



In 1907, the first trains departed the Clifton depot (located south of the intersection of 5th Street and the railroad tracks), another blacksmith shop opened on Main Street and Dr. Glendering of Whitewater relocated his medical practice to Clifton. Frank Paxon constructed a two-story building on Main Street. The lower story was used for a store, barber shop and restaurant and the upper floor was used as the Odd Fellows Hall.

With this growth the community began to feel pressure to keep up with housing stock and public facilities. Dick Breedlove, involved in Clifton real estate at the time, reported in early 1907 that he had inquiries to rent six more houses than could be found in town. Within months, there was a flurry of building activity with new houses going up and lumbermen scarcely able to supply the demand for materials.

There were 75 children of school age living contiguous to Clifton which had no school house. The newspaper reported:

But we are confronted with the fact that the assessment for school purposes will not amount to over \$1,750 in all, which one can plainly see would not be sufficient to erect a building such as we should have and are justly entitled to. It has been suggested that some of our enterprising citizens circulate a petition to assess each acre of land a certain amount per acre for school purposes – if you know of a better scheme suggest it. Anyhow we need a school building and need it bad.

By April of 1907 an election for the new school district of Clifton was held and there was not a dissenting vote on the proposition. Original school board members were Mrs. C.J. Stapleton, O.W. Foster and W.C. Strain. A November 1907 newspaper reported that, upon completion of a new Adventist school there were now two schools in Clifton. Clifton's first consolidation of these small schools occurred in 1920. Clifton's high school was held in an adobe Works Progress Administration (WPA) building from 1941 until 1946 when the high schools consolidated and the students from Clifton were sent to Central High School. The Clifton School, constructed in 1937 on the location of the present Clifton Elementary School was then used as a combined junior high and elementary school.

In mid-1907 the new Methodist Episcopal Church at Clifton was completed at 4th Street and Grand. With a total cost of \$4,000, the new building consisted of an auditorium 32x50 feet with a seating capacity of 250 and a lecture room with a seating capacity of 75. The auditorium boasted the "very best of pews made with five ply curved oak backs and built up curved seats of elm."





Colorado Governor Henry A. Buchtel, who was also a preacher, dedicated the Methodist Episcopal Church with much fanfare. The Governor was taken for an automobile ride through the orchards of the valley and then he delivered a lectured in Clifton on Theodore Roosevelt.

These early years of growth in the Clifton community were fueled by the strong agricultural base of the community. There were 10,000 acres in fruit in the first decades of the century, with Cross Orchards located at 3079 F Road the largest operation in that area. L.R. Phillips, manager of the Clifton branch of the Grand Junction Fruit Growers' Association observing the Clifton operations in September of 1906, stated "the rush is not yet over, that despite the growers report that they are about all in, the rush continues. Seemingly there is no end to the stream of wagons that are bringing in the peach crop. Everything that had been constructed to date to handle the fruit operations had been outgrown already and there was 'no telling what the demands of another season will surmount to.'"



As with other areas in Mesa County the Clifton-Fruitvale area fruit growers and the community prospered in the early 1900s until a coddling moth infestation and seepage destroyed apple and pear orchards in the area in the 1920s. Orchards were later replanted. Apples and pears continue to be the important revenue producers, but cherries have also been grown extensively as a cash crop. Many orchards have disappeared during the past two decades, as the Clifton area in general has been heavily subdivided for residential development.

Fruitvale, west of Clifton, was a community centered around its schools, including a senior high. A fruit loading platform and packing shed near 30 and E Roads employed many local residents near harvest. The Ancient Order of Fools, a community club begun during the 1930s Depression, helped people through the hard times with laughter.

The Clifton Rural Fire Protection District organized in 1943, replacing the earlier Clifton Fire Department. The District built a new fire station in 1979; it also has a volunteer Rescue Squad, a feature of many Mesa County towns.





HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

Historic sites and buildings are scattered across the Clifton-Fruitvale area, but with a higher concentration in the downtown original plat area. The structures in outlying areas are primarily residential structures remaining on parcels of land that may have been farms or orchards in the past. Some of these have been surrounded by new residential development and many have already been lost as the former agricultural properties have developed. In the downtown area, the historic sites and structures are a mix of residential and commercial buildings.

Mesa County has not yet adopted a local register of historic sites, structures and districts but there are three properties within the Clifton-Fruitvale area that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Clifton Community Center and Church (now the Foursquare Gospel Church), the Kettle-Jens House and the Cross Land & Fruit Company (just west of the planning area).

The early Clifton Community Center and Church located at the prominent downtown Clifton location on F and Main Streets (now 2nd Street) dates from 1920. The stucco building has a cross gabled roof, is two stories in height, and includes a raised basement. Organizers of the church were committed to providing a variety of community events. Even though church membership was less than one hundred, the building could seat six hundred people within its main floor and balcony level.



HISTORIC STRUCTURES or historic sites can encompass a wide variety of arrangements from true authentic restorations to adaptive re-uses. Historic 'period' restorations may deserve public interpretive facilities similar to that shown above. Private commercial partial restorations however may not. Many of these streetscape elements may, none-the-less be important in accentuating an important community landmark feature.





Located at 498 32 Road, the Kettle-Jens House was constructed in 1905. The 1-1/2 story wood frame Queen Anne style dwelling includes Shingle style detailing. The asymmetrical building has two porches, several gables, and a tower with a bell cast roof. Other local residences that survive from the same era tend to be simple utilitarian structures devoid of the intricate architectural detailing of the Kettle-Jens House.



The Cross Land & Fruit Company (Cross Orchards) located at 3079 F Road is just west of the planning area and includes numerous intact buildings and structures associated with early 20th century fruit production in the Grand Valley.



Established in 1909 by a group headed by Walter B. Cross of Denver, apples and pears were the primary crop. The design of the large circa 1910 barn was adapted for the handling of the large scale fruit processing. While many local orchards averaged ten acres in size, the property encompassed 243 acres. Financial difficulties forced the

sale of the land for taxes in 1923. Through a community fundraising campaign, the property was acquired by the Museum of Western Colorado in 1980 for operation as a living history farm.

In addition to these historic structures that have already been formally recognized, an early 1980s county-wide historic survey identified other historic resources in the Clifton-Fruitvale Community. A windshield-survey of those remaining structures that may be eligible for historic designation is included in Appendix B.

