

The Past Supercedes the Future, for the Present, at Valmont Butte in Boulder County, Colorado¹

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Abstract

When does sustainability justify destruction? That was probably the central question in a dispute between the City of Boulder and the pioneer community of Valmont, with specific regard to Valmont Butte, the signifying landmark of that rural portion of Boulder County. For the community of Valmont, it was a classic case of NIMBYism (not in my back yard), combined with a sincere longing to save what is left of their pioneer heritage dating back to the late 1850s. For the City of Boulder, it was an opportunity to combine two valuable public-works projects into one location, which was convenient, accessible to utilities, and concealed from public view. But a third component, the butte's plausible use as a past and present Indian sacred site, rotated the kaleidoscope to an even more complex dimension.

A Clash of Good Intentions

The story of progress colliding with contentment is not new. Across America, public and private developers continue to reshape lands, neighborhoods, and cities. Whether citizens moved to or were born into a community, their natural feeling is to preserve the quality of place that originally captivated them. But the inexorable push of development, fueled by growing populations, all too often must destroy existing foundations—whether physical, architectural, historical, or archaeological—razing that which exists to clear ground for newer constructs. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, unbridled progress began to feel the reins of social and political considerations that began fomenting in the '60s. Today, developers no longer are allowed simply to clear-cut and rebuild. They must undergo, either voluntarily or acquiescently, a public process, whereby all interested parties—even those without a financial stake in the outcome—are offered the opportunity to participate.

The Valmont conflict erupted in 2000, when the City of Boulder initiated a CEAP (community and environmental assessment process) after three city departments jointly purchased a 101.6-acre parcel of land on Valmont Butte for roughly \$2.5 million. The tripartite of purchasers included the Public Works Department, the Boulder Regional Fire Training Center Board, and Open Space and Mountain Parks. The land would serve three purposes:

- A biosolids facility for converting human waste into compost for agricultural use

- A county fire-training facility, needed because the current one long ago outgrew its capacity

- Open space for the most visible portion of the butte

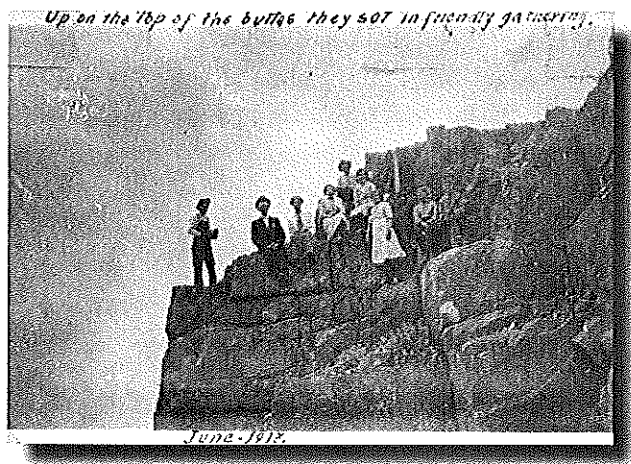
Residents of rural historic Valmont responded with ferocity.

The community of Valmont—a stunning contrast to fully developed, bustling Boulder—still consists of unspoiled stretches of rolling land and historic structures in varying stages of restoration.

This is a small town at the confluence of the North and South Boulder creeks, four miles out from the base of the mountains, and is distinguished by the butte at that place, an upheaval of igneous rock, several hundred feet in height, making it the most prominent landmark in all the valley landscape. Valmont is on the line of the Boulder Valley railroad and is the center of a wide scope of the best farming lands in the state, early settled, and now improved by the most intelligent class of people (Baskin 1880:420).

Baskin would notice changes in the landscape—paved roads, scattered housing developments, and some industrial installations (a Public Service Company power plant is already nicely concealed behind the butte)—but he would also recognize the similarities between 1880 and 2006 Valmont. The land opens and undulates to meet the sky in exactly the same way it did when Indians and white settlers hunted, camped, fought, and planted there.

The contemporary community of rural Valmont, in an effort to stave off further industrialization of the butte, enlisted the aid of one of the authors (Michael Burney) to investigate the historic and prehistoric anthropology and archaeology of the area. They wisely cobbled together a coalition among disparate groups who had an interest in seeing the butte remain untouched: community activists, organic farmers, and urban Indians (who, by the way, weren't urban until European-Americans immigrated there and urbanized their lands), who still use the site for sacred practices, including a sweat lodge.



A gathering of early citizens on Valmont Butte in 1913. Courtesy the Keeter/Sawhill Family, Valmont, Colorado.

Most of the information for this article is a distillation of research initially gathered through efforts on behalf of that community's struggle to preserve its heritage. Soon after the project began, however, the data assumed a force of its own, inspiring simple curiosity in the authors to see what this information might yield. It also serves as a repository for a section in the forthcoming volume "American Indians and Native Sacred Sites: An Ethnohistory of Colorado's Front Range" (Burney, Scott, and Fresquez, in prep.). More than action anthropology, the strictly volunteer effort was community action in the spirit of

...Sol Tax's populist-inspired action anthropology, which renounced the employment of practitioners by government or any large organization in favor of voluntary academic projects engaging in intensive intervention in the problems and needs of local communities" (Bennett 1996:23).

Our commitment to this project was based on a number of motivations. Paramount was the sheer love of and interest in history, anthropology, and the Indians of Colorado. Very close on the heels of those pursuits was a sense that the butte and surrounding area had never received the consideration it deserves, in light of the absence of a comprehensive multidisciplinary study of its history, anthropology, and archaeology. Third, both of us had lived, worked, and/or studied in Boulder at varying times throughout our lives. Fourth, the community of Valmont, with few resources, seemed to be up against insurmountable odds. And not least, from past experience working with Indians tribes, Burney and Associates had witnessed first hand the loss of investment and good will when a government entity or corporation begins to develop an area or remove resources before committing to meaningful tribal and/or community consultation and extensive archaeological investigation. In this case, we refer to consultation as not just telling the tribe or the community what is going to take place, but listening to what the people who are affected have to say—and actually absorbing what is said. From past experiences, we were aware that the danger of not undertaking a true risk analysis far outweighs the danger of finding information that might prohibit development.

The Setting

Boulder County's western alpine boundary is defined by the Continental Divide and Indian Peaks Wilderness showcasing Arikaree Peak (13,150 feet), Kiowa Peak (13,276 feet), Navajo Peak (13,409 feet), North Arapaho Peak (13,502 feet), South Arapaho Peak (13,397 feet), and Shoshoni Peak (12,967 feet). The county's eastern limits are near Broomfield, Lafayette, Erie, and Berthoud at about 5,000 feet in elevation. With an approximately 8,000-foot rise in elevation from the grasslands of eastern Boulder County to the treeless alpine tundra of the Indian Peaks Wilderness, the Front Range transitional zone provided Indians with a great diversity of floral and faunal species, fresh cold and hot water, and shelter from severe weather. The Ute and Arapaho made their winter camps in the Boulder and Denver foothills (Coel

1981:9), just as native bands and tribes had done for thousands of years before them. In 1853, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Upper Platte and Arkansas Indian agent, noted that "...the mountain front zone north of the Arkansas ... renders it the favorite resort of the Indians during the winter months, and enables them to subsist their animals in the severest seasons..." (Fitzpatrick 1853:365).

Indians in Boulder County

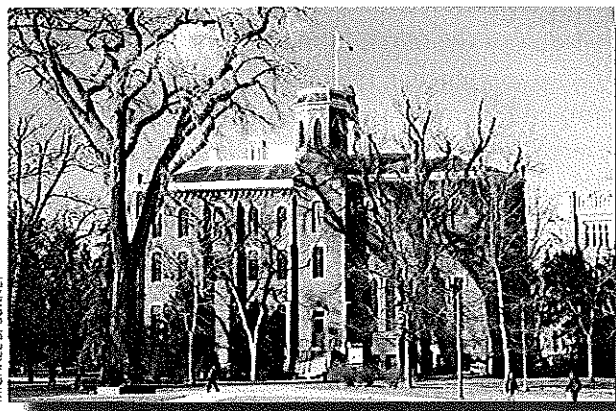
The Ute and Arapaho lived in the Boulder area because it was one of their usual haunts along the Front Range, as was the nearby Denver Basin—especially the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, also well-documented village locations of the Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and other tribes. Colorado is undisputedly aboriginal Arapaho territory, although they were relatively new arrivals toward the end of the 1700s or very early 1800s. "If one could see the mountains [Front Range and Continental Divide] he was in the land of the Arapaho" (Cropley 1951:49).

There were also a number of Apache groups that included the Jicarilla and Navajo, as well as Ute, Shoshone, Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Pawnee, and Sioux (principally the Sicangu/Brulé and Oglala). These are just several of the better known Colorado native bands and tribes. As many as 74 native groups have been identified with ancestral ties or a legacy of occupation in Colorado (Colorado Tribal Contacts List, revised, April 22, 2004; on file, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver).



Buckskin Charley, center, and his band of Southern Utes were brought in from Ignacio to drum up support for the University of Colorado/Colorado School of Mines football game in 1909. Courtesy Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.

The Southern Ute ("first settlers" or "first citizens" of Boulder), including Headsman Buckskin Charley, lived and hunted in the Boulder area. Arriving in Boulder from Ignacio on the Colorado and Southern train for Boulder's 1909 semi-centennial celebration, Buckskin Charley and a delegation of 16 Southern Ute tribal members from Ignacio recognized "Boulder



Old Main on the University of Colorado-Boulder, campus; constructed in 1877.

Junction," where the Ute undertook a losing battle with an Arapaho band (Fine 1939:75-76). Boulder Junction is about one mile south of Valmont Butte on the north side of Arapahoe Road southwest of the Public Service Company of Colorado Power Plant.

During the week the Southern Ute were in Boulder for the semi-centennial celebration, Buckskin Charley gave a speech to faculty and students in Old Main on the Boulder campus. Constructed in 1877, the year after Colorado achieved statehood, Old Main was the first building on the University of Colorado campus and at the time the only building, housing classrooms and living quarters for students and faculty, including the president and his family. The Utes led a parade and sang and danced at the entrance to Broadway Park in Denver to elicit support for the University of Colorado versus School of Mines football game on that Thursday in 1909 (Fine 1939:76-77). Boulder's "first citizens" would not see the game, however; they were hastily shuffled back to Ignacio rather than risk any undesired "incidents."

It was not the Utes, however, that Captain Thomas Akins and the Nebraska City gold seekers party encountered in the fall of 1858 while camped at "Red Rocks" at the mouth of Boulder

Canyon. It was the Arapaho. Niwot, or Left Hand, as he is interchangeably known, and several other prominent Arapaho leaders were, in turn, camped at the mouth of the South St. Vrain Canyon. In his letter dated Sunday, December 19, 1858, Captain Akins stated, "We stayed two days and nights with the Arapahoes, and partook of Indian hospitality in true Native American style." Akins said Indians were camped on a hill a short distance to the north. Abner Brown, Boulder's first school teacher, related "...the Indians were camped in back of Red Rocks where the city reservoir now stands" (Stewart 1948:3), or above Memorial Hospital.

The City of Boulder has identified this historic spot at the mouth of Boulder Canyon as "Settlers Park." A red sandstone sculpture of Niwot by Thomas Meagher-Miller, 1985, is located on the north side of Boulder Creek, just west of the Ninth Street Bridge. Stewart (1948:16) notes that:

The first settlers crossed the creek at Seventeenth Street before there was any bridge. The Indians found the spot where the Seventeenth Street Bridge now rests, and where the high school building stands, a favorite camping ground. The buffalo are said to have used that locality as a convenient place to get down to the creek for a drink.

The mouth of Left Hand Canyon was thought to be a favorite camping spot for Niwot's Arapaho band, complete with a burial ground. Schnucker (1983:45-46) provides a photograph of the purported burial area although he "...promised the remnant of the Arapaho Nation not to disclose the exact location for fear that white men will desecrate the graves in search of artifacts as they have done so often in the past."

Oral history tells how Niwot with a group of hunters were confronted by a Ute party where Lee Hill Road meets Left Hand Canyon or where Glendale Gulch intersects the canyon. Niwot negotiated the use of the canyon without further difficulties. Niwot's band camped at Haystack Mountain north of Boulder with tipi rings in the vicinity still visible in the early 1970s (School-land 1972:10). At the time of the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864, Niwot's band was camped

between the old town site of Pella near Hygiene and present-day Niwot (Schnucker 1983:40-41).

Ruth Dodd McDonald remembered her grandfather plowing a field in the Niwot area when Chief Niwot protested because he wanted the land saved for the wild game to live on. Because of the relationships between Niwot's band and early settlers, Ruth said "I think there're some Indians buried in the Niwot Cemetery" (Rogers 1995:7). The same could be speculated of the old pioneer cemetery on Public Service Company's Valmont Plant property and the private Valmont Cemetery located on Valmont Butte.

Completed in October 1860, Boulder's second school was located at Walnut and Fourteenth streets, across the street from the south entrance to Boulder's downtown post office (Smith 1981:30). Repplier (1959:10) describes Elizabeth and her brother, J.E. Hubbard, riding into school from their ranch on east Arapaho and picketing their horses along Boulder Creek:

The Indians were still around. There were two bands of Arapahoes, one camped at Valmont and a smaller group at Seventeenth Street ford. It was their custom to pass back and forth between the two camps, and in so doing one day a group of seven invaded the school room. They found considerable amusement in the attitudes and positions of the surprised and probably frightened children, but were soon intrigued by the water pail and the common drinking cup hanging on it. For some time, as the children stared, they entertained themselves by drinking water from the cup, by scooping water from the pail and pouring it back. Eventually they departed, chattering amiably.

In 1934, Boulder hosted a powwow on the courthouse lawn on Pearl Street consisting of a picnic between the miners of the mountain communities and the ranchers and farmers of the eastern flatlands. This was the same year the "Loveland Stone Age Fair" had its debut "...at Cornish, Colorado, a small settlement 20 miles northeast of Greeley in Weld County where the grammar school pupils staged the First Stone Age Fair, showing collections of products of Indian manufacture" (*Southwestern Lore*, September 1951, 17(2): inside back cover). In 1936,

the powwow included a parade "...with the hunter and trapper back in the early days, then the Indians, covered wagons, and the farmers and whatnot..." (D.M. "Dock" Teegarden and Lyndon Switzer, quoted in Rogers 1995:111).

[Michael Burney]: *In the 1990s, annual summer powwows were held in Chipeta Park in Nederland (Weil 1991:1A, 3A), but I don't remember seeing any powwows in Boulder during the 23 years I lived there (from 1974 to 1997). There was the Halloween "mall crawl," but that too became history after becoming disruptive and destructive. It's not that there weren't plenty of American Indians in Boulder. There were. The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) began in 1970, and the University of Colorado was variously involved with native peoples. Presently, there are estimated to be about 1,787 native residents in Boulder County (Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, Denver; "Colorado Directory of American Indian Resources, 2004–2005").*

During the early 1980s, while living in Boulder on Pennsylvania Avenue west of The Pioneer Cemetery where Tom Horn is buried, I became mildly acquainted with an elderly neighbor who told me she moved with her family to Boulder by covered wagon from Missouri. I vividly remember thinking how profound it was that my neighbor came to Boulder in a covered wagon! I came to Boulder in 1974 in a 1971 Dodge Polara: power windows, power bucket seats, and an AM/FM radio! One morning, my neighbor's equally elderly sister arrived at my doorstep letting me know she thought her sister had passed away in her sleep. "Would you please go in the house and check on her?" she asked. Indeed, this dear pioneer woman, who had begun her new life in Boulder so many years ago, was gone. I was grateful for the opportunity she had given me to sit on her front steps and listen to her stories whenever she was in the mood to share them. Her oral history had now reached its end.

Years later while attending a friend's wedding in the mid-1990s at an old cattle ranch near the mouth of Lee Hill Road in North Boulder I had an opportunity to visit with an elderly gentleman who still owned what was left of the original spread. He told me this was the "Wine Glass Ranch," and it had been here many years. As a young boy, he and the other cowboys would ride their horses to Denver, where they and their horses would board the train headed to El Paso, cross the Mexican border, and purchase their cattle. The next several months, these Boulder cowboys would be occupied with adventure and responsibility, moving the herd

north to the Wine Glass Ranch. "The annual cattle drive was pretty exciting times for a young man. Boulder was a much different place then. Hell, there was a Ute Indian camp on that small rise just across Lee Hill Road there. See where I'm talking about?" he asked pointing to a small rise across the road. It was close enough that I couldn't miss the campsite he referred to. This old cattleman of the Wine Glass Ranch is gone now and the Ute Indian campsite covered with new homes. The cowboy and Indian beer joints, like "Walt and Hanks" at the west end of what is now "Pearl Street Mall," or "Peggy's Dance Hall Saloon" on the Longmont Diagonal are distant memories.

The Front Range: From Natural Paradise to Urban Corridor

With an ever-accelerating pace, the results of non-native historic activities have altered Boulder County's indigenous landscape. The year 1858 "...marked the initial alteration of the virgin landscape" (Stoeckly 1938:1). Eliza Buford Rothrock, wife of John R. Rothrock, one of Boulder County's first permanent settlers, said in the early 1860s, "...wild grass grew as high as her waist in the [Boulder] valley..." (Brown 1946:212). Native short grasses making up Boulder County's grassland habitat once included prolific amounts of wheat-stem, bluestem, blue-grama, and buffalo grass—a paradise for beast and man. Game was bountiful. Ute Headman Buckskin Charley, in his 1909 speech before CU students and faculty recalled that when he lived in Boulder "...buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope were plentiful on the plains and mountains, while beaver and trout were plentiful in the streams" (Fine 1939:77).

In 1858, "Elk, deer, antelope, and mountain sheep were still plentiful throughout Boulder Valley—one gold seeker that winter counted five hundred elk grazing on the bluff where the University of Colorado now stands" (Coel 1981: 83). Large herds of deer and elk are said to have wintered along South Boulder Creek in Eldorado Canyon south of Boulder, and mountain sheep were hunted while feeding with grazing cattle (Crossen 1963:32). Stewart (1948:16) reported: "For several years after the town of Boulder was surveyed, elk roamed the streets at will." Frank Hornbaker, an early Boulder County pioneer who ranched on Left Hand Creek, reminisced:

Indians used to come through, goin' out from the mountains to hunt buffalo and fight and goin' back. Down here on my place is a low spot with a lot o' brush on it. They'd hunt small game down there, rabbits and such like. We've found lots of arrowheads down there (Crossen 1963:76).

Antelope were said to be particularly numerous in the Valmont area, and plenty of buffalo and antelope once grazed on Gunbarrel Hill (Schoolland 1972:33). The Arapaho and Cheyenne undertook a large communal hunt in 1860 or 1862 when hunters of both tribes dispatched a large number of antelope on the north side of Valmont Butte, where the present-day community of Valmont now sits (Kindig 1987). An elk herd escaped by running into the mouth of Boulder Canyon (Bixby 1880:380; Schnucker 1983:43).

But by 1864, development along Colorado's Front Range had become reality as noted by Keller (1987:55): "In 1864 ... prospectors and mining companies ... had reduced the front range of the Rockies to squalor and rubble with incredible speed." Allen (1937:195) stated that, "In 1871 there was not a shrub higher than a sage bush or soapweed on the prairie between St. Vrain and Little Thompson, and only scrub cottonwood or box elder trees on either stream." And, by the very early 1900s, most of the three-to-five-foot-in-diameter cottonwood trees along Boulder Creek and the South Platte River had been cut down.

Archaeological and historical sites, human burials, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and the like ("nonrenewable cultural resources") are inevitably lost every day along the Front Range to development—primarily housing, commercial districts, and transportation corridors. Accommodating Colorado's growing population is reality-driven. Eastern Boulder County has a stunning view of the Front Range, a small piece of the larger urban corridor being rapidly developed between Fort Collins and Pueblo. Even 23 years ago, Butler (1982:9) well-understood the dramatic loss of archaeological sites along Colorado's Front Range:

The Front Range Urban Corridor—Fort Collins to Colorado Springs—is seen as the top priority area for archeological investigations. *All other areas for work must be of second-*

ary consideration. With the exception of some "open space" being preserved by enlightened state, county and city governments [e.g., Valmont Butte], the rest of the Front Range is going to be covered with houses, shopping centers and parking lots. We can expect the increased population (ca. 1.5 million more people by the year 2000) to not only result in the bulldozing of the landscape, but increased predation on archaeological sites. Once disturbed, an archaeological site is gone forever. Investigations in the Front Range Urban Corridor commands our increased and concentrated attention before what is left is gone.

Today, little of the natural prairie vegetation Captain Aikins and his group encountered survives, and the wild game is only a memory. Still, the sun rising from the eastern plains continues to splash its light of varying color and intensity across the Flatirons, Devil's Thumb, Eldorado Canyon, and Boulder Canyon. Regardless of the season, the magical views can still generate a sense of awe, power, timelessness, and spiritual acknowledgment, much like it did for the hundreds of native generations before us.

Early one Boulder morning while watching the late Anthony Sitting Eagle, Northern Arapaho elder from Arapaho, Wyoming, slowly smoke his hand-rolled cigarette, I asked him if he could tell me of any nearby sacred mountains. Anthony paused, looking at me with his timeless clear eyes, quietly and slowly asking me to understand, "Michael, the whole Colorado Front Range is Sacred" (p.c., October 2, 1993). Anthony went back to enjoying his cigarette, the morning sun, and the beauty that surrounded him.

It is easy to see why people have chosen this area over the many thousands of years. The pristine view shed must have been spectacular. Even now, from a high point in the Lyons area north of Boulder, one can clearly see Pikes Peak at 14,110 feet elevation about 100 miles to the south, as the crow flies. Also visible at times are the Flatirons and Devil's Thumb, about 15 miles distant. And the view of Longs Peak (14,251 feet elevation) from the west side of Rabbit Mountain is breathtaking.

Sacred Land, Sacred Places

Benedict (1991:21) notes, "The importance of sacred geography in the Front Range is only beginning to be recognized by archeologists." Unfortunately, however, this fascinating field of research has received little attention. An early exception, however, was the insightful work undertaken by Oliver W. Toll (1962) to record numerous Arapaho place names in Rocky Mountain National Park. In July 1914, Toll invited a couple of Arapaho Indians, Gun Griswold and Sherman Sage, on a horse-pack trip in the park. The group was accompanied by interpreter Tom Crispin and guided by Shep Husted. Toll recorded invaluable information from these Arapaho consultants about the names of many mountains, passes, and other topographic features within the park as well as other valuable



The 1914 tour of the Estes Park. Left to right: Shep Husted, Gun Griswold, Sherman Sage, Tom Crispin, Oliver Toll, and David Hawkins (seated). Courtesy National Park Service, ROMO-11207.

oral history regarding language, customs, battles, songs, and legends that may otherwise never have been recorded. In his wonderful little book *Arapaho Names and Trails: A Report of a 1914 Pack Trip* he wrote:

The Indians arrived in Longmont, Colorado, on Tuesday, July 14, 1914, about noon. As they got off the train, Tom Crispin was carrying his suitcase with an air of considerable sophistication, Sage in his blue cloth chief-of-police uniform, rather baggy at the knees, had a roll of blankets under his arm, and Gun Griswold was fanning himself embarrassedly with some eagles' feathers, his share of the luggage.

Of course we became at once public characters to the citizens of Longmont; and in fact throughout the trip were accorded a place in the estimation of the public somewhere between that of a governor and a theatrical troupe.

From Longmont we went to Estes Park by automobile, in the machines of Mr. C.F. Hendrie and Mr. F.O. Vaile, arriving at Longs Peak Inn in the latter part of the afternoon. There, with the help of Enos Mills, general plans for our camping trip were made. Our idea was to cover a good deal of country, and as far as possible to get views from high elevations, so that the Indians could see as much of the geography of the region as possible (Toll 1962:2).

Native American religions tend not to involve the use of major physical constructions. Rather, places of worship and veneration may be mountains, trees, rocks, lakes, and other natural features. For American Indian religions and sacred geography in the central Rocky Mountains, examples of places that tend to be sacred for all groups include geologically distinct points such as the tops of hills, buttes, mesas, and mountains, confluences of streams, creeks, and rivers, trails, hot and cold springs, waterfalls, caves, mountain passes, and other natural features (Walker 1985:2; 1987; 1988:245-253; and 1991:108).

For American Indians, plants and animals, mountains and rivers, deserts and running water are endowed with protective powers. Elevated points are sacred places and "Rock formations are places of power in which spirits reside..." (McPherson 1992:25). Scott (1907:559), when talking in sign language with Left Hand in 1897, was told: "We used to have a great many medicine places; any place where there is a high hill or water by itself is a place where one can be helped by the medicine. We worshipped the earth also, but nothing beneath it." Mountaintops, buttes, hills, mesas, or other prominent points, especially, perhaps, "geomorphologically unusual features" are often considered sacred and used for vision questing and other activities (e.g., rock art, sweat lodges, piercing trees) (Parks and Wedel 1985:167-172). Unless the site has been used repeatedly over years, these solitary

activities may yield little archaeological evidence.

Certain places on the landscape are considered sacred because of events that occurred there. There is always a mythological and/or historical story associated with the landscape. The National Park Service long ago acknowledged that "A site may be a natural landmark strongly associated with significant prehistoric or historic events or patterns of events, if the significance of the natural feature is well documented through scholarly research" (National Park Service 1982:6). Several examples include the point where a group is said to have originated (e.g., Pikes Peak for the Ute); burial areas; pictographs and petroglyphs; gathering areas for plants, stones, clay, and other natural materials; fasting and vision-questing places; sweat-lodge locations; battle areas; and sites of historical significance.

Deward E. Walker Jr., long-time friend of Indian people and champion of their religious rights, wrote in "The Arkansas Mountain Ceremonial Complex": "Boulder County and the Front Range are believed to still possess a variety of sacred sites, including medicine wheels"; and yet, "One of the most distressing problems for tribal members visiting the Front Range is the desecration and destruction of American Indian sacred sites" (Walker 1993:12-13 and 16). Northern Arapaho and Lakota tribal elders and spiritual people told Walker (1993:16) that they will continue using sacred sites in Colorado's Front Range, including sacred mountains, medicine wheels, and other sites of traditional ceremonial significance. Valmont Butte is alleged to be one such site.

Local resident and community advocate Carol Affleck acknowledges Boulder County's early native residents writing in her October 30, 2000, letter, "We [Rural Historic Valmont Association] are aware that the area [Valmont] is rich in Native American activity." Similarly, Gary Brown, Northern Arapaho, felt "Valmont Butte may have been the location of American Indian ceremonial activities" (Mead and Bunyak 2001:8); and "Valmont Butte has been the site of numerous prayers for many generations. Native Americans climbed 200 feet to its top, which gave them spectacular views in any direction" (Gallegos 2004:A5). Lee Ann McGinty, local resident and descendent of a pioneer family, provided in a

February 13, 2005, letter her recollections of Indian stories, archaeology, and prayer ties (ceremonial bundles or flags):

I am a fourth-generation Valmont resident. My family has lived on the same property ... since the turn of the last century, almost 100 years ago. Four of my family members, my great-grandparents, my grandmother and my mother, are buried in the Valmont Cemetery.

There were always stories about Indians living and gathering here. It was part of our local lore and was always a given. There were stories about the Arapaho having large gatherings at the confluence of North and South Boulder Creeks. I don't know if it was a camp for ceremony or trade. I only know that it was a well-known fact with the locals. ... I know that there have been artifacts (arrowheads) and possibly teepee rings found around the confluence, as well.

There were also stories and legends of Indian camps, hunts and burials on the butte. It is certainly an ideal place for Indians to camp, to search the valley below for game or foe, and it most certainly would have been the perfect place for religious ceremony. As you now know, the views are quite spectacular. ...

I spent almost every day of my childhood on the butte. It was always a fascinating and, frankly, quite spiritual place to be. In the 1960s and '70s, I saw tiny red bundles or flags on the bushes on the ridge of the butte. Somehow I knew to leave them alone, though I didn't know what they were. It wasn't until I met Nick Halsey, a Native American, that they were explained to me as being ceremonial bundles or flags. I do not recall if the bundles were new or old, I just remember that they were mostly red, and were tied onto the short brush or bushes at the top of the butte.

Sweat lodges have been used by North America's native peoples for centuries. Taylor (1963:8D) noted that "Tanned buffalo hides were stretched over wooden frames to hold the steam inside the sweat lodge." Such a sweat lodge was observed by Richardson (1867:193) when watching Little Raven and seven other Arapaho participating in a sweat bath while in their Denver encampment:

Little Raven was not only brave, but devout. One day seeking him in his own village, I discovered that with several other warriors he was shut up in a low lodge, by which two young sentinels kept guard. The weather was intensely hot; the lodge without a single aperture and covered with masses of buffalo robes. Beside it upon a little mound of fresh earth were the skin of a wolf and the horns of a buffalo. Soon eight perspiring, naked braves emerged and threw themselves upon the ground, utterly exhausted. They had been taking a vapor bath, to propitiate their "medicines."

A sweat lodge on the south side of Valmont Butte has been in use for several years now by Indians and non-Indians alike. A sweat lodge ceremony conducted by Mr. Robert Cross, an Oglala Lakota spiritual advisor who conducted weekly sweat lodge ceremonies atop Valmont Butte, was shut down by law enforcement on New Year's Eve 2003. The City of Boulder later issued a written apology, agreed to compensate participants for any expenses incurred in conducting the ceremony, undertaking cultural-competency training, and creating a permanent *American Indian Advisory Council*, the latter two requiring action by the city council (Avery 2004a, b; Hebert 2004a, b). The authors observed several individuals preparing for a sweat ceremony on Sunday, February 13, 2005.

According to local Indian and non-Indian testimony spiritual activities like vision questing, prayers, and pipe and sweat lodge ceremonies have been conducted on Valmont Butte during the recent past as they have for many years. Nick Halsey, a Boulder resident and Lakota filmmaker, commented, "...the area surrounding Valmont Butte holds spiritual significance for many Indian nations," and "...the butte was traditionally used for a variety of ceremonial reasons, including vision quests. The site currently hosts a sweat lodge used by American Indians from as far away as South Dakota and Arizona for *inipi* ceremonies" (White 2004:10).

In fact, igneous rocks are collected at the butte for their ability to hold heat during such activities. At a meeting held in eastern Boulder County, Tuesday evening February 15, 2005, one

native participant testified that people have been coming to Valmont Butte for many years from many different places specifically to gather the basalt rocks highly desired for use in sweat lodges. The basalt rock found at Valmont Butte is still highly sought after by those using the sweat lodge on the butte and elsewhere.

Robert Cross, a Lakota spiritual leader, said he and his uncle "...found the kind of rocks they needed for a sweat-lodge ceremony at the foot of the butte when they were trying to revive native ceremonies in the Denver area." Nick Halsey, who lived at the bottom of Valmont Butte as caretaker of this sacred place, said he came to know the butte through his grandfather on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, South Dakota (Morson 2004).

The Archaeological Evidence

Although documented accounts of Indian peoples using Valmont Butte are sparse, sufficient archaeological evidence, historic accounts, and oral history firmly establish that American Indians have lived in Boulder County, Colorado, for thousands of years (Wedel 1964; Gleichman 2004). Clovis and Folsom chipped-stone points beautifully manufactured by PaleoIndians clearly indicate native peoples were enjoying the abundance of natural resources found in this part of northern Colorado's Front Range for at least 12,000 years and, most likely, longer, as suggested by pre-Clovis archaeological sites such as the Lamb Springs site near the Denver suburb of Littleton.

Several archaeological sites in Boulder County illustrate this 12,000-plus-year indigenous record from PaleoIndian times to the recent historic period. The Rock Creek site near Lafayette is an aboriginal campsite dating from between 6,000 B.C. and A.D. 1500. Indian Mountain is an ancient stone-circle site west of Rabbit Mountain. Excavations located the earliest and westernmost occurrence of Plains pottery in Colorado, with the extremely early date of 410 B. C.-A.D. 25 (Cassells and Farrington 1986:32, 37). And a deeply stratified site sits north of Boulder, between Indian and Rabbit mountains, dating between A.D. 100 and A.D. 1000. Many sites could have been occupied as late as the mid-1800s (Burney 1989). Kittie Hall Fairfield related how she and other young students discovered a

"mummy" from a Indian tree burial and the excavation of an Indian skeleton with a can of beads from the bank of Coal Creek (Isaac 1959:295).

An ancient Indian trail over Arapaho Pass went through Eldora and then down Boulder Creek to Nederland. From here the trail continued along Boulder Creek "...to Boulder and thence to the White Rock Campsites." Another Indian trail from Nederland passed through Eldorado Gap "...and joined the ancient trail connecting the Coal Creek and Boulder camps" (Ives 1942:461-462). Trails and the confluence of trails are considered sacred by native peoples.

Ives (1942:458) observed an abundance of chipped-stone artifacts for Boulder and relates how Charles Moore of Eldorado Springs describes

...a series of camps lining the north bank of Coal Creek for several miles and extending, some distance northward over the mesas ... Teepee circles, fireplaces, and fragments of artifacts made of local materials are plentiful, despite stripping by collectors and obliteration of much evidence by recent aqueduct construction. Fragments of imported artifact materials, particularly obsidian and white quartzite, are numerous. Buffalo bones in quantity have been reportedly found nearby; hence, this was probably a hunting camp.

Archaeological excavations on Valmont Butte may yield undisturbed buried sites despite the extensive disturbance to the prominent landform. Ground-and-chipped-stone and ceramic Indian artifacts have been found on the surface around Valmont Butte over many years by local residents and professional archaeologists. Collecting Indian artifacts is nothing new as brought to light by Low (1935:143):

Friendly Utes came often to camp along Cherry Creek, and I recall vividly seeing old Chief Washington with his tribe—and Colorow was a visitor on one occasion. These Indians were always a source of much interest and some apprehension; although I do not remember that they ever molested anyone. *After they had broken camp and departed the settlers would visit the spot, looking for arrowheads and other possible souvenirs* (italics ours).

Jeri Andrus Schricker, in a letter, dated October 30, 2000, to Rural Historic Valmont (courtesy of Irene Eggers) reads:

My grandparents, Bert and Mattie Andrus, owned the farm and mesa at 61st and Andrus Road in Valmont. My parents, Dick and Geneva Andrus, later sold the mesa and some of the farmland in the early 1980s to the City of Boulder as open space. When I was a child, I remember my grandfather showing me the collection of Indian arrowheads that he had found on the mesa. I also remember that we found a stone with a hollow in it that Indians had used as a mortar to grind corn. There was never any doubt in our family that the Indian population and culture had once flourished on that Valmont mesa (letter on file, Rural Historic Valmont, Niwot).

Wilfred Marston Husted (b. 1928) collected artifacts from Valmont Butte in 1959, the year he graduated from the University of Colorado-Boulder with this B.A. in anthropology. A number of rock features have recently been recorded on the butte, although their cultural affiliation and temporal placement is unknown. The seemingly unexplained sudden appearance of abundant various colored interior chipped-stone flakes scattered over several features was cause for accusations of unethical behavior and foul play.

Despite this disagreeable possibility, Charlie Cambridge, Ph.D. (Diné), believes Archaeological evidence clearly shows numerous tribes have visited the butte over the course of time (Gallegos 2004:A5). Cambridge, who earned his doctorate at CU, characterized Valmont Butte as an ideal location from which to spot herds of animals, say prayers and ask permission to conduct the hunt (Morson 2004). A 45/70 cartridge was found on the north edge of Valmont Butte. The 45/70-caliber weapon was the official U.S. military service weapon from 1873 until about 1892, when it lost favor to the 30/40 Krag.

However, few artifacts would remain on the surface at Valmont Butte, in large part due to the collecting and disturbance that has taken place there since the 1870s. The historic artifacts resulting from the Culbertson or Pennsylvania Mill are an exception. Intact buried cultural deposits may be discovered providing there are

suitable undisturbed areas on Valmont Butte amenable to controlled excavation.

Historic Accounts

Historic accounts of early pioneers and settlers about their observations and encounters with Colorado's native peoples are invaluable when reviewing protohistoric and early historic periods of Indian occupation. The Protohistoric period dates between about A.D. 1650 and 1800 and was coined to identify the time when Euro-American settlement and trade indirectly influenced Northern Plains native peoples before direct contact took place. The Historic period encompasses the time between about 1800 up to the present. Northrup (1938:169) notes:

In the records of the Colorado Plains Indian a number of pioneers of this plains area have left, as a contribution to Colorado history, true stories of actual happenings or incidents in their lives in contact with the Indians, which give a better insight into the personal lives of these natives.

Renaud (1927:40) early recognized "Again, too many pioneers have disappeared without leaving us sufficient accounts of the early days in this region, their struggle against the elements and their relations with the Indians." Nevertheless, a wealth of information can be found from early historic pioneer and settler accounts reporting their experiences with native peoples. Northrup (1938:169-179) titled Chapter 8 of her M.A. thesis, "True Stories of the Indian as Told by Pioneers."

Ever since man first came upon Valmont Butte (or "monadnock," a geological term indicating an isolated hill or mountain rising above a peneplain) many thousands of years ago, this elevated feature—rising over 230 feet from the eastern Boulder County landscape and nearby confluence of Boulder and South Boulder creeks—has provided a place to camp, hunt, harvest edible and medicinal plants, undertake ceremonies, and bury the dead.

Hwang and Heaslet (1970:9, 20) observe that the Valmont Butte area "...was originally used by the Arapahoes and the Utes as a campground, hunting area and burial site"; and the "Valmont Dike and its environs have a rich his-

torical background." The burial site refers to an account describing a burial ground with 15 to 20 mounds located south of Valmont Butte (Larkin and Mitikv 1968). Mr. Larkin reminisced that the source of the 15 to 20 mounds may have originated from Forest Crossen (Carol Affleck, p.c., December 2003).

This well-recognized landmark would serve as a lookout for large herds of animals and hostile visitors traversing the "Great War Road" along Colorado's Front Range, a place of refuge from stampeding buffalo or marauding packs of prairie wolves, and a signal point for communication purposes.

Its sweeping views of the Flatirons and the plains inspired man before the area was settled by whites in the 1860s. According to historical accounts, the region was used by the Arapahos and Utes as a campground, hunting area, spiritual center and burial site (Barge 2001:4A).

During his stay in Boulder Valley, Morse H. Coffin camped on the banks of Boulder Creek on July 18, 1859, noting "...a large Indian village on the flat between the buttes [Valmont] and where the White Rock grist mill was later built" (Coffin 1911:13). Another author notes,

An uneasy peace existed in the [Boulder] valley until 1867 when Charles Pancost "tree claimed" two sections of land on the banks of Valmont Lake, part of which included the winter campground of the Arapaho. The Indians objected to this transaction but eventually compromised with Pancost, who agreed to allow them use of his land around the butte east of the present Valmont Cemetery for their winter campground (Dyini 1989:3).

Valmont and Valmont Butte/Dike

Early settlers combined "valley" and "mountain" to make Valmont, or "Vale Mount," for the butte and the valley (Dawson 1954:50). The community of Valmont (Valmont) and Valmont Butte share an inseparable history, since Valmont was platted in 1865. Intent on providing a sermon to the area's inhabitants, Bayard Taylor visited Valmont on July 14, 1866. He pro-

vided an interesting description of his approach to Valmont Butte and the community, as well as a story of Indians in the area, in his publication *Colorado: A Summer Trip*, originally published in the *New York Tribune* in 1867 (reprinted in 1989, Niwot University Press of Colorado):

I had an engagement for the evening at the new town of Valmont, some eight or ten miles down the Boulder Valley ... On approaching the isolated hill which had been pointed out to us as indicating the position of Valmont, we were surprised to find no sign of a village. The dark wheat-plains swept up to its base, masses of rock looked down from its summit, and the rosy ridges toward St. Vrain lay beyond. ... But of these cabins one was a store, one a printing-office, and one a Presbyterian church. So it was Valmont.

I was introduced to one of the original eight squatters in Boulder Valley. He tells a singular story of their experience with the Indians, when they first settled here, in 1859. Where the town of Boulder now is, was one of the favorite camping-grounds of the former (Taylor 1989:157-159).

During the mid-1860s Valmont was a serious rival of Boulder as the commercial center of the valley. "Boulder soon was threatened by a new neighbor to the east. Valmont had started up in the spring of 1865 ... Its citizens even had the audacity to advocate establishing the county seat there instead of in Boulder" (*Daily Camera* 1991:3-4).

Many of the community's earliest residents are buried in the Valmont Butte Cemetery on Valmont Butte, including Captain Thomas Akins and Alexander P. Allen. Captain Akins, who participated with Colonel John M. Chivington at the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864, died in 1878. Fort Chambers, built in 1864 about a mile and a half north of the Tommy Jones Stage Stop and Hotel by the Burlington Home Guard and Boulder City's Home Guard, is where Captain Akins and other volunteer militia trained before engaging in the massacre at Sand Creek. Alexander P. Allen was one of the original platters of the community. The well-maintained Valmont Cemetery is available for visits by family members.

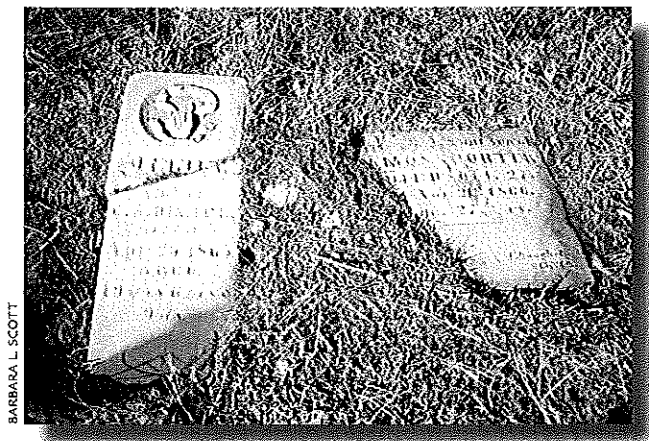
"It's sacred to me. It's my connection to the past, to my family," says LeeAnn McGinty, referring to the Valmont Cemetery where several of her family members are interred, including Frank A. Polzin, a blacksmith and Spanish-American War veteran who died in 1933 (Morson 2004).

Clint (1969:31) provides this interesting description of the Valmont Cemetery: "The cemetery is fenced with woven wire and is approximately two acres in size. There are many sunken areas that appear to be grave sites but have no markers." Barker (1970) claimed at the time of her writing there were "seventy-nine unmarked graves, fifty-eight of which are of unknown occupancy." In 1996, Chuck Howe, funeral director of Howe Mortuary in Boulder, said: "It's the oldest official cemetery in Boulder County, and there are a lot of unmarked graves." Valmont native Tim Smith was of the opinion that there could be "mass graves" in the Valmont Cemetery area (*Boulder Planet*, October 2-8, 1996). A stone monument erected in 1961 by Arthur G. and Millie Chambers Gallagher in the Valmont Cemetery is dedicated to the memory of Boulder County pioneers (Wendt 1964:24).

The unmarked cemetery, which lies adjacent to the pioneer cemetery and sits on Public Service Company property, is too old and weathered to receive many visitors. Barker (1970) writes:

One of the most historically fascinating areas lays a couple of hundred yards south of the Valmont Cemetery. Because it is on State Fish and Game goose nesting land, it is not open to the public. It contains, however, some of the first white graves in Boulder County. There are only five or six headstones (none of which are standing), but it is evident from piles of stones, that there are a number of other graves also.

Inscriptions on the stones tell stories of their time. "Hattie N. and Little Willie, Wife and Infant Son of Amos Porter, Died October 27, November 26, 1866." "Frank E. Robinson, Died May 5, 1869." "Mary Etta Robinson, Died April 30, 1869. 2 years, 1 month, 28 days." "Elva Robinson, Died July 20, 1869. 7 months and 4 days." Jennie Dimick, Wife of C.A. Dimick, Died April 25, 1865. Age 19 years, 6 months, 9 days."



The authors observed several headstones lying on the ground; and a large rectangular-shaped feature of medium-sized stones was observed within the fenced area of gravesites. Unmarked graves were also fairly well discerned by the rectangular depressions resulting from the subsidence of the grave itself over the past 145 years. Additional unmarked gravesites are highly probable outside the current fenced-in burials. American Indians might possibly be interred in this cemetery as well.

The earliest graves most likely would not have included milled-lumber coffins or durable headstones that are commonplace today. The deceased may simply have been wrapped in blankets or animal robes and interred with little to mark the burial other than several stones or a vertically placed marker of some sort. In time, more substantial burial boxes of milled-lumber and headstones of etched stone would appear better marking the grave's location, providing the headstone had not severely weathered or been vandalized or taken for garden art and landscaping.

In addition to the cemeteries, the standing ruins and tailings ponds from the St. Joe Mining and Milling Company are still in evidence. The company operated the gold and fluorspar processing mill from 1935–1970 (commonly referred to as the “Valmont Mill”) (Hoefler and Bunyak 2001). And the Culbertson or Pennsylvania Mining and Milling Company constructed a mill in 1898 south of Valmont Butte overlooking what was then called Owen’s Lake (now, Leggett Reservoir). At least two brick cottages housed executive personnel.

Little remains of the Culbertson Mill, with

the exception of an abundance of assorted historic artifacts in several refuse dumps and concentrations of red bricks and angular Valmont Butte stone suggesting where the two cottages may once have stood. Traces of the narrow-gauge railroad that served the mill, crucible fragments from its assay lab, rusty metal containers and vessel glass fragments were found upon investigation of the area. Metal containers included the hole-and-cap and soldered vent-hole types; and vessel glass fragments included solarized purple glass (between 1880 and 1915), decorative ware, porcelain-like pieces, and utilitarian stoneware crockery (See Burney, Neal, and Scott 2005: 73–81 for color photos of artifacts).

The Culbertson Mill is a fantastic historic archaeological site that should continue to be protected and left in place. Otherwise, the mill deserves the most careful examination to the highest archaeological and historical standards available. The historic database (archaeological and architectural) is sufficient to stimulate several M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations. Encouraging such graduate studies would support a conclusion made by a University of Colorado Department of Geography class when they investigated the Valmont Butte/Dike in 1970 as a “potential natural study area”:

Valmont Dike and its environs have a rich historical background. When this background is combined with the natural attractiveness of the area, and its proximity to the rapidly growing city of Boulder, the idea of transforming this site into a natural area becomes justified (Tripp, Callihan, and Hwang 1970a:1, 20).

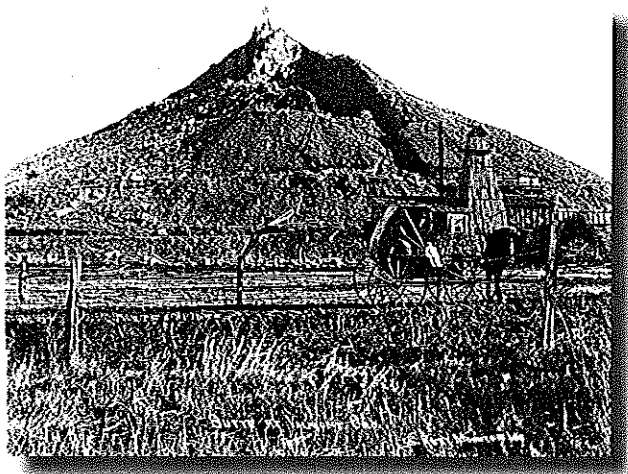


Historic Valmont Mill, 2005.

Because of the butte's unique geological structure, varied vegetative zones, and vantage point of the surrounding landscape, the University of Colorado investigators conclude that

...Valmont Butte's "highest and best use" is to remain in a relatively undeveloped state, being always available to interested parties and study groups from various University departments as well as to others similarly oriented" (Tripp et al. 1970a; 1970b:1) (italics ours).

Regrettably, the University of Colorado recommendation has gone largely ignored, with the exception of Valmont Butte being designated a Boulder County Landmark in 1978. The butte itself continued to be whittled down and its materials fashioned into a host of products and uses ranging from building stone, monuments, bricks, topsoil, street construction, housing foundations, and railroad car ballast. Basalt



View east showing basalt being removed from Valmont Butte's west end. Photograph by "Rocky Mountain" Joe (Joseph Bevier Sturtevant), courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.

began to be removed from the butte's west end between the 1870s and early 1900s. During the 1870s, a large tower—quite visible on top of the butte—was utilized to lower the quarried basalt by overhead cable to a crushing tower below. Railcars then transported the rock to its intended destination. In the late 1800s one author described Valmont and Valmont Butte this way:

This is a small town at the confluence of the North and South Boulder Creeks, four miles out from the base of the mountains, and is

distinguished by the butte at that place, an upheaval of igneous rock, several hundred feet in height, making it the most prominent landmark in all the valley landscape.

Valmont is on the line of the Boulder Valley railroad, and is the center of a wide scope of the best farming lands in the state, early settled, and now improved by a most intelligent class of people (Baskin 1880:420).

Lucy Davis Holmes, a longtime Valmont resident, recalls how in the early 1900s her family, the Davises' and the De Backers'

...regretted the removal of the original lofty rock formation in the Valmont country. Twenty-eight feet of stone was removed from the butte, most of which went for the paving of Blake Street in Denver" (Jenkins 1959:8).

The sheer volume of natural resources extracted from Valmont Butte these last 145 years is truly astonishing: the earth-filled dams required of Public Service Company of Colorado's coal-fired Valmont power plant, constructed in 1924, were built from rock and soil taken from the south-edge of Valmont Butte. And an estimated 400,000 cubic yards of soil was used as road base for Foothills Parkway. Disfigured, reduced, modified, and poisoned, Valmont Butte still stands like its nearby colleague to the north, Haystack Mountain, as they have for millions of years. One Boulder company went so far as to encourage local governmental officials that the best way to deal with Valmont Butte was to level the west end and use the 11 acres for an industrial site.

Valmont Butte's condition and appearance became so dismal that Gibson (1981:6) had reason to write "As a result of more than a century of activity, Valmont Dike is a hodgepodge of rock, dirt piles, gravel quarries and sheer cliffs." Deloria (1998:4E) described the butte in equally poor terms, describing Valmont Butte as "Kinda trashed, in fact"; furthermore, "The landscape around the butte is littered with old Christmas trees and rusting industrial remnants. It's a place that has received a lot more trash than respect and attention." Battered, gauged, scrapped, and bruised, Historic Boulder identified this Boulder County Natural Landmark as "...a historically

endangered place..." (Neff 2004:1A).

Despite these 145 years of cumulative adverse impact to the butte, the views even today remain dramatic from the abused and tortured west end, especially to the south, west, and north. The Flatirons and Sugarloaf Mountain are clearly visible, adding to the panoramic view of this incredible part of Colorado's Front Range. One perspective:

To American Indian eyes, the butte offers a special place to pray, not only because it is a high spot on the relatively flat plains, but because it stands above the confluence of two rivers [Boulder Creek and South Boulder Creek], which is spiritually significant ... the dike [butte] runs east to west, pointing directly toward another Indian sacred site, Sugarloaf (White 2004:10).

Information drawn from archaeology, history, ethnohistory, oral history, and contemporary testimony supports Valmont Butte not only as a Boulder County Natural Landmark but as (1) a historic district, first identified by Weiss (1981) in "The Boulder County Historical Site Survey"; (2) an agricultural type of rural historic district; (3) a sacred site; (4) a site with intangible spiritual attributes; (5) a contemporary prayer and offering locale or contemporary-use area, and (6) a traditional cultural property or TCP (King 2003 and 2005; Parker and King 1990).

Relevant Preservation Law

Although Valmont Butte is a Boulder County Landmark, there appears to be little protection for such designated sites. The City of Boulder's Valmont Butte project was not a federal undertaking, which would have initiated the legal requirement of the city adhering to federal historic preservation statutes, primarily Section 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The city did, however, undertake various cultural-resource inventories of Valmont Butte, as well as consultations with several tribal members in Boulder affiliated with the United Tribes of Colorado (UTC). These efforts were welcome additions to the Valmont Butte database. However, short of a thorough investigation of archaeological potential—suggested by oral history, contemporary testimony,

and historic accounts—the likelihood of inadvertently discovering unmarked human burials during construction activities remained problematic.

The authors have identified the potential for the presence of unmarked human graves in the vicinities of both the Valmont Butte Pioneer Cemetery and the equally old historic cemetery on Public Service Company's property. The Historical, Prehistorical, and Archaeological Resources Act of 1973 (CRS 24-80-401 to 410) gave the office of the state archaeologist (OSAC) in the State Historical Society of Colorado "...explicit authority to promulgate rules and regulations defining how the duties prescribed by the Act were to be carried out. The 1990 Act ... adds a new statutory section, part 13, pertaining to unmarked human graves."

Section 11, "Lands not owned by the state of Colorado" reading, in part: "Upon the request of any municipality, county, or governmental agency, the state archaeologist shall undertake the powers provided for in Section 24-80-405 to 24-80-407 of the Act, with respect to historical, prehistorical, or archaeological resources on private or public lands, owned by the entity so requesting, within the boundaries of Colorado. Upon the request of any corporation or private individual, the state archeologist may at his/her discretion undertake these powers with respect to archaeological or paleontological resources on private lands, except that the excavation of unmarked human burials requires a permit on all nonfederal lands in Colorado."

Section 13, "Unmarked Human Graves" reads, in part, "On all nonfederal lands in Colorado, the discovery of unmarked human graves more than 100 years old shall cause the procedures defined in part 13 of the Act to take effect. Disinterment of human remains from such graves will require an excavation permit as provided for in Sections 4 through 8 of these regulations" (Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation 2004; see also, Carnett 1995:9).

Conclusion

The authors submitted their report to the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the City and County of Boulder, Valmont residents, the University of Colorado

Museum on the Boulder campus, and the Carnegie Library in Boulder in May 2005. In August of that same year, the Boulder City Council voted to move the biosolids facility to a different location. Debate on the proposed fire-training facility continued until February 2006. Despite the best intentions of City of Boulder staff, the anthropological record—along with community outcry—in this rare case took precedence. On February 21, 2006, the Council voted to locate the fire-training facility at a different site. City of Boulder Planning Director Peter Pollock admits that he trusts the public process: “The City committed to an open dialog with the community about issues and concerns. The goal was to surface the material so that City Council could make the best decision” (Scott, p.c., May 30, 2006).

The problem remains that the land must be sold, and the danger is that it will be sold to a less sensitive buyer than the City of Boulder. “The Native American interest on the site and the historic interests on this site could well be worse off,” commented Councilman Andy Schultheiss, who voted with two others to locate the fire-training facility at Valmont. The 6–3 decision, however, dictated a location other than Valmont Butte (Morgan 2006). A consortium of nonprofit groups, including the Trust for Public Lands, has expressed an interest in purchasing the land, but no offer is expected to reach the table anytime soon. While the City of Boulder is anxious to recoup its losses, it has graciously offered to allow a year from the February 2006 council meeting for TPL to present a viable purchaser. Doug Newcomb, from the open space department, agreed that the best use of the property would be as a historic-preservation site, one that perhaps would include a cultural resource center for Native Americans. The site requires remedial cleanup of its contaminated area, i.e., the tailings pond that remains from the milling and mining era. And prairie dogs will need to be relocated off the mildly radioactive area to another portion of the butte, though testing has shown that the creatures themselves have not been harmed. A group of botanists is meliorating and testing the soil to determine its health; once remediation is complete, low-water native grasses will be planted.

The City of Boulder is involved in the process with TPL to come up with funding to buy the butte. If TPL is not able to broker a purchase of the land, the property will become available for sale to the general public. However, it is hard to imagine that any potential developer would disregard the political baggage that is intrinsic to this culturally sensitive site. The unanimous voice at the final City Council meeting was that the entire process had been “exquisitely painful.” But the heritage of a people—of several peoples—was at stake here. And for now, the longing to preserve that heritage trumped money and political will. ○

Notes

1. Much of this material for this article was distilled from two larger reports titled “A Class I File and Literature Search: Indians and Native Sacred Sites, for the Valmont Butte Area, Boulder County, and Northern Colorado Front Range” (Burney, Danenberg, and Affleck 2004) and “The Valmont Community and Valmont Butte: Evidence for the History of Boulder County, Colorado,” submitted May 20, 2005 (Burney, Neal, and Scott).

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