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Our Story



History of The Buffalo Rose

Welcome to Golden arch
(Credit: Golden History Museum)



Forward

This isn't just the story of the collection of buildings that are The Buffalo Rose that we know today. It isn't a story about wood, brick, steel, fire and stone— not simply a tale of the many businesses that have stood on the site or the colorful characters that have passed through these doors. No, this is the story of Golden City, one of Colorado's very first municipalities and where our great state has its roots. It is the story of the American West and a rugged frontier spirit. It is a story about architecture and governments, railroads, cars, and motorcycles; shootouts, Olympians, entrepreneurs, and wars— it is a story of great economic expansion and profound depression, of drunken debauchery and of Prohibition. This is the story of The Buffalo Rose, but more importantly for the people of Golden, Colorado: it is *Our Story*.

Appreciation to local historian Richard Gardner for his insight into Golden's unique and captivating past.

Introduction

The properties comprising the present day Buffalo Rose have been the pulse of Golden since the City's founding in 1859. Golden has grown up around the site and the businesses located at the bustling corner of Washington Avenue and 12th Street have provided the commercial lifeblood of the town for well over 150 years.

In an embrace of the role this property has played in the history of Golden, loving care was taken in the recent large-scale renovation to retain as many of the historic structures as was feasible and to restore the building exteriors to reflect original architecture as closely as possible. At the same time, the interiors of the buildings were completely overhauled to bring them up to contemporary safety, environmental and comfort standards. As a result of these efforts, The Buffalo Rose is now poised to continue being the pulse of Golden for another 150 years!

The Overland Hotel Circa 1867
(Credit: Golden History Museum)



The Buffalo Rose is made up of the following historical structures:

- 1117 Washington Ave. – The present day Buffalo Rose event venue
- 1119 Washington Ave. – The Buffalo Rose Saloon
- 1123 Washington Ave. – The Iler Block, now the main entrance to The Buffalo Rose bar and restaurant and most famously a barbershop for more than a century
- 720 12th St. – The Hoagland Building, where the new Buffalo Rose bar is located beneath a retractable glass roof
- 712-718 12th St. – The Haas Block, the location of the popular Buffalo Rose outdoor patio

If these walls could talk, boy the stories they'd tell!

1117 WASHINGTON AVE.— The Buffalo Rose Event Venue

1859 – 1910 When it was built in 1859, this was Golden's largest building, measuring 44-feet across Washington Ave. and 40-feet deep. Originally, it had twin storefronts on the street level and a public hall on the second story. It is on the second level where Colorado's Territorial Legislature met in 1865. Many of Colorado's earliest laws were voted on in this room, which is why we call our upper-level venue bar "The State Room."

It was converted into the Overland House, a hotel in 1867. The Overland House became an affiliated Wells Fargo stage stop hotel run by noted stage driver Lemuel Flower. It was here that Generals Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman and Philip Sheridan stayed around the time of the Civil War. Outlaw "Heartless" Edward Franklin was cornered and shot by officers in the Overland Hotel in 1868 in a shootout between Denver detectives and the notorious Musgrove Gang. The proprietor of the Overland House was paid \$50 to cover bloodstains and damages.



Edward L. Berthoud
(Credit: Golden History Museum)

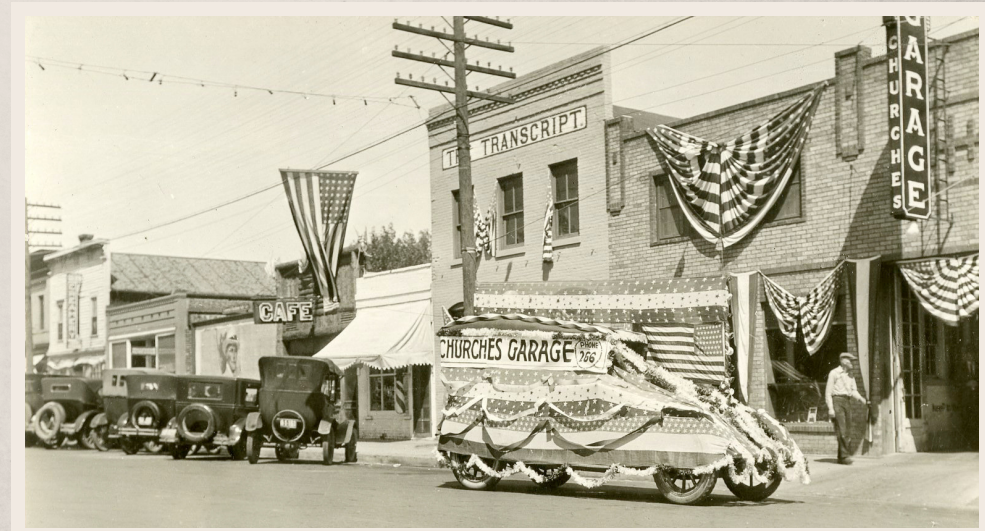
in the 1870s. The town of Berthoud, Colorado, as well as Berthoud Pass in the Rocky Mountains west of Denver, are named for him. Berthoud served as the Colorado State Historian and was Mayor of Golden from 1890–1891. Berthoud died in Golden in 1910 as a result of injuries sustained in a fall at the Overland; he was 82. The Overland House was torn down shortly after Berthoud's death. The Colorado School of Mines dedicated Berthoud Hall in the Captain's honor in 1940.

The building's most famous owner was Captain Edward Louis Berthoud- a military officer, statesman and engineer who came to Golden in 1860 and proceeded to run for the Colorado Legislature in 1866. He also served as the librarian of the Colorado Territorial Library in Golden from 1867–1868. As a member of the legislature, he helped authorize the foundation of the Colorado School of Mines and served as the college's first registrar, and on its Board of Trustees.

Captain Berthoud is primarily known as the chief engineer and secretary of the Colorado Central Railroad during its expansion throughout Colorado

1922 – 1926 In the early 1920s, a large two-story masonry building was erected on the Overland House site. By original description the building "will have a frontage of fifty feet and will be 140-feet deep." It is this structure that stands today as The Buffalo Rose event venue. In the early days, this building was a garage for some of the first cars made in the United States. The 1922 Churches Garage, designed by Tracy Quick and built by contractor Charles J. Buckman, was constructed of brick manufactured right here in Golden.

What is now the mezzanine balcony is original to the auto garage. The lines and numbers on south brick wall uncovered during the renovation marked the stalls for the cars. The garage had a parts department, selling some of the original Goodrich tires. Though a garage, it also sold new cars, specializing in Overland and Jewett automobiles. The building ceased being a garage when both the Overland and Jewett automobiles were discontinued in 1926, leading Churches to pursue a creative new business venture . . .



Churches Garage parade float in front of their garage on Washington Avenue in Golden Colorado. The Transcript building is visible behind the decorated vehicle along with a number of other unidentified businesses circa 1920. (Credit: Golden History Museum)

Golden was established in June 1859, during the Pike's Peak Gold Rush.

The original mining camp was named Golden City after Thomas L. Golden.

1928 – 1941 In 1928, owner Grant Churches hired theatrical architect Leo Andrew Desjardins to transform the place into The Golden Plunge, an indoor swimming pool, featuring an oriental style facade with neon "SWIM" sign. In 1929, the stock market crashed and the Plunge shut down during the Great Depression. Elwood Romney, an ancestral cousin of Mitt Romney, purchased The Golden Plunge in 1938. Mr. Romney hired Nils Christiansen as his swimming instructor. Christiansen, a student at the School of Mines, had competed in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin and had qualified for the 1940 Games that were canceled as a result of the start of World War II. The Golden Plunge finally closed down in 1941 when Romney sold it to the local carpenters' labor union to convert to their union hall. Romney used the proceeds from the sale of the Plunge to purchase the Denver Bears, a minor league baseball team at the time. The carpenter's union installed the wood floor over the pool just two months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. The union disbanded as many did in World War II and the building was shuttered until after the end of the War; however, the pool still remains below the sturdy venue floor!

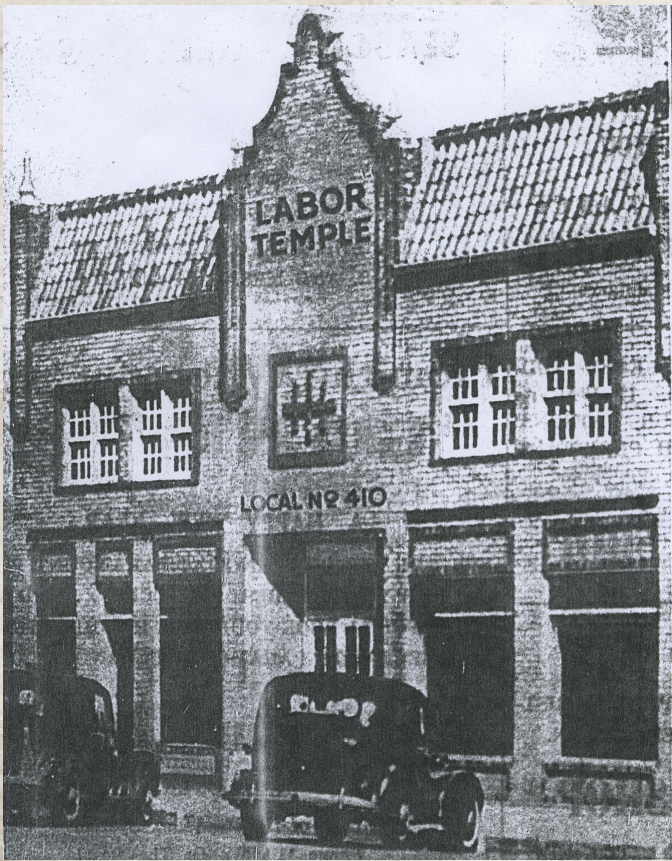
"In the Swim - A.P. Archer and Joe H. Dekker, owner of three Denver theaters, are now in the swimming pool business. They have taken over The Golden Plunge at Golden, Colo., 15 miles out, and will operate same."
Variety Magazine, June 1935 issue.

"DENVER - Tony A.P. Archer, former Educational district manager, together with Joe H. Decker, have opened a ritzy swimming pool at Golden which they have named "The Golden Plunge." "Motion Picture Daily," July-September 1935 issue.

Washington Avenue looking South from 11th Street. The Transcript building is located on the left side of the photograph. The Golden Plunge next door has a large sign in the front with the word "SWIM". (Credit: Golden History Museum)



An Advertisement from a 1934 Issue of the Golden Transcript



The Golden Plunge finally closed down in 1941 when owner Elwood Romney, an ancestral cousin of Mitt Romney, sold it to the local carpenters' labor union that converted it to their union hall.

1941 – 1953 The Plunged served as a union hall, roller skating rink and social event venue through the War years until the middle of the 20th century.

1985 – 2018 Over the course of the next 30+ years, The Buffalo Rose became a popular concert venue that hosted thousands of musicians from all over the world. Over this period, the facility was largely unchanged and went through various owners until it was purchased in 2016 by a local Golden developer. In 2018, a major renovation of the properties was undertaken, including a complete overhaul of the event center. Among the changes made to the historic venue were: the restoration of the Washington St. façade to closely resemble the original Churches Garage / Golden Plunge masonry and mansard tile architecture while blending in the lower-

DID YOU KNOW

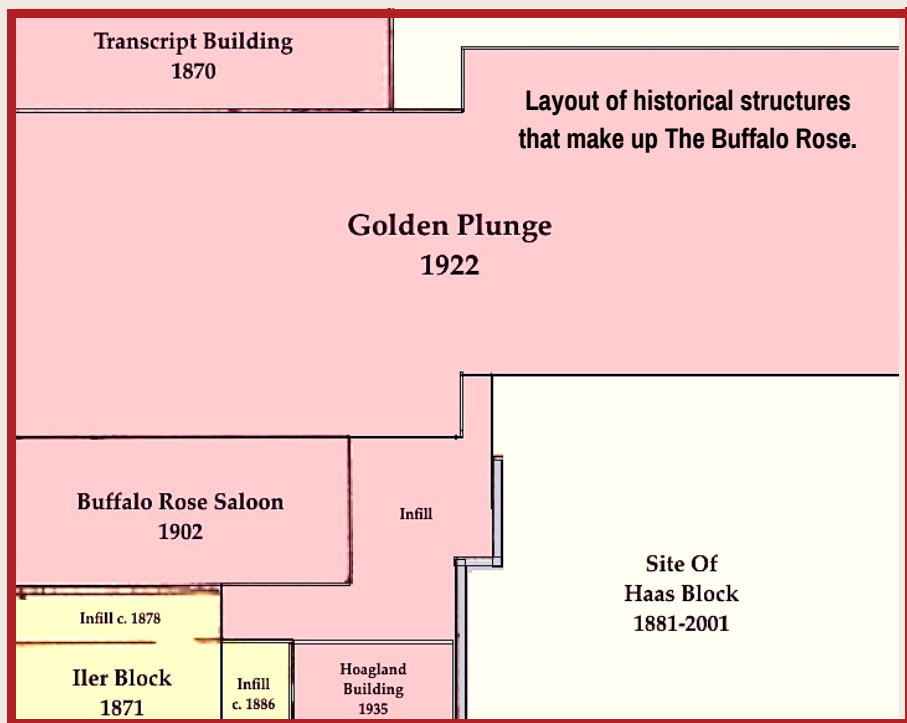
Golden is the birth place of Jolly Rancher candies. In 1949 Bill and Dorothy Harmsen opened the Jolly Rancher candy store where they sold their own candy.

1953 – 1985 In 1953, August Gaines Eaker transformed the Plunge building into the Eakers Department Store, of his Colorado department store chain, giving it a new mid-century modernist facade with plate glass window first story and ribbon window set on the second floor. It sported its own neon sign across the facade. The department store chain went out of business in 1985 and Ken Mueller annexed it to the neighboring Buffalo Rose Saloon, converting it into a concert hall and installing a vertical clapboard wood facade at the same time he installed wood on the face of the original saloon (1119 Washington Ave.) and corner barbershop building (1123 Washington Ave.). Some time around 1990, Mr. Mueller had all of the Buffalo Rose storefront wood painted red, which is how it remained until 2018.



A.G. Eaker Community Department Store circa 1962.

and upper-level window configurations characteristic of Eakers Department Store era; the exposure of the impressive steel interior roof trusses, and revealing the original interior Churches Garage brick walls. In addition, a new roof, all new bathrooms, flooring, heating/air conditioning, lighting, and built-in bar/furniture were added. Finally, a theater-quality audio / visual system was installed. All of which makes the new Buffalo Rose event venue simultaneously a genuine nod to its important historical legacy, and complete with all of the modern creature comforts expected of contemporary facilities.

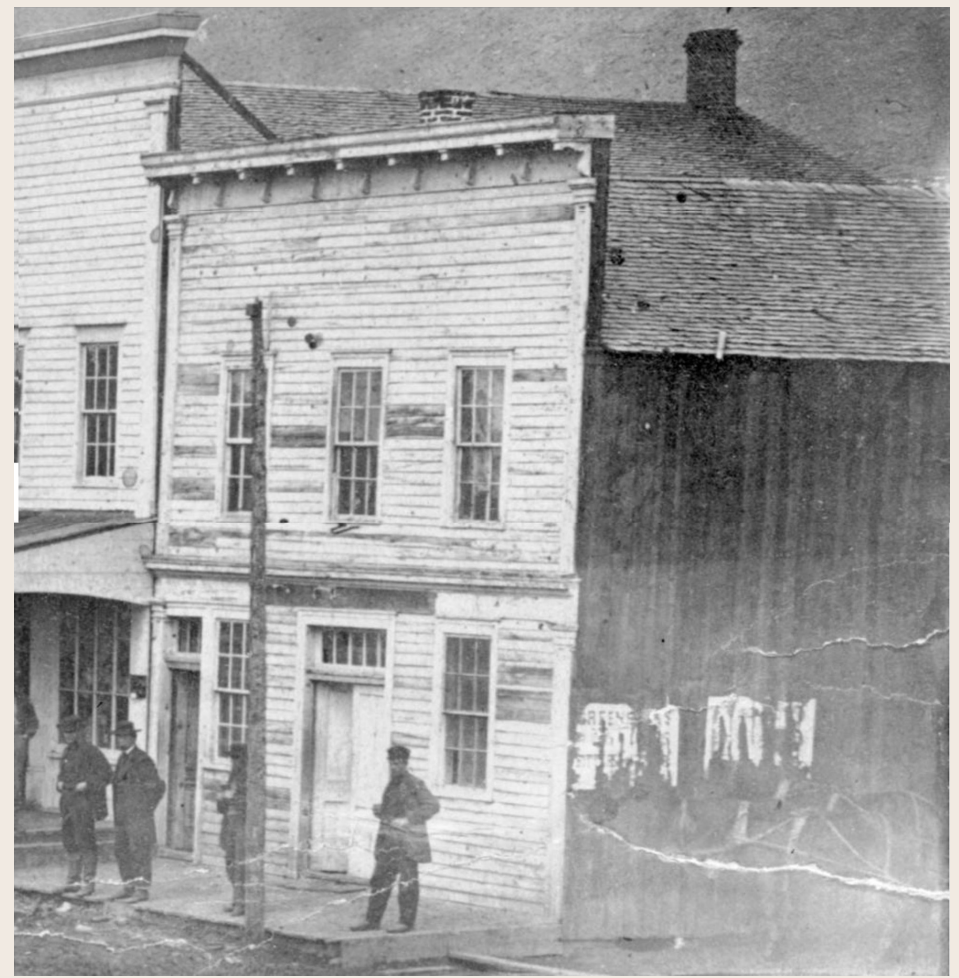


1119 WASHINGTON AVE.— The Buffalo Rose Saloon

1859 – 1902 A real piece of the Old West! The International Bowling Saloon was the very first business established on property that is the present day Buffalo Rose Saloon, *making The Buffalo Rose the oldest bar in the state of Colorado.*

Golden's Western Mountaineer newspaper on December 28, 1859, reported on its being constructed: "Messrs Crow & Brundy are building a very fine house, 25 x 40, and two stories high, to be occupied by them as a saloon. In the rear will be three bowling alleys 70-feet long. They intend finishing off their house in the best possible style both inside and out." This would imply that bowling was actually Golden's very first recreational activity.

With Coors establishing their brewery on the banks of Clear Creek just two blocks east in 1873, The International Bowling Saloon was undoubtedly one of the very first retail establishments to sell Coors beer.



International Bowling Saloon Circa 1864

The International Bowling Saloon was a 2-story building. The second floor inside was taken out in the 1880s when proprietor Gustavus Haas installed a grand orchestrion (a type of large organ) inside his establishment but discovered the ceiling was too low, so he removed the 2nd level and covered up the upper windows, hence the building's apparent shrinkage to one story in later years (though it actually had an 11-foot cathedral ceiling inside). This organ was a unique attraction that helped to bring female customers to the establishment.

This location has also been home to Jack Hill's Saloon, Paul's Place, Larson's Café, Dud's, the Office Saloon, DeVere's, Shotgun Annie's and finally the famous Buffalo Rose Saloon.

1902 – 1985 The building was updated to an attractive 1-story brick construction in 1902 by then-owner Paul Ficht. The 1902 building was designed by prominent and locally educated architect James H. Gow, three of whose works (Foothills Art Center, Armory, Quaintance Block) are listed on the National Historic Register for their designs. The saloon was quaintly called "Paul's Place". The original 1902 saloon front had twin iron support posts on either side of what was the central doorway.

The dimensions of the original huge plate glass windows of that facade were 124 x 169 inches. As The Golden Transcript of the time put it: "If he [Paul Ficht] finds it necessary to throw some recalcitrant customer through one of them it would cost him a cool hundred to replace it."

The building was unceremoniously modified from the 1940s-1984 and was eventually expanded in 1985 to encompass the Hoagland Building and the Haas Block. The original Paul's Place façade was fully refurbished to closely resemble its original early 20th-century classic brick design in 2018.



Paul's Place Circa 1902
(Credit: Colorado School of Mines)

Paul Ficht was the builder as well as the longest and one of the best-known owners of the saloons that have continuously occupied 1119 Washington Ave. He owned the business from 1894-1934. Remarkably, Mr. Ficht not only built the brick saloon building that still stands today, he owned the business through the turn of the century as Golden transitioned from a dusty frontier town to a modern city, during World War I, at the time of the Great Depression, and throughout Prohibition, when he sold soft drinks and malted milk to survive.

The Golden Transcript captured some of Mr. Ficht's significant contributions to Golden in this 1934 article:

"Paul Ficht, one of Golden's oldest, most substantial and respected business men will retire this week. He came to Golden in 1894 and has operated his own business for 40 years. His successor will be Leonard Larson, who will take over the business July 16. The store room will be redecorated and rearranged and the business will be expanded to include sandwiches and beer on tap and in bottles. "Paul," as he is known on the avenue, throughout the community and Jefferson county says, that he will still be in a position to help out occasionally. But at the old stand he will be missed by his host of friends who have made it a practice to just drop in and say hello whether they wanted to buy anything or not, as well as his regular customers.

School of Mines boys all over the world remember Paul Ficht, especially those who attended school a few years ago. Those who know, say he has helped more boys to finish their courses than any other one man - some with just a word of encouragement and others financially. Mr. Larson, who will take over the business, is also well known in Golden and throughout Jefferson county due to his many years in the automobile business.

Paul Ficht opened his business, known as "Paul's Place" in 1890, 44 years ago, in a log building on Washington Avenue on the site of the building he now occupies. This building had been the bar of the old Overland hotel next door, which was torn down sometime ago and the place is now occupied by the Golden swimming pool. The building which Paul started in was a two story structure, one of the first erected in Golden. A man by the name of Haas had occupied it before him. Haas bought an organ. When it arrived it was too high to set-up in the room so he tore out the second floor. This left the ceiling 18 feet high.

In 1902 Paul tore down the old log building and built the modern brick he has since occupied. During the time he has been in business Paul has taken very few vacations. One he was away four months on a visit to the "Fatherland," and again in 1902 while his new building was being constructed he spent three months in California. This was the last vacation he has taken."

1123 WASHINGTON AVE.— The Main Corner Entrance of The Buffalo Rose

1871 – 1904 (Iler Block; corner building). Jefferson County's oldest remaining commercial property. Originally the Mallon & Chamberlain meat market, the building measured only 15' (Washington Ave.) x 30' (12th St.) and featured marble counters harvested from Marble, Colorado, perhaps from the very same vein of stone used for The Washington Monument in Washington, DC. The building also housed a confectionery and a drugstore before becoming a barbershop in the early 1900s. The original old-growth pine of the Iler Block remains and the remarkable old building now serves as the main entrance and a lounge for The Buffalo Rose restaurant and bar.

1904 – 2017 The Sportsman Barbershop occupied the Iler Block for over 100-years, making it one of the longest continuously operating businesses in the State of Colorado. The building was a barbershop from 1904-2017 and a local distillery tasting room from 2017-2018.



On the original board and batten wall of the northeast corner of the room, one can see the remnants of a shipping crate sent by Daniels & Fisher from Denver. Commonly referred to by its initials of D&F, Daniels & Fisher was quite a prominent dry goods firm of the Mile High City. Their famed clock tower graces the 16th Street Mall today.

These planks were from a shipping crate sent from Daniels & Fisher to proprietor William H. Gray in 1905 and reused to board this window opening.

Board and batten wall in what was
The Sportsman Barbershop

A. Haas Merchant Tailor with
Drugstore on 12th St. and
Washington Ave. that then
became The Sportsman
Barbershop. (Credit: Golden
History Museum)



Brick Nogging

One notable construction technique of the corner building that is now visible at The Buffalo Rose is known as brick nogging. Nogging was in use in America from colonial times through the mid-19th century. While it was a widespread construction technique in the day, it is poorly documented. Examples of brick nogging are exceedingly rare. The Iler Block at The Buffalo Rose is one of only two nogged buildings still standing in Jefferson County. The nogged wall at The Rose is original 1871 construction and clearly not later infill.

The technique was to build the structural framing and then infill between the studs with brick, and cover the brick structure on the outside with clapboarding and on the inside with plaster. The brick was not meant to be seen, hence why it is structural and not facing quality brick. The brick was used for several purposes: wind blocking, insulation, rodent control, and fireproofing. Its presence may help explain why this beautiful old building did not simply go up in flames like other frame buildings around Golden did during various fires.



Brick nogged wall in what was
The Sportsman Barbershop

720 12TH ST.— THE HOAGLAND BUILDING

The Hoagland Building was built in 1935 by Thomas Hoagland as infill between the Iler Block and Haas Block that then stood to the east. The Hoagland Building was a nondescript basic brick facade building and served various odd uses over time before being annexed into The Buffalo Rose complex in 1985. The Hoagland Building was partially destroyed by fire in 2001. After the fire, the remnants of the building were stuccoed over and served to connect The Buffalo Rose outdoor patio and the main saloon space. Given the structural and esthetic challenges associated with the restoration of the Hoagland Building, the remaining structure was torn down during the 2018 remodel project.

712-718 12TH ST.— THE HAAS BLOCK

1881 – 2001 A 4-storefront brick building built in 1881 by Gustavus Haas. Numerous businesses occupied this building, including a print shop, a plumbing supply store, a tin shop, a jeweler, a tobacco shop, and a men's clothing store. It ultimately became D.J.'s Restaurant owned by Dudley Young, then Kenrow's owned by Ken Mueller, until it was destroyed by fire in 2001 and was annexed into The Buffalo Rose and converted to a popular, some might say rowdy, outdoor patio, popular with motorcycle enthusiasts. A new structure was built on this site in the 2018 renovation. Many of the exterior architectural elements of the Haas Block were incorporated into the new building along 12th St. and it now features one of Colorado's only retractable glass roofs. The lively patio remains.

Haas Block with Jewelry and Cigar Store
(Credit: Golden History Museum)

