

## Fruita, Colorado

A brief look at Fruita's history is a great introduction to a walking tour of the town's main streets.

William E. Pabor, the founder of Fruita, was a representative of Horace Greeley's Union Colony. In 1870, he scouted this area with an interest in the development of towns in the west. Years later he spoke of his dreams that came "in the spring of 1884, lying on the bare floor of a log cabin on the site of what is now the town of Fruita." For Pabor, "...visions of the possibilities of the future swept before me... I saw vineyards and orchards and rose-embowered cottages in which love, happiness and contentment abode..."

Not only as a poet, but as a scientist, Pabor recognized the great promise of the Grand Valley. He wrote a 300 page volume, "Colorado As An Agricultural State," in which he spoke glowingly of the fruit growing potential of the area.

On May 1, 1884 the Fruita Town and Land Company was incorporated. Pabor was so convinced orchards would flourish here that he named the town's streets after varieties of trees. In 1886, five-acre tracts including 200 fruit trees and water could be purchased for \$500.

Fruits and vegetables from Fruita were of impressive size and quality, winning many awards and blue ribbons.

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11. The block between Mulberry and Peach on the south side of Aspen, as it appeared circa 1915. The Timmerman Furniture and Undertaking establishment of yesteryear is today's Over The Edge Sports at 202 Aspen.

Other features of the historic block remain visible today, but no individual historic photos of still-existing buildings have been found.

One year a 23 pound sugar beet won an award at the Denver Exposition, and Mable Skinner of Fruita was crowned the National Apple Queen in 1910.

Fruita launched an ambitious project in 1906 that brought water through a 23 mile pipeline from Pinon Mesa. The clear mountain water was the envy of the entire valley, and people traveled great distance just to have a drink.

In the early 1900s, when the fruit industry was at its peak, the coddling moth invaded, destroying the apple and pear orchards. Beets, tomatoes and general farming eventually replaced the fruit industry.

Fruita has had a steady growth for over a century, and descendants of many of the original pioneers still live in the area. Today, Fruita is a progressive community that appreciates its western heritage and its scenic setting at the foot of the Colorado National Monument.

This Walking Tour brochure includes the best photos available of the town's historic structures – most of which have been home to a number of different businesses over the years. Take a step into the past; leave today behind for a moment. Imagine Fruita as it once was, in simpler – sometimes harder – times.



# Welcome...Join us in a walk back in time...

1. The original building on this site at 199 Aspen, built near the turn of the century, was a mercantile store. When this photo was taken the First National Bank occupied the structure. Today it is the Mid-Valley Building.



2. The Beach Block at 201 Aspen was built in 1910 and is owned by Hesperia Lodge 120, which still meets upstairs. In this photo Bollinger Hardware occupied the first floor. Today the first floor houses the Dinosaur Restaurant.



3. A dapper young man, circa 1930, outside of the Loeffler's Clothing Store at 217 Aspen. The building was constructed in 1910 and today is home to The Fruita Times.



4. This photo, taken in the 1920s or 30s shows the John Deere store of its day at 225 Aspen Avenue. Today the building houses Video Home Theater.



5. The building at 229 Aspen has been home to many businesses since the turn of the century. In this 1930s photo, it was the Union Trading Company Store. Today it is Pancho's Villa Restaurant.



6. Originally built as Central Grade School in 1912, this classic structure on Elm, north of Aspen, is today's Fruita Civic Center. It was listed on the Colorado register of Historic Places in 1993.

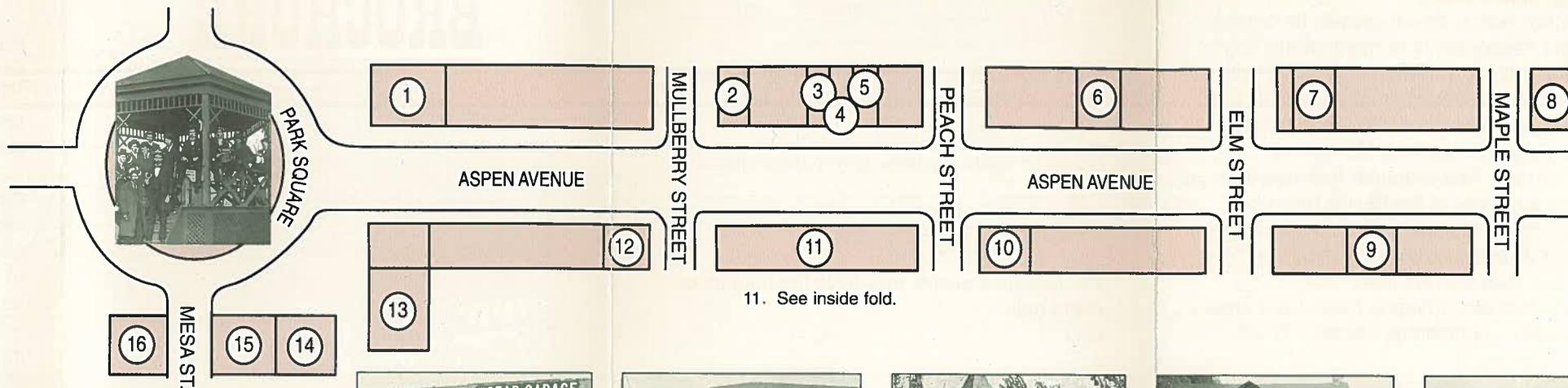


7. The United Methodist Church originated in Fruita in 1888. The church's present home at 405 Aspen—pictured here—was built in 1909.



## CIRCLE PARK

17. Originally, Fruita had a rectangular park at the west end of downtown. In 1912, the corners were rounded to accommodate automobile traffic. Many trees and shrubs were planted, and a bandstand hosted summer concerts.



11. See inside fold.



16. The Keep It Simple Shop at 168 South Park Square was built as the First Bank of Fruita in 1904.



15. The Thrift Shop at 142 South Park Square has housed many businesses. When this photo was taken at the turn of the century, the building's east end was home to O.A. Svanson's Boot and Shoes.



14. The Park Hotel at 150 South Park Square was established in 1898. It is the only commercial enterprise in Fruita that retains the same name and function it had when it was built.



13. The True Value Hardware building at 158 South Park Square has housed many businesses. In the 1920s it was occupied by the Good Eats Restaurant and the Star Garage.



12. This 1911 photo shows the then new First National Bank at 136 Aspen, seen from the north across an unpaved Aspen Ave. The structure is now home to Sweet Haven Chocolates.



10. Where the Assembly of God Church stands on the corner of Aspen and Peach, the Congregational Church pictured above once stood. It was Fruita's first church, built in 1888. The original building was demolished in 1950.



9. Originally built by the WPA in 1938 as a Museum, this unique structure was made of rocks from the western slope, and from as far away as Hawaii. It is owned by the City of Fruita and was added to the state and national Register of Historic Places in 1996.



8. Sacred Heart Catholic Church at the corner of Aspen and Maple was built of locally-quarried stone in 1921 at a cost of \$16,000, and still serves the Catholic population of the Fruita area.

...into Fruita Colorado's historical and colorful past.