

# BOETTCHER HARDWARE



This etching, done in 1887, depicts Harrison Avenue in Leadville, location of the Boettcher hardware store and the busiest street in the state during the silver boom of the 1880s.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

## FROM GERMANY TO CHEYENNE

"Hardware is one of the best businesses there is. I like that line, I was brought up in it. Axes and hammers don't go out of style like so many other things." This quotation was published in the Rocky Mountain News in April of 1934, when Charles Boettcher's business enterprises had turned him into a national figure. Charles was born into the hardware business; his parents, Frederick and Susanna Boettcher, ran a hardware store in Kolleda, Germany. When Charles finished Gymnasium (secondary school) his parents sent him to America to visit his older brother Herman, who was working in a hardware store in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Once in America, Charles admired the western landscapes and was soon working alongside Herman at Hoyer & Company Hardware. As a fringe benefit, he was allowed to sleep under the store counter. Charles figured out early that he was better off saving his money than spending it foolishly in the town saloons.

## THE BOETTCHERS ARRIVE IN COLORADO

Both Herman and Charles were self-disciplined and conditioned to work hard, and soon Herman was able to buy the Cheyenne store and an affiliate in Greeley. Herman enlisted Charles as his partner, and in the summer of 1871 the brothers acquired another new store, this time in Evans, Colorado, just four miles from Greeley. Less than a year later, Charles moved to the new agricultural colony, Fort Collins. In Fort Collins, Charles met and married Fannie Augusta Cowan. Business in Fort Collins suffered because the town had no railroad connection, so during their first year of marriage the couple moved south, to Boulder, where Charles opened the first hardware store in his own name. The Boulder store was so prosperous that Charles was able to build a large new building at 12th and Pearl, in the young town's central commercial district. The building still stands today with the C. Boettcher & Company name visible high above the main

entrance. Charles later reminisced that the nearly 4 1/2 years he and Fannie spent in Boulder were the happiest of his life. This may in part be due to the arrival of the couple's first child, Claudius Kedzie, in 1875.

## BOOM TIMES LEAD TO EXPANDED INTERESTS

Although the family was both happy and prosperous in Boulder, their days in the town were numbered as soon as Charles heard of the silver boom in Leadville. Charles was always quick to recognize an opportunity and immediately began preparations to move his young family and business to the mining settlement. Although travel and transportation were often difficult, Charles Boettcher's decision to move to Leadville was fortuitous. While the hardware business flourished, Charles' investments broadened to include mining properties, a ranch in North Park, and Leadville's first electric company. Charles also became involved in banking circles, serving as a director the Carbonate Bank. The decision to join the Carbonate Bank marked a turning point in Charles' career. Charles, along with six other bank directors, would soon move to Denver to further expand his business interests. When they finally left Leadville, Charles, Fannie, and Claude had spent a decade in the two-mile high city and become one of Colorado's wealthiest and most prominent founding families.



Throughout the 1880s the Boettcher Hardware store was located on the east (right) side of Harrison Avenue, and was one of the busiest and most prosperous spots in the mining settlement.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

# ✦ GREAT WESTERN SUGAR ✦



A view of the Great Western Factory in Loveland, Colorado, one of the first factories built by Charles Boettcher and his associates.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

## DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS

By the end of the 1880s Charles Boettcher owned multiple hardware businesses and had his hand in mining, electricity, ranching, and banking. In the 1890s his interests would grow to include a meat packing company, a railroad, and Capitol Life Insurance. Charles also continued to build a banking empire when he became the President of the National Bank of Commerce in 1897. However, the financial panic of 1893 and the rapid decline of silver signaled the end of Colorado's boom period and forced Charles to spend the next decade trying to keep his businesses solvent. As a result of these draining years, Charles and Fannie took a six-month vacation to Europe. Before returning home, however, Charles studied Germany's successful sugar beet industry and obtained some high quality seed. Fannie then emptied one of her trunks to transport the seeds back to Colorado!

## COLORADO'S FIRST SUGAR FACTORY

Colorado's sugar beet industry had struggled to get off its feet for a number of years. Charles realized that Colorado's farmers needed to know more than how to grow beets; they needed to raise capital, to build factories, and to manufacture the sugar. Immediately upon his return, Charles enlisted John Campion, William Bryd Page, J.R. McKinnie, and his son, Claude, to form the Great Western Sugar Company. The group quickly developed plans to build a large factory in Loveland, south of Fort Collins. The plant's first year was a success, and soon other rural communities were willing to give sugar beets a chance. Charles' ability to see sugar's potential in Colorado was crucial. Colorado's economy depended on the development of new industries, and the young state's farming communities were desperate for a profitable crop. Between 1899 and 1900 the sugar industry in Colorado grew from \$100,000 to \$3,600,000. Soon, factories were built in Rocky Ford, Eaton, Greeley, Longmont, Fort Collins, Windsor, and Holly.



The sugar beet industry provided work for laborers after the decline of silver mining in the 1890s.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library



The Great Western Factory in Sterling, Colorado circa 1910.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

## WESTERN EXPANSION

By 1905, Charles' original partners had sold their stock to eastern interests. Charles, however, chose to join the directorate of the new corporation. Over the next decades, the company expanded into Nebraska and Wyoming and built additional factories in Colorado at Brighton, Johnstown, and Ovid. By 1930, Great Western was one of the largest beet sugar producers in the world. Between the wars, Great Western employed 9,000 people in twenty factories. By the late 1970s, Great Western produced almost 1/4 of the nation's beet sugar. Charles Boettcher's foresight and creativity in 1900 helped to ensure economic stability for the entire state throughout the 20th century, and led to the development of other lucrative enterprises.

# IDEAL CEMENT

## SUGAR BEETS LEAD TO CEMENT FACTORIES

When Charles founded Great Western Sugar, Colorado was not truly industrialized. Most of the materials needed for industrialization had to be imported from the East or from Europe, which was not only expensive but also inefficient. To Charles, the expense of importing high grade, durable cement seemed wasteful, and he instinctively knew that Colorado could produce its own. Colorado was rich in the necessary natural resources, lime, silica, and alumina. In 1901, only months after Great Western's debut, Charles and John Thatcher of Pueblo incorporated the Portland Cement Company and bought land adjacent to Colorado's only cement plant in Florence, Colorado. The owners of the existing plant realized what they were up against and quickly joined forces with Boettcher and Thatcher. Just as he had with his hardware businesses, Charles made certain that his merchandise was top-quality.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

The sign at the Ideal Factory in Fremont County combines the original Portland Cement name with the Ideal name, adopted in 1924.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

The Ideal Cement Building, still located in downtown Denver, was the first reinforced concrete building in the city.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

Chris Dobbins began working for Charles Boettcher at Ideal in 1919 as an office boy. He was named President of the company in 1952 and served as chairman of the board from 1968 until 1979.

## THE "IDEAL" INDUSTRY

In 1908, Denver witnessed the completion of its first reinforced concrete building at the corner of Seventeenth and Champa, built by Charles Boettcher to promote the use of cement. Charles even ordered the workers to burn the wooden forms used in construction to dramatize the strength of cement. The building would later be named the Ideal Building, as the conglomerate of cement companies gathered by Charles Boettcher and his partners became the Ideal Cement Company in 1924, with Charles as President and Claude as Vice-President. A year later, a cement plant was completed outside Fort Collins, and the small town that resulted was named Boettcher, Colorado. After two decades of progress Ideal Cement had plants all over the West and the cement industry had led Charles and Claude into a variety of other industries, most importantly, potash. After Charles' death, Ideal merged with Potash of America and became Ideal Basic Industries.

## MEN OVER MACHINERY

By 1955, Ideal Cement employed 3,200 people, operated 13 plants in 26 states, and was one of the nation's top three producing companies. Ideal Cement was not just a local business - it was a nationally recognized trademark and had achieved "a position of prominence in the industry and nationally." Ideal Cement became Charles' primary focus, and it bore the stamp of his philosophy, which included faith in his employees. As a result of this credo, Charles often promoted his trusted employees to top positions. Chris Dobbins, for example, began working as an office boy for Charles in 1919, and after decades of dedicated service in a number of positions he was named head of Ideal Cement. Charles once said, "There is nothing more important in any business than the men who make it up. Machinery can be bought or repaired, or renewed, or rearranged, but the finest machinery in the world is worthless without good men to run it." Charles' employees could never complain that he did not hold himself to the same standards, as he went to his office on the fifth floor of the Ideal Building nearly every day until his death at age 96.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

Charles Boettcher went to his office each morning in the Ideal Building. During his later years, Cris Dobbins picked him up at the Brown Palace, where he had an apartment, and dropped him off each evening.

# BOETTCHER & COMPANY

## PIONEERS' SONS TO FINANCE GROWTH

At the turn of the century, Denverites with capital to spare realized that investing in the city's and the state's future could bring big dividends. Charles Boettcher and H.M. Porter, in addition to being close friends, were business associates. They invested together and served on the board of directors of Colorado's leading enterprises. In 1902, Boettcher and Porter set up the Fifteenth Street Investment Company to purchase and manage downtown Denver property. The Company became the largest landowner in downtown Denver. Encouraged by their fathers, Claude Boettcher and John Porter, along with another scion of the pioneer generation, Gerald Hughes, further formalized their fathers' investment practices in 1910 when they founded Boettcher, Porter & Company. The company's first aim was to channel money into much-needed municipal projects and growing businesses. The company rapidly became one of the region's most successful firms. Tragically, John Porter died in 1925. For several years, the firm operated under the name Boettcher & Company, and there were few changes to the basic policies: expand along conservative lines and finance western enterprises.



Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society  
**John Porter, co-founder of Boettcher, Porter & Company.**



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library  
**Henry M. Porter, close friend and associate of Charles Boettcher and father of John Porter.**

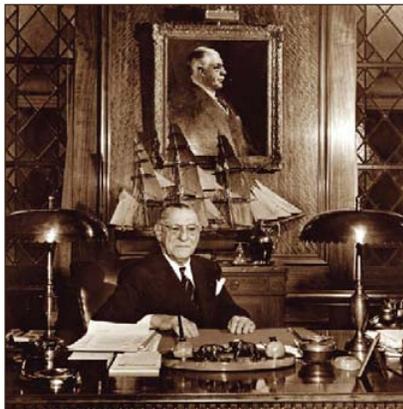


Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society  
**Claude Boettcher at his desk in the Boston Building, with a portrait of his father who provided the inspiration for the investment company.**

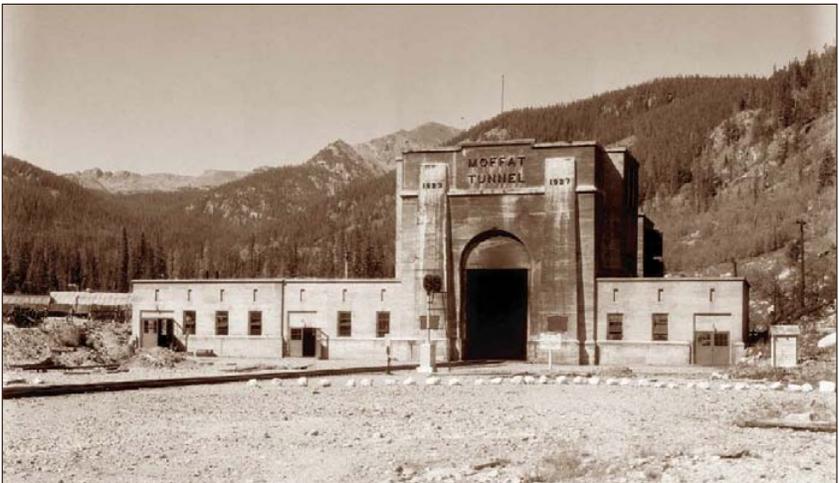


Photo Credit: Denver Public Library  
**The Moffat Tunnel was one of Boettcher & Company's projects and was significant in opening Colorado's western slope to commerce.**

## THE FIRM EVOLVES

In 1928, Claude's only child Charles, along with James Q. Newton, acquired a stock exchange firm, which they renamed Boettcher, Newton & Company. The firm focused on commodities and securities, rather than municipals. Due to its similar name and 17th Street location, the two Boettcher partnerships were often confused, and therefore decided to merge in 1929 and to retain the Boettcher, Newton & Company name. The merged company was housed in the Boston Building on 17th Street, but before the files were even organized the stock market crashed. Creative measures were needed to keep the company solvent through the next decade. Claude Boettcher and James Newton led the company through this trying period. James was liberal and impatient, while Claude was conservative and pragmatic. This blend helped keep the company grounded, while allowing it to progress into the future. The controlled growth facilitated by Boettcher, Newton & Co. helped Colorado to avoid some of the negative consequences of industrialization. The firm helped to finance many historically significant projects statewide, including the construction of the Moffat Tunnel in 1924 and a new hanger

at the airfield, which eventually became Stapleton Airport. In 1938, James Newton and Claude handed the reigns over to Warren Willard, who had been with the firm since 1921. After Newton's death in 1944 the firm became simply Boettcher & Company again.

## THE "WALL STREET" OF THE WEST

Under Willard's leadership, Boettcher & Co. acquired a seat at the New York Stock Exchange, becoming the first Colorado firm to do so. Willard also instigated a move to a computer-based system, long before computers were commonplace. The software developed for the firm was licensed to Computer Research, Inc. and installed all over the country. During the 60s and 70s, Boettcher & Company was involved in another series of important projects: financing the Boulder Turnpike, the ski industry at Vail, new buildings on the University of Colorado campus, and numerous projects at Denver hospitals. By the late 1970s Boettcher & Co. was referred to as "the Wall Street of the West." In 1985 Boettcher & Company was sold to the insurance company, Kemper Corp, after seventy-five years of doing business in Colorado and the West.

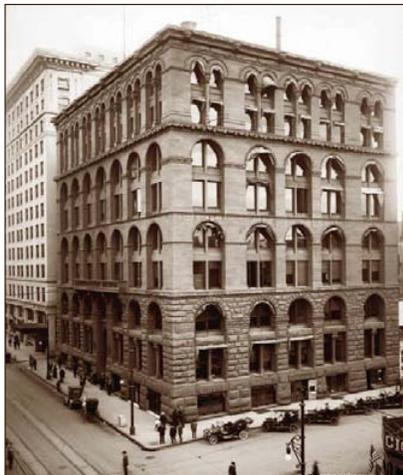


Photo Credit: Denver Public Library  
**The Boston Building in downtown Denver, home of Boettcher & Company for over sixty years.**

# THE BROWN PALACE



The Brown Palace circa 1890, when it was the largest building in the city.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

## TAVERNS AND TOWERS AT THE BROWN PALACE

Charles Boettcher never considered the Brown Palace a sound investment and commented that he wished he could just turn the key in the lock and walk away. Claude, however, had more faith and undertook a major renovation of the upper floors of the Brown Palace in 1935. An engineer and architect by training, Claude enjoyed such projects and was the driving force behind the Ship Tavern, still a popular restaurant on the hotel's first floor. The restaurant's name and theme were inspired by his extensive model ship collection. Later, Claude helped plan the twenty-two-story tower known as the "Brown Palace West." The tower was completed in 1959 and a bridge over Tremont Street connects it to the main building.

## CHARLES BOETTCHER RESIDES IN PALACE

Claude's father, Charles, lived in the Brown Palace for many years before his death. Never wasteful or extravagant, Charles maintained a simple lifestyle in the luxurious setting. Every evening he crossed the street to purchase a Coca-Cola; when employees asked why he did not simply order one through room service he replied, "And pay the prices we ask here?" Mae Boettcher, wife of Charles' grandson and long-time Trustee of the Foundation, also maintained an apartment in the hotel until its sale in the 1980s. During the years the Boettchers owned the Brown, the hotel hosted numerous American Presidents. In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower made the hotel his campaign headquarters and during his term the hotel was nicknamed the "Summer White House." The Brown Palace came to the Boettcher Foundation as part of Claude Boettcher's estate in 1957. The Foundation retained control of the hotel until 1980, when it was sold to Associated Inns and Restaurants of America.

## PALACE TO BE BUILT IN COW PASTURE

In 1892, two years after the Boettchers moved to Denver, Henry C. Brown, along with two partners, Maxcy Tabor and William Bush, turned a triangular cow pasture at Seventeenth and Champa into the finest hotel in the west, the Brown Palace. The men chose Arizona Sandstone and Colorado Red Granite for the exterior of the building and paneled much of the interior with onyx from Mexico, thereby making the building not only luxurious, but also distinctly western. Unfortunately for the partners, only a year after construction was complete the Silver Panic of 1893 hit. After a series of hard years, the Brown was sold to Cripple Creek multi-millionaire, Winfield Scott Stratton. In 1922, Horace Bennett and his associates, including Charles Boettcher, purchased the still-struggling hotel. After the crash of 1929, Bennett was forced to liquidate his interest, and Charles and Claude Boettcher became the hotel's sole proprietors.



It has been a tradition of the National Western Stock Show to display its champion bull in the lobby of the Brown Palace.

Photo Credit: The Brown Palace



The Palace's bakers always made Charles a special birthday cake.

Photo Credit: The Brown Palace



The Ship Tavern was inspired by Claude Boettcher's extensive model ship collection.

Photo Credit: The Brown Palace

# THE PIONEER COUPLE



The Boettcher's home at 1201 Grant Street in Denver.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library



*Fannie Boettcher & Ruth  
in Rome, Italy*

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

Ruth Boettcher often accompanied her mother on her travels, including this visit to a cathedral in Italy.

## A WHIRLWIND COURTSHIP

Fannie Augusta Cowan came to Colorado in 1874 to visit an uncle and learn about the region for her family. Earlier that same year, young Charles Boettcher had arrived in Fort Collins to open another hardware store. Fannie caught Charles' eye, and he soon proposed marriage. Always levelheaded, Fannie thought she should return home first to see her parents and to prepare her trousseau. Charles'

characteristic determination, however, enabled him to convince Fannie to marry him right away. The couple soon moved to Boulder, which was growing faster than Fort Collins, and again opened a hardware store. That same year, Fannie gave birth to their first child, Claudius Kedzie. After 4 1/2 happy years, Charles' business sense took the family to Leadville, the two-mile high city. It was their success in Leadville, the lodestar of Colorado's mining industry, that rocketed the Boettchers into the state's elite.

## BOETTCHERS MOVE TO THE "QUEEN CITY"

By 1890, the Boettcher family was well established, Claude was away at Harvard, and Charles' growing business interests in Denver led to a move to Denver, the "Queen City" of the plains. The family's new home was built at 1201 Grant Street, in the chic Capitol Hill area. The Boettcher house was elegant, but modest compared to the lavish residences of their neighbors, who included influential Colorado families like the Tabors, the Hughes, the Porters, and the Moffats. Also in 1890, Fannie and Charles welcomed their second child, Ruth Augusta. When Ruth was ten, she accompanied her parents on Charles' "retirement trip." The trip was a rare interlude in Charles' fast-paced career, but for Fannie it marked the beginning of a life-long passion for travel. Between 1900 and 1914, Fannie spent as much time abroad as she did in Denver.



Charles Boettcher

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library



Fannie Augusta Cowan

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

# ⇌ PIONEER PHILANTHROPY ⇌

## TIRELESS EFFORT

In 1918, Charles and Fannie Boettcher, who already spent much of their time apart, became legally separated. Fannie remained in the Grant Street House while Charles moved into the new Denver Club, and later into the Brown Palace. Both Fannie and Charles were active well into their 90s and remained dedicated to Colorado. Maintaining interest in the family's businesses, Charles and Fannie often visited factories to inspect the quality of the work. Charles never tired of telling stories to his companions on these trips.



**Denver Children's Hospital was the second home of many of the students at the Boettcher School.**

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library



**Charles often received birthday cards from the students at the Boettcher School for Crippled Children.**

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

## EARLY GIFTS

The couple also dedicated a great deal of time to philanthropic ventures. Fannie took a special interest in the Kent School for Girls, and donated both money and her extensive travel collections to the school. Charles, along with Claude, helped to start the Boettcher Foundation to help give some

of their good fortune back to the people of Colorado. Charles also took special interest in the plight of handicapped children, who had to spend much of their time at Children's Hospital. As a result he helped found a school for the children, which was ultimately named the Boettcher School for Crippled Children. Charles enjoyed receiving birthday cards from the students at the school every

year until his death in 1948 at age 96. The pioneer spirit lent longevity to Fannie as well, and she died four years after Charles at the age of 98. Charles and Fannie Boettcher are excellent examples of the hardworking pioneers who built Colorado and witnessed the state's first century.



**The Boettcher School was located near Children's Hospital and allowed many young patients the opportunity to attend classes with other students.**

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

# LEGACY BUILDERS

## CLAUDE BOETTCHER RETURNS TO DENVER

The second generation of Colorado pioneers came of age in the 1890s. Educated in the East, these men would shape Colorado just as their fathers had. Claude attended Dr. Holbrook's Military School in New York along with his future business associates, R.C. Buell, J.H. Porter, and Gerald Hughes. After graduating from Harvard, Claude, who was called C.K. as an adult, returned to Denver and dedicated himself to expanding his father's enterprises. Claude married De Allan McMurtrie in 1901 and they welcomed their only child, the second Charles Boettcher, later that year. When young Charles



Edna was active socially, and she co-chaired the Central City Opera Ball with her friend, Mrs. Van Schaak.



Claude and Edna frequented the theatre at Elitch Gardens.

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

was a teenager, Claude and De Allan were divorced. In 1920, Claude married for the second time to Edna Case McIlveen. Unlike Charles and Fannie, Claude and Edna were active with Denver's prominent set and entertained

frequently. Edna was a leader among socialites, and her parties were always much anticipated. Claude and Edna's social renown extended beyond Colorado as well, they entertained the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and Edna was one of few American women presented to King George. Claude was also widely admired and was named both one of the best dressed men in the nation and one of the 64 men "who ran America."

## LEGACY OF PHILANTHROPY

Neither social activities nor popular praise diminished Claude's work ethic or his dedication to matters at home in Colorado. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the Boettcher Foundation in 1937 and, at the time of his death in 1957, he left substantial sums to the Boettcher Foundation as well as directly to community institutions like St. Luke's Hospital, the Boettcher School for Crippled Children, and Children's Hospital. Claude was aware that Colorado had made his family wealthy and felt that they were in the fortunate position to give back some of the wealth. He once said, "Luxury and wealth are all very well if you use them properly, and all very bad if you don't."



Claude was dedicated to Colorado, he and his son Charles helped officially open the Charles Boettcher Colorado Hall at the Museum of Natural History.

Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation

# THE BOETTCHER MANSION

## A MANSION ON CAPITOL HILL

In 1923 Claude and Edna Boettcher purchased a home at 8th Avenue and Logan Street. Built by the Cheesman family in 1907, the mansion was one of the grandest residences on Capitol Hill. Mr. Cheesman did not live to see the mansion's completion, and after Mrs. Cheesman's death, Gladys Cheesman Evans sold the mansion to Claude Boettcher. As Fannie Boettcher had, Claude and Edna decorated their home with artifacts from their world travels. In fact, the chandelier in the drawing room originally hung in the Grand Ballroom at the White House. In addition to their travels, Claude and Edna entertained at home quite frequently. Edna typically hosted a large costume gala at the mansion each year, and the papers always carried a full report of the event the next morning. To Claude, the most appealing room in the house to entertain in was the Palm Room, located on the first floor. The room has a light, elegant feel due to the use of white marble and numerous large windows. Claude generally ate breakfast in the room and when he reached old age it was the site of numerous business gatherings.

## THE BOETTCHER MANSION BECOMES THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Claude and Edna lived in the mansion for the rest of their lives, and it was the scene of extravagant galas as well as intimate family gatherings. When both Claude and Edna had passed away, the house that was the heart of the Boettcher's family life for thirty-five years was left to the Boettcher Foundation. As a tribute to the family, the Foundation donated the home to the state of Colorado to serve as the Governor's Residence. Today, Claude and Edna's initials remain leaded in the dining room windows, while their home has become one of the finest examples of turn-of-the-century style in Denver.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

A view of the home in 1908 gives a sense of the scope of capitol-hill properties during the first half of the 20th century.



Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

Claude and Edna Boettcher lived in the mansion at 8th Avenue and Logan for more than thirty years.



Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

Charles and Mae Boettcher officially handed the home over to the state of Colorado in 1960. It would henceforth serve as the Governor's Residence, Governor and Mrs. McNichols accepted the Foundation's gift.

# ≡ A NEW GENERATION ≡

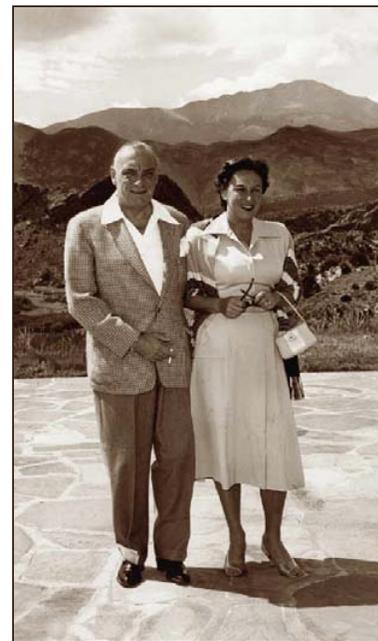


Charles (front right), Claude (in car), and young Charles (small boy) pose with friends circa 1910.

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

## TAKING THE REIGNS

As Claude's only child, Charles Boettcher grew up with all the advantages wealth brings. After completing his education, Charles too returned to Denver and began participating in the management of the family's empire. Charles became a partner in Boettcher & Company in the 1920s, was involved in the Ideal Cement Company, and eventually inherited most of the offices formerly held by his father and grandfather at many Boettcher enterprises. In 1926, Charles married Anna Lou Piggott of Helena, Montana, and the young couple moved into their newly built mansion at 777 Washington Street.



Charles and Mae at the Garden of the Gods Club in Colorado Springs.

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

## THE BOETTCHER TRADITION

Charles and Anna Lou had two children, Anna Lou and Claudia Boettcher. In 1941, the girls' mother tragically took her own life. Charles later married Mrs. Mae Scott Foster. Like Claude and Edna, Charles and Mae led active social lives. They spent time in San Francisco and owned a home in Hawaii, which became a state park. Charles Boettcher died in

1963, while Mae Boettcher lived another 38 years. During all those years, Mrs. Boettcher was active with the Boettcher Foundation and was the longest tenured Trustee in the Foundation's history. Mae also served on the board of other community institutions. In 1998, the Mae Boettcher Center for Pediatric Imaging was established to honor her service to Children's Hospital. Claudia Boettcher Merthan succeeded Mae as Chairman of the Board of the Boettcher Foundation.



Claudia and Mae Boettcher.

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society



Anna Lou Boettcher

Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

# THE BOETTCHER KIDNAPPING

## CHARLES BOETTCHER II GETS HIS WINGS

Although interested in his family's business empire, Charles' real passion was flying. As a young man, he took flying lessons with Claude in California, and in the 20s he flew mail from Denver to Colorado Springs. During World War II, Charles was on the board of the National Aeronautics Association, and was commissioned into the Army Air Corps in 1942. His interest in flight even influenced business decisions, and he was a director of Western Air Express. Charles also shared his passion with family members. His second wife, Mae, was the first licensed female pilot in the state of Colorado.

## A HIGH PROFILE CRIME

One evening in 1933, as Charles and Anna Lou Boettcher returned home from a dinner party, they were accosted in their garage. Charles was held at gunpoint while another man passed a ransom note to Mrs. Boettcher. The kidnapers then sped away with Charles. Anna Lou immediately called her father-in-law, Claude, who called the police. The kidnapping was widely publicized locally and nationally. Charles was held for two weeks while Claude tried to make contact with the kidnapers. After Claude paid the \$60,000 ransom, Charles was released. However, Charles had paid attention to the sound of airplanes during his captivity. Once he was released his extensive knowledge of flight patterns helped police locate the house in rural South Dakota where he had been held. Police were then able to apprehend the kidnapers.



Police Officers surround the garage of Charles and Anna Lou Boettcher looking for evidence after Charles' kidnapping.

Photo Credit: Denver Public Library



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

Occuring the year after the Lindburg kidnapping, the similar Boettcher kidnapping received wide media coverage. Claude and Edna Boettcher held a press conference to address the public.



Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

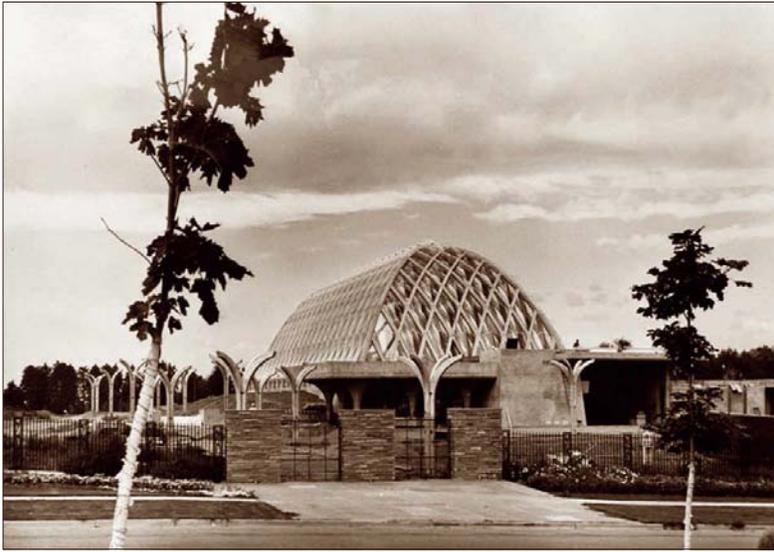
Charles Boettcher converses with the pilots who helped locate his captors.



Photo Credit: Colorado Historical Society

Charles & Anna Lou Boettcher, circa 1933.

# THE BOETTCHER FOUNDATION



The Foundation gave the Denver Botanic Gardens a significant grant to build the Claude K. and Edna C. Boettcher Conservatory in 1966.

Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

The Central City Opera was of special interest to the Boettcher family and has received grants from the Foundation over the years.

## PHILANTHROPY IN THE FAMILY

Along with hard work and financial success, philanthropy runs deep in the story of the Boettcher family. From their earliest days in Colorado, the Boettchers were community leaders and expressed a deep commitment to the future of their

adopted state. In 1937 Claude Boettcher, with the support of his parents and wife, founded the Boettcher Foundation. Claude was the principal donor, but members of each generation contributed significantly to the Foundation's endowment. Members of the family have also contributed time and energy to the Foundation and its work. Both Claude

and young Charles served on the Board, as did their wives. At the time of her death in 2001, Mae Boettcher had served on the Board of Trustees for almost forty years, the longest tenure of any Trustee in the Foundation's history. Claudia Boettcher Merthan represents the family in the 21st century.



The Boettcher Concert Hall is home to the Colorado Symphony, and its unique shape makes it an innovative venue.

Photo Credit: William Thatch

## BOETTCHER FOUNDATION GRANTS

From its inception in 1937 the Boettcher Foundation has given grants in every corner of the state. The Foundation gives grants in four categories: education; civic and cultural programs; community and social services; and hospital and health services. It has been the Foundation's practice to make mainly capital grants. The family felt that making substantial grants to "well conceived projects" sponsored by larger, established not-for-profits could help more people than if smaller amounts of money were widely distributed. Perhaps the best-known Boettcher Foundation project is the Boettcher Concert Hall, located in downtown Denver. The concert hall was completed in 1978 and is the home of the Colorado Symphony and the site of many local and statewide events. As one of the two oldest private foundations in Colorado, the Boettcher Foundation has built a tradition out of Claude Boettcher's desire to give back to Colorado. At the time of his death in 1957 the Trustees of the Foundation resolved to continue to fulfill the "dream and hope of Claude Boettcher for the purpose of assisting, encouraging, and promoting the general well-being of mankind within the territorial limits of the state of Colorado."

# THE BOETTCHER SCHOLARSHIP

## COMMITTED TO EDUCATION

Education was always a central concern of the Boettcher family. In the 1880s, Charles Boettcher donated money to the University of Colorado at Boulder. Later, both Charles and Fannie maintained a commitment to education in Colorado by funding secondary schools, such as the Kent School for Girls and the Boettcher School. The Foundation has maintained this commitment to education by supporting numerous capital projects at Colorado's colleges and universities and by funding other education related projects. Today, many Coloradoans are familiar with the Boettcher name because of the Boettcher Scholarship. The Board of Trustees, led by Claude Boettcher, created the Boettcher Foundation Scholarship in 1952.

## LEADERS FOR COLORADO

Claude's hope was that top students would no longer leave Colorado to pursue higher education. He felt that if the state's best and brightest young people were educated in Colorado they would remain in state as adults and ultimately provide leadership for the state's communities. He was also aware that Boettcher Scholars had the potential to raise the bar at Colorado's institutions of higher education, and an enhanced academic environment would benefit a far larger number of students than solely



The University of Denver has been one of the leading recipients of Boettcher Foundation Grants. The Boettcher Center for Science, Engineering, and Research was dedicated in 1963.

Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation



Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation



The Boettcher Scholarship Program, begun in 1952, now includes thousands of alumni spread across Colorado and the country.

Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation

**2000 Scholars at Ocean Journey**  
Boettcher Foundation Scholars are chosen on the basis of superior scholastic ability, leadership, service to their school and community, and outstanding character.

the Scholarship recipients. The Boettcher Scholarship is merit based and covers the full expense of a public or private undergraduate education in Colorado. Over the years there have been additions to the Scholarship Program. As a way of demonstrating the importance of teachers to the quality of education in the state, each new Scholarship recipient nominates a teacher to honor at an annual banquet. Scholars are also able to access grants to study abroad, conduct independent research, complete internships, and pursue many other educational opportunities. Since 1952, the number of Boettcher Scholars has grown into the thousands, with over half remaining in Colorado to become leaders in their professions and communities.

# FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

## A FIRM FOUNDATION

In addition to the active participation of many family members, others have given their time and energy to the Foundation. The first Trustees of the Boettcher Foundation were Claude Boettcher and his son, Charles, along with family friend James "Quigg" Newton, Jr. The Board grew over the years and included the men who ran the many Boettcher enterprises. These men felt that carrying on the Boettcher legacy, both in the business world and in philanthropy, was their central responsibility. Cris Dobbins was one of the first Trustees to take on this responsibility. Dobbins began working



Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation

**In addition to changing with the times, the Boettcher Foundation strives to uphold the goals and values of its founders, Charles, Claude, and Charles Boettcher II.**



Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation

**Until the mid-1980s the Boettcher Foundation had its offices in the Boston Building, next door to Boettcher & Company, and the trustees met in this wood paneled boardroom. From left to right: Hudson Moore, Mrs. Charles Boettcher II, C. Bruce Flick, John C. Mitchell II, Judge Hatfield Chilson, William A. Douglas, J. William Sorensen, Richard A. Kirk, Hover T. Lentz, Walter Koch.**

for the Boettcher family in 1919 when he was still a teenager. He spent his entire career at Ideal Cement and became the company's President in 1952. Dobbins was named a Trustee of the Foundation in 1944 and served in a number of capacities until his death. Dobbins worked in close co-operation with Warren Willard, managing partner of Boettcher & Company for thirty-three years. Dobbins provided creative management and enthusiasm, while Willard's financial expertise was

invaluable. Together Dobbins and Willard led the Board of Trustees for almost three decades and helped expand the Foundation's impact across the state.

## A CHANGING GUARD

1979 proved a difficult year for the Foundation, as both Cris Dobbins and Warren Willard passed away. John C. Mitchell, already the Executive Director of the Foundation, stepped in to fill their shoes. Mitchell became both the director of the Foundation and a member of the Board of Trustees and is remembered for the leadership he provided to non-profits around the state. Mr. Mitchell retired in 1987, and William A. Douglas, formerly of the University of Colorado, became the President of the Foundation. When Mr. Douglas retired in 1997 Tim Schultz joined the Foundation as President and Executive Director. The one constant through the years was the leadership of Mae Boettcher, who joined the Board in 1958 and served until her death in 2001. The new millennium thus marked the beginning of a new era for the Foundation, as all the dedicated early trustees who had developed the philosophy and procedures by which the Foundation operates were gone from the Board. The hard work of these individuals created the legacy and history that have become the Foundation's governing principals; these principals will guide the Boettcher Foundation into the future.



Photo Credit: Denver Public Library

**The Boettcher Foundation made a substantial grant for the restoration of the Georgetown Loop Railroad to honor longtime Trustee Warren Willard.**

# BOETTCHER FOUNDATION PAST TRUSTEES

## GIFTS OF TIME

Since 1937 twenty-one former Trustees have served as stewards for the Boettcher Foundation. These Trustees gave their time and energy to the Foundation and to the people of Colorado. The group has included friends of the Boettcher family, prominent businesspeople, and community leaders. The small number of Trustees over the years demonstrates the depth of commitment each has given to the Foundation, as many served terms that lasted more than two decades. Through diligence and thoughtfulness these Trustees turned the Boettcher Family's gift to Colorado into an endowment that has allowed the Foundation to give in excess of 200 million dollars in grants to institutions and organizations throughout the State of Colorado.



Photo Credit: Boettcher Foundation

**Hover T. Lentz, John C. Mitchell, Harry T. Lewis, E. Atwill Gilman, Edward Lehman, George Willfley, A. Barry Hirschfeld, Mae Boettcher, Claudia Boettcher Merthan, and former Foundation President William Douglas pictured at the Foundation's 50th Anniversary in 1987.**

Claude K. Boettcher 1937-1957	Richard A. Kirk 1982-1987	George Willfley 1983-1998
Charles Boettcher, II 1937-1963	Walter K. Koch 1963-1987	John C. Mitchell 1979-2000
Edna C. Boettcher 1944-1958	Hudson Moore, Jr. 1947-1983	Edward Lehman 1986-2000
Judge Hatfield Chilson 1964-1986	James Quigg Newton, Jr. 1937-1955	Harry T. Lewis 1986-2000
Cris Dobbins 1944-1979	Hency C. Van Schaack 1944-1963	Mae Boettcher 1958-2001
C. Bruce Flick 1958-1982	E. Warren Willard 1955-1979	E. Atwill Gillman 1988-2002
J.B. Grant 1944-1947	Hover T. Lentz 1983-1997	A. Barry Hirschfeld 1988-2002



**BOETTCHER**  
FOUNDATION