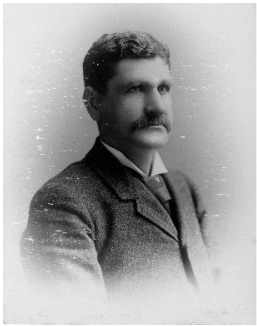


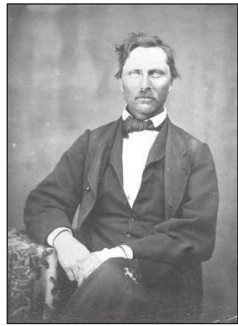
## 115th Anniversary of the Incorporation of SS.

We are today celebrating the 115th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Steamboat Springs. But to fully appreciate the significance of that occasion, we must know the history of Steamboat before incorporation.

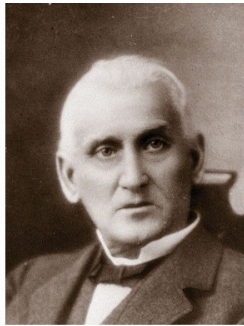
Steamboat Springs became a vision the day my great-grandfather, **James Harvey Crawford**, first set foot in this area back in June of 1874. He knew then that this is where he wanted to live and grow a town. In fact, one year later in 1875, he got 4 other men to join him in applying for 160 acre homesteads, for a total of 800 acres. The five men sold each other interests in each other's land, such that by 1877, four of them: Crawford, Perry Burgess, William Mellon, & William Walton, each owned  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest in all 800 acres, an arrangement that only made sense to start a town. The Crawfords built their cabin on 12th St. and were the sole family living here until they were joined in the early 1880s by James' brother Henry, the Perry Burgess family, the Woolery brother families, Horace Suttle with his saw mill, and Francis E. Milner. The Crawfords wintered in Boulder several of these years, first in 1879-80 when they did not have enough provisions in Steamboat due to the Indian scare, and next in 1881-83 when their daughter Mary was born and their older kids went to school. In Boulder Crawford met 3 other gentlemen who became important to the history of SS. The first was Crawford's neighbor Lewis Cheney, who was the uncle of both the before-mentioned Perry Burgess and Francis Milner.



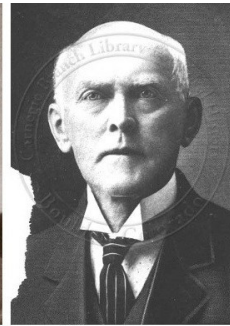
James H. Crawford  
1845-1930



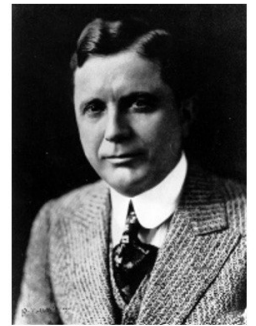
Lewis Cheney  
1830-1885



Andrew J. Macky  
1834-1907



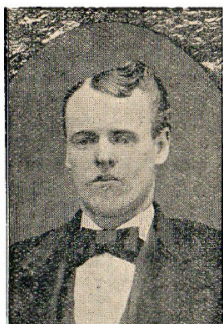
James P. Maxwell  
1839-1929



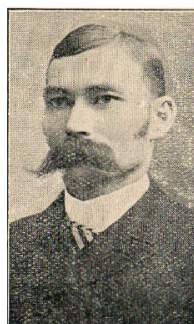
Henry W. Gossard  
1871-1965



Willfred F. Brightman  
1844-1913



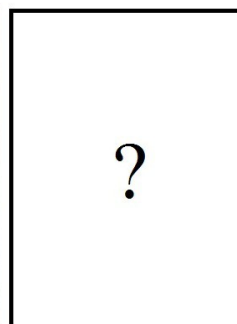
William H. Dunfield  
1855-1917



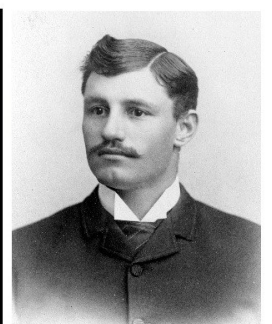
Dr. William Kernaghan  
1864-1931



Francis E. Milner  
1861-1929



C. A. Seymour  
1856 - 1949



D. W. "Billy" Whipple  
1862-1943

**Top row: Steamboat Springs Company founders**  
**Bottom row: first Steamboat Springs Town Trustees**

**Lewis Cheney** was born in N.Y. in 1830, but grew up on a farm in Illinois. He did a lot of different things in his 20s and 30s: he mined for a year in California, ran a mercantile business for a year, farmed in Illinois, freighted wagons and livestock to Montana, where his party was ambushed by Indians. He made money on all of these, which he then used to organize several banks in Missouri before moving to Boulder in 1877. There he founded the First National Bank and became the richest man in Boulder.

One of the directors of Cheney's bank was **Andrew J. Macky**. Macky was also born in N.Y., in 1834, but grew up



in Wisconsin. He was one of the early pioneers of Boulder, arriving there in 1859 and as a carpenter, he built the first frame house in town. During the 1860s he served as postmaster, county treasurer, justice of the peace, school secretary, and town treasurer. In the 1870s Macky was clerk of the district court and city clerk. In 1872 he organized the Boulder Aqueduct Company with his neighbor, James P. Maxwell. He became Director of Cheney's bank, then vice president and finally president., and he also became the richest man in Boulder.

Macky's neighbor **James P. Maxwell** was born in 1839 in Wisconsin. He came with his father to Colorado in 1859, mining in Gilpin county. In the 1860s he was sheriff of the central district of Gilpin Co, and ran a lumber mill. He was elected to the territorial legislature in 1874, and to the first state senate in 1876, where he served as president pro tem. In 1878 he was elected Mayor of Boulder. He was later county treasurer, state engineer, and Boulder civil engineer, and finally he also became president of Cheney's bank. He spent many summers in Steamboat, and built the Maxwell block, which is the building which now houses Lyons Drug.

These four men: Crawford, Cheney, Macky, and Maxwell, all seasoned pioneers who knew how to work hard and seize the initiative and be successful in a variety of endeavors, formed the Steamboat Springs Company in 1883, with Maxwell as President; Macky as Secretary & Treasurer; and Crawford as Veep/Manager. The company officially became incorporated on January 14, 1884.

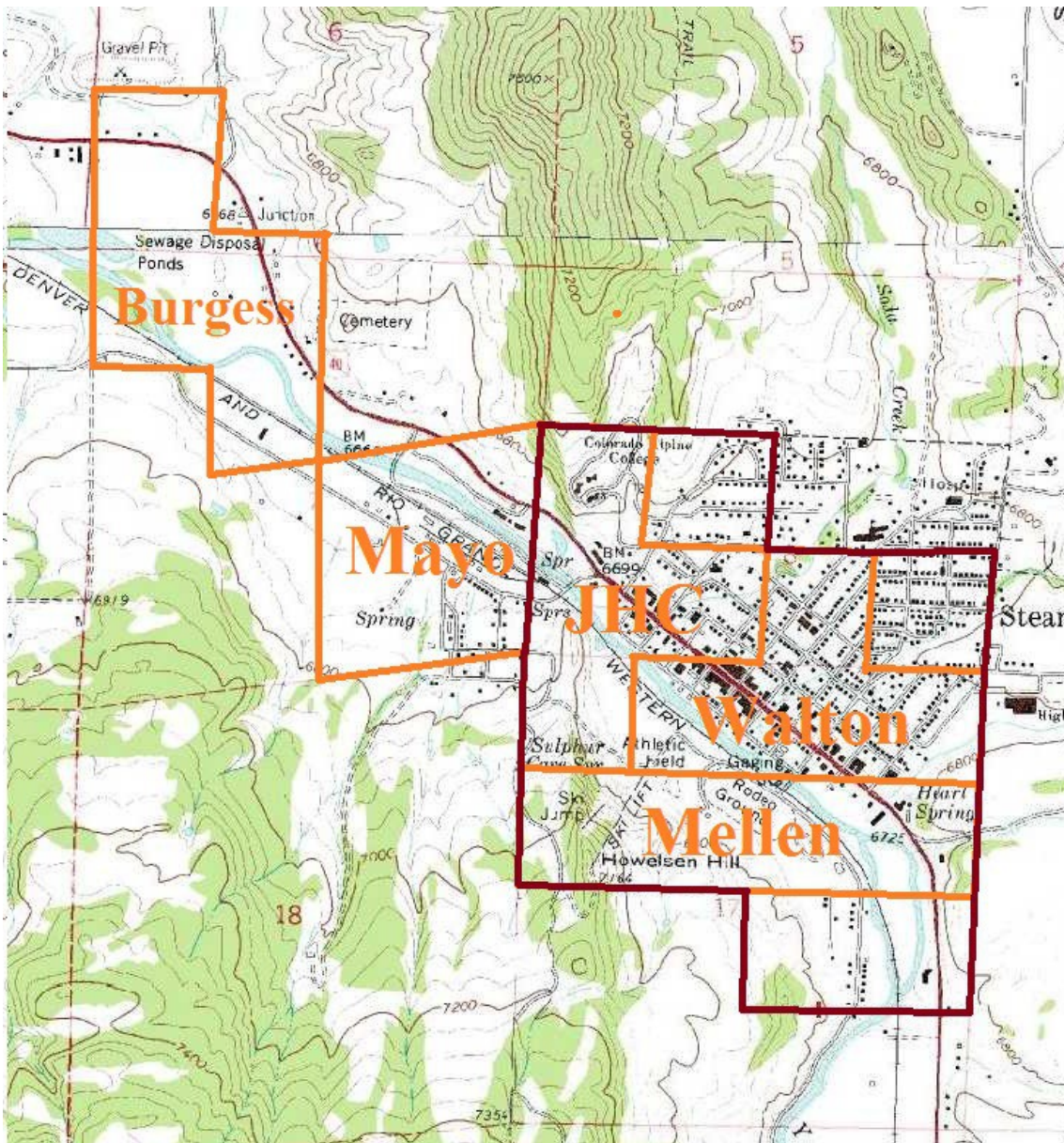


Stock certificate for The Steamboat Springs Company

The Company was undoubtedly modeled after the Boulder City Town Company, which owned and managed the Boulder townsite from 1859 until the town incorporated in 1871. Macky was in Boulder during this time, and the first president of the Boulder City Town Company was A. A. Brookfield, who was Macky's and Maxwell's partner in their Aqueduct company.

The first act of the new company was to buy the land for the town, namely the afore-mentioned 800 acres. The land included both sides of the river from the northern edge of Brooklyn downstream to where the current Sheriff's office is located.





**The 5 original land owners in S.S.:**

**James H. Crawford  
Perry A. Burgess  
Charles A. Mayo  
William G. Mellen  
William E. Walton**

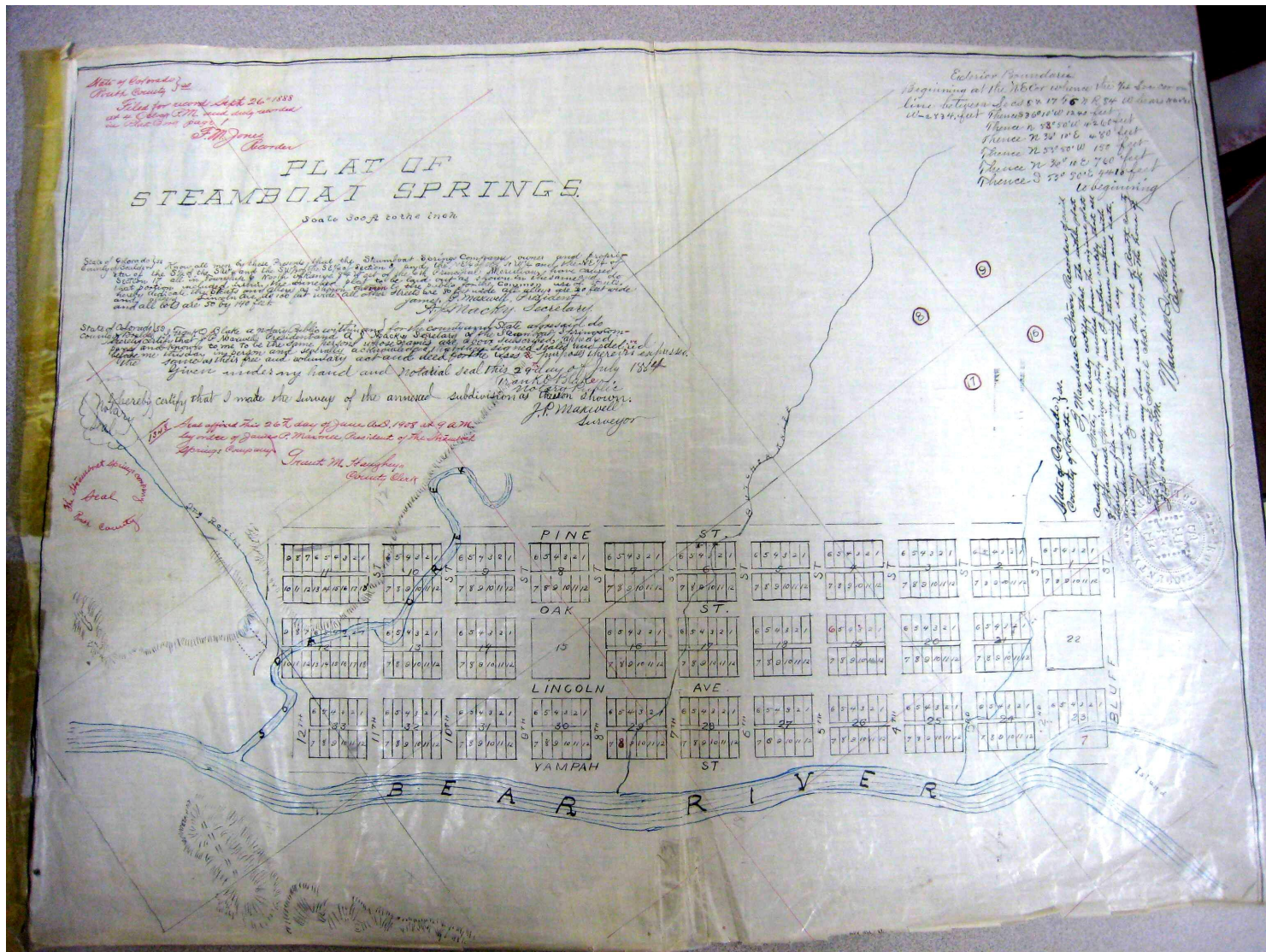
**Original Steamboat Springs boundary in 1900**

Next, President Maxwell surveyed the town site and recorded the Plat of Steamboat Springs on July 29, 1884. This plat included only from Pine St to the river, and 1st St to 12th St. The layout of each block, and the sizes of the lots, alleys, and streets, were identical to Boulder. The only aberration was the widening of Lincoln Avenue by 20'.

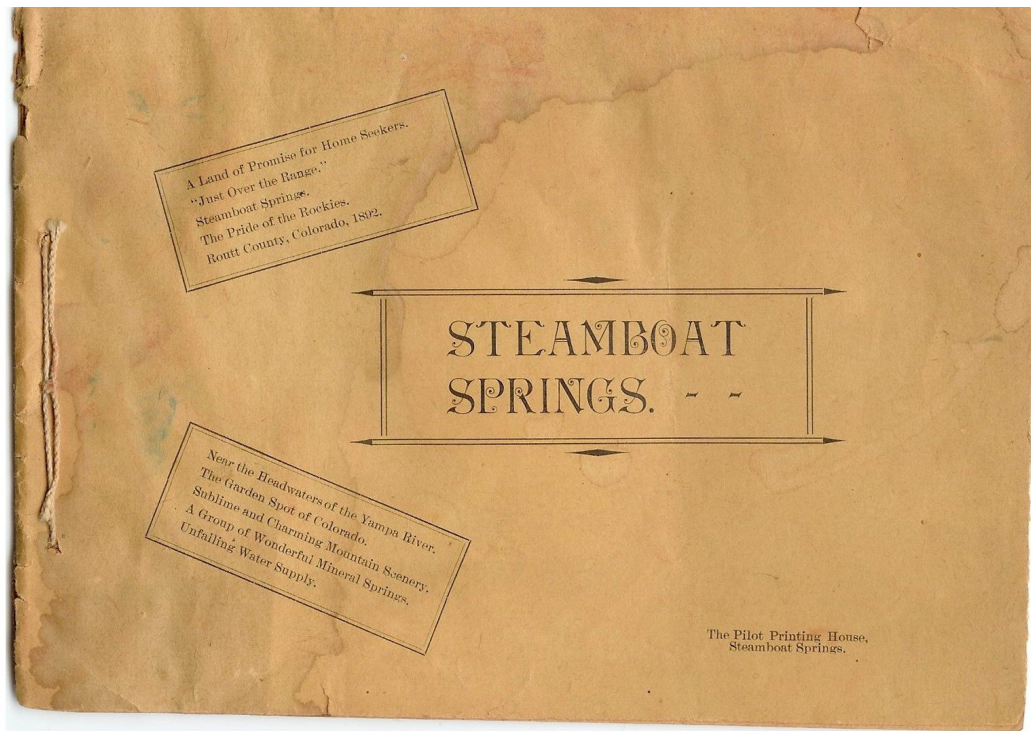
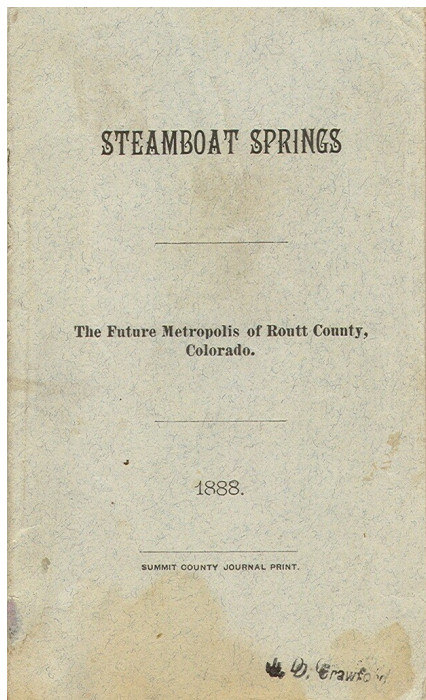
Finally, the company started selling lots to settlers and merchants. The first two lots were sold to Mrs. S.D.N. Bennett, who with her husband spent the winter of 1876/1877 with the Crawfords and taught school to the Crawford children in exchange for room and board. She built a large house on her lots that included a nick-knack store in the front room and several rooms in the back and upstairs for borders. She advertised her home in the Pilot as "Bennett's Mountain Home".

The S.S. Company was basically a land development company. It promoted the town with brochures and newspaper stories; it maintained the streets and built bridges; it built and ran the Bath House; and it encouraged enterprises to locate in SS. For example, the company convinced James Hoyle, who was living in Boulder, to move to SS and start the Pilot newspaper. They gave Hoyle a printing press and gave him land for the Pilot office.





1874 Plat of Steamboat Springs



Two of the early brochures of Steamboat Springs, from 1888 and 1892.



The first real building boom in Steamboat occurred in 1888 when the railroad was extended to Wolcott, or what was then named Russell. With the time to travel from Denver to Steamboat cut in half from a week to just 3 days, the area received a spike in new settlers, many from states back east. Before 1888 there were less than 10 frame buildings in town, but over 20 new homes and businesses were built in 1888 at a total cost of more than \$23,000.



A photo of the Company office, with JHC in front and his older brother JDC on the side.

We know a lot about the SS Company at this time because of a discovery my sister Nancy Rosi made a year ago. She came across a roll of old dog-eared pages with marginally readable handwriting on them. She had discovered the 1880s version of a photocopier machine. Called "Bushnell's Perfect Letter Copying Book," it was manufactured in 1885 to allow the purchaser to copy any letter written in ink. This book contains many of the business letters that JHC wrote from 1889 through 1892. From it we can find that in 1889, the Steamboat Springs Company spent \$4904.65. This included money to build a new bath house by the hot springs, and to build their office building on the west corner of 11th and Lincoln. The money also included legal fees, advertisements in the papers, freight costs for supplies, surveying, and \$21.60 to Crawford for expenses. During that year they sold 38 lots for roughly \$7000.

The Copy Book contains a lot of what we now call Purchase & Sale agreements. I'm going to read a sample agreement from the book:

July 24th 1890

I have sold to William Kernaghan M.D. Lot no. three (3) Block no. six (6) in the town of Steamboat Springs Colorado for seventy five (75) dollars, ten dollars of which is paid down and a promissory note given for sixty five (65) dollars bearing ten (10) percent per annum till paid, due ??? six (6) months from date and having same date with this contract. When said amount is paid in full, and with all accrued interest, the Steamboat Springs Co.

agrees and is hereby bound to make and issue warranty deed for said lot to the said Dr. W. Kernaghan. It is further agreed and stipulated, that no intoxicating liquors shall be sold on said lot, or otherwise disposed of from said grounds or premises and a violation of this clause shall work a forfeiture of said lot to said Steamboat Springs Company.

James H. Crawford  
Genl Manager

That last sentence is the intoxicating liquor clause that was added to every deed sold by the SS Company. It was patterned after a similar clause in the deeds in Greeley, and it in effect made SS a dry town, even before it became a town. We will come back to this clause later.

The Company did what it could to encourage businesses and growth in the city. In 1891 it hired Heff and Thissell to make 100,000 bricks, which the Company would buy at 1 cent/brick, with the Company providing free use of Company land one mile below the town. The Company offered free land at the south end of town for a flour mill, which was eventually built by Suttle and Milner just south of town. One of the things the Company wanted for Steamboat was an electric power plant. JHC, when he built his stone house in 1894, installed wires in the walls in anticipation of the day the town would have power. G. H. Smedley came to town from Denver in March of 1900 seeking the franchise to supply electricity to Steamboat, but he said he could only be granted a contract by a duly elected board of an incorporated town.

So on May 9 JHC went to Boulder for a meeting with the Company, in which the Company decided to incorporate 640 acres of land. Back in Steamboat, a petition was sent to the county court asking for an election. On election day July 17, 1900 in Library Hall, 82 people came to vote, with an overwhelming majority of 68 to 14 voting for incorporation. An election was then held on August 21 for officers of the new town. With 129 people voting, JHC was elected mayor and Willfred F. Brightman, William H. Dunfield, Dr. William Kernaghan, Francis E. Milner, C. A. Seymour, and D. W. Whipple were elected trustees. The first board meeting was held Thurs, Aug 23 at the office of the Steamboat Springs Company, making that building the first City Hall.

Since these were the 1<sup>st</sup> people in the municipal government of SS, let us look more closely at who these 6 men were. One was blue collar, one a professional, three were merchants, and one worked in the transportation field.

**Willfred F. Brightman** was a stone mason and bricklayer who came to Steamboat in 1889 from Illinois. He played the fiddle, and as the only musician in SS for awhile, he played at every dance, many of which he held at his house. He was very jolly and made friends with everybody. He was a county commissioner at the time he was elected as a Town Trustee. He died in Steamboat in 1913.

**William H. Dunfield** was a lawyer, one-term County Judge, and merchant. He came to Steamboat in 1889 and opened up a saloon just north of the town near the present cemetery. In 1892 he built a large General Merchandise store in the 900 block of Lincoln Ave. which he sold to the Hugus Company in 1898. He built himself a new store next door, which he operated until it burned in 1910, and he moved to Utah.

**Dr. William Kernaghan** was the one who bought the lot in the Purchase & Sale Agreement I just read. He came to Steamboat in 1890 from Canada, the 2nd licensed doctor to ever practice in SS. He also ran a Drug Store, the only person in town trained to dispense prescriptions. He retired to California in 1921.

**Francis E. Milner** came to SS in 1883, and established the 1st store and hotel. He started the 1st bank with his cousin Perry Burgess. He also ran a freight outfit, operated the Hahns Peak placers, opened a store at Hahns Peak, and bought a large cattle ranch where the town of Milner now exists. He served as Trustee and Mayor for years, and bought and ran the Cabin Hotel until he retired shortly before his death in 1929.

**C. A. Seymour** managed the Hugus Stores in Craig and Hayden before moving to SS in 1898 to open up the Steamboat Hugus Store. He was a relative new-comer to Steamboat, and only served as trustee for 1 year, but he

had a lasting effect by building 4 buildings that still exist: the 3 old Hugus buildings that are now the Steamboat Smokehouse, the VFW, and the Lorenz building; and his house, which was later owned by Dr. Utterback and is now part of the Museum. By 1906 he moved to Denver, coming back to Steamboat often to check on the store. He retired to San Diego in 1912.

**D. W. Whipple** was the manager of the stage coach. In 1879 he and his father took up a ranch near Yampa. He teamed with A.J. Stafford to start a stage business. When Stafford died later that year, Whipple joined F.E. Milner and secured the mail contract from Wolcott to SS. The Whipple livery stable in SS burned in June 1909, also burning the Pilot Office. Since the railroad was about to reach SS, he closed the stage business permanently, and moved to California to work in the mining industry.

These six men, along with Crawford, laid down the initial rules and regulations for the town. In their first meetings, they of course agreed to the contract for the electric power company, and a similar contract with the telephone company, and they established a 5 mil levy so the town could have money to operate. One year later, Crawford and Milner were the only ones re-elected, although in future years Dunfield was elected Mayor 3 times and Brightman was elected Trustee for a 2-year term.

In many respects, the town continued as it had. The SS Company was still the major land owner in the town, still owned the Hot Springs and Bath House; all of the other major springs such as the Iron Spring, Soda Spring, and Lithia Spring; the Rodeo grounds and all of Howelsen Hill. Crawford still managed the Company from his office building, in addition to now holding once-a-month town Board of Trustee meetings in the same building.

Crawford gave up his seat as mayor in April of 1902. He was followed for 1-year terms by Dunfield, Charles Leckenby, the Editor of the Pilot, Dunfield again, Milner, and Dunfield once again. Many of the other early pioneers served as mayor, including Dr. John A. Campbell; Henry Schaffnit Jr.; L.G. Blackmer; Fred Metcalf; Clay Monson; and Archie Wither, who served three consecutive terms, and whose descendants still live here.

Finally, I want to complete the story of the S.S. Company:

In December of 1902 the Routt County Sentinel reported that the townsite was sold for \$250,000 to a Denver syndicate which included D. H. Moffat, the railroad magnate. That sale never occurred.

In April of 1906 the Sentinel reported that the S.S. Company's property was transferred to a Chicago syndicate. That sale likewise never occurred.

Macky died in 1907 and his 520 shares, almost 1/3 of the Company, were bequeathed to the U. of Colorado. The Regents kept the stock, and became intertwined with the fate of SS.

In March 1908 the company gave land to the Moffat Railroad for the train station and track right-of-way.

In Aug of 1908 the townsite was finally really sold for \$250,000 to G.H. Miller of Nebraska and Floyd Frasier of Chicago. They incorporated as Steamboat Springs Town and Quarry Company, Miller pres, Frasier sec/treas, JHC veep/manager, with offices at the corner of Lincoln and 6th. They also bought the "Burgess stone quarry", and immediately started marketing stone from the quarry, and they invested in the Cabin Hotel. They sold stock in the company to locals including Milner, Norvell, JHC, and Maxwell. The company was incorporated with a capital of \$300,000 and owned the unsold portions of the original 800 acres including all of the mineral springs, the quarry, and onyx deposits. It sold \$80,000 in property in 1909, and also spent \$50,000 to rebuild the Bath House with an open air pool. But just to be clear, this was a separate company from the SS Company.

In July 1916, all property of the SSTQ, consisting of 1123 lots were taken over by "St. Joseph (Missouri) capitalists". The new owners planned to sell off all lots at auction Aug 31-Sept 2, including the baseball park where they would build summer homes to sell. They secured a special train from Denver and expected 1000 people to come. Unfortunately, there was a threatened railroad strike that caused a lot of people to cancel, and only 137 came

on the train. Average sale price was \$120/lot. The corner lot at the bath house brought \$2800. A second auction was scheduled for the end of Sept, but it was canceled. There was no more news about the mysterious owners. They probably wanted to make a quick profit and had no intention of keeping the assets.

By June 1917, the original Steamboat Springs Company regained control of the townsite land including the bath house, which they renovated a few times over the next years.

In November 1924 the newspapers announced that Henry W. Gossard acquired control of all the property of the SS townsite. This might have been another incorrect report, as there is no mention over the next 5 years of Gossard having anything to do with the townsite. The Company did default on its tax payments to the county, and the property went through a tax sale, but the Company still seemed to be the land owners through the 1920s.

In April 1930 Colorado U. became the new owners of the townsite. The University still owned a third of the shares of the Company, and arranged to transfer the townsite to avoid paying taxes, which at that time were about \$2285 per year. However Charles Leckenby, editor of the Pilot, wrote several long articles castigating the University, which led to the University deeding the land back to the Company, which immediately sold it to Gossard.

**Henry Gossard** was one of the fascinating characters in the history of Steamboat Springs. He founded the Gossard Corset Company in Chicago in 1901 and became quite wealthy from his domination of the corset industry. He first came to Steamboat Springs on his honeymoon. He liked the area, and came back often in summers. Gossard bought a ranch southwest of Craig, that was his principal residence in Colorado. He bred high quality Ayershire cattle on his land there and in Kansas. He also bought other property in Steamboat, including the Pritchett Ranch. Gossard renamed the Bath House to "Miracle Spa", rebuilt the hot spring into a stone Heart, and added gateway pillars of decorative river rock to not only the Bath House but also the Rodeo grounds and the Lithia Springs; all of this rock work still exist. He became so enthusiastic for SS that he permanently moved here in 1932 to a home on Crawford Ave. that still exists.

After five years, Gossard finally did the right thing for the town. In March 1935, he deeded property back to the SS Company, which immediately sold the bath house and hot springs north of town to the Steamboat Health and Recreation Association, a new non-profit corporation that still runs the Old Town pool, although it sold the Strawberry Park Hot Springs in 1982. The rodeo grounds, ski hill, and mineral springs were all deeded directly to the municipal town. Finally, 60 years after Crawford first laid eyes on this land, the jewels of the mineral springs and Howelsen Hill were owned by the town of SS, available for all to enjoy.

This, then, is the happy end of the saga of the SS Company. However there is a Postscript, one little mess had to still be cleaned up: the liquor clause. When FDR set up the New Deal, one way to stimulate the economy to get the country out of the Depression was to have the Federal Housing Administration, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, offer lost-cost mortgages. However these agencies refused to loan money for property having the intoxicating liquor clause in the deed, and development in Steamboat ground to a halt.

This was fixed in April 1939 when 780 shares of the SS Company (out of 1280 total) were transferred to the municipal town of SS for \$500, giving the town control of the Company. County Commissioner Claude Leukens became president and Town Attorney Addison M. Gooding became secretary. The Company recorded a Quit Claim Deed giving up any and all rights to the many lots it had sold. And the town filed a law suit against the Company, which allowed a Judge to order that the liquor clause was abrogated for all of the deeds sold by the SS Company.

At this point, the SS Company had no land and no reason to exist, and the story and my talk finally end.

– Jim Crawford

[Note: this was the intended speech, but of course in practice I said things differently and left out some parts to avoid running too long. The video of the talk is in the Tread of Pioneers Lufkin Library Research Center.]