

# Union Station



1701 Wynkoop Street

Before the construction of the current Union Station, there was a series of Train Depots that were individually run by the different Rail companies.



One of the small Train Depots (located just east of the current location) was having problems with people not using the spittoon that was in the lobby of the building. They decided to stop the issue by placing a sign in the lobby stating "please Do Not spit on the floor. Use the spittoon". This did not seem to be working, so they "acquired" a human head from City Cemetery (Cheesman Park) and placed it near the sign, adding "this is the last guy that spit on the floor". This approach seemed to take care of the problem. Years later when the building was demolished the head was buried on the property. It is rumored to be buried in the location of where Union Station is today.

There was a decision that having passengers walking (sometimes for miles) between Depots was not something that represented an upcoming town like Denver, so the decision to make a "Union" Station was made.



Built in 1881 on 17<sup>th</sup> and Wynkoop.

The original structure featured a much larger building with a large clock tower in the middle of the structure.

In 1894 there was a fire that destroyed a large portion of the structure, including the clock tower, which was never replaced.



**After the fire**

There used to be a huge welcoming arch that was built in 1906. It read "MIZPAH" (Hebrew for welcome) on one side and "Welcome" on the other. The arch was dismantled in 1931 as a traffic hazard.

In 1933 there was a large flood that submerged the structure for several days

In 1965 a massive flood overtook the city and once again put Union Station under water.

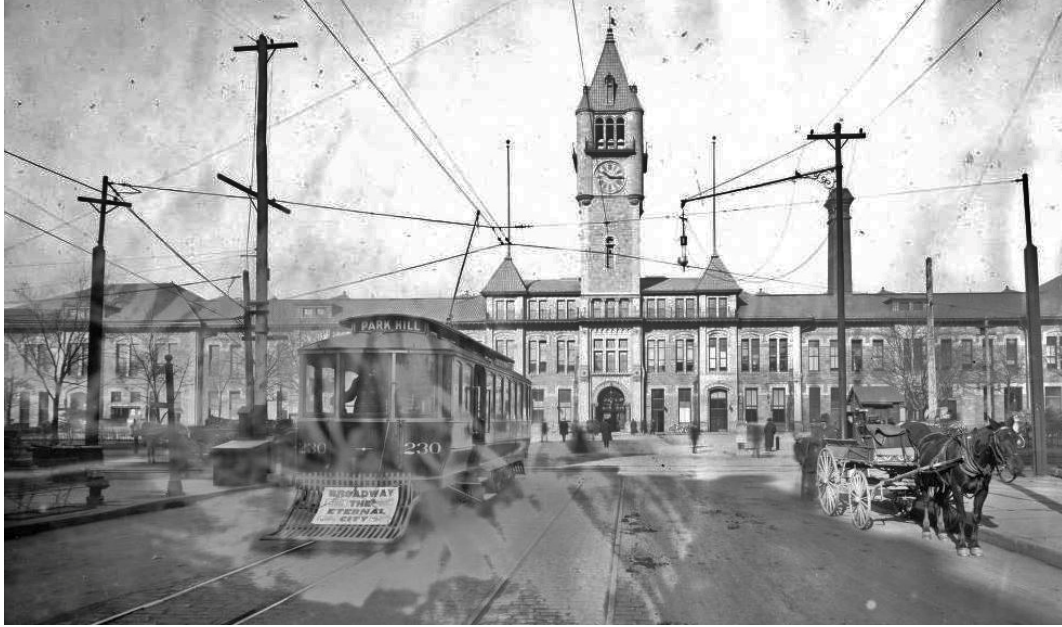


Story from newspaper:

*"October 4 1883 – Arapahoe & 19<sup>th</sup>*

*At 10 o'clock Tuesday evening at the corner of Arapahoe and nineteenth streets, O.J. Hallar committed a double murder by shooting his wife dead and fatally wounding Samuel Morris, whom he charged with being his wife's paramour. The murder was a most heartless one and was perpetrated, it is thought in the same mind. The parties to the tragedy are not well known here, as they arrived a few days ago. The murderer who recently kept a pawn shop in Pueblo and has resided in various portions of the state during the past nine years. Morris was a barber and worked in a shop in the basement of Skinner Brothers & Wright's building. The instigations of the tragedy were jealousy.*

*Update - - - Morris who last night thought to have a death wound is resting quietly tonight.*



*Aug 2 1893 - Denver was disgraced by a lynching on the night on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup>. It can be said however that the victim or the mob was guilty and richly deserved his fate.*

*The man lynched was Dan Arata who on the day previous while partially intoxicated foully murdered Benjamin C. Lightfoot a highly respected citizen and a member of the RAR. Lightfoot was killed in Arata's saloon near the Union Depot, without any provocation whatever. Arata, who is an Italian, had been ugly all day and was looking for someone to wreak vengeance upon when Lightfoot dropped into the saloon for a drink of beer on his way home from work. Arata shot and pounded Lightfoot to death and threw the body into the alley. He was arrested but denied committing the crime. Arata had killed a man become and had been cleared by an alibi sworn to by Italians. There were rumors of a lynching during the day, and at 8 o'clock a party of*



army veterans and other formed at Eighteenth and Larimer streets and started for the jail for the purpose of avenging Lightfoot's death. As the crowd progressed it was augmented by thousands of men, crying "Hang the Dago". At Fourteenth street the excitement became so intense that the crowd began to run, and then the rush to the jail became a perfect race, each man apparently in the greatest alarm lest some others should get there and rob him of the privilege of assisting the hideous task. To get to the jail in the shortest possible time became everybody's aim, and breaking from the original mass great parties of 500 or more swept along every street, each taking the way that occurred to it as the shortest. At shortly after 9 o'clock the square about the jail was thronged by an excited mob of more than 10,000 men. The leaders lost no time in speech-making. Without a moment's delay for of them dashed up the steps to the north of the main entrance. They were met there by Captain Crews, who demanded what they wanted. "We want the brutal fiend of a Dago you've got here." Replied the spokesman, in a low voice. "You'll give him up?" "I will not." was the all the jailer said, but his tone meant business and the door closed with a clang. "Then we'll take him," yelled the leaders of the mob, and they explained as best they could to their pushing, struggling companions below what Captain Crews had said, and the task that was before them. When the actual work of breaking in was decided upon, a state of things developed that showed clearly the spontaneous growth of the movement. In the whole mob there was not a tool of even the dimensions of a tack hammer. No one had given thought to a thing beyond the simple getting of his own person to the scene of the action. Now for a few moments all was confusion and uproar. "A sledge! A sledge!" a hundred throats would yell. "Bring a crow or a sledge," would come the echo from a thousand or more, but to no one did it seem to occur to go and get the tools himself. Then principally, for want of other occupation those on the porch began to tear down the storm doors. In an instant Constable George Welsh was among them, cuffing and batting them right and left with his fists and kicking the whole dozen or so off the steps altogether. His fearless pluck and determination evidently awed the mob, and had it been followed up at once by the resolute action of even a dozen others, the mob, big as it was, could have been dispersed without further trouble. But the support did not come, the proper opportunity was allowed to slip by and from that minute the final result became inevitable. A strongly built heavy set man, evidently a mechanic, appeared with a crowbar and with him a companion bearing a sledge. Without a word these two tramped up the steps and the next minute a dull thud, followed by a ringing clank of metal against metal, announced that the first actual blows were struck and the crowd frantically shrieked with delighted satisfaction. The blow after blow echoed and re-echoed in a way that told plainly that the sledge was being wielded by men who knew how to use it.



*All this time the guards within the jail had been keeping very quiet, but now they could be seen through the windows, running about, evidently preparing for the defense. The first result of this movement became apparent when the light on the porch suddenly went out, leaving the workers in darkness – the gas had been turned off inside the jail. For a few moments this caused a lull in the sledging, but then a candle was produced, and soon a kerosene lamp, and the banging of the hammer started up again with redoubled vigor amid tremendous yelling by the crowd. The entrance at which this attack was being made is peculiarly strongly situated for defense. It is perhaps ten feet above the ground, reached by a flight of a dozen steps and a porch not over five feet wide. This gave the attacking party very scant room for work. The door itself is double, the outer one being of iron and steel bars, the inner of solid iron. The outer cage door of course to be overcome first, and the sledging, for all it was kept up persistently and with vigor, had very little effect. The crowd soon began to be impatient, and ironical shouts of “Goin’ to be all night about that door” were going up on every side, when all at once there was change. A gig brawny miner appeared on the porch, and he had a miners pick with him. With a wave of his hand he got the other workers out of the way and struck a scientific blow that the stonework about the hinges. The splinters and chips flew in every direction, and it was evident in a moment that a very few more such strokes would settle the door. The guards inside evidently appreciated this as well as anybody, for they at once ceased their Fabian tactics, and, throwing open the solid inside door, turned the fire hose on the lights of the attackers. This caused another delay, while the illuminations was relit, only to be extinguished in the same way once again. The next time the light-holders lit up they put their hats before the lamps and candles, while others tore off of the*

*storm doors and pressed it against the grating to break the force of the stream from the faces of the workers, and then the hammer began again. The struggle continued in this way for some time. One of the guards inside the jail fired on the besiegers and a colored boy was wounded in the hip. This increased rather than diminished the zeal of the mob. Street cars were stopped and the headlights taken off to furnish light for the men at work upon the door.*







*Other parties began work upon the other entrances of the jail. Twenty men took a long four-inch iron pipe someone found and using it as a battering-ram made short work of the ground floor door on South eleventh street. As it went in a perfect roar of satisfaction went up from the 10,000 throats. "They're in, They're in! Come on everybody." Was the cry, and hundreds of men crowded themselves into the corridor, where everybody soon found himself in everybody else's way, for there were several more steel doors to be broken down before they could even get upstairs, but nothing daunted, the battering ram fell to work with a will, and the crash of their blows re-echoed through the whole building. To intimidate the party, the guards fired several more shots from shotguns, which made a most thunderous and disquieting noise, but the fact announced by somebody that the charges were only blanks markedly spoiled the effect. Finally, at 10:30 by dint of hard work with the crows, the sledge and the miners' picks, the outside grated door on the north side gave way and was torn aside. Five minutes more and the inner door yielded, and with a rush the mob went into the jail. They expected a hot reception as they went up the stairs. They were confronted by a squad of policemen, but still they poured up the stairs. The officers saw it was no use; nothing could be done by clubbing; and they would not shoot. The guards could have used their guns and slaughtered many, but Jailor Crews ordered them to retreat to the inner corridor and slammed the door in the faces in the leaders of the crowd. This door is but a thin plate and the guards saw at once that it would be broken down within a few minutes. They hid away the keys to the different wards and then allowed the vast crowd to rush into the main court of the jail. One of the leaders demanded the keys, but Crews refused to give them up and the mob proceeded to hunt for Arata. The crowd had not been in the jail long before the information was given that Arata was in the "cooler" and the same sledgers who broke in the front door were soon at work on this cell. The*

*cell has but one solid iron door, but this is of great thickness, and it required half an hour to get through it. When the interior of the cell was open to the view of the crowd, Arata was standing coldly in the middle of the cell, cool and calm, seemingly indifferent to the fate awaiting him. "Go to hell, you fellows. What you been making so much noise about" I am the wrong man," he said. "That's Arata. That's he," Cried several and two or three grabbed him and jerked him into the corridor. "Get over this as soon as you can" a grabbed his hair. "Don't bull my hair. Kill be if you're going to," he yelled.*



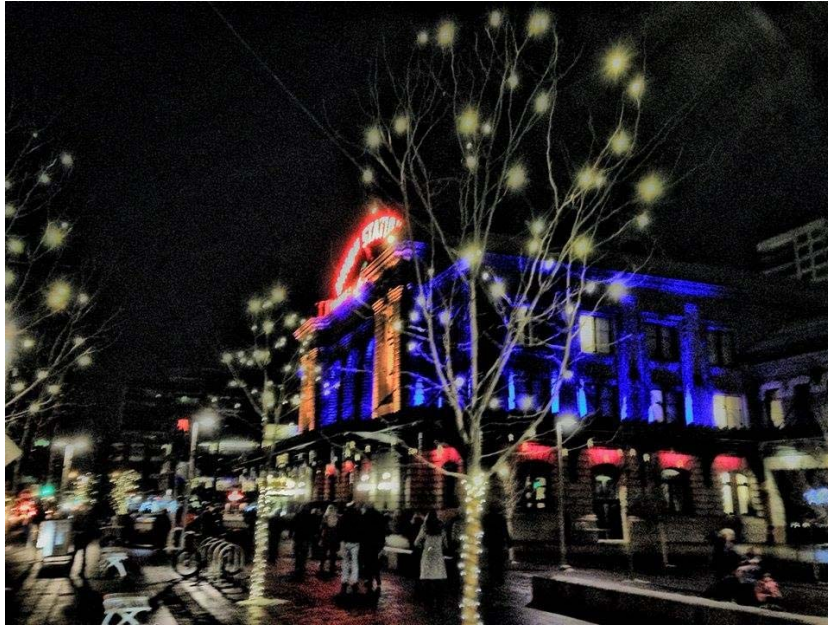
*More like a rag than a human being, the murderer was dragged, knocked, pulled out into the open air, where he was received with yells of satisfaction. The murderer was carried quickly to Santa Fe Avenue and across the street. After a few minutes waiting a rope was produced and thrown over the limb of a cottonwood tree. Ready hands made a noose at the lower end. Arata stood first in a stupor of fear and then struggled like a wild beast at bay. Someone struck him a blow to the neck. He stopped struggling. "What have you to say?" "Tell my mother not to cry" said Arata. "Did you murder Lightfoot?" "Yes; hurry up and get through with me," he panted. He was quickly strung up, and after a few convulsive jerks a number of shots were fired into his body. The mob was not yet satisfied and proceeded to drag the body through the streets. The leaders, followed by a tremendous throng proceeded downtown at 11 o'clock they reached the corner of seventeenth and Curtis where the almost naked body was again suspended. It was cut down in short time by the police."*



#### Ghost Stories:

The Train Depot that was at the location before Union Station claimed that after they had “acquired” the human head used to dissuade clients from spitting on the floor, the night watchmen reported that they heard odd sounds and moaning accompanied with the sight of a headless body wandering the property (likely looking for its missing head).

One of the ghosts is a three fingered hobo who used to live at the station. He will bother the ticket agents and follow passengers.



There is a story of a little girl dressed in 1800's attire, maybe she is a victim of the fire in 1894? A maintenance worker has seen her in the tunnels.



Reports of a headless body and a floating head have been reported by guests and staff. They have been spotted throughout the building.

A night watchman was working alone late one evening after everyone had left the building. He was doing his rounds, and claimed that he heard what sounded like a “large party” coming from a locked storage room located in the basement. When he went to investigate, the sound became increasingly loud as he approached the room. He says that the minute that he opened the locked door, the sound stopped and he could not find the source of the sound.



