
Uneasy Money: The High-Stakes Consequences of Low-Stakes Gambling for Black Hawk, Central City and Cripple Creek, Colorado: A Commentary

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Climb the hills above Central City or Black Hawk and a sight will unfold that has not been seen since the days of their mining glory--bright lights, hustle and bustle, and the noise of communities in the throes of a boom. Cripple Creek has not enjoyed quite the same degree of resurrection, but it too enjoys a prosperity unknown for generations. No, it is not the rumble of ore wagons, the pounding of stamps, the voices of miners and their families, nor the dull thud of explosions far underground causing this boom. Gambling is the game of the day. It might not be mining in the true sense of the word, but miners would understand "mining" the investors' pocket books.

Gambling has always been a part of the fast-paced life of mining towns and camps. Prospectors knew the long odds of striking it rich. Miners gambled their lives every day they went to work underground. Investors risked their money on mining stocks and mines, hoping against the odds that dreams would become reality. Businessmen realized the uncertain nature of their community's future. It all carried over into gambling in saloons, private clubs, and gambling "hells."

Few people, however, expected the modern revival to turn out the way it did. Into May 1996, gamblers wagered \$17.1 billion in the three towns, with Black Hawk leading the way with nearly half that amount. Coloradans gamble, one study showed, twice as often as "the average American." The impact on the three communities and their people has been equally startling. According to locals it has even stirred up the ghosts, whom all the activity and throngs of people have apparently disturbed and distressed. "There are definitely some active poltergeists in town," said Jeff Casey, a member of the Gilpin County Historical

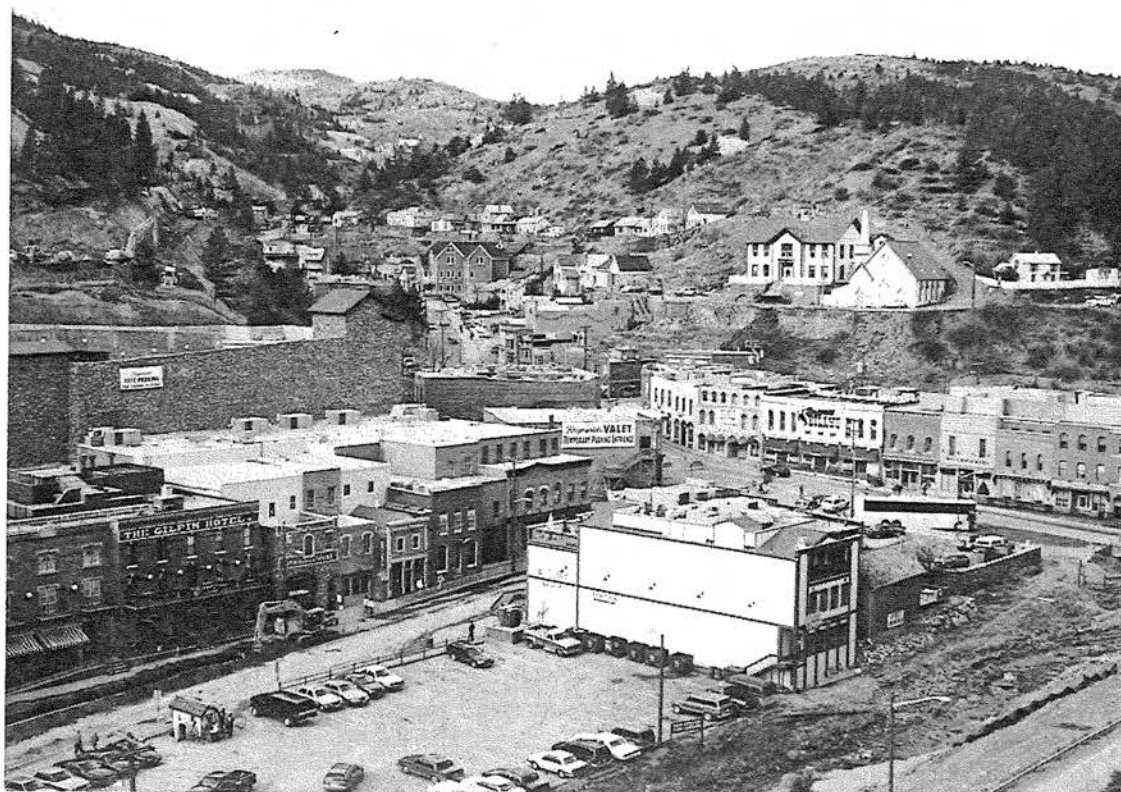
Society's board of directors.¹ In the past three years he has collected more than thirty-eight accounts of old and new ghosts in the two towns.

The gambling movement which stirred these specters started back in the late 1980s and has mushroomed since then. In so many ways, it proved reminiscent of the rushes of 1859 into Gilpin County and 1892 into Teller County. The idea of "getting rich without working" pervaded both excitements, and in each more people by far failed than succeeded. Buildings went up as businessmen and women raced to get in on the ground floor, and many of them failed as well--twelve casinos in Central City alone, along with dealer schools, newsletters, slot maintenance schools, and bus companies. Streets were overcrowded and transportation systems failed to match needs. Neither water nor sewage systems--nor any other city service--could keep pace with growth. A transitory life style spawned a host of problems. Nineteenth-century folks would have understood it all too well; they had seen it in mining town after town. Unfortunately, twentieth-century folks did not grasp the lessons of history. Optimistically, they predicted nothing of that sort would happen when the new era dawned in the early nineties. Their ancestors would have understood that attitude as well.

In January of 1990 a promoter outlined to a Colorado legislative board a plan to build "Highland City" within a hundred miles of Denver. The town would feature a 1.6 million square-foot shopping mall, surrounded by 18 gambling casinos, a dozen thousand-room hotels, and a large amusement park. He claimed Highland City would be "half Disneyland and half Las Vegas."² Highland City never came to pass, but at the same time as that project was being considered, a proposal was afoot to legalize gambling in the former



Two views of Black Hawk, looking west toward Central City. The first is from six years before the introduction of gambling in 1991, and the second is from five years after. If economic revitalization is the only criterion, legalized gambling must be judged a spectacular success. (Courtesy Ron Ruhoff and Eric Clements.)



Colorado mining towns of Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek. That movement started with the introduction of a resolution in the state legislature for a constitutional amendment permitting gambling in Colorado, though the original idea was quite different from Highland City.

The plan, vigorously promoted by all three towns, was that small-time, small-stakes gambling operations would revitalize their depressed economies. The sponsor of the state senate resolution, Sen. Sally Hopper of Golden, said "I would pray no one uses the word casino to describe the type of limited gambling we are proposing. It has nothing to do with casinos. . . . We're not going into competition with Nevada."³ Such assurances notwithstanding, the resolution was defeated in the senate in May of 1990, but by that time proponents of gambling had prepared a ballot initiative containing essentially the same elements as the senate resolution. By August of 1990 they had collected enough signatures to place the issue on the November ballot.

Those who argued in favor of the initiative held that limited casino gambling would be the economic salvation of the three former mining towns, that these small-stakes operations would have only a small impact on those historic sites, and that tax monies derived from gambling would be used, in part, to further historic restoration in the towns. The large percentage of the profits taken in taxes, they believed, would nullify the impacts gambling would have on government and infrastructure, and would discourage large-scale, out-of-state investment in Colorado gambling. Said Cripple Creek councilman Terry Wahrer: "We want to bring limited gaming in as an attraction, as part of our history, not as an industry."⁴ They further assured voters that the mistakes of Deadwood, South Dakota, where gambling had overrun the town, would not be repeated in Colorado. "I believe all three communities are quite prepared to remain the way they are. They have all visited Deadwood and have learned from Deadwood," said a consultant for Deadwood and Central City.⁵ Proponents of the gambling initiative also carefully avoided the use of the word "casino."

Those who argued against the initiative, led by Governor Roy Romer, decried the ethics and values which they felt that gambling brings with it. They predicted that the towns would be overwhelmed by crowds, bringing congestion, crime, and alienation to their citizens, and that the economic effects of gambling would force out existing businesses and injure historic preservation in the districts.

Though a gambling amendment had been defeated

in 1984, in 1990 the governor had his hands full defeating a tax-freeze amendment, and groups in favor of gambling raised almost 100 times as much money as those against. Assurances that part of the profits would go to historic preservation, and that these would be ma and pa operations helped overcome fears of crime and vice among voters. Proponents carried the day, winning the statewide election by 57% to 43%, and winning in Teller County, the site of Cripple Creek, by almost three to one.

Whatever one's views on the correctness of that decision, one must admit that gambling has brought plenty of money to these three towns since it officially began on 1 October 1991. Clusters of small-stakes gamblers now wander the towns with their coin cups at the ready, filling hotels and restaurants. Gamblers did indeed "come like trained pigs," as one investor put it.⁶ In their first year, Colorado casinos brought in over \$155 million and paid \$17.7 Million in taxes--almost triple what had been predicted in either case. Nor has the positive impact been solely economic. Some people enjoy the thrill of gambling and, perchance, the opportunity to "visit" the mountains. As one visitor to Central City said: "At least the food is better and there are more potties than before the gambling era."

The economic bonanza produced by legalized gambling has been irresistible to the merchants, boosters, and government officials of small communities all over the country. Since a town's history can't produce the revenue that gambling can, local and state preservationists have been forced onto the defensive, protecting what they can from the economic heavyweights. Governor Romer, upon signing the gambling legislation into law, said "we are going to be very diligent to preserve the historic value of these towns,"⁷ and a few months later, the chair of the new state gaming commission told Cripple Creek residents that "we want to see these precious towns preserved."⁸ The powers of state officials are limited, however, and development has proceeded tumultuously.

Black Hawk, Colorado, closest to Denver and with plenty of open land, has been the most completely transformed of the three Colorado gambling towns, but Central City has also been changed by the construction of a large casino block. Cripple Creek, farthest from the population centers of the front range and somewhat isolated by the mountains, has been less affected. A survey of local officials in mid-1992, almost a year after gambling began, indicated that gambling had improved the quality of life in Cripple Creek, but not in the other two towns. Given its

distance from points of supply and customers, Cripple Creek has had to retain more of its services and accommodations. In an outward sense Bennett Avenue, the main street of Cripple Creek, has been the least altered by the arrival of gambling.

Legalized gambling has undeniably produced much new construction in the three towns, and at least a superficial restoration of existing structures, especially the repainting of signs. Twenty-eight percent of gaming revenue has gone to historic preservation. The whole state has benefitted, but what about these three mining communities?

Black Hawk, Cripple Creek, and Central City have received a total of \$6.5 million for preservation. Of the three, Central City has done the most to preserve its original charm. A *Post* article concluded, "Today there are more vacant store fronts on the two main streets than there were before gambling, but the town has definitely benefitted from gambling income, many improvements have been made, and positive projects are underway."⁹ Gambling has never fulfilled the promises of 1990, however. The *Post's* headline to another article said it all: "Industry a curse, blessing."¹⁰

If the blessing is money for preservation, the curse is the preservation problems gambling has introduced into these historic districts. As Deadwood's mayor warned just after the election, "the gaming psyche is very different than the tourism psyche. The people who come into the community to do gaming are working to make a profit and are not always concerned with the best interests of the community."¹¹ Even the historic agencies slated to receive money through gambling taxes were leery of the consequences. "We have talked to many organizations that would theoretically benefit, and they're not willing to sacrifice these three towns," reported the regional field representative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation before the election.¹²

Historical agencies had cause for concern. The Central City Opera House saw its revenues drop 15% in the first year, and the Gilpin County Historical Society suffered even worse. The truism that the gambling psyche is very different from the tourism psyche applies to customers as well as retailers. Patrons of historic preservation have been replaced by patrons of gambling, and some people who had long supported such historic enterprises as the Central City Opera House have given up, unwilling to fight the traffic and tumult.

Some historic structures, such as Gilpin Hotel in Black Hawk, have been rehabilitated externally, but have been gutted internally. Casino operator Dan

Douglass, from Reno, Nevada, discussing the costs of operating in Colorado complained that "we're in these old buildings. As we rip the walls down we find . . . more than we budgeted for."¹³ "Ripping the walls down" to build casinos goes to the heart of the difference between a development and a preservation ethos; it goes beyond disagreements about the treatment or disposition of particular properties to a battle over values.

In some cases developers have ripped all the walls down and the facade is the only original part of the building saved. Other old buildings now suffer the abuse of greatly increased traffic and weight loads. Further damage to historic context and continuity has come from new construction. Sometime during the formulation of the gambling amendment, the provision that gambling must take place in "existing historic structures" was changed to "in structures of historic type." So now pseudo-historical toad stools like the "Colorado Central Station" in Black Hawk, and other large structures alien to their historical settings, blight these communities.

There was gambling before the gaming. Land speculation began in these historic districts even before the gambling question went to the voters. The Teller County assessor's office reported forty-two land sales in Cripple Creek in the fifteen months prior to May of 1990, compared to fifty-three land sales in the previous six years. Investors included people from Texas, Ohio, New York, Connecticut, California and Hawaii. The president of the Cripple Creek Gaming Association, fearing adverse voter reaction, said "we don't want to publicize the fact that outside money is coming in,"¹⁴ but outside money was calling the tune, nevertheless. While outside money is no more inherently corrupting than inside money, it is, as Deadwood's mayor pointed out, much more interested in profit than in local welfare.

This land speculation poses problems for historic preservation. In Black Hawk, dozens of properties "zoned gambling" were quickly up for sale. Most of these were not structures which could claim any particular historic distinction. While such properties may not be able to bear designation as historic landmarks, they are a vital part of the physical environment of an historic district. Even if a particular historic property in Black Hawk, such as the Fisk House, survives, will it have a context if all the buildings around it, even its contiguous neighbor, are replaced by casinos? Another problem with the preservation of historic structures in the new gambling towns is that it doesn't seem to occur behind the main street facade. Much gambling money isn't staying in



Legalized gambling has undeniably produced much new construction, and at least a cosmetic restoration of existing structures in the three towns. Renovation does not usually occur behind the main street facade, however. Two Bennett Avenue buildings get new paint, while an old fire station decays on a side street in Cripple Creek (Courtesy Eric Clements.)





An example of what some historic preservationists call a "facadectomy." The entire building is demolished, save for the facade. The building constructed in its place retains a "historic" appearance. This facadectomy has stood thus, on Bennett Avenue in Cripple Creek, for several years. (Courtesy Eric Clements.)

town, and preservation funds aren't being spent in the back streets. The arrival of gambling has produced only very selective historic restoration.

Though the supply of casinos apparently exceeds demand, people are still trying to sell lots for further casino construction. The situation seems to be lost on those trying to cash in on the real estate sweepstakes. Not all of these sales are speculations, however; some people are being forced to sell because they cannot pay their soaring property taxes. Residents of a trailer court in Black Hawk, most of them elderly, found they had to move when the land became more valuable for a casino. Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek residents found their taxes mounting and faced increased pressure to sell their properties. In either case, if all of the available properties were sold to casinos, would any community remain? Black Hawk already resembles a gambling strip mall more than it does a community.

These communities have been narrowed in economic diversity by gambling. The irony is that these three

towns have returned to being one-extractive-industry towns. Other types of businesses have been forced out by casinos. Within the first year after legalization of gambling, Central City residents lost their only grocery store and only service station. Jo Waara, owner of Miss Hallie's pizza in Cripple Creek, who had voted for gambling, quickly found herself sued by her landlord, who wanted his building back so he could make twelve times as much money leasing it to a casino. Miss Hallie's no longer exists, and Ms. Waara apparently no longer resides in Cripple Creek. One casino operator reported paying a thousand dollars a day in rent in the summer of 1992. Other types of small businesses simply could not stay afloat when faced with these stratospheric new rents and property taxes.

Many locals did not want one of the new jobs that gambling created, they wanted the life they had enjoyed. It was a classic example of a once cherished quality of life deteriorating, if not disappearing. This point was clearly made by an article in the *Wall Street*

Journal, which reviewed how the Las Vegas “veterans raced in, along with real-estate developers,” and wiped out the “mom and pop stores.”¹⁵

Even locals who tried to compete by running ma and pa gambling operations were soon forced out of business by large, out-of-state concerns. Just as in the mining days, locals couldn’t strike it rich without outside capital, outside labor, and outside expertise. By the time the casinos opened in Cripple Creek, at least three-quarters of them had outside investment, with one-quarter wholly owned by outsiders. Expertise was provided by veteran casino operators from Nevada, and labor was imported from Denver and Colorado Springs.

The competition from the giants soon began to tell on the smaller, local enterprises. Within a year “indications of small casinos fading from the Gilpin County landscape [were] everywhere,” according to one newspaper report.¹⁶ By mid-1994 Cripple Creek had seen seven casinos close, and four more absorbed by other casinos. These small businesses were driven under by operators such as Harrah’s and Lady Luck Gaming Corp. “We didn’t foresee the opening of these large casinos,” said one small casino owner bankrupted in less than a year. “Good grief. They have 400, 500, 600 slots, food service, Las Vegas style and entertainment. Those are the things a small place can’t compete with.”¹⁷ An old mining saying runs: “Gold is where you find it, silver runs in ledges.” One old-timer summarized it concisely, “Gold is where I ain’t.” Much like the previous century, most of the money from the mining counties is going elsewhere while the problems stay at home. Gambling had once seemed like “Paradise Gained,” now it seems more like “Paradise Lost.”

Deadwood foretold divisiveness, had anyone listened. “From the business standpoint, it’s been great,” reported a Deadwood realtor, “but [you] have to realize that along with this comes greed and jealousy. A lot of people don’t like that.”¹⁸ Cripple Creek, for one, was polarized into factions before the issue even came to a vote, and it only got worse. Once gambling passed, the town divided into one faction which sought to limit gaming and its impact, and another which sought to gamble to the full extent of the law.

The controversy centered upon town councilman Bill Fox. Fox had originated the idea of bringing gambling to Cripple Creek and had won his seat in a recall election in August of 1990 from a councilman who was a die-hard opponent of gambling. When he later sought to control the scale and impact of gambling, however, Fox found himself in the

minority, received threats, and was himself recalled from the council in August of 1991, just before gambling began. With him went the last of the restraint. That November, all eight candidates for town council were pro-growth. The town went over wholly to large casinos with largely out-of-town investment. Fox predicted that “two years from now, virtually nobody who had worked to get gambling will be involved with the town. Locals won’t even exist anymore.”¹⁹ True enough for Fox, who lives in Denver at last report.

The controversy in Cripple Creek did not end with the departure of Fox. A three-way battle between preservationists, casino operators, and the Cripple Creek town council came to a head in the summer of 1994, when the council, against the recommendation of the town’s planning and historic preservation commission, approved the demolition of three historic boarding houses to make room for a casino’s parking garage. The council, in turn, was sued by eleven citizens and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, who contended that the council had violated the town’s historic preservation and zoning ordinances and the state’s open meeting laws in approving the demolition. A compromise was finally reached in the summer of 1995. The council reversed its previous decision and agreed to develop an historic preservation master plan, and the casino agreed to relocate rather than destroy the boarding houses, whereupon the plaintiffs dropped their lawsuit.

The consequence of the real estate sales stampede, the loss of locally-owned businesses, and the alienation and factionalism, has been the effective destruction of these communities as small towns. Within a year of its legalization, Gilpin County Manager Donna Martin concluded that “gambling has not done us any good. We have lost our sense of community. . . . The culture shock for these people is unreal.”²⁰ Her assessment was confirmed by a survey of all three towns, taken in 1994 by University of Colorado researchers. Their study indicated that 32% of Black Hawk, 39% of Central City, and 44% of Cripple Creek residents would like to move away. In the least case, that was twice the rate of the researchers’ control town. Many were like one Cripple Creek resident, who “chose to live in Cripple Creek because I wanted a small-town environment.” “I came here figuring nothing would develop,” said another, “I could live without this.”²¹

A resident, historian, and preservationist of Cripple Creek, Brian Levine, lamented:

The impact of gambling on mining towns! The

issues are countless. Loss of historic fabric. Loss of sense of community. Development pressures. Lack of cultural influx. Lack of interest in cultural resources and community history. Lack of interest in community. Lack of respect for traditional community values. Economic concerns becoming predominantly the only concerns. Overflow of the "quick and easy buck" syndrome. Lack of future vision for the community.

Still though, newspaper headlines featured such statements as "State Hits the Jackpot."

The state certainly had with gaming tax revenues, but Black Hawk, Central City and Cripple Creek paid the price. Gambling, and the crowds it has brought into these towns, has introduced more tangible problems than loss of social consensus and the quiet life. While these municipal governments have certainly experienced tax windfalls (and parking ticket windfalls), they have occasionally overestimated their revenues, and frequently underestimated the costs of gambling. The infrastructures of these towns and

counties were instantly saturated. The cost of Central City's government jumped from \$300,000 to \$3,000,000, a figure that graphically illustrates the impact of gambling's entry onto the scene. Traffic increased and parking became a major problem. Within the first year, all three towns were cited by the state health department for pollution coming from their overloaded sewage systems. Health officials predicted "high altitude pulmonary edema, and major cardiac problems"²² for the many elderly people who would come to gamble in the mountains, emergencies which the towns were unprepared to handle. When Cripple Creek's health clinic closed in November of 1996, underfunded amidst plenty, one doctor observed that "its kind of crazy to bring tens of thousands of people into a place where there's no medical care."²³

At the end of 1993, Colorado Chief Justice Luis Rovira reported that since the start of gambling, Gilpin County had seen an eight fold increase in criminal infractions, and a six fold increase in traffic violations. Family abuse reports jumped by more than 100 percent in Black Hawk and Central City. Teller

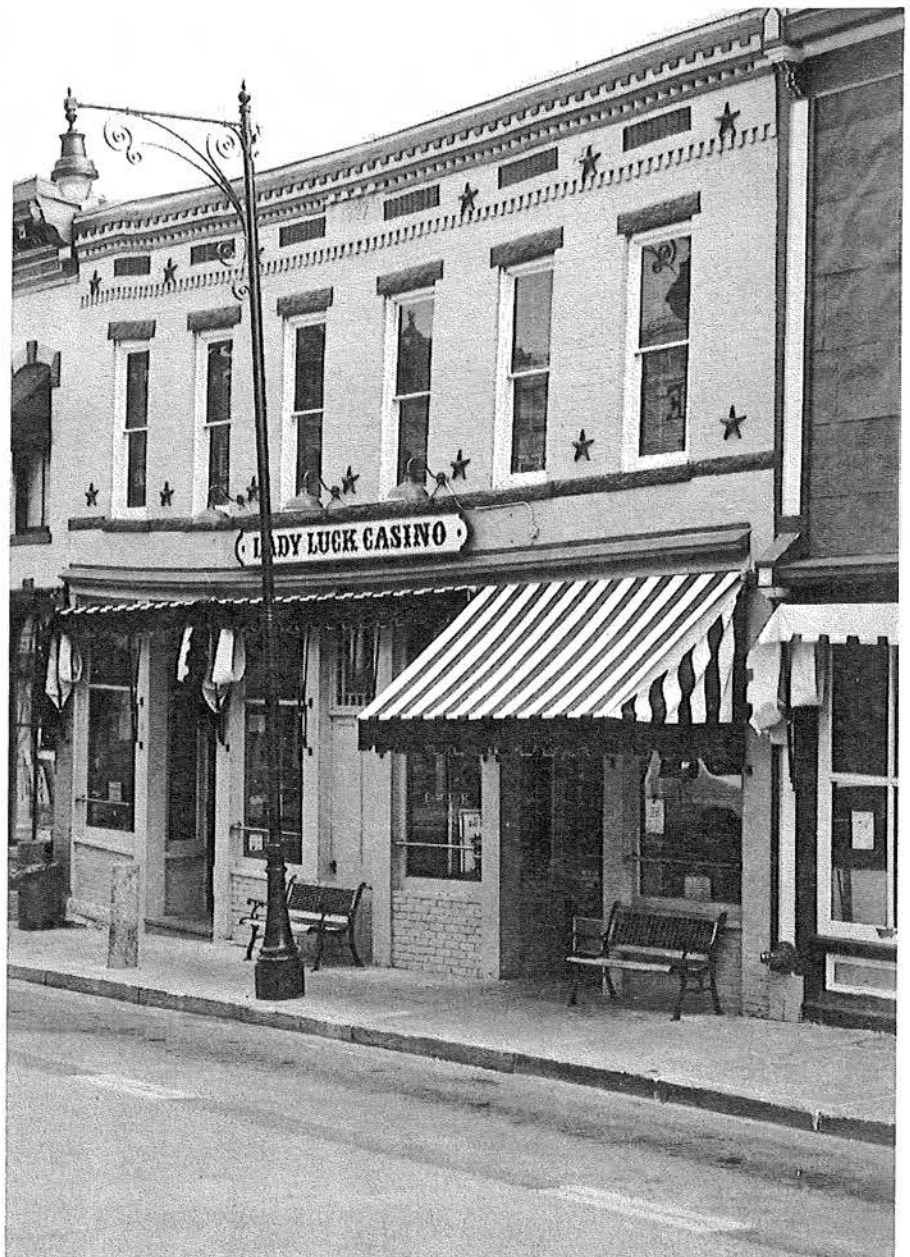


Despite previous examples, town officials in these communities underestimated the impact of legalized gambling and were quickly overrun by problems. Here Central City pays workers to direct traffic the suddenly-crowded intersection of Main and "Eureka. To date no traffic signal has been installed at the site. Perhaps such a device would lack historic authenticity. (Courtesy Eric Clements.)

County saw a 242% increase in domestic cases, and a 150% jump in criminal cases. In October of 1990, a year before gambling, Cripple Creek's three police officers handled 114 calls and issued a dozen parking tickets. In October of 1992 the town's seven officers answered 827 calls and wrote 500 parking tickets. The Cripple Creek police force now has 16 officers and a drug dog, and made 1,350 arrests in 1994, about a quarter of them for trafficking or possessing narcotics.

The problems have gone beyond the borders of the gambling towns. The Teller County Sheriff said he still has not been able to keep up with the increased calls for service; 9,000 a year now (four and a half times what it was in 1990). In Woodland Park, on the highway from Colorado Springs to Cripple Creek, traffic accidents were up sixty-eight percent and drunken driving arrests up 131 percent in 1993 over the same period in 1991.

In July of 1995 federal, state and local law officers arrested sixteen people and confiscated thousands of dollars in a raid on an illegal high-stakes poker game in Cripple Creek, and predicted the arrest of another thirty people in the operation. Several of those arrested worked in casinos and held gaming licenses, and one witness claimed that the illegal poker parlor had been operating for the previous two years. Even the secretary of the Casino Owners Association of Colorado admitted that illegal gambling "is a very large problem, and it's not this one isolated incident."²⁴ The lawlessness has not been confined to the underground games either. In May of 1995 the state gaming commission closed the Wild Wild West casino in Cripple Creek, citing fifty-six violations of state gaming laws. This marked the second time that the commission had had to close a casino because of illegalities.



Elderly buildings, such as this one on Main Street in Central City, may now fall prey to accelerated deterioration due to dramatically increased traffic and weight loads. (Courtesy Eric Clements.)

The towns, the counties, and the state have all poured money into these problems, but sometimes there isn't enough money to go around. The Colorado State Patrol asked for twenty-five new officers to patrol the Gilpin and Teller County roads leading to the gambling towns, but received only ten. One police officer in Cripple Creek's neighboring town of Victor had accrued 127 days off by November of 1993. Schools in Woodland Park and Victor were overcrowded and underfunded. The towns pleaded with county officials for money, but a Teller County



One of the most distressing consequences of the arrival of gambling is the substitution of an artificial, generic history for the real histories of these important mining towns. The fake headframe which greets the visitors to the Aspen Mine and Casino in Cripple Creek is one of the more elaborate examples of what might be called "virtual history." (Courtesy Eric Clements)

commissioner said "we want to help, but we don't have the money. We're frustrated. We see the need."²⁵ Such pleas of poverty met with little sympathy in the adjoining counties. A Fremont County commissioner typified the attitude, saying "I wouldn't give a penny to Teller. I don't mean to be nasty to my neighbors, but, dammit, Teller wanted [gambling]. It's Teller's problem."²⁶

Overloaded or not, Cripple Creek, at least, is proceeding with plans for more and bigger. As one

enthusiastic casino operator put it: I consider the gaming as one attraction of a Disneyland in Colorado."²⁷ There has been enthusiastic talk about turning ten-thousand-foot-high Cripple Creek into a "destination resort." In November of 1994, Casino America Inc., of Biloxi, Mississippi, won approval from the Cripple Creek historic preservation and planning commissions for its "Isle of Capri" Hotel and Casino, which would feature 750 slot machines, 15 card tables, a 250 seat restaurant, a 150 room hotel, and a 450 car parking garage. By March of 1995, Cripple Creek had 229 hotel rooms and 3,574 gambling devices, and plans were in the works to add more than 1,000 more hotel rooms and over 4,000 more gaming devices.

The Isle of Capri Hotel and Casino, whatever else it may signify, is certainly not in keeping with the history of the town, or the original intent of the gambling amendment. Its sanction raises a final issue, more abstract than crime and congestion, perhaps, but still important, which is the bulldozing of the histories of these mining towns. Of course, many mining towns have long been dependent for survival on tourism, which has inevitably transformed them into tourist traps, with their craft boutiques and authentic frontier caramel corn. This process occurs in the

absence of gambling, as in Silverton, Colorado, and Tombstone, Arizona, for example.

What the legalization of gambling has done, however, is eliminate the need for these towns to survive by selling their local histories, however apocryphal. Historian Carlos Schwantex has observed that we have convinced ourselves that tourism is a non-polluting industry, but he argues that it does pollute, and what it pollutes is history. What tourism pollutes, gambling obliterates. In these mining camp

disneylands, the unique histories of the individual locales have been discarded in favor of stock figures, which roam the sidewalks shilling for the casinos, and even imaginary history, such as one fake headframe built within the entrance to one of Cripple Creek's casinos, or another which serves as the toll plaza for a Black Hawk parking lot. One would prefer that they had built Highland City instead. There gambling interests could have created their "Disneyland in Colorado" without hurting anything or anyone. The historic structures and heritages of Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek were individual, important and irreplaceable.

These were not faceless little mining camps. The Gregory Gulch strike at the site of Central City and Black Hawk was the discovery which started the Pike's Peak gold rush of 1859. Cripple Creek was one of the last great gold camps, and ultimately produced more wealth than the Comstock. While some might argue that the money raised through gambling taxes and poured back into historic restoration more than mitigates the damage or even the loss of these three historic sites, that puts them in the precarious position of having to decide what parts of Colorado's heritage will be sacrificed in order to endow the rest. Is such cannibalism ethical, or in the long-term interests of Colorado?

Though Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek will forge ahead, one may take some solace from knowing that others have chosen not to follow. Proponents of gambling in other desperate, depressed communities have continued to try to bring the activity to their towns, but without legislative, local, or statewide success through 1996. Voters in the historic towns of Fairplay, Estes Park, Grand Lake, Lake City, and Leadville have all voted down gambling propositions. When Leadville residents said no in 1992, their town was in a serious recession, and could have used the economic stimulation. In Manitou Springs, just to the west of Colorado Springs, voters have rejected gambling initiatives three times. During 1996, a state initiative to legalize gambling in Trinidad lost in the general election by more than two to one, and a movement to increase the betting limit

to \$100 met defeat in the legislative session. Among those who opposed raising the betting limit were Cripple Creek residents. One testified that the move "would bring more and more of the negative impacts of gambling to Teller County." Perhaps Colorado's citizens have belatedly seen and understood the price which Black Hawk, Central City, and Cripple Creek have paid in loss of heritage and community--a price which is Colorado's greatest gambling loss.

NOTES

It is a normally held view that historians should be reporters rather than editorialists. In this article we offer a little of both. Sources for a topic this contemporary are limited in number but not in depth. Newspapers proved the primary source for this contemporary look at three Colorado mining towns--newspapers in Denver, New York, Colorado Springs, Durango, Cripple Creek, and Central City all furnished numerous articles. The University of Colorado's *Summit Magazine* (Fall 1992) had an article "Boom Town" on the social impacts of gambling, as did the *Colorado Alumnus* (September 1995). Personal interviews and observations rounded off our research.

1. *Denver Post*, 26 March 1996.
2. *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 5 January 1990.
3. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 6 March 1990.
4. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 29 September 1991.
5. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 4 November 1990.
6. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 29 September 1991.
7. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 5 June 1991.
8. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 14 August 1991.
9. *Denver Post*, 19 May 1996.
10. *Denver Post*, 5 November 1995.
11. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 8 November 1990.
12. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 4 November 1990.
13. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 30 September 1991.
14. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 23 September 1990.
15. *Wall Street Journal*, 23 September 1992.
16. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 12 August 1992.
17. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 3 September 1992.
18. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 6 May 1990.
19. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 29 September 1991.
20. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 5 September 1992.
21. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 2 October 1991.
22. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 18 April 1991.
23. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 4 November 1996.
24. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 1 August 1995.
25. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 5 November 1993.
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27. *Gazette-Telegraph*, 2 October 1991.