

ten



Walk down to the last building on the block. The Graham building which was built in 1864 had to be torn down and replaced in 1969 because the original was structurally unsound. Denver's first photographer, William G. Chamberlain, had his studio

here, and though the current replica building warranted some cosmetic changes, the structure itself is still very similar to the original because Chamberlain had so carefully photographed the original.

**You've come full circle!** Looking across the street you will see the Granite Building where you began your tour. Now that you've finished, take some time to enjoy Larimer Square's world renowned restaurants and shops, and enjoy the modern side of Denver's most historic block.

## LARIMER SQUARE

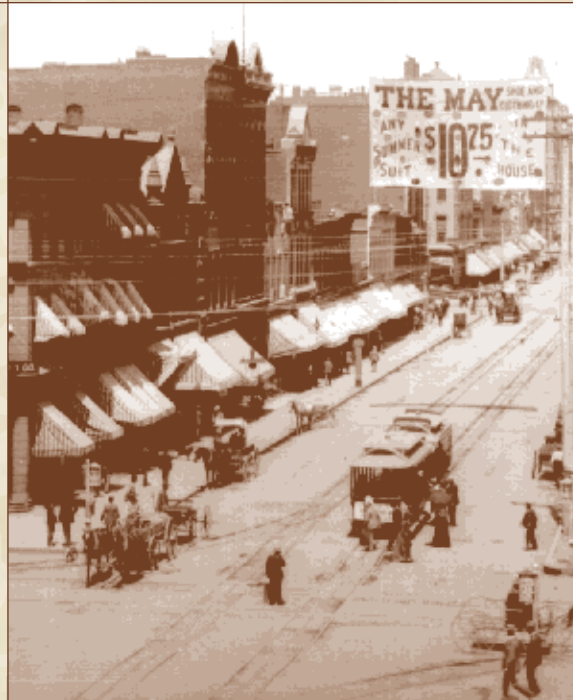
Larimer Square is located between 14th and 15th Streets on Larimer, just blocks from the Colorado Convention Center and The Denver Performing Arts Complex.



Larimer Square's parking structure is located at 1422 Market Street.

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## LARIMER SQUARE



## Historic Walking Tour

Larimer Square is an area as rich in history as it is in fine shopping and dining. As the Mile High City's oldest and most historic block, its buildings vividly tell the story of the birth and early years of Denver. The Walking Tour offers you a peek into the past of Larimer Square and the people who were part of it.

### one

The lobby of the **Granite Building** is the perfect place to start, as it sits on the site that was the birthplace of Denver. In 1858, gold was discovered on the front range and in the Colorado mountains, and people flocked to the area as news of the discovery reached the east. Green Russell's group made the first gold strike at Cherry Creek that



summer, and settled at the point where Speer Boulevard meets Cherry Creek, just a block away, calling their camp Auraria. Soon after, another group settled on this side of the Creek where the Granite Building now stands, calling their camp St. Charles. Unfortunately for the St. Charles settlers, General William H. Larimer, Jr. arrived soon thereafter, and liking what he saw, and claimed the spot for himself, instructing his lackeys to race to Leavenworth to record the claim. They beat the St. Charles party to Leavenworth, and jumped the claim, but for good measure, they decided to call the town site Denver City after James Denver, territorial governor of Kansas. Larimer named main street after himself. Take a moment to enjoy the lobby which was restored in the '90s and look over the authentic maps and photographs of Denver.

After taking in the history of the Granite Building lobby, exit, take a left and proceed to the corner of 15th and Larimer.



### two

William Larimer built the first house in Denver at this very site, a 16 x 20 foot cabin, which featured such luxuries as front doors made from coffin lids, and the city's first window, which was made of a semi-transparent glazed material.



In 1882, George W. and William N. Clayton erected the current four-story building, entirely of Colorado materials except for the glass and hardware, to house the MacNamara Dry Goods store, predecessor of the Denver Dry Goods Company. During the 1860's, William served as mayor of Denver and George served as a city councilman, and their names still stand on the corner roof pediment of the building. During this time, Larimer Street boasted 25 buildings, and grew substantially when the rival town of Auraria merged with Denver into one city during a torch-lit ceremony on the Larimer Street Bridge spanning Cherry Creek in the summer of 1860. After the turn of the century, the Clayton Building became the Granite Hotel, which is the origin of its current name, the Granite Building. Its restoration in the 1960s uncovered huge plate glass and stained glass windows, cast iron pillars stamped "Colorado Iron Works," and a grand staircase that had been boxed in.

### three

Look down Larimer towards 14th Street. You are looking at Denver's first main street, home of the first bookstore, post office, bank, photo studio and dry goods store. Denver and Larimer Street were flourishing as Colorado became a territory in 1861 and Denver officially chartered the same year. With luck, Larimer Street escaped the fire of 1863 which devastated Market and Blake and confirmed Larimer Street's main street status. By 1870, Larimer Square was the hub of the city and by 1880, Denver's population had climbed to more than 35,000, a boom period which saw the building of many of Larimer Square's buildings and lasted until the silver crash of 1893.

After the silver crash, Larimer's fortunes declined and the buildings slowly deteriorated. Until 1900, the street was overrun with out-of-work miners, ranchers and railroad workers and during this time. Larimer boasted 55 saloons and 1/3 of Denver's gambling houses, all of which were supported by corrupt police and government officials, whose offices were at city hall, located at 14th and Larimer.

The status quo continued through WWII until in 1963, the debate began about how to get rid of "Skid Row" and in 1967, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority Plan was passed by voters which would demolish and rebuild 30 blocks downtown, including what is now Larimer Square. In 1963, Dana Crawford formed a group of investors that successfully prevented the demolition of the 1400 block of Larimer Street. They refurbished the buildings, created courtyards and arcades to encourage people to spend time at Larimer, and began leasing to office and retail tenants with the intention of making Larimer Square the center of activity in Downtown.

In order to save landmarks during this period, the Denver Landmark Commission was created in 1969, with the purpose of designating and preserving historic sites in Denver. The first historic district to be designated was the 1400 block of Larimer Street in 1971 and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Larimer Square was sold to its current ownership group in 1993.

There have been several characters to grace Larimer Square over the years. In November of 1859, Count Henri Murat and his wife set up the first barber shop, and claiming to be a royal descendent of the King of Naples, charge exorbitant prices for his services. His wife, Countess Katrina Murat, fashioned the first American flag for the community using her red, white and blue undergarments!



## four

Stroll down Larimer past the newest Building on Larimer, the Noel Building built in 2003 to accommodate The Capital Grille, and past the red-brick Buerger and Sussex Buildings. Turn left into the Kettle arcade. As you walk through, look at the ceiling which features paintings of some old west celebrities who frequented Larimer Street:

Chief Hosa (Little Raven) has an eagle beside him and was a chief of the Native American Arapahoe tribe who learned to communicate with the white man to promote peace.

The woman riding the two horses is the famous markswoman Annie Oakley, who made her name traveling with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which toured all over the world.

Denver's founder, General William H. Larimer sits wears his Yankee uniform and sits by his infamous cabin.



Soapy Smith, the king of Western con-men, plays music as he looks towards the Rockies. He created his own con game in which he would stand on a corner and sell cubes of laundry soap wrapped in paper for \$5 each, telling spectators the he had hidden \$50 in every few cubes. This is how he acquired his nickname, Soapy.

Mayor Robert Speer is sitting on the rock next to Soapy, and was the first Mayor of Denver, an office he was reelected to twice. Under his watch the city built the Denver Auditorium Theatre and Convention Center, constructed Cherry Creek Boulevard (renamed Speer in his honor), and built the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and Civic Center Park.

Pass through the Kettle Arcade and you will be entering the Bull & Bear Courtyard, named after the carved stone figures on either side of the arch leading to the entrance of Bistro Vendôme. These figures were saved from demolition in the '60's when the city tore down the Mining Exchange building to make room for the Brook's Tower just south of Larimer Square, and refer to the "bull" and "bear" cycles of the stock markets.

The cherub statue was also rescued from its location in front of the former Manhattan Restaurant at 1633 Larimer during the '60s. To your right, you will see Gusterman Silversmith's, the only tenant remaining from Dana Crawford's original line up. Take a left and go through the archway to enjoy the rest of the beautifully landscaped courtyard.

## five

Travel back through the Kettle Arcade. The small white building directly above the Kettle Arcade entrance with "Kettle" etched on top was built in 1873 by George Kettle. Kettle bought an empty lot there, built the front and back and used the walls of his neighbors! This wasn't discovered until the renovation of Larimer Square in 1965.

*A side note about the Sussex Building on your right: In 1969, the Romero family opened La Mancha Restaurant in the basement where it was reported that ghostly spirits frequently would bang on the walls and rattle the pipes. To calm themselves, customers would drink hurricane margaritas, which were mixed six gallons at a time every day at 9:30 am and 2:30 pm.*

## six

Turn left and stop at The Bent Lens in the Barnum Building, the location of the first post office in Denver, and the address of thousands of pikes peak goldrushers who received more than 12,500 letters per week on average. The ever-frugal miners would pay the 25 cents required to get their letters, would read them and then give them back saying they were for someone else, getting their money back.



Continue on to 1402 Larimer where Dog Savvy is located. The Hope Building, was built in 1888, and housed J.H. Howard's Jewelry shop in 1890 and the City Hall Pharmacy from 1896 to the 1940's, and was the long-time home of the Hope Hotel. A one-story addition was made to the building in 1993, and at that time, the adjacent building where Starbucks is located, the Neverland Building, was constructed.

Cross the street to 1401 Larimer. On the grassy corner across the street towards the mountains where the mounted bell stands, is where Denver's first city hall was located. The building was torn down in the 1940s. Continue down 14th Street to Euclid Hall—1317 14th Street. Euclid Hall was constructed in the late 1800's. This three-story building has been home to the Masons, the Colorado Women's Relief Corp., a variety of social clubs, Maudie's flea market, and it is even rumored to have once been the very fancy headquarters of a brothel catering to government officials, law enforcement and members of the media. Perhaps its most memorable occupant of Euclid Hall was Soapy Smith's Double Eagle Bar which operated from 1977 through the end of the century. Named after the legendary con-man and early Denver personality

Soapy Smith, the bar was a long-time gathering place for good food and live entertainment.

It was in front of this building where there was one attempt at reform by governor Davis H. Waite who precipitated the City Hall War of 1894 when he tried to replace the corrupt police and fire commissioners who, in turn, refused to leave. Waite called in 400 militia troops, but they were challenged at city hall by a force lead by Soapy Smith, his companion, a hefty case of dynamite, and other leaders and members of the underworld. The standoff attracted more than 20,000 people to this corner. The governor stood down, took his case to court and lost, thus the underworld prevailed and skid row remained.

## seven

Return to the corner at Larimer Street to The Miller Building at 1401 Larimer, which was once Gahan's Saloon, a legendary watering hole and poker hall for politicians, policemen and city hall reporters. Gahan's became Gahan's "Soft Drink Parlor" with the onset of prohibition in 1916 as a cover for the Denver's hottest speakeasy which operated out of the basement.

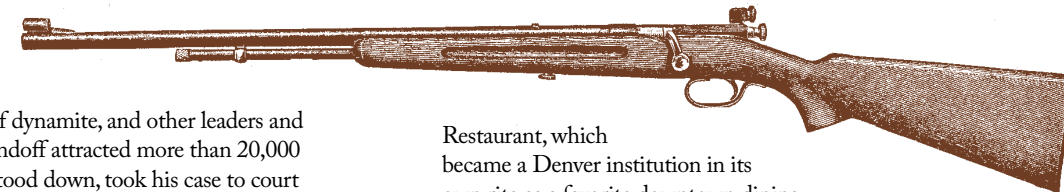


## eight

Walk to the building numbered 1415. Lincoln Hall was constructed in the 1880's and is an unusual building because of its tin mansard roof, typical of French architecture. Also, the entire second floor of this building, once a dance hall, was originally suspended on springs. This place became notorious for drunkenness, disorder and debauchery of young women who came to the dances.

Stroll down towards the Market Clock, and as you walk, you will be passing the Congdon Building. In 1861, the first theatre and city hall was named Apollo Hall and was located at 1425 Larimer. The owner, Libeus Barney, collected \$400 per night at \$1 per head for his shows, and though Barney claimed the large turnout demonstrated "the appreciation of art," the Rocky Mountain News complained frequently about the drunken uproar from the bar below and the occasional gunfire which kept the actors and plot moving quickly.

Next you will pass the two-story Looms Building, which was built in 1885 and is one of the more simple buildings on Larimer Square. Constructed of plain brick and decorated with three rectangular windows, an ornate cornice supported by bracketed eaves featuring dentils and Greek scrolls and scallops, the building is an elegant example of the architecture of its day.



Restaurant, which became a Denver institution in its own rite as a favorite downtown dining destination yet it closed in 2005. The ornate, original back bar for Josephina's remains today inside the building.

The Frontenac building has long been rumored to serve as the home for the ghost of Amelia, a showgirl who worked at the dance hall that occupied the space in the 1920's. After falling in love with the owner, "Papa," the two lovers married. Soon, Amelia and Papa gave birth to a child, a girl they named Ginger.

At the age of sixteen, Ginger fell in love with a young man who was rumored to have underground Mafia connections. Papa became enraged and hired a hit man to eliminate the young man. The hit man was successful; he murdered Ginger's lover but by fluke circumstance, Ginger was at the wrong place at the wrong time and was also tragically killed. Upon hearing the news of her daughter's death, Amelia was seated at the rear of what is currently Rioja restaurant. It said that her presence is felt and seen today in both buildings.

The brick building with the white cornice, is named Crawford after developer Dana Crawford, as it was her favorite building on the block. Built in 1875, its ornate wood-carved cornices are some of the most intricate and detailed carvings found in Western Victorian architecture.

Proceed to the building labeled 1441. This site was originally occupied by the Metropolitan Billiard Saloon in the 1960's, a false-fronted frame hall that was a magnet for drunken commotion, rattling billiard balls, and occasional gunplay. The false-front building was torn down and the current building was constructed in 1889. The building gets its name from its prior owner, Joe Replin, who ran an office supply store here for nearly 50 years.



## nine

The building standing next to the clock is the Gallup-Standbury Building, constructed in 1873 by merchant Avery Gallup and political aspirant, Andy Standbury, replacing the false front building which previously housed Andrew Standbury's famed Tambien Saloon.