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U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey

² P.O. Box 8, Branson, CO 81027–0008

Historic Trail Map of the La Junta 1°×2° Quadrangle, Southeastern Colorado and Western Kansas

Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph employees pose

by horse-drawn wagons in La Junta in 1907. The men are

in front of the Otero County Courthouse. Photographer

unknown. (Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western

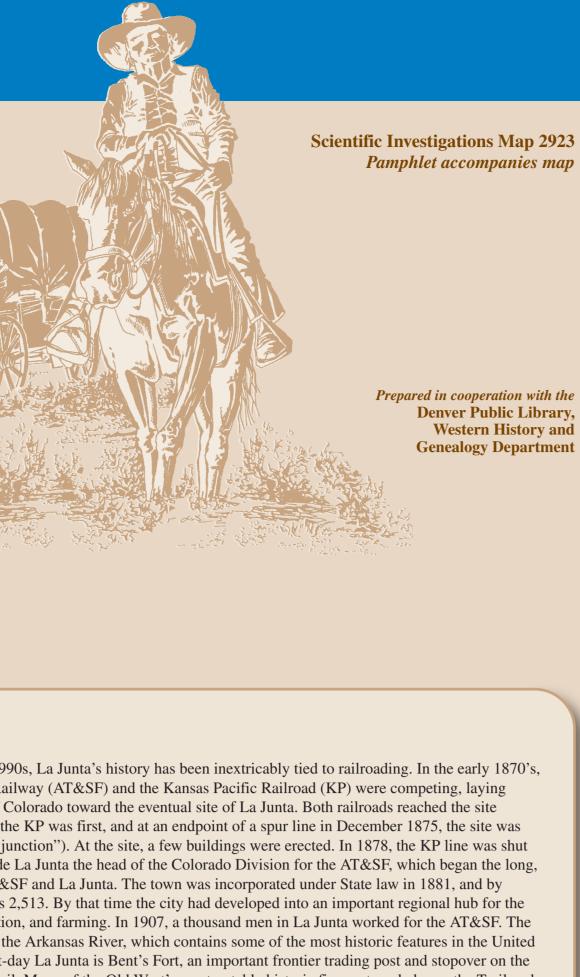
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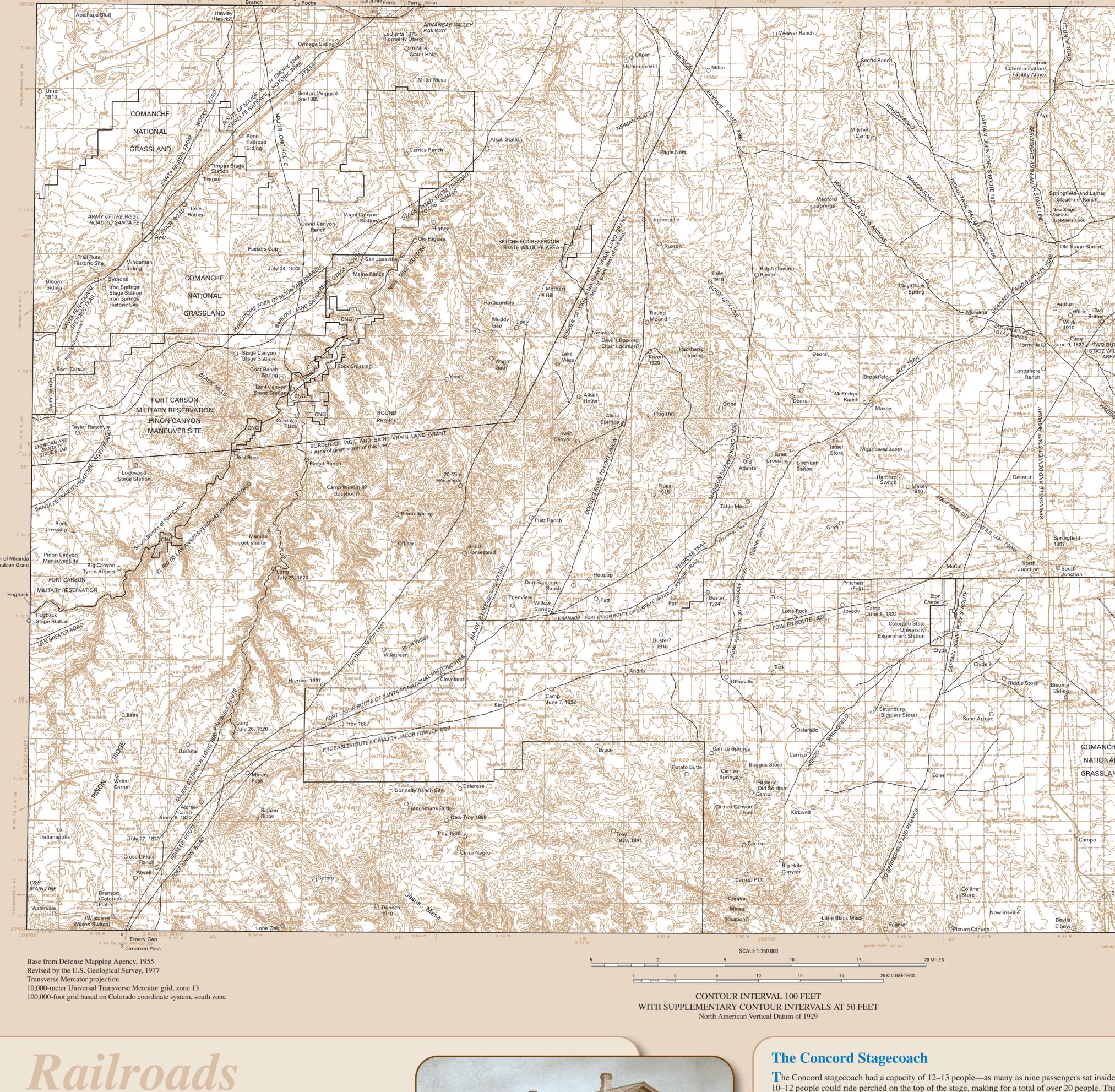
By Glenn R. Scott,¹ Richard H. Louden,² F. Craig Brunstein,¹ and Carol A. Quesenberry¹ ¹U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, CO 80225, and 60 Estes Street, Lakewood, CO 80226–1254





Colorado. Photographs taken 2005 by Craig Brunstein, USGS.





Railroads

"For some 120 years, La Junta has been the hub of Santa Fe operations in Colorado and the traditional dividing point on the original Santa Fe main line — east, the plains and fast track; west, mountains and curves." (Excerpt from "Santa Fe in the Intermountain West—Colorado Rail Annual No. 23," published by the Colorado Railroad Museum in 1998.)



Z-5463.)

Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe locomotive (engine number 840) and a coal tender. Between 1890 and 1910.

Photographer S.C. Sutton. (Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department.

Ornate Victorian rooflines of buildings in La Junta,



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(Above and Right) In the collection of the Otero Museum in La Junta is this 1867 Concord

mail coach. Once the best and most luxurious vehicle available for long distance travel, this stagecoach carried passengers across miles of wilderness, serving its various owners for more

than twenty years. For a number of years, it operated from Leavenworth, Kansas, to Denver,

Colorado, over the Smoky Hill route. It took six days to make the trip and cost \$100.00 plus

teams changed every ten to twelve miles. The coach was made in Concord, New Hampshire, by the

Abbot-Downing Company and purchased by Wells Fargo & Company for \$1,100.00. Since travel was

extremely hazardous because of poor (or nonexistent) roads, many coaches were wrecked. The wrecks were

salvaged to repair other coaches. This coach actually contains parts of three different coaches. Originally

numbered 253, parts of earlier coaches 105 and 106, as determined by serial numbers, are found on it. When

new, its brilliant red and yellow exterior and rich damask cloth and russet leather interior was described as

twenty-five cents per mile or approximately \$250.00. It was pulled by six horses or mules, the

the best of its day. Today, it is among the most complete surviving nine

of Commerce Museum. In 1989, the Otero Museum built the Coach House to protect this Grand Old Dame of yesteryear. Photograph taken August 6, 2005, by Craig Brunstein, USGS. (The text in this caption and permission to publish these photographs are courtesy of the Otero

Museum, La Junta, Colorado.)

passenger mail coaches in the country. When the railroad came, the stagecoach was no longer needed for the long Smoky Hill route, and this coach was then

used mostly for shorter hauls in Colorado to various gold camps and other

cities. Many legends are part of its history—some are true. One story says

that it ran from Denver to Deadwood, South Dakota, and eluded robbers at the cost of at least one passenger killed and several bullet holes in its chassis. It was eventually retired in Greeley, Colorado, and then purchased by the city of Las Animas for use in parades. In 1942, it was purchased by Dr. G.E. Calonge and given to the Chamber

coaches had the same color scheme; however, the favorite colors used on the coaches were red for the body and yellow for the trim. Depending on the steepness, roughness, and condition of a road, the stage might be pulled by 2–6 horses. The stage drivers changed horses (or mules) about 10 or 12 times in 24 hours, and did it nearly every time in 4 minutes. The change took place when a pin that attached the team's harness to the wagon tongue was pulled, the old team was led away, a fresh team was backed into place, and the pin was re-inserted, making the stage ready to continue its journey. The stage normally traveled 8–10 miles an hour. For each 200–250 miles of road, a stage company had a Division Agent or Division Superintendent, who had charge of all company property. In addition to having charge of all the property belonging to the stage company, the Division Agent bought all the hay and grain. He looked after the stock, the scheduling of the stages, and checked on the care of stations and the performance of their keepers. He hired the drivers, stock tenders, blacksmiths, harness-makers, general superintendent, attorney, paymaster, conductor, express messenger, and other employees. The conductor or express messenger rode on the stage and had complete charge of the passengers, mail, and baggage. He was responsible for safekeeping and transport of all valuable items including payrolls, merchandise, ore shipments, and farm shipments. He usually sat beside the driver and he carried a shotgun loaded and ready to use. Stock tender cared for the teams and made sure the horses were ready when a stage pulled in. The stage driver had to be expert, fearless, sober, and reliable. Drivers were forced to make quick decisions about the horses, the roads, and the passengers. When the driver was in his box he was superior to everyone else on the stage. (Information from McCullough,

in the text pamphlet.)

Chuck Wagons istorians credit Charles Goodnight (of the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail fame) with inventing the chuck wagon prior to an 1866 cattle drive from Texas to Denver in Colorado Territory. Such a wagon became a necessity for

(Left) Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF)

locomotive (engine number 92), with coal

January 23, 1919. Photographer Otto Perry.

(Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western

History and Genealogy Department. op-17.)

tender and passenger car, in La Junta,

large cattle drives in order to carry the food, water, cooking utensils, tools, bedrolls, and fuel for fires for the cowboys during the long dusty trail drives. The chuck wagon cook was almost always called "Cookie," and some of his duties included preparing meals for the cowboys, administering trailside first aid, and driving the chuck wagon ahead of the cattle herd and setting up the next campsite. He was expected to set up camp and provide meals no

chuck%20wagon.htm], accessed Oct. 25, 2007, and other references listed in the "Sources of Information" in the text pamphlet.)

matter the weather or trail conditions: hot, cold, rainy, dusty, muddy. Chuck wagons are still used on large ranches in the Western U.S. They have become historic vehicles, and there is a national registry for owners to register their chuck wagons. There are also numerous chuck wagon "cook offs" in the Western U.S., where modern-day "Cookies" and their modern or historic chuck wagons are part of popular public events where they prepare meals in the same fashion as in the old cattle roundups and cattle drives. (Information from Nola McKey Eads [http://www.phudpucker.com/bluebonn/

