartime rationing, and other economic measures led to a downturn in Lyons' economy. Following the end of the war, many hoped that the end of austerity measures and the presence of the sandstone and lumber industries in Lyons would lead to an economic rebound. In 1949, the town planned a \$40,000 community building to house the Lions and Lionesses Clubs. Additionally, the town anticipated the rehabilitation of the 27-acre Meadow Park open space to help draw tourism.¹⁸⁸ However, soldiers returning to Lyons found that the end of the war did not immediately lead to improvements in the economic situation in town. Though the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (G.I. Bill) of 1944 allowed more opportunity for returning soldiers, the population and industry in Lyons remained stagnant with little evident growth for several decades.

¹⁸⁴ “Six Men Taken into Custody After Three Fiery Crosses are Burned Here,” *Longmont Times-Call*, April 9, 1940, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁸⁵ “Six Men Taken into Custody After Three Fiery Crosses are Burned Here.”

¹⁸⁶ “Ku Klux Klan Enjoyed Lively and Powerful Existence in Colorado.”

¹⁸⁷ “Lafayette Has 292 In The Armed Service,” *Lafayette Leader*, July 16, 1943, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁸⁸ “Lyons Regaining Place of Prominence,” *Estes Park Trail*, April 29, 1949, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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With the end of the war, soldiers returned to the United States looking to settle down and start families. Contractors like Joseph Eichler and Levitt & Sons developed efficient building processes that made the construction of large subdivisions extremely efficient. Builders like Eichler and Levitt came to be known as merchant builders. This Post-War building boom benefitted the stone industry and Lyons' economy as Lyons sandstone became a staple local building material.¹⁸⁹ The prominence of Klauder era buildings on CU's campus influenced local architects, who began to use the thin strips of stone for cladding and accents on their ranch-style houses. Additionally, many of the sandstone pieces featured various hues of lichen which customers sought believing the lichen provided a more natural look to homes.¹⁹⁰ In addition to wall cladding, Lyons sandstone continued to be quarried and used for curbstones, paving blocks, and sidewalk slabs, suburban patios and barbecue pits.¹⁹¹ However the process for quarrying and cutting the stone continued to be a laborious process until Chris Jenkins of Kansas City arrived in Lyons in the 1950s. After careful observation of stonemasonry, Jenkins invented a new method of cutting stone, giving it the moniker Chris-cutter. The stone cutter used "individual hydraulic cylinders to set each chisel-shaped tooth onto the rock's uneven surface."¹⁹² The teeth adjusted on the rock to be positioned so that when the entire cutter applied force to the rock, the stone slab would break. This invention revolutionized stone cutting, and quickly spread to stone quarries around the world, pivoting the industry towards a more mechanized future.¹⁹³ The resurgence of the stone industry, in turn, offered better opportunities for Lyons residents to make a comfortable and stable living.¹⁹⁴

While the stone industry remained an integral part of the Lyons economy during the post-World War II era, farming, education, and local businesses also played an important part in the Lyons economy.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, jobs in Boulder drew Lyons residents to commute.

The housing boom in the Post-World War II era greatly impacted the housing market in Boulder County. The higher demand for housing incentivized landlords to increase prices for renters. In Boulder County, rent controls were established with the intention of regulating rent by providing a ceiling on costs. A rent control previously in place was lifted in 1949 in Louisville, Lyons, Nederland and the rural areas of Lafayette.¹⁹⁶ Boulder and Longmont were exempt from

¹⁸⁹ Pace, 76-77.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 114.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 79.

¹⁹² Ibid, 92.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 94-96.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 99.

¹⁹⁵ "History of Lyons," Town of Lyons, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.townoflyons.com/232/History-of-Lyons>.

¹⁹⁶ "Rents Decontrolled Here Wednesday," *Lafayette Leader*, September 23, 1949, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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the lifting of the restrictions. According to the *Louisville Times*, the Housing Expediter, Tighe E. Woods, from Washington, D. C., was responsible for lifting restrictions, which had not been requested by County nor Town officials.¹⁹⁷

According to Colorado's Department of Local Affairs, the 1950 census reported 689 individuals in Lyons, which exceeded the recorded population in the 1940 census by about 30 people.¹⁹⁸ Though there had been little population increase in Lyons between 1940 and 1950, the surrounding towns, such as Boulder, saw population brought about by soldiers returning from the war. Many soldiers returning from war and lacking in formal education found their only economic prospects in manual labor. The benefits provided by the G. I. Bill, however, offered a means of social and economic mobility for many returning to Boulder County.

During the Post-World War II period, the onset of the Cold War and conflicts such as Vietnam and Korea, resulted in a growing number of veterans who could take advantage of federal aid programs.¹⁹⁹ By 1966, the increase in students at CU—many of which utilized G. I. Bill funding—resulted in a temporary housing shortage in Boulder which pushed students to seek housing in surrounding areas such as Lyons.²⁰⁰ The Post-World War II era also brought changes to the demographics of the typical American college student. Prior to World War II, the majority of university students were younger and single. However, the new opportunities provided to soldiers through the G. I. Bill resulted in an increase in students who were older and had established families.²⁰¹ These families sought single-family homes in Boulder County, some of whom settled their families in Lyons in the face of the Boulder housing shortage.

With the growing number of families in the area in the Post-War years, schooling became a paramount issue among residents of Lyons. LaVern Johnson, born in Colorado in 1927, would become an important advocate for education as well as an important figure in the Town of Lyons. After graduating from Lyons High School in 1945, she attended Barnes Business College. LaVern Johnson was heavily involved in the Lyons community and fought to keep schools in Lyons. Additionally, she served on the Parent Teacher Organization for Lyons' schools and taught Sunday School at the Lyons Community Church for 35 years. Johnson was also instrumental in preserving Lyons' history. She founded the Lyons Redstone Museum in the 1970s and acted as director for over 40 years. She was also a founding member of the Lyons

¹⁹⁷ "Rent Controls Are Removed," *Louisville Times*, September 29, 1949, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

¹⁹⁸ "Historical Census Population Lookup," Colorado Department of Local Affairs, accessed July 3, 2024, https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/assets/lookups/historical_census_lookup.html.

¹⁹⁹ "GIs May Alter University," *Colorado Daily* 15, no. 88, February 24, 1967, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

²⁰⁰ "Housing Lack Hits Boulder," *Colorado Daily*, September 16, 1966, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

²⁰¹ "War Veterans Jam Colleges," *Lafayette Leader* 42, no. 11, February 1, 1946, <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

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Historical Society, which was successful in saving the Lyons Train Depot (5BL.241.12). In addition to her advocacy for education and preservation, Johnson served on the Lyons Town Board and the Lyons Park and Recreation Committee, which worked to save Meadow Park (now LaVern M. Johnson Park).²⁰² Without her dedication during the second half of the Twentieth Century and early Twenty-first century, Lyons would not be what it is today.

Lyons' residential portfolio continued to grow during the Post-World War II period. Many residences were constructed within the original plat of the town between the 1940s and 1970s. Some of these residences include 240 Main Street, 436 Prospect Street, 225 Park Street, and 305 Seward Street. Tom and Margaret Russell platted the Russell Subdivision along Long's Peak Drive in 1974.²⁰³ The subdivision included 26 parcels and a planned open space to the east. A decade later, the Russells planned the Russell Second Subdivision in 1985. The plat was a 24-acre development with 32 parcels and a 17.5-acre open space. The subdivision was marketed as a higher income, upper-end neighborhood.²⁰⁴ Similar to Lyons' residential development, commercial development also occurred during the Post-World War II period. Several buildings, including 328 Main Street and 432 Main Street, were constructed in the 1940s. Historical aerial imagery indicates that commercial development expanded southeast along the Main Street corridor throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

According to United States Federal Censuses, Lyons' population continued to gradually increase over the course of the second half of the Twentieth Century, with 706 residents in 1960, 958 in 1970, 1,137 in 1980, and 1,227 in 1990. By the turn of the Twenty-First Century, Lyons boasted a population of 1,585, a number which has grown to 2,209 as of the 2020 U.S. Federal Census.²⁰⁵

While Lyons continued to prosper throughout the early Twenty-first Century, the town faced unprecedented flooding in September of 2013. The flooding was caused by a stalled cold front that brought continuous heavy rainfall, resulting in 12-18 inches of rain over several days. This storm caused St. Vrain Creek to overflow, leading to widespread destruction of homes, businesses, and infrastructure, and necessitating evacuations. The floodwaters isolated the

²⁰² LaVern's sons, "Obituary: LaVern M. Johnson," Dignity Memorial, accessed December 26, 2024, <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/longmont-co/lavern-johnson-10754748>.

²⁰³ Tom and Margaret Russell, "Russell Subdivision," 1-inch equals 60-feet, March 1, 1979, <https://boulder.co.publicsearch.us/doc/182320715>.

²⁰⁴ "Board Moves Ahead with Second Russell Subdivision." *Lyons Recorder*, August 9, 1984. <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

²⁰⁵ "Historical Census Population Lookup," Colorado Department of Local Affairs, accessed September 13, 2024, https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/assets/lookups/historical_census_lookup.html.

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town, causing significant property damage and the tragic loss of life, leaving a lasting impact on the community.²⁰⁶

The recovery efforts in Lyons were extensive and community driven. The town implemented the Lyons Recovery Action Plan, which emphasized sustainability, resilience, and community engagement. This plan guided the rebuilding of homes, restoration of utilities, and repair of public facilities such as parks and the historic library. Additionally, the plan aimed to support local businesses, enhance tourism, and improve infrastructure. The community's efforts were bolstered by various organizations and funding sources, enabling Lyons to rebuild stronger and more resilient than before. The collaborative approach and focus on long-term resilience have been key to the town's recovery and ongoing development.²⁰⁷

Additionally, Lyons undertook specific projects such as the Pedestrian Network Plan, which aimed to improve walkability and accessibility by assessing and upgrading sidewalks, curb ramps, and crossings. The town also developed a Housing Futures Plan to address affordable housing needs and support future housing development.²⁰⁸ These efforts were part of a broader strategy to ensure that Lyons could better withstand future natural disasters and improve the overall quality of life for its residents. The Town of Lyons and its residents are incredibly resilient, and the town now boasts a population of 2,209 as of the 2020 U.S. Federal Census.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Shannon Tyler, “‘Almost Unimaginable’:The 2013 Colorado Flood, 10 Years Later,” *Colorado Newsline*, accessed December 26, 2024, <https://coloradonewsline.com/2023/09/05/almost-unimaginable-the-2013-colorado-flood-10-years-later/>.

²⁰⁷ “Community Plans,” Town of Lyons, accessed December 26, 2024, <https://www.townoflyons.com/301/Community-Plans>.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ “Historical Census Population Lookup,” Colorado Department of Local Affairs, accessed September 13, 2024, https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/assets/lookups/historical_census_lookup.html.

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3. Lyons Architecture

3.1 Lyons Sandstone Buildings Historic District



Figure 14. Lyons Schoolhouse (Credit: Lyons: Schoolhouse 1976-1979, A.A. Paddock Collection, BHS 213-2-22k, Boulder Public Library: Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.)

room schoolhouse was spearheaded by E. S. Lyon. In 1895, a second story was added to accommodate the increasing population of the town. The school features Lyons sandstone on the first story and metal sheets molded to resemble stone on the second story. Another early building in Lyons was the Old Stone Church, the construction of which was also spearheaded by E. S. Lyon and was completed in 1894. The church is one story and features a single steeple and is clad entirely in Lyons sandstone.

These two buildings are part of the Lyons Sandstone Buildings historic district (5BL.241), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on April 29, 1980. The 1979 nomination form, prepared by Manuel M. Weiss of the Lyons Historical Society, was not clear on the exact boundary of the district, noting either quarter sections or lots and blocks for contributing resources. As a result, the OAHP COMPASS database depicts the Lyons Sandstone Buildings historic district as encompassing a majority of Section 18 in Township 3 North, Range 70 West. The district contains 15 contributing structures, which are a mix of commercial and residential, constructed between the early 1870s and 1917. Each building is clad

Lyons, Colorado is characterized by unique architecture tied to one of its earliest and most important industries. The establishment of the Town of Lyons was closely tied to the development of the sandstone quarry industry. During the early years, settlers in Lyons primarily constructed simple vernacular buildings made of local materials. These functional structures included homesteads, agricultural buildings, boarding houses serving the quarries, and small businesses, churches, and schools.

One of the first buildings constructed in Lyons was the Lyons Schoolhouse, which was completed in 1881.

Construction of the single-story, one-

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in rough faced, coursed, Lyons sandstone, exhibiting local craftsmanship and making them unique to the area.

The district is significant under NRHP Criterion A for community planning and development in Lyons and Boulder County and commerce related to the local sandstone industry. The district is also significant under NRHP Criterion C for the architecture of the sandstone buildings, which represent a type, period, and method of construction that is unique to the Lyons area. The NRHP nomination form states that “production of sandstone brought an economic boom to the area, and these years witnessed the construction of educational, religious, commercial, and residential structures, the survivors of which make up the district.”²¹⁰ Below is a brief description of the contributing buildings within the Lyons Sandstone Buildings historic district (5BL.241). All buildings are extant, and the descriptions are current.

- *Evans Homestead (5BL.241.1):* The Evans Homestead was constructed in the early 1870s and is located at 500 West Main Street in Lyons. The property contains a two-story house and a one-story blacksmith shop. The residence features a cross-gable roof, and the walls are clad in Lyons sandstone. The blacksmith shop features a side-gable roof and is similarly clad in sandstone.
- *Chisholm House (5BL.241.2):* The Chisholm House was constructed in the early 1890s and is located at 425 Seward Street. The one-and-a-half story residence features a front gable roof with decorative shingles under the gable end. The original portion of the house is symmetrical, and the walls are clad in Lyons sandstone.
- *Jensen House (5BL.241.3):* The Jensen House was constructed in the early 1890s and is located at 413 Seward Street. The symmetrical one-and-a-half story residence features sandstone cladding and a front gable roof with decorative shingles under the gable end.
- *Residence (5BL.241.4):* The residence at 409 Seward Street was constructed in the early 1890s. The single-story house features a side-gable roof and a symmetrical façade with sandstone cladding. An addition was made to the back of the house between 1978 and 1990.

²¹⁰ Manuel M. Weiss, “Lyons Sandstone Buildings,” National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form,” February 27, 1979.

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- *Lyons General Store (5BL.241.5):* The Lyons General Store was constructed in 1884 and is located at 426 High Street. The one-and-a-half story building features a front-gable roof, a symmetrical façade, and the walls are clad in Lyons sandstone.
- *Old Stone Church (5BL.241.6):* The Old Stone Church was constructed in 1894 and is located at 408 High Street. The church is one story and features a front gable roof and a single steeple with a pyramidal roof. The building is clad entirely in Lyons sandstone and features round masonry arches over the doors and windows. Stained glass windows are located across the façade.
- *Lyons School (5BL.241.7):* The Lyons School was constructed in 1881 and is located at 340 High Street. The building was constructed in two phases, with the first story completed in 1881. The second story was completed in 1900. The building is clad in Lyons sandstone on the first floor and metal sheets molded to resemble stone on the second floor. The building is topped with a gable-on-hip roof and features elements of the Neoclassical Revival style, including eave returns and a Palladian window. Decorative shingles are located under the gable end.
- *Dynamite Storage Building (5BL.241.8):* The Dynamite Storage Building was constructed in the 1890s and is located at 446 High Street. The simple single-story rectangular plan building features a flat roof and is clad in Lyons sandstone.
- *McAllister Saloon (5BL.241.9):* The McAllister Saloon building was constructed in 1881 and is located at 450 Main Street. The single-story building features a flat roof, symmetrical façade, and a recessed entry atop a large sandstone slab. Sandstone dentils line the cornice of the façade, and the building is clad in rough faced sandstone and features large smooth face sandstone lintels.
- *General Store (5BL.241.10):* The General Store building was constructed in the 1890s and is located at 415 Main Street. The two-story building features a flat roof, a symmetrical façade, and a slightly recessed entry. Additionally, the building features sandstone corbelling and dentils along the cornice, the façade is clad in rough faced sandstone, and the windows feature rough faced sandstone sills with smooth faced sandstone lintels.
- *Turner-Stevens Building (5BL.241.11):* The Turner-Stevens Building was constructed in 1917 and is located at 401 Main Street. The building has been used as a bank and as a service garage. The single-story building features a flat roof with a decorative corbeled sandstone cornice and slightly projecting parapets. The building is clad in Lyons sandstone.

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- *Lyons Train Depot (5BL.241.12)*: The Lyons Train Depot was constructed in 1885 and is located at 451 4th Avenue. The single-story building features a side gabled roof, a bay window containing three four-over-two light hung sash windows, and the walls are clad in Lyons sandstone. An L-shape addition was constructed on the east elevation between 1983 and 1985.
- *Bradford Homestead (5BL.241.13)*: The Bradford Homestead was constructed in the 1870s and is located south of Lyons. The two-story building features a gable roof, and the walls are clad in Lyons sandstone.
- *Sites Milkhouse (5BL.241.14)*: The Sites Milkhouse was constructed in 1885 and is located at 4089 State Highway 66. The single-story building features a side gable roof, and the entrance is topped by a sandstone arch with a keystone.
- *Montgomery School (5BL.241.15)*: The Montgomery School was constructed in 1917 and is located at 5291 State Highway 66. The single-story building is topped with a hipped roof. The primary entrance features sidelights and a transom.

3.2 Architectural Styles and Forms Represented in Lyons

A variety of architectural styles can be found in Lyons. However, six styles feature more prominently than others and are described below.

<p>Late Victorian (Folk Victorian)</p> <p>Common characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectangular or L-shape plans • Porches with spindlework detailing • Turned spindles and lacelike spandrels • Cornice line brackets • Decorative shingles • Typically constructed c. 1870-1910 <p>Possible application of NRHP Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion A: Event 	 <p>Figure 15. 418 Seward Street constructed 1924</p>
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- Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
- Early residential development
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Late Victorian architecture
 - Represents the work of a master

Bungalow

Common characteristics include:

- Overhanging eaves
- Exposed rafter ends
- Moderate or low pitched, front or side gable roof
- Brick masonry or weatherboard exterior envelope
- Clipped gable ends
- Full-length front porch
- Battered porch columns
- Brick masonry chimney
- Typically constructed c. 1900-1940

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
 - Early residential development



Figure 16. 306 Stickney Street constructed in 1925

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Bungalow architecture
 - Represents the work of a master

Hipped Roof Box

Many simple and functional wood-frame buildings with hipped roofs were constructed between the 1900s and 1920s.

Common characteristics include:

- Rectangular or square plans
- Horizontal wood siding
- Front gable roof
- Minimal ornamentation

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
 - Early residential development
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture



Figure 17. 332 Evans Street constructed in 1903

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Hipped Roof Box architecture 	
<p>No Style</p> <p>Many simple and functional wood-frame buildings were constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.</p> <p>Common characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectangular or L-shape floor plans • Horizontal wood siding • Front or side gable roofs • Minimal ornamentation <p>Possible application of NRHP Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criterion A: Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat ○ Associated with the early residential development of Lyons • Criterion B: Person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons ○ A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons ○ A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons 	 <p>Figure 18. 402 Reese Street constructed in 1910</p>

Gable Front

Many simple and functional wood-frame buildings with front gable roofs were constructed between the 1900s and 1920s.

Common characteristics include:

- Rectangular or square plans
- Horizontal wood siding
- Front gable roof
- Minimal ornamentation

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Early development of the Town of Lyons
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Gable Front architecture



Figure 19. 441 Stickney Street constructed in 1903

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

Minimal Traditional

Common characteristics include:

- Minimal architectural details
- Rectangular plan
- Low-pitched roof
- Central main entry with flanking windows
- Typically constructed c. 1935-1950

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Development of the Town of Lyons during the interwar period and the post-World War II era
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of minimal traditional architecture



Figure 20. 331 Stickney Street constructed in 1935

Ranch Type

Common characteristics include:

- Elongated, asymmetrical façade
- Low, horizontal orientation
- One-story
- Low-pitched roof
- Wide overhanging eaves
- Minimal front porch
- Attached garage
- Rear porch or patio
- Picture window



Figure 21. 111 Longs Peak Drive constructed in 1975

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low chimney• Typically constructed c. 1930-1980 <p>Potential application of NRHP Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Development of the Town of Lyons during the post-World War II era• Criterion B: Person<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons○ A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons during the post-World War II era• Criterion C: Architecture<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Ranch Type architecture within a planned subdivision	
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Split Level

Common characteristics include:

- Can be several styles, including ranch, styled ranch, and contemporary
- Three or more separate levels staggered and separated by partial flights of stairs
- Typically constructed c. 1960s-1970s

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Development of the Town of Lyons during the post-World War II era
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons during the post-World War II era



Figure 22. 123 Longs Peak Drive
constructed in 1983

Richardsonian Romanesque

Common characteristics include:

- Semi-circular arch
- Corbel table
- Archivolt
- Compound arch
- Square tower
- Rough faced stone
- Round masonry arches
- Contrasting colors
- Transom windows in ribbon pattern

Typically constructed c. 1880-1900

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:



Figure 23. 408 High Street built in 1894

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
 - Residential and commercial development of the Town of Lyons
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture
 - Represents the work of a master

Sandstone as a Construction Material

Many of the sandstone buildings in Lyons are a form of vernacular architecture that would otherwise be considered No Style. However, their use of rough faced sandstone cladding is notable and represents a low-style example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. Additional community features constructed from sandstone, including sidewalks, retaining walls, and landscaping features, could be contributing features.

Common characteristics include:

- Rough face stone cladding
- Steeply pitched gable roofs
- Symmetrical facades
- Decorative shingles under the gable end
- Typically constructed c. 1870-1917



Figure 24. 413 Seward Street constructed in the 1890s

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Late Victorian architecture
 - Represents the work of a master
 - Exhibits the patterns of features common to the particular class of resources associated with this type of vernacular architecture

False Front Commercial

Common characteristics include:

- Front gable roof
- Façade parapet extending above roof
- Wood-frame construction
- One to two stories
- Elaborate cornice
- Typically constructed during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
 - Early commercial development in Lyons
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of False Front Commercial architecture
 - Represents the work of a master



Figure 25. 419 Main Street constructed in 1903

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

Early Twentieth Century Commercial

Common characteristics include:

- Recessed or flush entrance
- Translucent window transom
- Door transom
- Corbelled cornice
- Decorative brickwork
- Parapet
- Typically constructed during the early Twentieth Century

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Settlement of Lyons in the original town plat
 - Early commercial development of Lyons
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the establishment of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
 - A person instrumental in the development or evolution of Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Early Twentieth Century Commercial architecture
 - Represents the work of a master



Figure 26. 450 Main Street constructed in 1881

Town of Lyons Historic Context Report

Modern Movement

Common characteristics include:

- Rectangular plan
- Flat roof
- Lack of ornamentation
- Ribbon windows
- Curtain walls of glass
- Asymmetrical façade
- Commonly constructed post-World War II

Possible application of NRHP Criteria:

- Criterion A: Event
 - Commercial development during the post-World War II era
- Criterion B: Person
 - A person significant to the development of the Town of Lyons
 - A person significant to one of the primary industries in Lyons
- Criterion C: Architecture
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of Modern Movement architecture

Represents the work of a master



Figure 27. 138 Main Street constructed in 1952

4. Recommendations

The Town of Lyons and its built environment was shaped by the industries that sustained it, as well as the people who called the Red Rimmed Valley home. Its establishment in 1882 and the subsequent formation of the quarry, mining, and timber industries ensured that Lyons became a vibrant community. Lyons' unique environment and location drew tourists to its open spaces as well, making it an important stop on the way to Estes Park and RMNP. While the Town of Lyons faced booms and busts in all of its industries, it proved its resilience, and its population remained relatively steady throughout the Twentieth Century. Census records indicate that Lyons boasted a fairly large immigrant population, primarily made up of people from Northern Europe—including Sweden and Finland—who worked in the quarry and timber industries. While Lyons' population was diverse in that way, few records could be found listing people of color as town residents. Lyons' built environment speaks to its unique history.

Lyons has a large number of unrecorded, potentially historic properties that are representative of the various periods in the Town's history. After Lyons' establishment in 1882, residences constructed a number of wood buildings and sandstone buildings. Additionally, Main Street saw significant commercial development during this period, with multiple sandstone commercial buildings being constructed during this time. Over the course of the early Twentieth Century, multiple residences in a variety of architectural styles were constructed within the original plat of the town. A lull in development during the Great Depression gave way to the construction of more residential and commercial buildings in the 1930s and 1940s. The post-World War II years saw an even larger uptick in building, with many residences being constructed through the 1950s- 1970s. The development of new subdivisions in the 1970s further contributed to Lyons' growth.

This Historic Context report is intended to characterize the history and historic resources of the Town of Lyons, Colorado, and to identify key elements that define its character to inform future survey efforts. The context within this document is designed to provide baseline information on the development of Lyons, and is not intended to serve as a comprehensive, all-encompassing history of the town. This Historic Context Report provides an overview of background information needed to evaluate extant resources in Lyons that may possess historic significance. The history of Lyons presents several possible avenues for future historical inquiry, which are listed below:

- I. Further research into LGBTQ+ histories within Lyons to supplement this historic context. Research into the history of Lyons revealed a gap in the archival record, with limited information on LGBTQ+ individuals and themes. Additional research, including

oral history with knowledgeable individuals, may provide valuable insight into this underrepresented history.

2. Further research into BIPOC and Women's History within Lyons to supplement this historic context. While research reveals Lyons had a large immigrant population, newspaper and census records did not reveal the presence of many people of color and those who were present are not well represented in the written record. Similarly, the contributions of women to the economic and physical development of Lyons are complex, and additional research is required to fully comprehend their impact. Oral histories may be a beneficial tool to unpack these stories.
3. A reconnaissance survey of the Town of Lyons would help with establishing the perimeters of a possible historic district. Additionally, a reconnaissance survey would serve to select properties for further intensive level survey to better understand significance beyond architecture. Research done while compiling this Historic Context Report revealed a mixture of residential and commercial development from various periods throughout Lyons.
4. Future historic resource surveys should focus on the downtown core to better understand pre- and post-World War II commercial development as it manifested along Main Street. Subsequent surveys should expand from the downtown core into the different neighborhoods of Lyons. Resources found individually eligible to the National Register of Historic Places are also considered eligible to the State Register of Historic Places and would be likely candidates for local landmarking designation. As a part of the survey work, the development of a more focused historic context surrounding the post-World War II period should be completed to supplement this historic context.

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