

MILE HIGH MAGIC: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PROFESIONAL  
SPORTS IN DENVER

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## ABSTRACT

### DENVER: AN EXAMINATION OF ITS DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS

By

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The city of Denver has evolved from a humble pair of mining settlements to a large and booming metropolis. The city has experienced growth in industry and changes in generating its economic revenue. Denver began as a burgeoning settlement that relied heavily on the extraction and selling of natural resources such as silver and gold. After WWII, Denver began expanding into other industries and differentiated its ways to expand. What resulted the second half of the twentieth century was changes in city neighborhoods. Many districts in the city have been and continue to be revitalized through the restoration of historical buildings as well as the construction of entirely new structures for residential housing, offices and other multi-use purposes.

The second half of the twenty century also yielded the creation and progression of Denver's professional sports teams. The addition of the Denver Broncos, Colorado Avalanche, Denver Nuggets and Colorado Rockies reflect a genuine interest by city boosters and moguls in creating and maintaining its professional sports teams. These franchises produce high amounts of revenue for their owners and various types of remunerations for other business enterprises like hotels and restaurants. The addition of these teams (and others before them) established a banner of civic pride amongst city, metro and state residents. Hundreds of thousands of Coloradans either attend or watch the weekly games of these teams. The downtown area of Denver consistently uses these teams to polish its image as a winning city, one that is attractive for new outsiders to

move to permanently. The changes in the destruction and formation of these teams' sports arenas/stadiums have assisted in downtown development/revitalization efforts in the city.

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I dedicate this work to my parents. Dad, Mom and Doug, you have always nurtured me in a caring way that has made me the man I am now. I am so thankful for all of your support and more importantly encouragement during my academic and athletic careers. Your countless hours building my study habits and coming to my sporting events has granted me success in both endeavors. Doug, thank you for bringing me to Broncos games since I was seven. My exposure to the downtown area eating lunch before the games initially sparked my interest for this topic. Here is to many more games and Broncos victories together in the Mile High City.

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## Chapter 1- Introduction

Because their boosters believed they elevated the human condition and promoted the virtue of each participant, sports have been an integral part of life in America since its founding. The colonial times were deeply rooted in the Great Awakening. This was the first great American religious revival, emphasizing the “potential for every person to break away from the constraints of the past and start anew in his or her relationship with God.”<sup>1</sup> Being guided with a supposed religious authority renewal, this way of life guided everyday aspects of society including power, equality and individualism. Leisurely activities such as games and sports were also parts of life affected by the Great Awakening. The colonists were called to “awaken from their religious slumber” and come “together with the clergy’s powerful mid-eighteenth-century message that people should engage in moral pastimes of sport instead of vulgar and frivolous activity.”<sup>2</sup> Since sports, as an entity from colonial times onward had been widely considered a ‘moral good,’ it remained a key part of American life through its founding and progress to one of the world’s most supreme nations.

The concept of modern sports emerged contemporaneously with increasing urbanity in the United States. Until the middle-Antebellum period (1840s), sports in America were largely unorganized and focused mainly on communal closeness or personal well-being.<sup>3</sup> Modern sport however emerged out of the rise in population of cities. The massive influx of immigrants in separate waves throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to more opportunity for modern sport to grow. Historian Steven Riess of Northeastern Illinois University argues

The evolution of the city, more than any other single factor, influenced the development of organized sport and recreational athletic pastimes in

America. Nearly all contemporary major sports evolved or were invented in the city.<sup>4</sup>

The addition of immigrants from across Europe added to the variety of new Americans that could participate in sports. These sports became influential through widespread distribution of sports manuals and pamphlets on athletics written by health reformers as well as through competition amongst neighborhoods and cities.<sup>5</sup>

As modern sport grew from the nineteenth century to what it is now in the twenty-first century, it becomes clear the emphasis of team sports has increased dramatically. Professor Allan Guttman of Amherst College in his book *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* presents a claim that Americans in the end of the twentieth century have shifted their preference to team sports rather than individual contests. Though the great philosophies and revivals of American history tend to highlight individualism (i.e. Tocqueville's observation of American individual liberty & Thoreau's Transcendentalism), America has become largely a team oriented society in participation and viewership. Guttman explains the emphasis of 'joining the team' through manipulation from politicians to get one's vote (republican or democrat) or serving the greater good in one's community by partaking in a team sport.<sup>6</sup> The idea of putting one's individual effort towards a larger collective and end goal seems to have grasped hold of Americans and citizens of the world. Through the rise of globalization, broadcasting shortfalls have diminished and the world has become more connected through sporting events whether it be World Championships for various sports, the FIFA World Cup for soccer or the Olympics to cite a few. The higher viewership and involvement in team sports has led to the creation of a multibillion dollar industry, allocated through various professional leagues and team franchises.

The state of Colorado has also seen this gap bridged between individual to team sports. As a territory, Colorado originally used sport as a means of transportation. Cross-country skiers solemnly trekked across the brutal mountain terrain as vital means of communication and transportation between mining camps and other outlying areas, often times serving as mail carriers.<sup>7</sup> When Colorado became a state, the rise of mining communities in the mountains as well as ones on the Front Range led to the development of collective team sports, often pitting one town versus another town. Leadville, a once booming mining settlement is an example of a town that relied on team sport activity to bring themselves closer. The Leadville Blues became “the tonic needed to revive the town’s flagging spirits,” during late 1880s when it had pitfalls from two of its largest mines.<sup>8</sup> Other towns such as Denver, the state’s capitol, soon became the epicenter for professional team sports in the state.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a rapid increase in professional sports in Denver. No longer considered simply a plains city between the two coasts, Denver soon became a city that its sports teams would be mentioned each and every day in the box score sports sections of newspapers across the country. This exposure is important, at bare minimum, because it has potential to inform the whole country about these teams. Since roughly 2/3rds of Americans watch professional football according to a 2011 *Harris Poll* for instance, the publicity for these teams has the ability to make cities look more attractive with such amenities as professional sports teams.<sup>9</sup> But it is not as if Denver transformed overnight to the eye-catching, close-to-the-mountains city it is now. Though by 1950 Denver had developed a substantial downtown core, it was the second half of the twentieth-century that has shaped our modern perceptions of the city.<sup>10</sup> The

rise of its sport teams also occurred during this time period. Currently the city houses seven official professional sports teams: the Denver Broncos (football), the Colorado Avalanche (hockey), the Denver Nuggets (basketball), the Colorado Rockies (baseball), the Colorado Rapids (soccer), the Colorado Mammoth (indoor lacrosse) and the Denver Outlaws (outdoor lacrosse). The big four teams (Broncos, Avalanche, Nuggets and Rockies) are the state's representatives of the four largest sports leagues in America: the National Football League, the National Hockey League, the National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball. Since 1950, other professional, semi-professional and minor league sports teams have come and gone from Denver. The failed business ventures of some of these teams have also yielded positive outcomes for the remaining teams, which are financially stable enough to survive through residents attending events, buying merchandise and watching their games on television.

The remaining sports teams have all (except for the Rapids) kept their home stadiums/arenas not only within the city limits of Denver, but within the downtown area of the city. The Broncos and Outlaws play at Sports Authority Field at Mile High in the Sun Valley neighborhood. The Colorado Avalanche, Denver Nuggets and Colorado Mammoth compete at the Pepsi Center located in the Auraria neighborhood. The Colorado Rockies play at Coors Field, located in the Lower Downtown area. Through the past sixty plus years, these neighborhoods, and the city in general, have experienced massive change through revitalization and gentrification efforts. The continued presence of these sports teams (especially the four major teams) demonstrates Denver's commitment (or elongated tolerance) of having professional sports franchises in its city. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze, understand and evaluate the benefits and

detriments of these four specific sports teams have on Denver. More importantly, this thesis also hopes to uncover the connection of the specific teams and professional sports in general to the development of the city itself over the past sixty years.

Professional team sports began to grab a foothold in Denver the latter half of the twentieth-century. The rapid change of Denver from the 1950s to what the city has evolved to now is remarkable. The greater understanding of these sports teams' tenure in Denver helps one better value what Denver has become. Now that Denver is becoming one of the most appealing places to live, especially for younger generations, it is important to understand how certain neighborhoods and areas within the city have changed over more than half of a century. Using the lens of professional sports teams in the city, it is the hope one will know how and why certain areas are the way they are in Denver and how they got to that point, for better or worse.

## Chapter 2- Denver: A City and a Team

The Denver Broncos are the most popular Colorado professional sports team. With two Super Bowl championships and five other Super Bowl appearances, the Broncos have established a winning tradition in the National Football League (NFL). The team's success is matched by few other NFL teams. More importantly to the city of Denver, the Broncos brought forth a commanding identity as a sports city and in turn, Denver was no longer considered a cow town. The 1977 season marked the first playoff and Super Bowl appearance for the Broncos and from that point forward, the city became obsessed with Broncos football. The team's colors of blue and orange represented the beautiful sunsets that stretch across the Front Range region of the Rocky Mountains as the sun sets to the west. The team's primary color was orange. This color became a trademark for Denver residents. 'Orange madness' had struck Denver in 1977. Sports writer and journalist Woodrow Paige explains the Broncos obsession as the fake disease orange madness is, "taking over my life and everyone else's in Colorado, and then orange began seeping all over the country."<sup>1</sup> Others have described 'Orange Madness' as "an infectious and generally harmless civic celebration of the Broncos' success."<sup>2</sup> The Broncos became the first professional sports team in Denver to leave a lasting impression on its citizens and to elevate the Mile High City in national consciousness.

Producing a greater understanding as to the different ways which the Broncos have impacted, whether it is favorable or damaging, to the city of Denver through the team's and city's development is the focal point in understanding the connection between professional sports teams and the city. Not only did the Broncos steal the hearts of Denver citizens, they also generated hundreds of millions of dollars and produced

benefits for the city through countless charity organizations. The question becomes, who were the recipients of the revenue generated by the team? Scholars have long noted the complex impact of a successful sports franchise on the economy and civic pride of a city and a region. The Denver Broncos have provided both for Colorado and Denver. Colorado College professors and scholars Thomas Cronin and Robert Loevy have noted that Denver “increased taxes to expand the Denver ‘light rail’ commuter train system” around the same time the Broncos were Super Bowl Champions and had their new stadium proposal voted on and approved.<sup>3</sup> The light rail commuter system has provided means of conveyance for tens of thousands of the-greater-Denver-area residents and surrounding Coloradans not only to sporting events like Broncos games, but also to other downtown areas and places of business. In the 2013 season alone, an estimated 18,000 Broncos fans used the RTD light rail and BroncosRide systems to commute to and from Broncos games.<sup>4</sup> Partially due the Broncos popularity as well as a greater need to connect suburban Denver with the downtown area, expansion of the light rail now reaches nearly twenty miles south of the city and fifteen miles westward. Similarly, historians have long noted the nature of the West and how the post-WWII modernization transformed its cities. This modernization caused Denver (and the state as a whole) to “rapidly change from an urban-industrial society into a metropolitan-technology society” the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Any modernized society calls for entertainments outlets for its residents which includes professional sports teams. Hence, the Broncos saga illustrates both these themes of economic endeavors, modernization and identity for the city.



Denver in the twenty-first century is considered a major city, consisting of millions of residents in the city limits and metropolitan areas. The 'Gateway to the West' as some proclaim, Denver has evolved from a modest pair of mining communities to the largest city in Colorado. The growth of Denver came by way of a new century of entrepreneurs, varying from town builder, miner or farmer.<sup>6</sup> These ambitious folk were the original contributors into turning Denver into a city. In the 1920s, Denver followed the trends of the nation. Bootlegging, gambling and general debauchery were common throughout the city. Despite its chaotic customs, Denver began to attract more and more people. By the middle of the century, Denver had close to half a million residents. In light of the competitive nature of Americans, sports surely became an integral part of Denver's image in the twenty-first century. Coloradans had a variety of sports to choose from.<sup>7</sup> Baseball had begun to formally establish in Denver as a city that possessed a minor league team in the Denver Bears. College football in Colorado became widespread, part of the state's three largest universities: the University of Colorado, Colorado A&M University (later Colorado State University) and the University of Denver. The NFL did not yield strong unity with other professional football organizations until the late 1960s. Denied a chance to field a team in the long-established NFL, Denver was able to launch the Denver Broncos franchise as one of the original American Football League teams in 1960.<sup>8</sup>

Bob Howsam was a baseball executive who created the Denver Bears, a minor league baseball team in 1947.<sup>9</sup> He then led the effort to build the team's home field, Bears Stadium. Howsam expanded the home of the Denver Bears, popularly known as the Mile High Stadium in the years to come. In hopes to get more use out of the stadium,

he met with businessman Lamar Hunt and invested in the stadium which helped to create the American Football League (AFL).<sup>10</sup> The AFL became an effective nuisance to the longer established and much more powerful NFL. The NFL knew it was risking debt, instability and a negative public image by continuing to fight the new league.<sup>11</sup> By 1970, the leagues merged, after the first three Super Bowls were played by the winners of each league. The two leagues' merging began in 1966, but the NFL and AFL did not officially join together until 1970. The AFL realized a merging with the NFL would be their most viable option, but in the end of a three year process, the unified National Football League remained.<sup>12</sup> Instead of continuing to fend off the AFL, the NFL decided to let their teams become part of the NFL.<sup>13</sup> It did however take many years before the AFL teams were compared as equals to the NFL teams. The Broncos, a member team of the AFL now had their opportunity to compete at the highest level of professional football.

Though the Broncos played in a respectable 34,000 seat stadium, the team struggled in its first decade and a half. Their first five seasons the Broncos garnered a measly 18 wins against 49 losses, clearly the worst AFL team.<sup>14</sup> After the first season, Howsam viewed the successive years as a large financial loss to himself. Attendance plummeted in the 1960 season from almost 20,000 for the opening game to less than 6,000 for the final home game, the days of die-hard loyalty and sell-out records were far into the future for the Broncos.<sup>15</sup> This being the case, he sought to sell the Broncos in the spring of 1961. Denver businessman and partial owner of the Denver Bears Gerald Phipps bought the team to ensure the Broncos would not be relocated.<sup>16</sup> Phipps became a champion in Denver for keeping the Broncos in the city. He also created the first Broncos facility north of Denver in suburban Adams County in 1967.<sup>17</sup> Under Phipps the

Broncos experienced growth and greater hope for a bright future. Even so, the addition of college stars such as Floyd Little still did not make the Broncos a winning franchise through the 1960's and into the following decade.

Though the previous decade saw hardships for the Broncos, the late 1970s proved a change in the franchise. The 1977 season was the Broncos first appearance not only into the NFL playoffs, but also the Super Bowl. In sports journalist's Terry Frei's *'77: Denver, The Broncos, And A Coming Of Age* he makes clear to "never mind the way... [this] book ends. The '77 Broncos were champions."<sup>18</sup> The Broncos entered the 1977 season with a new head coach, Red Miller, and a new starting quarterback, Craig Morton. Led by a staunch and physical defense coined the 'Orange Crush,' the Broncos became a relevant team in the NFL through their success. The 1977 Broncos were "instant media darlings... overnight sensations, a miracle team who had enjoyed a Cinderella season."<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately the 1977 Denver team did not win the Super Bowl; they lost in the ultimate game to the Dallas Cowboys, 27-10. Nonetheless, the Broncos became a national underdog story, and the team was now truly a well-known team in the NFL, not just a measly member of the league. The city also developed to large extent during the 1977 season. Denver was beginning to grow up in front of everyone's eyes.

In the 1980s and 90s the Denver Broncos' image was recast by the drafting of John Elway. John Elway, a quarterback sensation hailing from the University of Stanford became the most iconic sports hero in Colorado history.<sup>20</sup> Elway came to Denver in a peculiar fashion. The Broncos experienced a .500<sup>21</sup> or better season every year from 1976 to 1981 but due to an NFL players' strike in 1982, the Broncos struggled to regain their winning ways and ended the short season with 2 wins and 7 losses as well as the

number four overall pick in the upcoming draft.<sup>22</sup> Elway, the favorite to be picked first overall in the 1983 NFL Draft, made it clear he had no desire to play for the Baltimore Colts, who possessed the number one pick due to their volatile coach Frank Kush. Elway knew he also had the opportunity to play baseball, having been drafted by the New York Yankees in 1981 and playing a summer season with the Oneonta Yankees, their Single A short season minor league affiliate.<sup>23</sup> The Broncos entered trade talks on May 2, 1983 and acquired the highly coveted young quarterback through trading offensive lineman Chris Hinton, backup quarterback Mark Herrmann, and their first round pick in the 1984 draft.<sup>24</sup> What followed in John Elway's illustrious sixteen-year NFL career was a rewriting of the record book, two Super Bowl victories, and an induction in the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Elway's renowned career is supported by ten playoff appearances, five Super Bowl appearances, two Super Bowl victories, 46 come-from-behind victories and 147 career wins. Despite reaching the Super Bowl on three separate occasions, Elway and Bronco head coach Dan Reeves had, at best, a shaky relationship. Sports historian James Whiteside wrote that "the Elway-Reeves relationship was strained from the beginning and sometimes erupted into open conflict during their decade together in Denver."<sup>25</sup> It did not seem as though Elway had the talent around him to take the Broncos the next step to win the Super Bowl. After firing Elway's favorite offensive coordinator Mike Shanahan, after the 1991 Season, as well as passing on wide receivers for Elway and drafting a quarterback Tommy Maddox in the 1992 NFL Draft, then owner and businessman Pat Bowlen, who bought the team from Edgar Kaiser in 1984, decided to put his faith in Elway, and not Reeves. Coach Reeves was fired after the 1992 season.<sup>26</sup>

After experimenting for two years with defensive coordinator-turned-head coach Wade Phillips, the Broncos found their best coach in franchise history, Mike Shanahan.

Mike Shanahan and John Elway earned two Super Bowl victories together, only the city's second and third professional championships respectively. The Broncos had always been Denver's favorite team, with an average of 76,000 plus fans screaming in the stands of Mile High Stadium, and now had bragging rights as winners of two Super Bowl championships. The two Super Bowl years in 1997 and 1998 were marked with a powerful running attack by little known University of Georgia running back Terrell Davis and a defense that created numerous turnovers. Terrell Davis led an offensive surge that ranked top 3 in the NFL in rushing yards per game during the two Super Bowl Years thanks to their feisty offensive line coach Alex Gibbs, coined the "godfather of zone blocking."<sup>27</sup> Zone-blocking involves a unified stepping scheme by offensive linemen which gives the running back the option to follow the line or cutback against the direction the line is moving. Davis also became just the fourth 2000 yard rusher during the 1998 season, which led him to earn him the NFL MVP honor.<sup>28</sup> John Elway decided to end his career as a victor and after the second Super Bowl win, he retired from the game. Remaining in Denver, Elway owned car dealerships, coached high school football and currently serves as the Broncos Vice President of Football Operations, a title which he took in January 2011. Unfortunately for the Broncos, the retirement of John Elway and downfall of Terrell Davis's career through knee injuries beginning in the 1999 season set the Broncos back on an enduring and frustrating rebuilding process, and the team would not again reach prominence for fifteen more years.

The 2000s were a respectable decade for the Broncos. Ever since the 1977 season, the Broncos have not yielded consecutive losing seasons. All the same, the first ten seasons of the new millennium only provided four playoff appearances and one playoff win. Even Mike Shanahan was fired, eventually bringing in head coach John Fox after a two year debacle with young and unproven head coach Josh McDaniels. Change within the Broncos was clearly occurring, but the bottom line was their number one priority focused on winning. As a start to drawing a plan for winning, Coach McDaniels drafted quarterback Tim Tebow in the 2010 NFL Draft. Tebow is known for his evangelical Christian faith and motivating personality. A Heisman trophy winner and two-time national champion at the University of Florida, Tebow was clearly a proven winner in his college playing years. His infectious personality led him to be named the starting quarterback and though an incredibly unpolished as an NFL quarterback, he led to team to the divisional round of the playoffs in 2011. Sportswriter Brian Howell proclaimed that “Tebow became *the* biggest story in the NFL” during the 2011 season.<sup>29</sup> Though the Broncos were exciting and competitive in the early years of the new decade, management decided to upgrade the quarterback position and signed former Indianapolis Colt Peyton Manning to an enormous contract. His addition brought the hope Denver would soon reach Super Bowl prominence once again.<sup>30</sup>

The Peyton Manning led Broncos have won the AFC West division three consecutive times. Manning has enjoyed a tremendous amount of success in his final years in Denver. He won multiple awards including Comeback Player of the Year (2012) and his 5<sup>th</sup> league record NFL MVP (2013). Despite Manning’s individual accolades, their 2013 Super Bowl appearance was abysmal; the Broncos were routed by the Seattle

Seahawks 43-8. John Elway, the champion of Denver turned executive superstar sought to aid Manning's offense with an improvement on all three levels of their defense, hoping to concoct a defense with a familiar flavor of the Orange Crush of the late 1970's.<sup>31</sup> Coach John Fox was fired after winning four straight division championships but no Super Bowl wins. John Elway hired his longtime backup quarterback Gary Kubiak in January 2015. With a new look coaching staff, the Broncos look slated for another Super Bowl run and successful season. The Broncos have the possibility to continue to improve with a talented roster and Kubiak's aggressive style of coaching.

Denver also has some of the largest and most loyal fan bases to their teams, especially with the Broncos. Former professor in the Smeal College of Business at Penn State University, Wayne DeSarbo considers fan avidity of sports through four dimensions: on-field participation, passive engagement activities, purchasing a team's entities, and social dimension. On-field participation includes dance teams, cheerleaders and a marching band. Passive engagement activities include fan viewership, radio listening and following up on the said game. Purchasing a team's entities includes buying team memorabilia as well as actively participating in booster clubs. The social dimension focuses on attending team based parties, buying season tickets and attending home and possibly away games.<sup>32</sup> The Denver Broncos fans possess many of these dimensions from DeSarbo's model. For instance, currently the waiting time for season tickets for the Broncos is estimated to be 10 to 15 years with over 40,000 people on the list.<sup>33</sup> Forbes business magazine also ranked the Broncos as the NFL's best fans. The ranking was based on five categories,

Hometown crowd reach (defined by Nielsen Scarborough as a percentage of the metropolitan area population that watched, attended, and/or listened to a game in

the last year), 3 years worth of television ratings (per Nielsen), 3 years of stadium attendance based on capacity reached, 3 years worth of merchandise sales (per NFLShop.com), and social media reach (a combination of Facebook likes and Twitter followers based on the team's metro area population).<sup>34</sup>

This data demonstrates the fan base for the Broncos is incredibly strong. Starting with the Broncos, Denver has been deemed a sports haven for many, containing many professional sports teams.

The Broncos are synonymous with the city of Denver. One simply cannot speak of one without the other. Clearly however, the Broncos have not been in existence since the birth of Denver. Since the 1970s, when the Broncos became competitive, the city truly supported the team.<sup>35</sup> Denver's residents ritualistically watch the Broncos every week. Walking down any street across the Front Range region of Colorado, one is sure to find at least one individual donning a piece of Broncos apparel. Many cities boast about their fan bases, they are understandably fierce in loyalty to their respected hometown NFL team. But the city of Denver and the Broncos are different. The Broncos, for instance, ranked first in stadium attendance percentage for the 2011, 2012, and 2013 seasons.<sup>36</sup> Denver Post and ESPN sports writer Terry Frei describes how the Super Bowl season of 1977 as the point in which Denver began to grow and change. What has remained constant these some forty years since 1977 is the Broncos are still the kings of professional sports in Denver.<sup>37</sup> His experience with the Denver Broncos since their 1977 season displayed a city that was on the verge of becoming relevant to the eastern coast of the nation, where professional athletics, up to that point in time, reigned supreme across the nation. Despite Denver's fearful complex of inferiority, the Broncos played the 1977 season with reckless abandon.<sup>38</sup>



The Denver Broncos and the city as a whole fought insurmountable disrespect from throughout the NFL. Despite wielding the AFC's best record in the 1977 season, most of the NFL and its fans believed the Broncos were a 'one-hit wonder.' Sentiments of "yeah, you guys are good, but you haven't played the Raiders yet" echoed through the team throughout the season.<sup>39</sup> Rightfully so, the Broncos had not beaten the defending Super Bowl champion Raiders since the 1972 season. The regular season win and conference championship victory over their arch nemesis proved the Broncos were a competitive team, and Denver was a major city. Broncos wide receiver Haven Moses reflecting on the 1977 Super Bowl season notes the significance of the Broncos to the city,

There was more done that year to bring people together than I've ever seen in my life. It transformed the attitudes of this city. This is a beautiful town and a beautiful place... There was something needed to kick it off. And this brought attention to what Denver was about to become.<sup>40</sup>

Woodrow Paige Jr. also emphasizes the Broncos thankfulness, noting that NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle stated "the fans in Denver were the greatest" and the Phipps family were "class people."<sup>41</sup>

It appears as though the 1977 Broncos season laid a strong foundation for the team's future but also aided in part to the city's development. The Broncos owner Pat Bowlen in 1995 stated that Denver had "grown up from a relatively small Midwestern city to a much more sophisticated city."<sup>42</sup> This growth came, in part, to the city's rise of sports teams, the Broncos as forerunner. Besides the heartfelt love and passion Denver fans have for their Broncos, the team has provided financial gains for businesses throughout the city. According to Woodrow Paige Jr., the impact of the Broncos during the 1977 season alone yielded \$35 million in Broncos memorabilia.<sup>43</sup> It can be presumed

that such gains in Broncos products as shirts, coffee mugs and bumper stickers would only be a miniscule portion of sales made by the Broncos franchise in the given year which also takes television revenue, ticket sales and food and alcohol consumption into account. Another fiscal gain example from the Broncos organization came by Joe Iacino. Iacino was the distributor for Hires Root Beer in Colorado in 1977. His business benefited incredibly through the 'Orange Crush' defense. The Orange Crush soft drink, generally a weak seller in Colorado, had become the state's most popular soft drink due to the Broncos stifling 'Orange Crush' defense. Iacino distributed the soft drink across the state and sales boomed, increasing 100 percent.<sup>44</sup> It should be also noted the revenue from Mile High Stadium's parking, concessions, and advertising were taken by the city in return for covering for operations and maintenance.<sup>45</sup> This connection of product and team shows that because Mile High Stadium was on public land (as Sports Authority Field is as well in 2015), the city government gains wages from the organization.

These three instances illustrate a much larger reality to what the city can profit from having a professional football team. Local businesses, retail and dining services especially have profited and truly relied on the Broncos for their businesses survival and success. Brooklyn's Restaurant, a local bar and restaurant located a few blocks south of the Broncos stadium, Sports Authority Field at Mile High, essentially needs the Broncos for their business to run. Hundreds of Broncos fans eat at this establishment on their way to the game while others who do not have game tickets settle in their bar stools, order another pint of beer, and watch the game. In an interview with General Manager Matt Bradshaw of Brooklyn's restaurant and bar located on Auraria Parkway, the main walking route from downtown to Sports Authority Field, he explained that sales on an

average day compared to a Broncos game day is significantly less. When the Broncos play, Brooklyns' sales increase that day upwards to 65%, showing how important Bronco's game day can be to small-business and local economy.<sup>46</sup> This shows this restaurant relies incredibly on the profitability poles, either feast or famine. Despite other events occurring in downtown Denver such as festivals and concerts, restaurants are able to thrive because of many hungry and thirsty sports fans arriving in hopes for a great football game in a comfortable environment. The majority of sales earned from the restaurant, Bradshaw said were from sporting events such as the Broncos.<sup>47</sup> Brooklyns Restaurant demonstrates Colorado's long economic history of being a boom or bust state.<sup>48</sup> So long as social events and sports teams such as the Broncos are prevalent in Denver, the city's economy and businesses will benefit from it.

Aside from portions of revenue being earned for businesses and the city's government, the Broncos have also have become a fountainhead of sponsoring local charities throughout the Front Range region. Per the Denver Broncos official website, they have affiliations with various charity and community organizations, with ten different categories: Build, Care, Cure, Give, Inspire, Nourish, Play, Serve, Succeed and Support.<sup>49</sup> Because there are different types of these affiliations between the Broncos and the said organization, the affiliations encompass a wide demographic range. The Broncos charity and community organizations for instance encourage children to be physically active and house a safe environment for after school programs in association with USA Football and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. This program connects to First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* Program in which one of the goals is increased physical activity for children and initiatives "aimed at increasing access to play."<sup>50</sup> Denver in the

modern era is deemed one of the fittest cities in the nation. It has consistently ranked in the top five in the American Fitness Index report the last decade.<sup>51</sup> For disease stricken Coloradoans, the Broncos have teamed up with Bonfils Blood Center, the Alzheimer's Association and the Susan G. Komen Foundation which is a leader in the breast cancer movement program in Colorado. The Denver Broncos Quarterback Club, founded by Charlie Goldberg in 1976 under the name 'Mile-High Stadium Club' also made dividends in the community. Denver historian Jim McNally explains the Quarterback Club "provides tickets to disadvantaged children and orphans in the Denver area for Broncos home games" and still exists today.<sup>52</sup> These efforts by the Broncos organization show their care for their fans and community.

Through these connections with these organizations and foundations, the Broncos have proven to display interest in the betterment of the citizens of Denver. Many would blatantly assume a professional sports team should fulfill a strict requirement to serve and contribute to the community. When in reality, an NFL team such as the Broncos main priority functions like any other white-collar business working for a larger company, the NFL. It is important to note the NFL is a multi-billion dollar per year industry. According to Forbes magazine, the average NFL team is currently worth \$1.43 billion.<sup>53</sup> Their focus is to foster a successful business, meaning generate as much revenue for the businesses and companies to flourish. Involvement in the community, though admirable, does not necessarily create success in terms of dollars and cents for the Broncos or any other NFL team. What the participation in the community for the Broncos does create though is a genuine care for its fan base and hopefully deters the negative perception many view the league as, a power-hungry mega-corporation.

Currently, thirteen Broncos players have individual foundations ranging from providing youth football camps for children in the greater Denver area (Demaryius Thomas), hosting holiday shopping trips for needy families (Ryan Clady) and raising \$10 million to youth programs across the nation (Peyton Manning).<sup>54</sup> It can be argued that as professional athletes, Broncos players are almost mandated to partner with their community as part of their civic service. It does indeed reflect positively on the organization. However, other businesses in which employees' salaries range from six to eight digits per year are generally not viewed by the public eye. This means these business folk are not called to partake in community events as much compared to professional athletes. Since Broncos players all chip in to community events as well as others going beyond their call of duty to create distinct foundations on their own accord shows their commitment to the city they play for and live in.

The Broncos, similar to other businesses, believe some type of fiscal endeavor would be triggered from its customers (in this case its fans) being more involved in their lives aside from work. In football, when fans see their team participating in their everyday lives, they become more loyal to the team, through purchasing tickets, buying merchandise and cheering even louder on Sundays. This is not, by all means, to assume the Broncos only work with the community to earn more revenue, absolutely not. But if displaying attention towards the team's fans create more profits for their team, then so be it. The power of celebrities, in this instance, Broncos players, coaches and staff members is an influential networking tactic to produce more popularity for the team. Their impact is far-reaching and it shows through generation after generation of Denver residents continually supporting the Broncos through their on and off-the-field efforts. University

of Indiana graduate Brandon Washington was able to attend and complete college this past year, earning a degree in public health upon receiving \$10,000 per year from Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning's PeyBack Foundation. Washington was naturally appreciative of the scholarship, stating he "could have not accomplished what I have without the help" and "it truly has made life much smoother enabling me to focus on being a college student."<sup>55</sup> Joyous occasions as these should not go unnoticed. Instances like these make Denver and Colorado residents feel proud to be Broncos fans.

Because the Broncos are a business, their goal is to win games and generate the most amount of revenue possible. In the capitalistic motivations of any American industry, boosting profits is a necessity and goal, especially with historically less intervention from government control compared to other countries. Profits are based on the amount of revenue earned. Partially because of this, the Broncos decided to expand their stadium (Mile High Stadium) from 51,000 to 75,000 seats in 1974. Expanding the stadium was also a testament to the Broncos increased popularity amongst Coloradans. The two newspapers of Denver, *The Rocky Mountain News* and *The Denver Post* both supported this action stating, "It is a responsible step forward to keep Denver a leading city serving the widely diversified interests of all our citizens. An improved stadium is part of an improved community."<sup>56</sup> The \$25 million in improvements and enlargements was passed by the Denver City Council through a 40-cent admission tax (seat tax) at all city facilities. This was the beginning of the Broncos modernization within the big business of professional sports. Only 3 years later in 1977, the Broncos won the conference title and earned a trip to the Super Bowl. Denver was beginning to show enough of an interest in the Broncos to support their stadium improvements. The teams

immediately prior to the 1977 Super Bowl team were on the edge of reaching the more competitive level of being a common playoff team. In 1977 their full potential was solidified.

The idea of a new stadium for the Broncos began in the 1990s when owner Pat Bowlen believed the old Mile High Stadium was no longer a profitable stadium for an NFL team.<sup>57</sup> Professional sports economics in the 1990s shifted in that, according the *Financial World* magazine, “the pecking order in professional sports today is determined primarily by venue revenues.”<sup>58</sup> If the Broncos were to get the most out of their team in terms of profit, a new stadium became necessary for both boosting finances and growing the franchise. Furthermore, an engineering study of Mile High Stadium in 1994 revealed maintenance on the old stadium would in fact be almost as much as building a new stadium, roughly \$260 million for repairs compared to upwards to \$300-350 million for a new stadium.<sup>59</sup> It would make much more economical sense in the long run then to forgo the old stadium renovations to build a new stadium. The *Denver Post* reported that “city officials announced a deal Thursday that will keep the Broncos in Denver for 25 years if a new stadium is built.”<sup>60</sup> Whether or not Bowlen was truthful in telling the *Denver Post* these claims (on threat of moving the franchise if the new stadium was not going to be built), the presence of the media wields a power that cannot be matched by many. This semi-endorsement or at least acknowledgement of a new Broncos stadium preserved the team in Denver for the next twenty-five years served as a catalyst for many Denver residents to begin supporting the new stadium initiative. NFL commissioner at the time Paul Tagliabue also agreed for the need for Denver to create a new stadium. He believed a new stadium was dependent on the franchise’s success and for the team to remain in

Denver. Without a new stadium, Tagliabue stated that Denver would not be able to compete for players in the current situation which (in the late 1990s) was not economically viable.<sup>61</sup> His influence has the ability to inspire fear in Broncos fans, for if the team was not allocated a new stadium then Tagliabue could certainly lobby for the team to then be relocated. This citing from the NFL commissioner held power as well, for he, among other duties, is the facilitator of teams relocating to new cities.

Aside from owner Pat Bowlen, Denver businessman Charlie Goldberg and local interest group Citizens For A New Stadium (CFANS) led the charge for building a new stadium. The first goal was to get the issue of a new facility on the ballot in the six-county stadium district in the metropolitan area.<sup>62</sup> Bowlen exuberantly supported this interest group, donating \$1.98 million of his own money to the pro-stadium group.<sup>63</sup> This is important because it showed Bowlen's resourcefulness in supporting local groups which would help him raise public awareness for the new stadium. What resulted from Bowlen's agenda was a proposal called referendum 4A, a 0.1 percent (meaning one-tenth of one percent) on sales tax in the six-county stadium district, running until 2012.<sup>64</sup> These funds were to produce \$180 million for the new stadium fund. The sales tax was an extension of the tax revenue earned and used to fund for the majority of construction for Coors Field where Denver's Major League Baseball team, the Colorado Rockies play.<sup>65</sup> The rest of the funds would be from the Broncos organization and Pat Bowlen, spending an estimated \$260 million.<sup>66</sup>

The stadium proposal had its share of opponents. A grassroots movement dubbed Citizens Opposing the Stadium Tax (COST) held rallies and meetings stating their claim for not wanting a tax hike for the new stadium.<sup>67</sup> Cries of crony capitalism echoed across



the city once the proposal voting drew near in November of 1998. Former federal judge Jim Carrigan believed the plan to fund the new stadium was “a classic case of corporate welfare” in which the new stadium would and construction companies would receive large subsidies from the government, usually in the form of tax breaks.<sup>68</sup> Other Colorado politicians such as Denver City Council member Dennis Gallagher found the stadium proposal “ironic to devote \$180 million in tax revenue to millionaires of society while we lift a sneering lip to the welfare mother in the food line.”<sup>69</sup> This demonstrates the issue of where money should be spent by the government. Denver was, and continues to be no exception to housing poverty in their city. In 2014, homeless people in the Denver seven county metropolitan region has reached over 5,800 people with another 2,230 people on high at-risks of reaching homelessness.<sup>70</sup> This number displays a critical problem within the city. Social issues such as this seem to have been shelved for apparently higher priority items such as funding a new stadium. It remains highly questionable and discouraging that a new stadium can be voted on and built in only a few short years whereas inherent city problems like poverty and homelessness are not effectively approached by local and state governments as well as residents.

Despite new stadium opposition, the referendum passed by a 57% approval and Invesco Field at Mile High was built adjacent to Mile High Stadium in the Sun Valley neighborhood.<sup>71</sup> Some believe the success of the Broncos in the 1997 and 1998 seasons motivated voters to vote yes on the referendum. Richard Woodbury of *Time* magazine declared that “Denverites seem ready and willing to tax themselves for the even greater glory of their gridders.”<sup>72</sup> Because the Broncos were finally meeting expectations as an organization that was capable of winning, even in the largest games, many citizens of

Denver and Broncos fans believed a new stadium would benefit the city and state. Now as the Broncos have consistently been a successful team in the NFL, the new stadium has resonated with fans in a positive way. Tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people living in the Denver metropolitan area flock to the renamed Sports Authority Field at Mile High to see the Broncos compete. The identity of the majority of Denver residents resides with the Broncos.

Denver has housed the Broncos since their inception in 1960. The Broncos development parallels Denver's growth as a moderate and quaint town to a booming and popular metropolis, especially in the West. The question remains however, why are the Broncos impactful to the city of Denver and, in turn, the state? The Denver Broncos popularity since the earliest successful seasons in the late 1970s aided city growth by way of putting Denver on stage for the whole nation to recognize. From there, the addition of more distinguished players and coaches as well as more Super Bowl appearances made Denver a nationally distinguished city through the Broncos. Colorado historian and University of Colorado Denver Dr. Thomas Noel believes winning teams such as the Broncos are beneficial to the city in that they perpetuate the idea of a 'winning city.'<sup>73</sup> Successful sports teams attract more fans to a city, which in turn brings more business to areas surrounding the stadium, most notably bars and restaurants.<sup>74</sup> Large doses of civic pride are created from winning teams as well. The hope for both fans as well as people who work for the team is to produce the most successful product, in this case, a respectable and winning football franchise. Through increased popularity of the Broncos, the people of Denver and the state began to spend more money on the team's products and tickets. Restaurants and merchandise retailers benefitted greatly from the Broncos

success and popularity. Eating and drinking establishments around the stadium and in downtown areas along walking routes to the stadium have flourished the past thirty plus years from Broncos game attendees passing through for a quick meal before the game and the bar regulars settling in with a few pitchers of beer for the game. It is safe to say these businesses truly rely on the Broncos to be as profitable as they are. The NFL season yields great revenue for neighborhood sports restaurants and bars Denver citizens love.

The Broncos also impact the city of Denver through their various affiliations with numerous charity and community organizations. By having these partnerships, the Broncos have developed an image of themselves that fans are attracted to. Their generosity in the community has cast the Broncos as a loving and compassionate professional sports team that helps the homeless, the sick and the less fortunate. With all of these actions being done by the Broncos, they have established a true identity amongst the people of Denver.

Though some, such as historian James Whiteside have argued that “sports franchises and facilities have only minimal economic impact on a city or region,” in Denver, the city bleeds orange and blue.<sup>75</sup> Establishing the Broncos as an organization has indeed benefitted financially mostly the Broncos owner, staff and players first and foremost. New York journalists Neil deMause and Joanna Cagan expressed harsh views on Broncos owner Pat Bowlen, harping on his financial woes in which he sold off the rights Mile High Stadium’s luxury boxes to raise quick cash. The two believed this was the main incentive to construct a new stadium, so Bowlen could restore the millions of dollars he sold off via the luxury boxes.<sup>76</sup> This holds true to a degree, for the primary

goal of any business, whether it be a professional sports organization or a family owned general store, is to earn an income. The Denver Broncos are no different, and Pat Bowlen does run a successful business in terms of generating a team that is successful on the field and selling tickets to fans.<sup>77</sup> The Broncos have experienced 31 consecutive seasons of sellout games as well as the highest local television ratings of any NFL city.<sup>78</sup> Some believe the big business the NFL conducts is the essence of what is wrong with American capitalism in that business moguls have immense individual power. Others believe a man such as Bowlen is simply an actor in the capitalist theatre. Regardless, the system of potential economic inequality seems to be the root of the issue, not an individual like Bowlen. In spite of negative connotations with big business, the NFL and professional sports as a whole entity yields widespread appeal to the American majority.

Though the Broncos are sometimes associated with a characterized 'greedy' owner, Denver businesses have in the last four decades become entrenched in their favorite sports team. This has led to more people buying merchandise as well as the food industry serving more people on game day. All of this consumerism equates to the residents of Denver making the Broncos their team. These Broncos fans concern themselves with the team's success because it is a representation of the status of the city. When the New Orleans Saints won Super Bowl XLIV in 2009, its citizens were overjoyed, for now they had something to be excited for after years of turmoil in the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Their 2006 season provided civic relief by way of winning one playoff game. Professional sports teams have this unique effect on citizens, an unexplainable attraction in which tenants of the given city become obsessed with their professional sports teams. Denver has clearly shown the Broncos popularity

through its sheer tenure as the professional football team of the city. In turn, 'Denverites' and all Coloradans embrace the orange and blue of the Broncos as their successful home team. Producing financial gains for the city and businesses is important, but equally significant is showing how a team such as the Broncos can lift people to a peaceful state. Content people equates to a happier and more helpful society.

The creation and widespread distribution of the Denver Broncos franchise has left a lasting image on the city of Denver and its residents. From the struggles of the early years to becoming Super Bowl contenders and eventual champions, the Broncos have remained the pinnacle of interest of Denver area professional sports teams. Broncos players such as John Elway, Terrell Davis and Peyton Manning have displayed to the rest of the nation the team's commitment to excellence in fielding a competitive ball club. The Broncos were able to fund their new stadium through mainly public funds which was voted on in November of 1998. The nearly fifteen year old Sports Authority Field at Mile High serves as a physical symbol to the Broncos success. This further development of the city stadium's (Mile High Stadium and Sports Authority Field at Mile High) and post-WWII urbanization has created a revival in older areas throughout Denver. Businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods of Auraria, Jefferson Park and Union Station adjacent to the stadium have especially profited from the Broncos presence in consumer merchandise as well as food and beverage consumption. 'Broncomania' however encompasses the whole state, creating the ultimate seasonal experience for football fans in Colorado. Colorado and the Broncos are now synonymous. One cannot be accustomed to just the city of Denver without knowing the Broncos. Broncos Ring of Famer wide receiver Haven Moses words of the team's first Super Bowl year of 1977

continue to ring loud and clear, proclaiming, “There was more done that year to bring people together than I’ve ever seen in my life. It transformed the attitudes of this city... this brought attention to what Denver was about to become.”<sup>79</sup> Denver began to make itself known on not only a national level, but internationally. The Broncos aided in putting this glorious city as the final and home destination for Americans.

### Chapter 3- From McNichols to Pepsi: An Avalanche of a City

The National Hockey League's (NHL) Colorado Avalanche blew into Denver in 1995 and brought instant success to an eager fan base. Though the team is barely twenty years old, the 'Avs,' as they are affectionately known, have become an integral part of Denver professional sports. The team has won two Stanley Cup Championships, in the 1995-1996 and 2000-2001 seasons. The team's first championship parade in June of 1996 brought more than four hundred thousand people crammed in Denver's Civic Center.<sup>1</sup> Historian James Whiteside makes clear that it was notably shocking that the Avs would be the first professional sports team to deliver Denver a championship. He also believed this team helped create an "ever closer connection between major league sports and corporate empires."<sup>2</sup> Having been owned by different Fortune 500 businesses and incredibly wealthy owners, the Avs represent the ever booming and powerful industry of professional sports teams and have formed numerous large commercial partnerships with many products.

As a business entity and rallying symbol, the Avalanche have impacted Denver in a number of ways. The Avalanche have invoked and continue to invoke civic pride in the residents of Denver and the state. Championship seasons and division titles certainly convince city residents to follow the team more closely. But the team has affected the city in other ways, both positive and some negative. The Auraria neighborhood of central Denver has changed with the addition of the Pepsi Center sports arena, constructed in the late 1990s. This helped revitalize an important district to the city. According to Denver Commercial Real Estate, or CRBE, Denver's market leader in commercial real estate services, the Pepsi Center sales tax in 1999 and 2000 totaled roughly \$80 million and 907

hotel rooms were added in Downtown Denver since the groundbreaking of the arena in 1997 up until 2005.<sup>3</sup> The sales tax from the Pepsi Center trickles back into the local economy. As the interest in professional sports rises, especially in Denver, tourism generally increases. This addition of more hotel rooms can at least be partly credited due to the construction of the Pepsi Center.

Renovation efforts were already in effect in the Auraria district, beginning in the 1960s. The primary higher education institutions of Denver exist in Auraria. Even the entertainment section of Auraria has been redone with the addition of Elitch Gardens amusement park relocating to the area. These places have been renovated throughout the past fifty years which display the new urbanism movement within Denver, the ability to design admirable eco-friendly areas within a city. Auraria is now considered a 'hotspot' among both Denverites as well as tourists because of these added entertainment and education entities. The Pepsi Center housed the Avalanche as well as the city's professional basketball team, the Denver Nuggets, beginning in 1999.<sup>4</sup> The Avalanche's presence in Auraria was also a result of other downtown area renovation efforts such as the construction of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall and LoDo district revitalization. The urban transformation of Denver makes the city a continual beneficial destination for many. Though there are benefits to have many professional sports teams in a given city the concept of yet another team does stir controversy in some regards such as the revenue earned by the team is pocketed mainly by owners and elites who work for the team. In hopes of analyzing the urban development of parts of Denver, namely the Auraria neighborhood, in its connection with the Colorado Avalanche, understanding the effects the team has had on the city will be much clearer.



The 1990s was a time of change in the city of Denver. Older neighborhoods in the city were beginning to be heavily revitalized and turned from trashy 'has-been' areas to vastly popular pockets of land. The gentrification process has created an environment which young people especially found great interest to live. Sports in youth, college and professional ranks were a growing interest to the city and state. Three professional sports teams were already established in Denver in the early 1990s: the football Broncos, the basketball Nuggets and the expansion baseball Rockies. The Denver Broncos reigned as kings of professional sport in the city. With three Super Bowl appearances in the late 1980s and had been led by one of the NFL's most elite players, quarterback John Elway, the city deeply relied on the team's success as a source of pride for the city. This pride has been carried into the twenty-first century with the Broncos, in 2013 ranked second in the NFL in local ratings at 43.5%, which is based on the percentage of households which view the games.<sup>5</sup> The fan base and business success of other professional franchises in other sports attracted the interest of professional hockey.

The Quebec Nordiques, a respectable team in the NHL's eastern conference faced financial troubles in the early 1990s. Marcel Aubut, their owner, claimed the team could not afford to remain in Quebec unless the government could commit to a major financial subsidy, which included the building of a \$125 million new arena.<sup>6</sup> The city would not oblige. Because of this, Denver hockey fans were excited a team was on its way. Denver wanted an NHL team to return to the city. COMSAT Video Enterprises, who already owned the Denver Nuggets, agreed to buy the team in 1995 for \$70 million.<sup>7</sup> COMSAT organized its sports teams in a separate subsidiary, Ascent Entertainment Group. The Avalanche quickly credited as one of the city's best attractions, having effective players

and winning suddenly and often. In their first ten years in Denver, the Avalanche won eight division titles and went to the playoffs nine times (excluding the 2004-2005 lockout season), capturing the NHL's Championship Trophy- the Stanley Cup- twice, in 1996 and again in 2001.<sup>8</sup> Because of the triumphant rise of the team, the image of a 'winning city' has partially assisted in great population growth in Denver since the 1990s, especially the younger demographic ranges of 18 to 24 years old and 25 to 34 years old.<sup>9</sup> Younger people are usually more outgoing than older groups of Americans. As they are proportionally less likely to have families, their opportunity for leisurely activities is greater. Attending popular city event such as professional sports games would be large attractions for this demographic.

The Avalanches' immediate success displayed the city's return to hockey addiction. Their inaugural season alone yielded over twelve thousands season ticket sales.<sup>10</sup> In 2015, the expected number of season ticket sales for a new team is 10,000, which the Avalanche exceeded twenty years ago.<sup>11</sup> Though Denver's return to professional hockey was exciting, it is still important to remember Denver has a long history of hockey. Whether it amateur, semi-professional or professional, Canada's national sport has been consistently present in Denver. There have been plenty of intriguing team names over the past fifty years of Colorado professional hockey including: Falcons, Mavericks, Invaders, Rangers, Spurs, Rockies and of course Avalanche.<sup>12</sup> College hockey has also yielded a widespread following in Denver and throughout state with the University of Denver Pioneers winning seven national championships since 1958.<sup>13</sup> Their rival, Colorado College, located in Colorado Springs has also been competitive, winning multiple conference titles and two national

championships. Their rivalry, known as the Battle for the Gold Pan has existed since 1949 with the University of Denver winning 157 games compared to Colorado College's 111.<sup>14</sup> Many players from both teams have had successful careers in the NHL and other lower-tier hockey leagues.

Professional hockey in Denver began with the United States Hockey League team the Denver Falcons. The team only lasted one season due to the league's collapse in 1951.<sup>15</sup> Following the Falcons early exit, another one-season-wonder out of the International Hockey League was the Denver Mavericks. They suffered an even earlier exit than the Falcons and moved to Minnesota, renamed the Minneapolis Millers before their first season was even completed.<sup>16</sup> After the Mavericks left town, the Western Hockey League's Denver Invaders lasted one season as well, from 1963-1964. After a series of one season professional hockey teams, a more lasting team began in the city with the Western Hockey League's Denver Spurs. The Spurs corralled into town beginning in 1968 and played their last game in McNichols Sports Arena in 1976.<sup>17</sup> Though the longevity of these teams were not considered incredibly lasting, it remained clear hockey held some type of foothold in Denver the second half of the twentieth century. Though these minor hockey leagues and teams were not financially stable, the continued presence of multiple teams in Denver showed the city's residents were at least aware and willing and open to the possibility of having a hockey team in Denver. On the other end however, professional sports franchises as businesses are ventures that often take risks to place their teams in cities. Sometimes these teams and leagues are successful, but many times they are not. Due to this fact, Denver was, at least exposed to professional hockey which set up the city for even more competitive hockey, an NHL

team. And on the same token, more powerful franchises at most saw Denver as potential city to build their team from.

The Colorado Rockies was Denver's first NHL team. The Rockies name is attributed to the state's natural beauty of its Rocky Mountains and now is the name for the city's Major League Baseball team. The Rockies were acquired as the Kansas City Scouts, a two-year-old team that struggled, was talentless and bankrupt. The team was therefore bought by oilman Jack Vickers and moved to Denver.<sup>18</sup> *Denver Post* writer Terry Frei covered the Rockies in the early stages of his journalism career. Frei explains the Rockies were fairly popular, but not nearly on the same level as another team in Denver that shared the same parking lot, the Broncos. The team struggled to win games. Even in their 1977-1978 season when they lost in the preliminary round of the playoffs, their record was still an abysmal 19 wins to 41 losses and 21 ties.<sup>19</sup> With such unsuccessful seasons, the team only lasted six seasons in Denver.

The Rockies, according to Frei, "heard predictions that they had a young team on the way to giving Denver a foothold in the NHL."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately this did not come to fruition. Ownership changes, from Vickers to New Jersey trucking owner Arthur Imperatore and coaching changes did not supply the needed leadership for the team to succeed. The trading away of three of their top young players Wilf Paiement, Paul Gardner and Barry Beck did not help the teams cause either. After Gilbert sold the Rockies to Buffalo cable television magnate John McMullen, the team was relocated to New Jersey in 1982. Still, Frei and the rest of the city were left to wonder if Denver would ever get its shot at another NHL team.<sup>21</sup> It took over a dozen years after the

Rockies moved to New Jersey, but the Colorado Avalanche took the city by force became Denver's hockey savior.

The formation of the Colorado Avalanche became a blessing to sports fans in Denver. Usually cities that do not have a franchise for a specific sport will bid for an expansion team. Expansion teams are teams that are made from scratch; a new coaching staff and new players attempting to please a craving fan base that has longed for a team in the given sport. Professional sports leagues will allow an expansion team to be created within a given city. The main concern that arises with expansion teams is, because they are a new business, the chances of them succeeding in its first five years or even decade in most occasions are very slim. The Houston Texans of the National Football League are a prime example. Established in 2002, the Texans did not qualify for the playoffs until their tenth season and overall record their first ten years boasted 65 wins to 95 losses, only a 40% winning percentage.<sup>22</sup>

Expansion teams have an uphill battle, much like other newly established private businesses. Wins are difficult to come by for expansion teams, which leads to less overall interest in the team and loss of revenue from ticket sales and team merchandise products. Teams, who struggle to consistently win games, often relocate to different cities as well as be sold to different teams. The city suffers from these situations because revenue generated from sports teams is not always what it is conceived to be. According to a University of Vanderbilt study, "Professional sports teams are not the great engines of local economic development they were once thought to be."<sup>23</sup> Professor of economic Brad Humphreys of West Virginia University reveals the Pepsi Center yielded \$8.8 million dollars in public subsidies.<sup>24</sup> These public subsidies allowed the city to negotiate

the right for a new arena with Ascent Entertainment. This agreement, in 1997, unfortunately did not have any way of guaranteeing Denver would see a return on its investment of the construction of the Pepsi Center.<sup>25</sup> It would take time in determining whether or not the Pepsi Center would generate large amounts of local economic activity. An expansion team especially would likely struggle to be competitive in its early years thus making the hope for the estimated small amount of financial gain for the city even more limited.

The Avalanche however, were not an expansion team, they were the 'new-look' Quebec Nordiques.<sup>26</sup> The Nordiques relocated to Denver in 1995. The Quebec Nordiques were an established and competitive team in the Eastern Conference in the NHL. Their 1994-1995 season yielded the best record in the eastern conference, only to be eliminated from the playoffs in the first round in the lockout-shortened season.<sup>27</sup> After COMSAT Video Enterprises purchased the team, Denver had an NHL team once again.<sup>28</sup> Some believed a competitive NHL team would be highly popular in Denver. But the inaugural season for the Avs created a fandom that nobody seemingly expected. The 1995-1996 Avalanche season began the league's longest recorded sellout streak of 487 games.<sup>29</sup> This season in particular proved to be one of the team's most successful years. The Avalanche won the Stanley Cup over the Florida Panthers in four games. This solidified the NHL's presence in the Centennial State and in Denver.

The Avalanche's first Stanley Cup championship season was due in large part for its differing, yet key players and head coach Mark Crawford who kept the team functioning like a well-oiled machine. Crawford had won the Jack Adams Trophy as Coach of the Year in his first season as the Nordiques coach in 1994.<sup>30</sup> The Avalanche

housed talent of young and old players during their first season. Joe Sakic, a well-respected center in the league became the team's captain when the team was in Quebec. Terry Frei explains 'Super Joe's' leadership style, "his captaincy was leading by example and with a barbed sense of humor he turned off when the tape recorders and cameras came on."<sup>31</sup> A rising star for the Avs was another center, Peter Forsberg, a second year player. Forsberg was honored later in his career the letter 'A' on his jersey, representing the alternate captain logo.<sup>32</sup> The duo became the frontrunners to a lethal offensive attack. Together they combined for 236 points their first season in Denver.<sup>33</sup> Goaltending however was another issue. Like any goal scoring sport, a team is only as effective offensively as they are defensively. The most important aspect of defense in these sports is the goalie, the person closest to the net, guarding the goal. Unfortunately for the Avs in the beginning of their inaugural season, goaltending was the missing link. Jocelyn Thibault struggled immensely as the team's primary goal tender. Therefore, the Avalanche traded for goalie all-star Patrick Roy in December 1995.<sup>34</sup>

Patrick Roy, or 'Saint Patrick' as he was commonly known during his playing days, is recognized as one of the NHL's greatest goaltenders. Traded by the Montreal Canadiens, Roy, an already a highly established player, having won two Conn Smythe trophies, the award for Most Valuable Player in the playoffs, two Stanley Cup trophies and in eleven seasons in Montreal, having a low 2.77 goals against average.<sup>35</sup> Roy's eight season career in Denver was highly productive as well. He won two more Stanley Cup titles, made five more all-star game appearances to go along with his six in Montreal and one more William Jennings trophy, totaling five, which is the award for the goaltender who allows the least amount of goals in a given season, having played a

minimum 25 games. Roy ended his Hall of Fame career with 551 career regular season wins and 151 playoff wins, second and first on the NHL's all-time records, respectively.<sup>36</sup> Roy's tenacity as a goaltender was integral in the Avs first Stanley Cup season. He brought intensity and an 'ice cold' focus to the team. Another appreciated acquisition to the Avalanche roster during their first season was Claude Lemieux. He too brought a charismatic passion that served as the identity for the team. The *Rocky Mountain News* described Lemieux as "one of the toughest, nastiest, most abrasive players in the league."<sup>37</sup> Together these key players for the Avalanche awarded Denver its first professional sports league title.

The Avalanche in the 1995-1996 season were awarded the second seed in the playoffs behind the Detroit Red Wings. The Avs playoff run was nothing short of painless, but relatively unblemished through their victorious playoff run compared to many Stanley Cup champion teams. The team faced off versus the Vancouver Canucks the first round, defeating them four games to two.<sup>38</sup> The team won the next two series by the same margin, defeating the Chicago Blackhawks and the Detroit Red Wings. Their opponent in the Stanley Cup finals was another newer NHL team, the Florida Panthers. The Panthers were clearly outmatched against the Avalanche and lost the series in four games.<sup>39</sup> Bringing the Stanley Cup trophy home to Denver excited many residents of the state. By 1995, the city had the 'Big Four' major league sports teams: the Broncos, Avalanche, Nuggets and Rockies.<sup>40</sup> The tide of sports popularity was now rapidly increasing in Denver and throughout the state. One fan named Dan Egan, for instance, drove all the way from Alamosa, a 250 mile trip to see the Avs parade at the Civic Center



Plaza.<sup>41</sup> This dedication, though seemingly over the top compared to many typical sports fans, demonstrates the team's acceptance and attributions by the city and state.

Because the Avalanche won the Stanley Cup in their inaugural season, they were thought to be a team of dynasty in the making. Any first year professional sports team that wins a championship their inaugural season would, by effect, convince fans their future is very bright. *Sports Illustrated* magazine even declared the Avalanche to be "the NHL's next dominant team."<sup>42</sup> The next four years for the Avalanche were successful in terms of wins and losses as well as long playoff runs that usually ended in the Conference Finals. But these seasons did not equate to any Stanley Cup victories, only division titles. After losing in the first round of the playoffs two years after their championship season, Avalanche general manager Pierre LaCroix fired head coach Marc Crawford and hired Bob Hartley, a coach for one of the team's minor league affiliates, the Hershey Bears.<sup>43</sup> Hartley headed the team for four seasons, until he was fired in his fifth season. The team did however win their second Stanley Cup victory under Hartley in the 2000-2001 season. It is also important to note that the Avalanche were bought by businessman Stanley Kroenke in July, 2000.<sup>44</sup> Kroenke also owns a plethora of other professional sports teams through his company Kroenke Sports Enterprises which includes: the Colorado Mammoth (lacrosse), the Denver Nuggets (basketball), the Colorado Rapids (Major League Soccer), the St. Louis Rams (football) and English Premier League soccer club Arsenal.<sup>45</sup> Kroenke showed a commitment to the Avalanche so they had the best opportunity to return to championship form once again by acquiring the next wave of effective players. The team was fueled by two straight post-season exits in the Western Conference finals via the Dallas Stars, in both series the Avs lost three games to four.<sup>46</sup>

The Avs traded for two impactful players, defenseman legend Ray Bourque and the former Los Angeles Kings captain, defenseman Rob Blake. These two added a much stronger defense in front of Roy. LaCroix was very adamant about acquiring Rob Blake, stating, "When you have a chance to get a Rob Blake... you can't miss."<sup>47</sup> These additions were critical to the Avalanche successful run in the 2001 playoffs. The Avalanche success was in direct correlation to their attendance. Beginning in the eighth game in their inaugural 1995-1996 season, the Avalanche began a home sellout streak of 487 games, an NHL record.<sup>48</sup> These so-called 'glory years' represented star talent, continuous division titles and two Stanley Cup Championships, the second being in the 2000-2001 season.

The Avalanche entered the postseason that year as the NHL's best team, in regard to their record. But they were by no means unchallenged. After easily defeating the eight seed Vancouver Canucks four games to zero, the Avs faced a feisty seven seeded Los Angeles Kings. The Kings had stunned the number two seeded Detroit Red Wings in six games and looked to make another enormous upset.<sup>49</sup> The Avs however jumped out to three games to one after four games were played in the series. Games five and six however were Kings victories, each with the score of one to zero. The Avs rallied in game seven and fended off the Kings, winning "the most pressure-filled game in Avalanche history" 5-1.<sup>50</sup> The Avalanche then vanquished the four seed St. Louis Blues 4 games to 1. In the Stanley Cup Finals, the Avs faced off against the New Jersey Devils, the former Colorado Rockies team; the Devils were the returning Stanley Cup champions from the previous season. In an epic series, the Avalanche won 4 games to 3. The team had to rally the last stages of the series, being down three games to two against the

Devils. The Avalanche proved to be the most enduring team that season. The Avs playoff run was dedicated to Ray Bourque, the twenty-three year veteran in the NHL never had won a Stanley Cup in his tenured career for the Boston Bruins. The 2000-2001 season was his last season to win a Stanley Cup for Bourque, for he had announced he was retiring after the season. In a sign of tremendous respect and humility, captain of the team Joe Sakic graciously handed off the trophy to Bourque immediately after being presented the Stanley Cup. It took Bourque and NHL record 1,826 games before he hoisted the trophy, but he was finally able to be deemed a champion.<sup>51</sup>

The years following the 2000-2001 championship season have had some positives and many negatives. Three more division titles were won but the team has failed to qualify for the playoffs five out of the twelve seasons.<sup>52</sup> Denver sports fans expect the Avalanche to be perennial contenders to win the Stanley Cup. After its second Stanley Cup season, the team struggled. In the 2002-2003 season, Bob Hartley was fired after a slow start. The team then hired its assistant coach Tony Granato to turn the tide and create winning team again. Granato's one plus seasons were still competitive, but the team was not near the same level of contention as before. The 2004-2005 lockout began the downslide to the dark years in Avalanche hockey. After the lockout season, Granato was demoted back to assistant coach and Joel Quenneville was hired as head coach. During Quenneville's three seasons, the team qualified for the playoffs, but never advanced further than the second round.<sup>53</sup> Because of this, the Avs decided to not renew Quenneville's contract and promoted, once again, Tony Granato to head coach.

The Avalanche in the 2008-2009 season proceeded to have their worse showing ever, finishing last in the conference with only 65 points.<sup>54</sup> Granato was fired once more

and Joe Sacco, the head coach of the team's minor league affiliate the Lake Erie Monsters, was hired as head coach. During this same time, Pierre LaCroix stepped down from his role as General Manager, and business magnate Greg Sherman was promoted to GM.<sup>55</sup> The rebuilding phase had begun, but the next four years proved to be as frustrating as they were long. One playoff appearance then three consecutive losing seasons led to the end of Sacco's coaching career in Denver. At this time however, former super star Joe Sakic became General Manager and Vice President of hockey operations in 2011 and Stan Kroenke's son Josh became President of the team. Josh vowed for changes and "a new era of 'outreach' to the fans."<sup>56</sup> Sakic and Josh Kroenke decided to reach fans through finding a new coach that the team's fans were well acquainted with, Patrick Roy. Roy had been coaching as well as co-owning the Quebec Remparts for nine years.<sup>57</sup> Roy's first season coaching the Avs was majestic. The team finished with 112 points, the third best in all of the NHL. A heartbreaking seven game playoff series loss to the Minnesota Wild cast a shadow on the season, but the expectation had once been raised that the Avalanche could likely return to prominence again in the near future. Roy stated his genuine pleasure of the overall success of the season, "No one expected us to be where we are, and I certainly would like to give credit to our players because the players from the first day of training camp have been outstanding."<sup>58</sup> With a new and experienced coach and young and talented players, the Avalanche hopes to become the team of old and bring more championships to the city. Despite a second year setback under Roy, failing to qualify for the playoffs, expectations remain high for the team to continue to become more competitive.

There leaves little doubt the Colorado Avalanche hockey team has evoked a sense of pride to the city's residents. A roaring crowd of almost half a million people in 1996 and 2001 flocked the Civic Center Plaza in Downtown Denver celebrating the team's two Stanley Cup trophies.<sup>59</sup> This compares evenly with the Broncos Super Bowl parades of 1998 and 1999, yielding 600,000 and 375,000 respectively.<sup>60</sup> The Avalanche Stanley Cup parades are far from the largest however. The Chicago Blackhawks 2013 Stanley Cup parade had an estimated two million attendees.<sup>61</sup> Though Chicago is a larger city than Denver, other cities also have large interests in their hometown professional sports teams. Nonetheless, the Avalanche parades, much like the Denver Broncos ones, have served as a measuring stick of general interest of for Denver in creating an identity for the city. It is important to note other entertainment events have shaped Denver's identity as well. The National Western Stock Show in North Denver is a sixteen-day nationally renowned stock show that has operated for 108 years.<sup>62</sup> The National Western Stock Show pays homage to Colorado's humble beginnings as a frontier territory with ranching and farming was two of the most profound occupations. The Stock Show has affected Denver by attracting large amounts of tourists to attend the festivities and keep the city entwined with American cowboy western culture.

Professional sports teams also create multiple different effects into a city, some good and others bad. One portion of note is how the urban landscape can be altered through the construction of new sport venues. In the case of the Avalanche, the construction of the Avalanche current playing facility, the Pepsi Center, helped revitalized an important section of downtown Denver. The Pepsi Center is located in the Auraria neighborhood of Denver, just east of Interstate 25 and adjacent to the Central

Downtown District and Union Station neighborhoods, truly in the heart of the city. The Avalanche and NBA Nuggets played in city owned McNichols sports arena, constructed in 1975 and named after Denver mayor William McNichols.<sup>63</sup> McNichols arena was deemed too old and the team's owners sought a newer sporting complex. The Avalanche, owned by Ascent founder Charlie Lyons, who also owned the Denver Nuggets, sought a new arena for the two teams. The construction of the arena was part of a city sporting venue upgrade in which six new stadiums were built, most within the Denver city limits.<sup>64</sup> Construction for the arena began in late 1997 and opened October 1999 with a Celine Dion in concert.<sup>65</sup> The new sporting complex became known as the Pepsi Center.

The funding for the Pepsi Center differed vastly from the other two perennial sports facilities for Denver professional teams: Sports Authority Field housed by the Broncos and Coors Field, the home of the Major League Baseball Rockies. The Pepsi Center was built entirely by private funds, with the whole project costing \$180 million.<sup>66</sup> This arena was the first sports arena in the United States to be financed with asset-backed securities.<sup>67</sup> These assets included luxury suite licenses and corporate sponsorships, most notable the ones involved with naming rights.<sup>68</sup> The goal of having an asset-backed structure is "to make the possibility of bankruptcy more remote" by way of the trust, that retains these rights during the life of the debt, to sell investor notes secured by future revenue.<sup>69</sup> Pepsi became the largest sponsor, which the arena donned its name. PepsiCo paid \$68 million naming rights of the arena for 20 years, and supplies the arena with their soft drink products.<sup>70</sup>

Private funding for a sports facility such as the Pepsi Center is important because it took away public money (through tax payer dollars) out of the financing equation.

Privately funded sports facilities generally are much better accepted by general public than partially publically funded entities. Owners have much less strenuous road when presenting a new stadium plan to the public when the project is privately financed, even if the facility enjoyed tax breaks, like the Pepsi Center did.<sup>71</sup> Tax incentives are set up to promote ventures which would then, in turn, boost the economy in the area. One instance the Pepsi Center received a tax incentive was for the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, in which an 18.2 kilowatt solar installation took place on the property grounds.<sup>72</sup> The installation, headed by AeonSolar, Evergreen Solar, and PV Powered sought not only to provide energy for the convention, but also serve the community, using some of the energy to be put back in the local power grid.<sup>73</sup>

The Pepsi Center, like McNichols arena previously, houses a wide range of sports and entertainment events separate from the Avalanche and Nuggets. Sports arenas serve as home to a wide variety of city events. Sportswriter Gary Washburn, when writing for the NBA Seattle SuperSonics was highly impressed with the Pepsi Center facilities.<sup>74</sup> He mentions daytime profitability for the arena is also effective through, for instance, high school and youth basketball games being played at Pepsi Center.<sup>75</sup> The Colorado High School state wrestling tournament as well as 'The Show' Colorado High School Basketball All-Star Games are held at the Pepsi Center. These interactions with the community are important because they demonstrate a connection with the business of professional sports and the fans of the teams which compete in the arena. Building a sporting facility like the Pepsi Center for a specific purpose also provides other benefits for residents. When Stan Kroenke purchased both the Avalanche and Nuggets (and in turn, the Pepsi Center) in 2000, his goals through his company Kroenke Sports and

Entertainment, have been to generate championship teams as well as play a strong role in the community. Kroneke Sports and Entertainment has donated more than \$15.5 million to Colorado charities.<sup>76</sup> It is beneficial for professional sports teams to make the effort to become involved with the community. Not only does this have the ability to foster a genuine relationship between fans and sports organization, it also creates opportunities for more residents of Denver and the state to attend Avalanche and Nuggets games.

Kroenke's ventures through the Pepsi Center have been beneficial aside from sports. Former Colorado Governor Bill Owens believes the Pepsi Center has "been a huge asset for downtown Denver... to have a private arena like this, to have state of the art facilities. It's been a huge economic boost to the state of Colorado."<sup>77</sup> Countless artists have performed concerts at Pepsi Center the past fifteen years. In 2008, the Democratic National Convention was held at the Pepsi Center. This event alone resulted in hundreds of thousands of people across the nation to travel to Denver and boosted the local economy by nearly \$270 million.<sup>78</sup> This large contribution demonstrates the advantages of having a sports arena such as the Pepsi Center located in the heart of the downtown area, and in a historically significant neighborhood of Auraria. The destination choice for the Pepsi Center is of much more importance than it would be if it were moved farther away from the downtown area. Having such an arena recruits the masses to visit the downtown area of a city, like the Pepsi Center did to Denver's residents and sports fans. These efforts have assisted Denver's urban revival project.

Denver's revitalization efforts throughout the past sixty years are significant. There have been various positive effects to urban renewal in cities across America. If buildings and neighborhoods are not updated, they become subject to simply surviving



and not flourish. An industrialized city such as Cleveland has faced a tumultuous uphill battle regenerating its downtown area. Because the city was manufacturing-based, much of the downtown area was densely populated with factories and its housing stock decayed which had created heavy neighborhood overcrowding.<sup>79</sup> Problems such as these were prevalent throughout the nation, especially during periods of slow or no economic growth. Denver is no exception to the feature and problems of urban growth.

The Auraria neighborhood in particular has experienced a great deal of renewal the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century and holds historical significance to Denver. Auraria began as a mining community in the late 1850s, which gold was found along the Cherry Creek-South Platte Rivers. This area experienced a huge rush of pan miners. Auraria and neighboring mining settlement Denver (City) housed most of these early inhabitants when Colorado remained part of the Kansas Territory.<sup>80</sup> As Auraria and Denver developed, a bustling community arrived with over two dozen stores, roughly thirty saloons and restaurants and over two dozen doctors and lawyers.<sup>81</sup>

The Tivoli Brewing Company was one such business that flourished in the Auraria neighborhood. This brewery was established in 1882 and served the community with fresh German style lager beer, the Tivoli beer, and red ale named Sigi's Wild Horse. During the 1950s, the brewery was producing up to 150,000 barrels a year, one of the highest producing breweries in the nation at that time.<sup>82</sup> The brewery flourished until the 1960s in which a labor dispute over ownership changes and the great flood of 1965 also damaged the plant.<sup>83</sup> Later, Tivoli has made its comeback in 2012, when Coloradan natives formed the Tivoli Distributing company. The brewery had an immense impact on

Auraria and Denver, providing jobs for residents with a frothy beverage that many people enjoyed. Such a company that produced a respectable amount of beer certainly yielded opportunities to employ Denverites as well as sell their products to food and beverage establishments throughout the city.

The one hundred years after the creation of Auraria as a mining settlement, the area experienced tremendous expansion. During this time, Auraria became an integral part of Denver; Auraria was incorporated as one of the city's official neighborhoods once the federal government approved Colorado for statehood in 1876.<sup>84</sup> Another unique feature of the Auraria neighborhood is its 9<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District. Established in 1873, this district housed many different ethnicities; beginning with Anglo's but during the 1910s, Hispanics emigrating from New Mexico and Mexico arrived in Auraria.<sup>85</sup> A hearty Jewish population also inhabited the Auraria after the turn of the century. Eugenia Baker, a resident of Auraria in the 1930s, believed the community was "kind of a close-knit neighborhood... everybody knew everybody there."<sup>86</sup> This community was an important neighborhood to Denver. Denver community leader Don Etter believed Auraria supported a wide range of urban life; it truly began as a microcosm of nineteenth century Denver and beyond.<sup>87</sup>

Auraria began to diminish as a historic neighborhood in the second half of the twenty-first century for several reasons. The great South Platte River flood of 1965 damaged neighborhoods throughout the city. Bridges that connected Auraria to other city districts were destroyed as well as others withstanding the flood, but suffering tremendous erosion damage.<sup>88</sup> This scenario in which an urban area could be revitalized was nothing new for the city. The Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) was

responsible for urban renewal tasks.<sup>89</sup> Created in 1958, by the city and county of Denver, DURA was created to “assist in the redevelopment of blighted property and help foster the sound growth of development of Denver... DURA provides financial assistance to support redevelopment activities throughout the city.”<sup>90</sup> DURA was essential to turn the decayed, weathered and beaten down such neighborhood of Auraria to a flourishing district once again. Along with uncontrollable events such as flooding, Denver was growing at incredible rates. The necessity for access to higher education within the city seemed to be a high priority for city officials and residents. Auraria had the opportunity to be revitalized through DURA. In the 1970s, DURA cleared twenty-two blocks of the Auraria neighborhood to build the Auraria Higher Education Center, which included such institutions as the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State College and the University of Colorado at Denver.<sup>91</sup> This campus became the leading area of higher education in the downtown area of Denver. The old site of the Tivoli Brewery became the student union of the Auraria Campus.

Though the Auraria Higher Education Center did supply easier access to higher education for Denver residents, the construction of the facility also displaced many locals who resided in the Auraria neighborhood. The focal point of the Hispanic demographic in Auraria was directly where the Auraria Higher Education Center was to be built. Though the people living in the proposed education site were given funds to relocate, 155 separate families filed lawsuits against the city.<sup>92</sup> Mainly Hispanic residents, they organized under the Aurora Residents Organization, Inc. This demonstrates race relations during this time period. Some regions of the country were fixated on Civil Rights whereas others such as Denver, did not seem to be the focal point of local and

state politics. A city-wide campaign was established to help combat the revitalization project for the Auraria academic campus.<sup>93</sup> The role of religion was important in campaigning, as many Catholic churches across Denver served as beacon of hope that helped inform the masses about the plan to relocate Auraria residents. The efforts of these residents were admirable, but they were not able to stop the proposal and were evicted from their homes. The camaraderie of the neighborhood through the residents' Hispanic and Catholic heritage was a rallying point in which they had common political aims, in this regard to stop their displacement in the name of revitalization. This instance of urban renewal demonstrates the negative effect revitalization can have on a city. Not only are people forcibly removed from their homes, but they moved to other parts of the city which can cause overcrowding in other neighborhoods. When urban revitalization takes over a city, there is still a group or groups which suffer from the changes within a city, often ethnic and those lower on the socio-economic scale.

Displacement due to urban renewal continues to be prevalent throughout the nation. In the Beauregard neighborhood of Alexandria Virginia for instance, 2500 older homes are set to be razed in the subsequent years. The developer JBG is planning on constructing 5000 "much more expensive properties" in Beauregard. Only 800 apartments which yield the same pricing will be available for these residents, displacing the other 1700 families. This is an issue because, though cities seek to redesign and make newer buildings, many community members are deeply rooted for many generations in these homes. The standard of fairness does not appear to apply to these people in a revitalization case. It can only be assumed more of these people who live in older areas

throughout American cities will experience the same fate. Urban planning needs to limit displacement during revitalization efforts.

Though the benefit of constructing the Auraria Higher Education Center seemed to outweigh the cost of displacing many Auraria resident families, the revival and development of Auraria has experienced smart growth, along with the increase of revenue back to the city through the college campus. The term 'smart growth' is viewed by many as unobtainable, implying that any growth within a city limit is harmful to a city.<sup>94</sup> Proper city planning however, involves the reality of cities such as Denver continuing to grow. Within Auraria specifically, there have been smart growth changes. In regards to Elitch Gardens Amusement Park, the entire park itself was originally located on the 38<sup>th</sup> and Tennyson block of Northwest Denver.<sup>95</sup> Proposed by former Mayor of Denver Tom Currigan in the early 1990s, Elitch Gardens moved to the Auraria district in a 67 acre portion of the Central Platte Valley which was a large rail (rice) yard stretching across Denver.<sup>96</sup> The amusement park was strategically placed closer to the downtown area to create, within Auraria, a unique entertainment district, along with the establishment of the Pepsi Center. The Pepsi Center was another entertainment entity placed in Auraria with the help of DURA. The challenge to keep professional sports venues in downtown areas was a struggle in many cities across the nation, Denver included.<sup>97</sup> Ascent Entertainment Group collaborated with DURA to create a new venue for the Avalanche and NBA Nuggets at a 57 acre site across the Platte River from Elitches.<sup>98</sup>

Smart growth by means of mobility and accessibility were created in Auraria from the construction of the Pepsi Center as well as Elitch Gardens. Mobility can be

defined as the ability to move around by a variety of means, not solely through auto mobility.<sup>99</sup> Both the Pepsi Center and Elitch Gardens provide suitable parking for their facilities, so attendees could use their automobiles to access each. The parking lots are beneficial being surface lots because they have the ability to then possibly to become other buildings that compliment the facilities already in place.<sup>100</sup> Transportation also increased by other means. The extension of the Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail lines allowed for travelers on the light rail to move easily between the Pepsi Center and Elitch Gardens. In 2002, the \$47.8 million project would extend the C line of the light rail to connect the entertainment venues in the Central Platte Valley, to include Union Station, a few blocks away from where the Colorado Rockies play at Coors Field.<sup>101</sup> This enlargement of the light rail also increased foot traffic to the Central Downtown Neighborhood of Denver. The final station of this light rail line is Union Station, the farthest western portion Sixteenth Street Mall in the Lower Downtown district, an outdoor mall that includes dozens of restaurants, bars and entertainment venues. This addition of the light rail through the Central Platte Valley and Union Station was funded from both private and public funds and was estimated to add an additional 1.7 million riders per year.<sup>102</sup> The expansion of the light rail transportation system has increased downtown activity in Denver and made the inner city portions still an attractive and enjoyable place to visit as well as live.

The Auraria neighborhood of Denver transformed from a historic ethnic epicenter and brewery district to an entertainment and educational area. The unfortunate closing of Tivoli Brewery and the forced relocation of residents in Auraria in the early 1970s brought forth a difficult process to pave way for innovative entities added to the city.<sup>103</sup>

The three campuses of the Auraria Higher Education Center, which includes the University of Colorado-Denver, Metropolitan State University and Community College of Denver, houses roughly 44,000 students and between four to five thousand university faculty and staff.<sup>104</sup> Such numbers demonstrate Denver's stressed importance of convenient and effective higher education opportunities. The success of professional sports teams such as the Avalanche opened opportunities for sports arenas to remain in the downtown area, like the Pepsi Center, instead of being branched out to the suburbs. This is incredibly important for a city, according to Professor Thomas Noel of University of Colorado-Denver. He claims there is a connection between the success of a professional sports team and the growing population of a core city as Denver.<sup>105</sup> The symbolic importance of a 'winning city' does, in some ways, recruit outsiders to be a part of a new city.<sup>106</sup> The winning image includes housing sports arenas in downtown areas. Professional sports, being billion dollar industries, provide a city with popular entertainment venues. It is important to note however, urban revival in Auraria began long before the construction of the Pepsi Center at the end of the century, just like other neighborhoods in the city (see chapter 4). The Auraria Higher Education Center as well as the relocation of Elitch Gardens amusement park in 1995 became necessary entities which encouraged more people to the Auraria district of Denver. The addition of the Pepsi Center then served as a catalyst to the increased presence of residents and sports fans in the downtown area. Restaurants such as Brooklyn's Restaurant have flourished due to Pepsi Center activity. Hopefully the downtown area of Auraria will continue to be a hotspot amongst hockey and basketball fans as well as young people hoping to receive a college education.

The hockey scene in Denver and the state as a whole vastly increased due to the Avalanche continued tenure in the city. Youth programs have blossomed in part to having a winning NHL team in their presence. Littleton Youth Hockey Association for instance, located twelve miles south of the Pepsi Center, has increased their league to over fifty teams from ages six to eighteen.<sup>107</sup> The Association began with only five to seven teams, beginning in 1963.<sup>108</sup> Since the mid 1990s, membership has doubled from around 350 players to just below 700 players.<sup>109</sup> The Colorado High School Activities Association has recognized hockey as a sponsored sport since 1976 and has increased its participation to 29 teams for the 2015 season.<sup>110</sup>

The Avalanche have given Denver its first professional sports championship. The team's legacy is remembered by staunch defense and an explosive offense. The Auraria neighborhood has revived through the popularity of the Avalanche and more importantly city mandates which have given DURA the lead to update older and historic districts of Denver such as the Central Platte Valley and Auraria within the downtown area of the city in which residents and travelers alike can enjoy everything Denver has to offer. Because over sixty percent of the state's population lives within the Denver metro region, it is imperative for the Colorado legislatures to continue revitalizing the downtown area.<sup>111</sup> Professional sports teams have aided this process. Looking forward, one can hope the city will continue transforming its older and industrial districts to more urban hotspots for the younger generations to enjoy.



## Chapter 4- From McNichols to Pepsi Part II: The Golden Nuggets

The Colorado Avalanche were not the only professional sports team that competed both at McNichols Sports Arena and then the Pepsi Center. Those arenas also housed the Denver Nuggets, the team serving as the city's second oldest professional team behind the Denver Broncos. The Nuggets began as part of the American Basketball Association's Denver Rockets in 1967.<sup>1</sup> The Nuggets have provided Denver fans with a high-altitude level of professional basketball which has often emphasized a fast-paced style of play. The team's tenure displays the general public's interest in the sport and the team. As the Nuggets have charged into the twenty-first century, they are a team embedded with tradition and respectable success. The team has made 33 playoff appearances in 47 seasons.<sup>2</sup> The Nuggets have played in three arenas since their creation: the Denver Auditorium Arena, McNichols Sports Arena and the Pepsi Center. Each arena is located in a different neighborhood of Denver. Denver as a city has increased by means of population, development and urban revival. Professional sports teams have affected these changes in the city as Denver has grown into a vast metropolis. The continued presence of a professional team like the Nuggets in Denver displays the trend that, for better or worse to the city, professional sports teams, to some degree, have affected to shape urban areas. Examining these neighborhoods the last fifty plus years with the advancement of the Nuggets as the city's basketball team will yield a better understanding of how Denver has, and continues to change and expand.

Basketball is one of Colorado's oldest sports. James Naismith, the inventor of the game, brought basketball to Colorado in the late 1890s, organizing and coaching for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) basketball teams while his was earning his

medical degree at Gross Medical School in Denver.<sup>3</sup> It was during this time Naismith became “more interested... to further his understanding of the human body and to help develop young men into physically and mentally fit human beings.”<sup>4</sup> Professional basketball came to Denver fifty years later. The Denver Nuggets were one of the original teams of the American Basketball Association (ABA). The ABA began as competition for the much larger and powerful basketball league, the National Basketball Association (NBA). The NBA formed after the National Basketball League (NBL) and the Basketball Association of America (BAA) joined together in 1949, the beginning of the BAA third year of existence.<sup>5</sup> The NBA began as an owners driven league. Professor of economics at Northern Iowa University David Surdam believes these owners operated the league like a cartel, in that they had the cooperation amongst each other to set prices wherever they desired, whether that be ticket prices or other team expenses.<sup>6</sup> This created an uphill battle for competing professional basketball leagues in that they were highly financially inferior to the NBA.

The ABA formed in 1967 as a league fixated on a flashier style play than the NBA, such as installing a three-point shot, playing with a tri-colored basketball (red, white and blue) and implementing a 30 second shot clock, 6 seconds longer than the standard NBA 24 second shot clock.<sup>7</sup> The ABA began with 11 teams. Many of the teams relocated and changed names over the league’s existence. Only four of those teams were then merged with the NBA. Negotiations for the merger between the two leagues began as early as 1971. Due to disagreements and the superior-minded nature of NBA owners and elites, the merger was delayed. NBA negotiator William Alverson did not hold back his thoughts of allowing outwardly financially lesser teams to be part of

the NBA, stating the NBA was “not a charitable organization, If it’s not good for... the NBA, then screw you!”<sup>8</sup> He also believed Denver was the only ABA team in which the NBA held any interest.<sup>9</sup> In June 1976, Denver, along with the Indiana Pacers, the San Antonio Spurs, and the New York Nets agreed to pay the \$3.2 million admission fee and bought out the other remaining ABA teams which made the league deteriorate. Since the team’s admittance into the NBA, the Nuggets have remained a mainstay in the league and an identifiable symbol to the city of Denver.

The Denver Nuggets in the team’s early years had many changes in names as well as ownership. There were other teams named the Denver Nuggets leading up to the formation of the ABA Nuggets that participated in other small rival professional basketball leagues. Those Nuggets teams did not sustain as members in those leagues. The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Denver Nuggets were considered the precursor to the current Nuggets, an AAU club turned NBA team, yet their existence ceased in 1951 after participating as a member of the NBA one year, in the 1949-1950 season.<sup>10</sup> This Nuggets team was technically the first professional sports team in Colorado, though it is usually not recognized such due to its short presence in the NBA.<sup>11</sup> The merging of these smaller leagues, such as the NBL and BAA foreshadowed the ABA and NBA merger some fifteen years later.<sup>12</sup>

The current and widely recognized Denver Nuggets team originated as one of the first ABA teams, beginning in 1967 in Kansas City, Missouri. Southern California businessman James Trindle bought the expansion ABA team. Efforts to find a suitable playing arena in the Kansas City area proved challenging. Because of this, former NBA star and ABA League Commissioner George Mikan suggested the team be relocated to

Denver.<sup>13</sup> Trindle agreed and NBA player and Denver resident Vincent Boryla became the team's manager. He went to work right away and "set out to recruit players for the new team that, with the owners' approval, he had named the Larks, for Colorado's state bird, the Lark Bunting."<sup>14</sup> The relationship between the two men diminished through the Larks' first season due to disagreements on the financial conditions of the team. Boryla was fired and Trindle, out of fiscal concern, sold the team. Bill Ringsby, owner of a Denver-based trucking company *Ringsby Rocket Trucking Company*, bought the two-thirds majority of the franchise for \$350,000.<sup>15</sup> He immediately changed the team name to the Denver Rockets, hoping to gain more interest for his business.<sup>16</sup> One of the Rockets' team logos had Ringsby System written on the bottom of it.<sup>17</sup>

The Denver Rockets were successful as the city's professional basketball team in its early years. The team posted winning records their first three seasons under head coach Bob Bass and then John McClendon in the 1969 season. McClendon became the first African American to be head coach for an ABA team.<sup>18</sup> This displayed how sports were used as a vehicle for integration in American society. Unstable race relations enthralled some areas of the nation. Having an African American coach beginning in the time period was important to show how sports aided the process of equity for African Americans. Professional and college sports during this time were still partially segregated and Caucasian Americans still dominated those sports realms. Another figure who played an important role in the incorporation of blacks into professional sports was Spencer Haywood. Haywood only spent one season with the Rockets, but his marquee status as a college player made him well-known throughout the college and professional ranks. Haywood also represented the rivalry between the newly established ABA and the

NBA. The ABA sought to draft college players before they had used all their college eligibility, like Haywood, who had only been at school for two years.<sup>19</sup> The NBA rule was players were not to be drafted until they played out their eligibility. Both the NCAA and NBA sued unsuccessfully. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Haywood in *Haywood v. National Basketball Association* 7-2 In 1971, which the NBA could not require a player to wait four years after high school graduation, assuming many would obtain a degree by that time.<sup>20</sup> This shifted the NBA's approach in which they eventually held Early Entry procedure, still held today. The new stance states "any athlete with remaining college eligibility can enter the NBA draft on the condition that he notifies the league at least 45 days before the draft."<sup>21</sup> The Rockets drafting of Spencer Haywood in effect, prompted lasting NBA rule changes.

The Rockets suffered two straight losing seasons in 1970 and 1971. Ringsby sold the Rockets to San Diego Businessmen Frank Goldberg and Bud Fischer in 1972.<sup>22</sup> Alex Hennum became the Rockets coach for three seasons starting in 1971 to 1974, producing two postseason appearances, but no playoff series wins. The Rockets popularity decreased in the 1970s with average home attendance fell 35 percent in just four seasons.<sup>23</sup> Owners Fischer and Goldberg sought out NBA deputy commissioner to run the team as team President and General Manager. Larry Brown was chosen to be the head coach of the team for the 1974-1975 season and coached the team for five seasons. Brown went on to win both a National Championship as coach of the Kansas University Jayhawks in 1988, and added an NBA Championship coaching the Detroit Pistons in 2004. Not only did the team's popularity increase in Denver, the Nuggets reached the ABA Finals the 1975-1976 season, losing to the New York Nets.<sup>24</sup> The acquisition of top

talent players David Thompson and Dan Issel were both integral in the team having more success in the playoffs. Thompson, nicknamed ‘Skywalker,’ was a highly flashy shooting guard who once scored 73 points in a single game.<sup>25</sup> Issel, rather, was a seasoned center that could not only score but also rebound effectively, almost averaging a double-double in his NBA career after becoming the all-time leading scorer at the University of Kentucky during his college years.<sup>26</sup> Anticipating becoming a member of the NBA, there was already a team named the Rockets, the Houston Rockets. Because of this, the Denver team reached back to their early NBA history and chose the Nuggets, referring to the gold nuggets mined throughout the state and city in Colorado’s earliest occupation by Anglo settlers. The name change from Rockets to Nuggets occurred before the 1974-1975 season.

The Nuggets continued to have winning ways in the 1980s, but did not yield any NBA championships. Ownership changes continued through the 1980s; Fischer and Goldberg sold the team to a local investment group in 1976. The team was then purchased by Texas automotive businessman Red McCombs in 1979. He owned the team until 1985 when he sold the Nuggets to local Houston investors, headed by Sidney Schlenker.<sup>27</sup> Schlenker worked to generate interest in his restaurant ventures as well as other “gambits to bring in crowds, including indoor football and soccer teams,” which remained unsuccessful.<sup>28</sup> Doug Moe, a former assistant coach for the Nuggets came back to the team and was then head coach for ten seasons, earning playoff appearances every season from 1982 to 1990.<sup>29</sup> In 1989 the team’s majority share was sold to COMSAT Video Enterprises. Schlenker struggled financially due to his other business ventures not capitalizing in Denver. The team originally planned to be sold to two

African American Chicago businessmen C.B. Bynoe and Bertram Lee. Historian James Whiteside proclaimed this event historic, for it would have been the first time majority owners of a major sports franchise would be African Americans.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately for the pair, they had trouble supplying the needed finances to finalize the purchase. NBA Commissioner David Stern, wanting to ensure at least partial minority ownership to Bynoe and Lee arranged to have COMSAT purchase the 67.5% majority share of the team. In 1992 however, COMSAT assumed 100 percent ownership of the Nuggets.<sup>31</sup>

Coach Moe struggled to maintain his 'run and gun' offense into the next decade.<sup>32</sup> A poor underachieving 1989-1990 season led to Moe's firing. Despite a franchise record 432 wins, Moe never was able to reach the NBA Finals, and only reached the Western Conference Finals once.<sup>33</sup> Star player Alex English signed with the Dallas Mavericks after disagreements with Moe.<sup>34</sup> English is remembered as one of the greatest Nugget players, with accolades of 8 NBA All-Star games and 21,645 points for the Nuggets, both franchise records.<sup>35</sup> In the subsequent decade, the 1990s riddled the Nuggets with subpar performances. Paul Westhead was the coach for two seasons and brought his own 'run and gun' offense to the Nuggets. The result was awful and only produced 44 wins in two full seasons. The team only qualified for the playoffs twice and held eight different coaches during 1990s. The 1993-1994 season provided some excitement amongst Nuggets fans. The team, entering the playoffs as the lowest seed (eighth), defeated the Seattle SuperSonics the first round of the playoffs, winning three games to two.<sup>36</sup> Center Dikembe Mutombo became the mainstay of the for the team, providing a hearty dose of stern defense and averaged nearly 12 points per game during his five years with the Nuggets. He is more importantly known for his efforts being an international

humanitarian. In 2007, he was an honorary member of President George W. Bush's State of the Union Address, where he was commended for his duties aiding his home country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), especially helping to build a hospital in the DRC.<sup>37</sup> This is an instance that demonstrates sports are more important than just sports. Mutumbo represents much more than being a memorable NBA player. His transcendent lifestyle shows what wealth and power can positively influence many. Mutumbo, in a sense, has given the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo hope through his compassionate efforts to better his home country.

After Mutumbo's exit from the team via free agency, the Nuggets suffered their worse years in franchise history. Seasons with more losses than wins were the norm the next decade for the Nuggets. The 1997-1998 year was especially abysmal. The Nuggets only amassed a mere eleven wins and lost seventy-one.<sup>38</sup> Coaching changes were also rampant, with no coach lasting more than three seasons between 1995 and 2004. A billionaire real estate entrepreneur and Wal-Mart heir Stan Kroenke purchased the team in 2000 for \$400 million along with the NHL's Colorado Avalanche just as both teams moved to the Pepsi Center as their home arena.<sup>39</sup> The addition of college star Carmelo Anthony from Syracuse University helped the team enter the playoffs consistently. Arriving in 2003 as the third overall pick in the NBA Draft, Anthony was the team's best player, one that a franchise can build around. Author Nate LeBoutillier described Anthony's style of play,

Trying to find a weakness in Carmelo Anthony's game was like trying to make a full-court shot- pretty hard. With ideal height, weight, strength, and the deftness to play both inside and out, both offense and defense, Anthony made a nearly perfect model for a basketball player.<sup>40</sup>



Despite his unbelievable talent and promise, Anthony was never able to lead the Nuggets to an NBA Championship. The closest the team advanced to the NBA Finals came in 2009 when they reached the Western Conference Finals. The team lost to eventual NBA Champions, the Los Angeles Lakers. During the middle of the 2010-2011 season, Anthony was traded to the New York Knicks.

The Nuggets found stability at head coach for nine seasons in the beginning of the twenty-first century. NBA veteran head coach George Karl coached the Nuggets teams for ten seasons, beginning in 2004. Despite making the playoffs every year for the Nuggets, the team only produced two playoff series wins in 2009 when the team reached the Conference Finals and lost to the Los Angeles Lakers. In a somewhat stunning decision by Nuggets, Karl was fired after the 2012-2013 season, after being named NBA Coach of the Year after the team posted a franchise best record of 57 wins and 25 losses including a league best 38 wins and 3 losses at home.<sup>41</sup> Under new coaching and front office leadership, the team has struggled its past two seasons, failing to qualify for the playoffs. The team hired former Sacramento Kings head coach Mike Malone in June 2015.

The future of the Nuggets franchise in terms of providing fans with a successful team that can realistically compete for championships is uncertain. This does not mean however, the Nuggets are not a mainstay of Colorado sports. Nuggets' beat writer Christopher Dempsey believes professional sports tradition, the Nuggets' in particular "is a fabric woven with everything that makes up the whole- from great teams and great moments to struggles and characters to, yes winning."<sup>42</sup> This comment comes from this past season, when the team had already fired their second-year coach Brian Shaw and

their season essentially over when the article was written in April 2015. Nonetheless, based on his standards, the Nuggets have had a lasting tradition in Denver. Its 48 seasons in the ABA and the NBA speak to the needed popularity for the team to produce enough of a fan base to keep the team in the city.<sup>43</sup> The sheer longevity of the team remaining in Denver speaks loudly to its tradition in Denver. To be able to survive by remaining in Denver during tumultuous seasons in the late 1990s not winning even fifteen games for two seasons in a row is somewhat miraculous.

The transfer of ownership of the Nuggets to Stan Kroenke and his Kroenke Sports Enterprises has ensured the team will remain in Denver for the next ten years. When Kroenke purchased the Nuggets and Avalanche from Ascent in 2000 for \$450 million, the teams were put into a trust that would ensure they remain in Denver until 2025.<sup>44</sup> This leverage was something banking magnate Donald Sturm could not guarantee the teams would stay in Denver if he were to die or sell the teams in the future when he offered to purchase the teams for \$461 million.<sup>45</sup> The city thus trusted Kroenke more. The fact the city sided with Kroenke demonstrates the city's commitment to retain its professional sports teams by transferring ownership to the buyer who could guarantee the team would remain in Denver for the foreseeable future. The city's loyalty to an owner is something worth recognizing. Some believe that situations which an owner "severs the connection (between city & fans), the wounds can become jagged scars, commented upon with resentment and regret for generations."<sup>46</sup> In many of these cases, teams are suddenly relocated elsewhere, causing disappointment amongst the team's loyal fans. As well, to have 4 teams of the 4 major sports is something worthy of keeping in Denver.

Luckily for fans of the Nuggets, they were not subjected to this fate, in large part due to the city's agreement with Kroenke to keep the team in Denver for 25 years. Though these teams primarily earn money for their own franchises first, they still generate some economic activity in the city, especially in the local neighborhoods surrounding the sports arenas. Because of the opportunity of profitability, local governments usually encourage teams to stay in cities and not branch out to suburban areas, much of what has occurred in Denver. Though sports venues do not solely change or singlehandedly spark urban revivals in different districts, they add to a larger process of a city such as Denver attempting to create a revamped image of its urban areas.

The Nuggets have remained in Denver as the city's professional basketball team. Their tenure and transformation the past six decades, has similarly changed while the city of Denver has simultaneously. Citizens of Denver and the state have become more exposed to the Nuggets, in part due to Kroenke's television sports station Altitude Sports and Entertainment. Denver has grown rampantly through the latter half of the twenty-first century. All three neighborhoods in which the Nuggets have had their home arena located have experienced great renovation the past sixty plus years. Their first home arena, Denver Auditorium Arena, was located in the Central Business District Neighborhood of Denver on the corners of 13<sup>th</sup> and Champa streets to 14<sup>th</sup> and Arapahoe streets. Being in the Central Business District, the team's presence at the Denver Auditorium Arena brought many people to the downtown area, especially those who lived in the suburbs. Being part of the Central Business District, this arena was constructed as a multi-use facility not only for sporting events but also conferences, concerts, conventions and theater events among others. The original purpose of the

building was for the 1908 Democratic National Convention, which was held July 7-10, 1908.<sup>47</sup>

Initially named the Denver Municipal Auditorium, the arena held 12,500 people.<sup>48</sup> The original Nuggets in the 1950s played their two seasons in this arena. After this time, the southern half of the building was converted into the Auditorium Arena which served strictly as a sporting venue seating over 6,800. The building hosted the Denver Rockets/Nuggets from 1967 through 1975.<sup>49</sup> After the team moved to McNichols Sports Arena to the nearby Sun Valley neighborhood, the building was still used sporadically for various sporting events from professional wrestling, professional volleyball and the lower level classifications of the Colorado high school state basketball tournaments. It was during this time, after the Nuggets left the Denver Auditorium Arena, the Denver Performing Arts Complex idea materialized.<sup>50</sup> The four block area included the Denver Auditorium arena. This arena underwent a transformation the next fifteen plus years to create “the second-largest (Performing Arts) center of its kind in terms of number of venues and seating capacity.”<sup>51</sup> The DCPA Complex, along with other downtown venues which includes sports venues, attracts many people to live in the downtown areas in lofts, condominiums and apartments.<sup>52</sup> The project to build the DCPA Complex began in 1974 with the construction of the Boettcher Concert Hall. This hall provided a unique symphony hall in that “80% of the seats are within 65 feet of the stage,” which made this venue the first of its kind in the nation.<sup>53</sup> The Boettcher Concert Hall became the initial premier attraction for the DCPA Complex; the Complex however has now expanded to ten facilities, ballrooms, theaters, concert halls and opera houses. This included the Seawell Grand Ballroom, the Hoyne Buell Theater and the Ellie Caulkins Opera House.<sup>54</sup>

The DCPA theater organization has been and continues to be deeply rooted in the Denver community. For being the United State's largest non-profit theater organization, the DCPA has humble beginnings. *Denver Post* owner Helen Bonfils teamed up with Wall Street lawyer and Broadway producer Donald Seawell.<sup>55</sup> Under the direction of architect John Monroe, the Bonfils Theater was constructed on East Colfax in 1953, between Columbine and Elizabeth streets.<sup>56</sup> The Theatre served the community for twenty years in the East Colfax location, later being named the Lowenstein Theatre after its longtime managing director Henry Lowenstein.<sup>57</sup> The DCPA group was moved into the newly established DCPA Complex in the early 1970s. After the death of Bonfils, Seawell took the project of expanding the DCPA Complex singlehandedly. He hired architect Kevin Roche to implement the plan. What resulted became the first four theatres opened within the Denver Auditorium, renamed the Helen G. Bonfils Theatre Complex: The Stage Theatre, The Space Theatre, The Jones and The Ricketson Theatre.<sup>58</sup>

After the DCPA Theater group left the Bonfils the Lowenstein Theater, the building remained a community/children's theater until 1986, when it closed.<sup>59</sup> The building lay unattended for almost twenty years. Not until 2005 did the St. Charles Town Company purchase the lot. Under the direction of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA), large renovation projects began on the site. The project included the "redevelopment of the adjoining parking lot into 25,000 square feet of new retail space, a 230-space parking structure, and creation of a 'mini-esplanade' mirroring the historic City Park Esplanade."<sup>60</sup> Small to mid-size businesses are utilized in this renovated area now, including such establishments as: Tattered Cover Book Store, Twist & Shout

Records, Chipotle Mexican restaurant and the Sie Film Center.<sup>61</sup> The renovated structure and its tenants are described as providing East Colfax a destination for authentic and local flavor.<sup>62</sup> The ability for a city to reuse older and abandoned buildings makes the process of revitalization much easier for business to flourish as well as downtown areas to remain attractive places for people to visit and live in.

The national and global recession in 2008 has made businesses in downtown areas throughout the nation more susceptible to closing. Other cities without the organization, means or funds to restore downtown buildings have had to come up with alternatives to still utilize this space. Cleveland, Ohio, for instance, has chosen to destroy 6,000 homes within the city limits in order to save neighborhoods from blight, crime and sinking home prices.<sup>63</sup> These homes were only selling at half their market value. To combat these issues and people fleeing the city, Cleveland has begun the process to replace these old home lots with parks, vineyards and greenhouses.<sup>64</sup> The removal of excess homes hopes to still deter crime in these historic neighborhoods while still advertising a welcoming and enjoyable place to visit within Cleveland. Denver's success with revitalizing areas through sports and the arts have made it so these alternative measures have not been needed thus far. Cleveland's desperate measures such as this foreshadow what can occur to cities if downtown areas and neighborhoods are not maintained which lowers the numbers attractive buyers for housing venues that draw tourists and spenders to the city. Hopefully the city of Denver will continue to be dedicated to preserving more historically significant buildings in the city.

Another such building within the Central Business District neighborhood of Denver that has been revived is the old Executive Tower, located adjacent to the DCPA

Complex, on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Curtis streets. This building, 30 floors high, served as the hotel named the Executive Inn Tower on floors 4 through 16 and office floors between 17 through 30.<sup>65</sup> The top section was converted in 2004 to a 450-bed housing option for students attending the Auraria Campus.<sup>66</sup> Due to its close location to the DCPA Complex and the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall, a revamped hotel made perfect sense as well as the addition of student housing within the heart of the city. The goal of this \$71 million project was aimed to

Revive 14<sup>th</sup> Street from Civic Center Park to lower downtown and create downtown's 'Ambassador Street' where tourists, visitors, workers, and residents can easily navigate to destinations along and adjacent to 14<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>67</sup>

Having a prime location between so many ventures gives students and tourists great opportunity to experience the downtown area of Denver to its fullest.

The DCPA Complex continues to serve the community of Denver as well as tourists from around the world. The city's commitment to maintaining a pleasing downtown area through renovations and changes of buildings such as the Denver Auditorium (Arena) to the DCPA Complex is critical keep city neighborhoods inhabited and functioning. The Ellie Caulkins Opera House is another theatre in the DCPA Complex worthy of note. Named after Ellie Caulkins, one of the largest financial contributors to the project, the opera house serves both operas and the Colorado Ballet.<sup>68</sup> Caulkins work as an apprentice mentor to local singers has contributed to the success of many singers that have worked in the theatre. The seating capacity of 2,225 makes it one of the largest opera houses in nation. This Opera House serves as one of the best representations of the Denver art community. Such operations within the DCPA Complex are essential to provide the city with an extravagant art culture.

Though a culturally significant city appearance is important, what urban revival has provided through maintaining and promoting facets of everyday life is a diversified economy. The Denver Arts community, for instance, yielded \$1.76 billion in economic activity in 2011.<sup>69</sup> This large revenue helps boost the economy by providing many jobs for Denver metro residents. Current Denver Mayor Michael Hancock calls Denver the “cultural capital of the West.”<sup>70</sup> He believes this is one of the most important industries that have helped Denver become one of the leading cities to climb out of the recession. The indirect spending and capital expenditures equaling total economic activity for 2011 was an 18.4% increase from 2009.<sup>71</sup> As the economic status of the nation and state has rebounded, industries such as the arts will continue to flourish. Spending will at least remain stable as job security betters for many Denver residents. Because there are programs of free or reduced price ticket options, the arts community will be available for everyone as a key business within the city of Denver.<sup>72</sup>

Professional sports are also another large industry for Denver. The Nuggets not only contributed to the revival of the Central Business District through playing their home games in the Denver Auditorium Arena, but their presence in other neighborhoods has also been felt. Following the 1974 season, the Nuggets moved to the newly constructed McNichols Sports Arena in the Sun Valley neighborhood, adjacent to Mile High Stadium.<sup>73</sup> The arena was constructed from city funds for \$16 million and designed by architect Charles Sink.<sup>74</sup> Named after long-time Denver Mayor, William McNichols, who served from 1968 to 1983, the arena bears his name. The arena not only housed the Nuggets, but also various semi and professional hockey teams, most notably the Colorado Rockies and the Colorado Avalanche. Similar to its successor, the Pepsi Center,



McNichols Arena also became a concert venue for various artists including Elvis Presley, the Rolling Stones and The Jacksons.

McNichols Sports Arena represents much more than a place where professional sports teams played and concerts were held. Denver in the 1970s and even 1980s was in transitioned into a marquee city; it was still widely considered a point-of-transfer between skiers and their mountain destinations. Denver professional sports teams, besides the Broncos and Nuggets, rapidly moved through a revolving door, with new teams coming and going in a matter of years. In the 1980s, Denver's Chamber of Commerce launched a pro-tourism campaign dubbed "Destination Denver." Its goal aimed at attracting visitors from across the nation to Denver, especially for major league sports events and to establish a Major League Baseball team.<sup>75</sup> The NCAA Final Four games came to the city in 1990 as the last venue to have the tournaments' semi-final and final games being played in an intimate setting, for now the Final Four venues house well over 60,000 people, usually located at an indoor football stadium.<sup>76</sup> Talks of a Major League Baseball Team in Denver began in 1977, when Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics owner Charlie Finley had announced he had met with Denver Oilman Marvin Davis. The team would have played at Mile High Stadium. During talks with the Athletics, a US district court judge issued a restraining order for the Oakland Coliseum officials, where the Athletics played.<sup>77</sup> This required Davis to out-bid Finley out of the lease, something he was not completely committed to.<sup>78</sup> It would take another fifteen plus years for Major League Baseball to emerge in Colorado, discussed further in chapter five.

Though sports teams such as the Denver Nuggets can unite city and metro residents regardless of the given demographic, the wealth gap between professional

sports teams and the majority of their fans is looming large. It is important to ponder the fairness of professional sports teams possessing such vast amounts of wealth and the team's fans at times certainly struggle to pay for tickets and merchandise. Political sportswriter Dave Zirin believes fans are owed much more than what they are given. In his 2010 text *Bad Sports: How Owners Are Ruining the Games We Love* he states that

We are owed plenty by the athletic industrial complex. We are owed loyalty. We are owed accessibility. We are owed a return on our massive civic investment. And more than anything, we should raise our fists to the owner's box and say that we are owed a little bit of damn respect.<sup>79</sup>

His rhetoric exposes genuine fallacies within the professional sports dichotomy. Just like any big business, power lies with the wealthy elite. The unfortunate reality is, until equality in terms of the wealth gap significantly decreases, professional sports teams and owners will continue setting prices they see fit which will maximize their profits. The demand to watch, attend and buy professional sports teams' apparel however still greatly outweighs the cries for economic equality in the sports realm.

Specific to Denver, McNichols Arena, and Mile High Stadium for that matter, the symbolized wealth gap between the two venues and the state of the neighborhood which they were built on is evident. The Sun Valley neighborhood of Denver historically has been one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city and continues to be in current times. Sun Valley is located west of the Central Business District, located East of Interstate 25, west of Federal Boulevard between 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After the 2010 census, the average annual income per household in Sun Valley yielded a mere \$8000.<sup>80</sup> In some parts of this small neighborhood, annual household income is even smaller. *Denver Post* journalist Tina Griego puts the poverty of Sun Valley into perspective. Her two-month

stay in the Sun Valley neighborhood reporting for the *Denver Post* in a three article series in 2010, she states

Sun Valley is a neighborhood of at least 1,300 people, nearly all of whom live in public housing. This is not just a poor neighborhood. It is, by far, the state's poorest... Put another way: More than nine of every 10 people in the neighborhood live in subsidized housing.<sup>81</sup>

The demographic of Sun Valley is highly diverse. Not only has the community served and housed various immigrants and refugees from countries from around the ranging from areas in Asia, to Africa, to Europe, more than half of the neighborhood's residents are eighteen years of age or younger and single moms head the vast majority of homes.<sup>82</sup> These issues have been common for the past fifty years in Sun Valley. The massive flood of 1965 only made matters worse. Many homes in Sun Valley were also built on the flood plain, where McNichols Arena and Mile High Stadium were built. These homes were wiped out by the flood, a flood that changed the water gauge flow from 150 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 154,000 cfs in a matter of hours and caused \$543 million in damages, adjusted to over \$4 billion in 2015 fiscal standards (inflation).<sup>83</sup>

The 1965 Denver flood made it even more difficult for the Sun Valley community to revitalize. Though the addition of Mile High Stadium-which was previously Bears Stadium- and McNichols Sports Arena did add entertainment value to the neighborhood, but the residents of Sun Valley did not benefit greatly in financial terms. Perhaps some residents worked seasonal jobs at the one of the sporting venues or at a restaurant near the neighborhood which catered largely to games, but Sun Valley as a whole has remained incredibly impoverished. Beginning in the Post WWII years, the city of Denver provided housing for needy families. This type of housing was based on income; currently in the twenty-first century, the rent is 30% of income. Two problems arose from this rent

standard: housing authorities were short on money and it discouraged residents to seek higher-paying jobs because of the reality their rent would go up which could cause them to have to move.<sup>84</sup> These issues have remained, in some ways, keeping the Sun Valley residents trapped in their predicament.

Though community pride remains strong in Sun Valley, living below the poverty line is a common occurrence amongst the vast majority of residents. There has been a variety of reform efforts to aid Sun Valley and produce a wealthier and more contributing neighborhood to Denver. One such initiative, headed by the city of Denver, created a station of the Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail station system in the Sun Valley neighborhood. The station, the Decatur –Federal stop located on the intersection of Federal Boulevard and W Howard Place, was part of RTD FasTracks ‘W’ light rail line, which extends from 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall in Central Business District in Denver to the foothills in Golden, at the Jefferson County Government Center. The creation of this station was made possible by a community challenge grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and officially opened for travel in April 2013. The presence of a light rail station in Sun Valley is critical for these residents because it builds a community-centered on transit, one that connects residents to the downtown higher education institutions at the Auraria Campus as well as workers commuting to other neighborhoods in Denver.<sup>85</sup> Other commuters who travel light rail are exposed to the historic Sun Valley neighborhood, which holds diverse historic and cultural values.<sup>86</sup> This is an example of smart growth in that the construction of the Decatur-Federal light rail station has provided residents of Sun Valley frequent service.<sup>87</sup> These people only have to wait fifteen minutes for the next train to arrive both eastbound and westbound.

Though too early to confirm, optimistically, by adding a massive transit line in the RTD light rail through the Sun Valley neighborhood will add more revitalization efforts to the neighborhood.

Another urban renaissance effort in progress in Sun Valley in recent years is the creation of an 'eco-district' within the neighborhood. Outside planners are hoping to create a more environmentally friendly and aware neighborhood in the city, through such entities as better parks and open spaces, walk-able grocery stores, and modernized energy-efficient housing.<sup>88</sup> There are three existing greenways: one along the South Platte River, the Weir Gulch and the Lakewood Gulch. The hope is to expand these areas to create an "environment-friendly oasis."<sup>89</sup> Having large green open spaces is important because it promotes less clutter and assists in providing the city with cleaner air. This project is headed by Denver planners who have partnered with an Oregon-based nonprofit company called EcoDistricts. Though specific details are still being established, the expectation is to transform entire districts to create vibrant and more livable neighborhoods.<sup>90</sup> However, concerns over the eco-friendly neighborhood have been raised by Sun Valley residents. The vision for an equal proportion of public housing, affordable rentals and condos and for sale units yields its own challenges. Until more formalized plans are put in action, residents are put in limbo. Some dislike the notion their community would be severed and turned into a rich district of the city, one that would push the lower income residents out of Sun Valley. Other tenants of the neighborhood are more optimistic about the changes. Michael Williams, a native of Sun Valley who works for the Denver Department of Human Service in the neighborhood explains the changes occurring in his neighborhood. He states "You know what I feel

when I see those bulldozers and cranes? I feel pride, and I wish I was down there laying that track. I just see that what is going in there is going to be better than what was there."<sup>91</sup>

Others Sun Valley residents are also excited for the new changes planned for their neighborhood.<sup>92</sup> Much similar to other neighborhoods however, displacement of residents due to gentrification can become problematic. If Sun Valley is transformed into a 'young and hip' district, many of its residents will have to relocate. If buildings are renovated and new apartments and condos are constructed, rent prices will only increase. Currently, Denver ranks 10<sup>th</sup> among the top 20 US markets for most expensive housing. The city saw a 14.5 percent rental increase in the month of January 2015 alone, the highest in the nation.<sup>93</sup> This alarming increase in rental prices exposes an area such as Sun Valley. If the neighborhood were to become the trendiest new spot in the city, high housing rental rates would surely be a part of that process, assumedly creating a situation where residents already living in Sun Valley to not be able to afford living there anymore. This process is sure to create a rift between residents of the neighborhood and developers, according to Jeremy Nemeth, chairman of the Department of Planning and Design at the University of Colorado at Denver. He believes this process is never easy, stating, "to try to create that mix in a way that doesn't produce resentment among current residents and attract people that developers want, it's very hard for me to point to a place in the country where that has been seamless and successful."<sup>94</sup> Due to the relatively unsuccessful attempts to reach a consensus between residents of an area needed to be renovated and its developers, it does not give Sun Valley the most prominent future. That is not to say

however that agreements cannot be made and the needs for all residents, past, present and future and developers will be met.

Moving forward in the revitalization process, city planners need to walk the delicate tightrope between appeasing residents of Sun Valley as well as the overall future revitalization plans of all Denver's older city districts, including Sun Valley.

The Nuggets and Avalanche moved out of Sun Valley neighborhood after their 1998 seasons. The Nuggets remained connected to the neighborhood that housed them for almost twenty-five years. One such instance the Nuggets have given back to the Sun Valley community was through their partnership with Santa's Elves: Kids Giving to Kids Charity. This charity, created by mothers with the goal of teaching their children about philanthropy, where the parents "worked with the Rude Rec Center and the Denver Housing Authority to identify people who would welcome gifts from children to their children around Christmas time."<sup>95</sup> In 2013, more than 100 children dressed up as elves delivered more than 1,000 gifts to other children. The Nuggets players donated autographed merchandise as well as tickets for upcoming games.<sup>96</sup> Though this instance of good will towards children of lesser needs may not necessarily yield renovations for city structures or needed welfare for residents, it does however, have the ability to make a significant impact on an individual child's life. This could be the motivation one could use to motivate them to achieve a better life. Though it certainly would be foolish to presume all underprivileged kids who are exposed to professional athletes would ignite a passion to become professionals as well, let alone their athletic ability to be, but a positive and dramatic encounter with an extraordinary athlete could spark an interest to persevere to achieve one's goals.

The transition of the Nuggets from McNichols Sports Arena in Sun Valley to the Pepsi Center in the Auraria neighborhood displayed the city's interest in continuing to revitalize areas in their boundaries. Auraria originated as a mining community (discussed in chapter 3) and became an ethnic epicenter and industrial area focusing on the rail yard which ran through parallel to the South Platte River in Auraria. DURA was responsible for the utilization of this land by way of creating a higher educational mainstay in the Auraria Campus and transformed other parts of the district to entertainment centers, most notably the Pepsi Center. Built in 1999, the Pepsi Center is home to the Denver Nuggets and the Colorado Avalanche. The building also houses the Major League Lacrosse team the Colorado Mammoth as well as plays hosts to multiple high school post-season events.<sup>97</sup> Though the displacement of Auraria residents due to the gentrification of the district is an unfortunate reality, the added financial value and overall appeal to the revamped district in education and entertainment is beneficial in terms of boosting tourism and the amount of travelers turned residents to the city.

Even with the addition of professional sports teams in cities, their positive financial impact is not spread across the entire demographic or city. Civic pride however does cross many boundaries, uniting city residents under the team's successful and poor seasons. True fans are able unite under the success, or sometimes experience the struggle of a particular professional sports team. Denver as a city continues to move into the twenty-first century as one of the nation's most trendy and attractive cities to not only visit, but also to settle. The addition of professional sports teams to Denver is important because of some portion of revenue generated for the city and local businesses but also gives residents a common interest. The presence of sports teams such as the Nuggets



have also been a positive entity for Denver because of the team's net worth and fan interest, the demand for a suitable and complimentary stadium greatly increases. This allows older districts to be revived as professional teams move into and out of other city neighborhoods. The Nuggets began in the Central Business District at the Denver Auditorium Arena. After switching over to McNichols Sports Arena in the Sun Valley neighborhood, the Auditorium was gutted and turned into the Denver Center for Performing Arts Complex. The team then moved into their current home of the Pepsi Center in the Auraria Neighborhood. The existence of the Nuggets (along with the Avalanche and Broncos) in Sun Valley at bare minimum created a greater awareness to the morbidly impoverished neighborhood. By no means were these teams fountainheads of reviving this community, but their presence showed other residents how poor the surrounding area of the stadiums and arena was. Auraria has also transformed into the educational epicenter and one of the most attractive entertainment districts of the city, partially due to the move of the Nuggets and Avalanche into the Pepsi Center. With professional sports teams such as the Nuggets remaining headquartered in downtown Denver, the city will have one point of interest (professional sports) that will keep its image intact and residents appreciative of the teams' presence in the city and not outlying areas.

## Chapter 5- Blake Street Bombers: LoDo's Renaissance

An ode to the mountainous beauty of the state, Denver's Colorado Rockies is the fourth and final team of the 'big four' professional sports organizations in Denver. The Rockies are the city's Major League Baseball (MLB) team. The Rox, as they have become commonly known, were established in 1993 and have remained a mainstay in Colorado professional sports. The team has enjoyed mediocre success at best. In their twenty-two full seasons (the current 2015 season is their twenty-third season) they have only produced three playoff appearances, and four other winning seasons.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, the Rockies represent a city's long dream of obtaining a professional baseball team. Attendance rates for the team have remained very respectable during their tenure. The team consistently averages over 30,000 fans per game, ranking over 2.1 million attendees per year which ranks in the top half of the MLB for attendance.<sup>2</sup> Sports historian James Whiteside explains the sport of baseball in relation with Denver. He states, "for the story of baseball runs through Denver's, and Colorado's, history like a connective tissue, binding past to present and linking Coloradans to powerful forces at work throughout American society."<sup>3</sup> Baseball is considered by many to be America's most cherished sport. The presence of baseball in Denver cumulating with the formation of the Colorado Rockies and the construction of Coors Field is yet another demonstration of the connection between the city of Denver and the rise of its professional sports teams. The development of the Lower Downtown (LoDo) area where Coors Field is located along with surrounding districts has been transformed from industrial areas to bustling vibrant hotspots within the city.

Baseball has been an integral part of Denver since the city's humble beginnings as mining settlements in 1859. Baseball began as a game played by New York City clerks. The game quickly spread throughout the eastern United States and soon to Denver. In 1862, William Newton Byers, publisher of the *Rocky Mountain News* newspaper "summoned anyone interested to attend a meeting at Whipple's cabinet shop for the purpose of forming a baseball club."<sup>4</sup> Organized baseball thus was born in Denver. For the next twenty years, club baseball teams were present throughout the Denver community. These teams garnished national respect, and many conglomered to create more competitive clubs. Rivalries were then created with neighboring towns such as Golden and Central City.<sup>5</sup> This instance of sport being a central function of a small developing settlement such as this is important. Muscular Christianity, the faith-driven commitment to physical fitness to honor the religion's Christian god Jesus Christ of the Holy Trinity motivated many to participate in sports and other fitness activities. The idea of stability through social clubs like baseball were important because they gave meaning to people's lives, especially in a place like Denver which was, up to that point, a small settlement compared to a vast metropolis it is now in the twenty-first century. Baseball historian Duane Smith furthers this point, stating "You could see baseball just about everywhere in the state. Just as it is today, when you had a baseball team, you were coming of age as a town or settlement. It was a sign their community was becoming civilized."<sup>6</sup> Baseball was ever-present from even the smallest of towns' founding.

With the rising of popularity of baseball in post-Civil War Denver, amateur and then professional teams began to establish in the late 1870s into the 1880s. A very eclectic set of teams names for Denver's amateur clubs included: the Excelsiors, Eclipses,

Metropolitans, Resolutes, Pacifics, Queen City, Clippers and Athletics to name a few.<sup>7</sup> The Broadway Grounds, located at the modern-day intersection of Broadway and Colfax became the perennial playing field for many of these clubs. The area now currently is the Civic Center Station. This is located at the eastern-most part of Sixteenth Street Mall, where the free Mall Ride begins and ends.<sup>8</sup> Other ballparks nestled throughout the city have also transformed into other structures since their construction and then demolition. River Front Park, located between Bassett Street and the Platte River from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> housed various Denver teams in its existence. The Denvers, the city's first professional baseball team played for a short time as well as various exhibition teams hailing from MLB teams such as the Philadelphia Phillies and the Chicago White Stockings (renamed the Chicago Cubs).<sup>9</sup> River Front Park was a vast stadium, with its back wall reaching over 400 feet from home base. After the original ballpark burned down, the reconstructed park included auxiliary seating along the foul lines and featured a new grandstand.<sup>10</sup> Over a century later the ballpark serves the community as a section of Commons Park in the LoDo neighborhood.<sup>11</sup>

The ability for an area within a city to renovate and best utilize given space for the future such as this is important because, though the ballpark, by any stretch, paved the way for urban development, the fact the lot transformed from a baseball field to a recreational park speaks to the city's effort to maintain and create green areas throughout. As the Denver metropolitan area continued to expand in all directions, the city committed to providing more green areas. The previous chapter cited efforts in the Sun Valley neighborhood to expand its three greenways. The growth of environmental areas continues not only in Sun Valley, but throughout the city. In the Stapleton area, north of

downtown, Denver Parks and Recreation officially broke ground in March 2015 to create three adjoining parks. The parks would add another 64 acres to Denver's urban parks system and includes such features as trails, landscaping, vegetation areas and new irrigation systems to Northeast Denver parks.<sup>12</sup> Adding such attributes in a city and surrounding areas is highly beneficial. Because Denver is considered one of the sunniest cities in the nation, its residents benefit greatly from the addition of such parks.<sup>13</sup> In return, Denver then could potentially house a more physically active group of citizens. Therefore the addition of outdoor venues adds to the overall image of the city, as well the incorporation of sports in the lives of the residents.

The Denvers were the first professional baseball team in Denver. They joined other towns across the state to form Colorado's first professional league, the Rocky Mountain League.<sup>14</sup> The team won the first Western League pennant, the multistate league they joined in 1885. This was the city's first championship in an interstate professional league in 1886.<sup>15</sup> But struggles ensued in the following seasons and the team eventually dissolved. The most prominent early professional baseball team became the Denver Bears. In 1900, the team was the state's best-known professional sports team.<sup>16</sup> The team was owned and run by George Tebeau, a Denver and national baseball star-turned baseball executive. Throughout his career he made multiple attempts, some successes and some failures at running professional baseball teams. The original Bears team was dropped from the Western League before the 1917 season due to financial issues in the organization, but other future baseball teams named the Bears remained present in Denver until 1984.<sup>17</sup>

The next round of a Denver Bears team was originally the Missouri Miners. Businessmen bought and renamed the team the Bears.<sup>18</sup> The team only lasted one decade. During this time, the post-WWI era, town baseball teams remained present in Colorado. Teams hailing from the eastern plains all the way to the San Juan Mountains helped amateur baseball grow. Town teams are important because it created an identity for these small communities to rally around. In many ways, town teams such as this serve as a precursor to the now domineering professional sports team business in the twenty-first century. Residents of Denver for instance, take pride in having a professional baseball team in the Rockies. The 'die-hards' or devotedly committed fans would sometimes even travel to other states to watch the town teams play, much like these townspeople who would at times caravan with their town team to the next game, town band and all.<sup>19</sup>

The rise of a new Denver Bears team emerged in the 1950s. Coming from Kansas City as the Blues, this team was the Triple A (AAA) minor league affiliate of the New York Yankees.<sup>20</sup> The Bears served the city until the conclusion of the 1992 season. Various MLB teams used the Denver Bears as their AAA minor league associate after the Yankees ended their tenure with the team including: the Montreal Expos (now the Washington Nationals), the Texas Rangers, the Chicago White Sox, the Cincinnati Reds and the Milwaukee Brewers.<sup>21</sup> The team underwent a name change in 1985 under new ownership. The name changed to the Denver Zephyrs and they donned green and white uniforms.<sup>22</sup> The Bears/Zephyrs played at Mile High Stadium. Originally called Bears Stadium, the venue served the Denver Broncos as well as the Bears and the United States Football League's Denver Gold, two major league soccer teams and the first two seasons

of the MLB Rockies during its existence. The multiuse stadium was used a unique hybrid system that used powerful rams so “stadium operators could slowly move multi-ton stands that rested on a thin film of water, thereby converting the stadium from baseball diamond to football gridiron configuration in a few hours.”<sup>23</sup> Multi-purpose stadiums were most common to accommodate MLB and NFL teams. This practice was prevalent from the 1960s to the turn of the century, but since has declined greatly. The only current MLB/NFL teams to play in the same stadium are the Oakland Athletics and the Oakland Raiders. The Bears/Zephyrs held a relatively large amount of success in most decades in Denver except for the 1960s. The team won multiple Triple A Classics, the minor league championship series. Unfortunately their last owner in Denver, John Dikeou moved the team to New Orleans after the 1992 season, where the team currently resides.<sup>24</sup>

In its early days, baseball remained segregated and many African Americans were forced to play in the Negro Leagues. Colorado had segregated baseball at the end of the nineteenth century. These players played in various leagues that were created and then folded, parallel to the white professional, town and amateur leagues. Some viewed Denver as a transcendent area for integration, especially in sports. In 1890, the *Denver Republican* newspaper claimed Denver had proportionately more black men in Denver that owned homes than in any other northern city.<sup>25</sup> Though this may have been the case, the succumbing decades led to a more racist mentality amongst residents of Denver and the state in general. The second rise of the Ku Klux Klan was alive and well during the 1920s and 1930s in Colorado and controlled state and local politics for some 10 years. African American players faced constant heckling from white spectators. Despite this,

Negro League teams survived and played in prominent contests such as the city's prestigious *Denver Post* tournament. James Whiteside draws a unique comparison, proclaimed the intriguing interest level of fans with the Negro Leagues stating, "Although the Ku Klux Klan dominated state and local politics in the mid-1920s, white fans evidently appreciated the high caliber of baseball played by African American teams."<sup>26</sup> After WWII, professional sports began to integrate and now resulted in many instances where the majority demographic is African Americans. This important step toward equity became critical to create fairness and the most competitive atmosphere possible for professional sports.

Professional sports leagues were all soon integrated during the second half of the twentieth century. The game grew to be more competitive and gave all players, regardless of race or ethnicity much more objectivity to play. Talks of a major league baseball team in Denver began as early as the late 1970s. Denver was seeking to purchase the Oakland Athletics. Denver oilman Marvin Davis was seeking to buy the Athletics from their owner Charlie Finley. Finley was going through a divorce and having issues with the lease on his team's ballpark, the Oakland Coliseum. It became known Finley could not sell the Athletics without the Coliseum's approval, thus the Orange Sox MLB Denver team never materialized.<sup>27</sup> It took more than another decade that negotiations for an MLB team in Denver would begin. Former sportswriter for the *Denver Post* Adrian Dater explains the city's rise to prominence which impressed the eight-person MLB expansion committee, who were touring American cities for potential locations for two new teams. Dater states

Denver was starting to really transform itself in the early 1990s. No longer was it the boom-and-bust oil town of the past. Tens of thousands



of young transplants poured into the city, lured by cheap real estate prices and jobs in burgeoning industries like telecommunications and computers. The lower downtown section of the city went from being a bowery-style district to one teeming with hip microbreweries and dot-com startups.<sup>28</sup>

The greater amount of people moving to Denver helped the city amp up its image as one of the nation's premier business cities. The revitalization of Denver and specifically the LoDo area impressed the MLB expansion committee, who visited cities across the nation for potentially new teams, through its capability to have fiscal gains for the city, which they awarded one of the expansion teams to Denver and the other to Miami.<sup>29</sup> Denver received help from many sources in obtaining a team. The hard sell was by head of the MLB Commissioner Fay Vincent, who believed a professional baseball team in Colorado would promote viewership and support across the entire Plains and Rocky Mountain region. The city of Phoenix, Arizona, who was also in the running for one of the new MLB franchises but Phoenix withdrew in 1989 due to a failure to agree on a stadium referendum also boosted Denver's chances for a team.<sup>30</sup> Phoenix was awarded a team in 1995 to begin playing beginning in 1998 as the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Through these avenues as well a reputable movement with the residents of Denver to support an MLB team, the city won the approval and was awarded an expansion MLB team. The cooperation between Denverites and local politicians made the creation of the Rockies a reality. A grassroots movement to lure professional sports such as this in the city had not been demonstrated since the failed 1976 Winter Olympic bid. The new stadium tax became a crucial piece of legislation that passed in order for plans to construct Coors Field. Denver citizens in a 1990 ballot voted majority yes on a sales tax increase of 1% in the six county area surrounding the city of Denver.<sup>31</sup> This was the precursor sales tax referendum the Denver Broncos used to fund their new stadium in the

late 1990s. Of the Coors Field funding, 75% came from the sales tax and 25% from private funds, mainly from the chief financiers of the Rockies organization. Though the financing method for the building of Coors Field was still met with critics, the reality of the fans wanting an MLB team in Denver triumphed. Obviously, the potential fiscal endeavors were motivators for citizens to want the stadium, but the long history of baseball in the state also encouraged the arrival of an MLB team.

Expansion professional sports franchises are teams made from scratch. Unlike the Colorado Avalanche who were the Quebec Nordiques before relocating to Denver (see chapter 3), the Colorado Rockies were an entirely new MLB team. There were three original general managers for the Rox: John Antonucci, Mickey Monus and Steve Erhardt. All three businessmen had dabbled in the sports business. Monus and Antonucci were financial backers of the World Basketball League, which did not flourish and only survived for six seasons.<sup>32</sup> Monus revealed to be a crook and later indicted on 129 counts of fraud and embezzlement to fund the basketball league from his publicly owned drugstore company Phar-Mor in 1993.<sup>33</sup> Antonucci followed Monus and withdrew his money from the team, leaving the Rockies at a \$20 million shortfall. Jerry McMorris, owner of the Northwest Transport trucking company, invested \$10 million in the team and demanded the other members of the ownership group, specifically Oreb Benton and Charles Monfort, to pay the rest of the remaining \$10 million and in doing so he became the majority owner.<sup>34</sup> McMorris owned the team until 2005; he then sold his majority stake to Charles Monfort and his brother Dick Monfort. The two have remained owners and have held other managerial positions such as: managing general partner,

chairman and executive chief officer and vice chairman. They have remained the current primary owners of the team.

In terms of on-field talent, the Rockies were far from becoming champions when they were established in 1993. However, that did not mean they were not going to be competitive. Don Baylor became the Rox first manager, who thrived from being a former left fielder and designated hitter and a World Series champion. Baylor was also an MLB All-Star and the American League's Most Valuable Player (MVP) in 1979 while playing for the California Angels.<sup>35</sup> He represented stern leadership qualities and demonstrated being "disarmingly honest and painstakingly professional" throughout his tenure managing the Rockies, especially with the media.<sup>36</sup> Players accepted his guidance in the clubhouse and led to a relatively large amount success under his tenure as the Rockies manager. The team drafted players in the expansion draft in 1992. Sound hitting grew to be the strength of the original team. Four players: Dante Bichette, Andres Galarraga, Ellis Burks and Vinny Castilla became the founding members of the 'Blake Street Bombers,' a nickname for the potent offense.<sup>37</sup> Not officially recognized as this nickname until they team played in Coors Field in 1995, the name gives tribute to the location of Coors Field (20<sup>th</sup> and Blake) and the successful batting of these players. Larry Walker, the future National League MVP for the Rox also joined the Blake Street bombers at the beginning of the 1995 season.

The Rockies first season became a success by expansion team standards; the team won 65 games and lost 95. This was the best record of any expansion team in the major league history.<sup>38</sup> In terms of team popularity, the Rox also set records. Playing in Mile High Stadium in the 1993 season, the team amassed a total attendance of 4,483,350 and

an opening day attendance of 80,227, both of which are still MLB records.<sup>39</sup> An interesting end to the season occurred when the last two series (five games) were played against the two teams who were competing for the final playoff spot in the National League, the San Francisco Giants and the Atlanta Braves.<sup>40</sup> The Rockies won one out of the five games, against the Giants, which hindered their ability to secure the final playoff spot. Because the Braves swept the Rockies the last three games of the season, they won the National League West Division.<sup>41</sup> Being a part of the National League pennant race was a consolation for the expansion Rockies. Baylor still aggressively managed his ballclub through October. Some compared his final games “Like it was the seventh game of the World Series.”<sup>42</sup> The Rockies first season was at least met with respect from the MLB. Andres Galaraga, the ‘Big Cat,’ won the National League batting title, award for the highest hitting percentage, which he batted .370.<sup>43</sup> The highest attendance rates and avoiding 100 loses were both successful highlights of the year. The fact that their expansion team counterpart, the Florida Marlins had more losses than them was also something the Rox were content about. With a powerful offense, great fan popularity and one season experience, it looked as though the team was on its way to becoming one of the competitive teams in the MLB.

The 1994 season was shortened due to a league lockout. Despite more batting success, the team ended the year with a 53-64 record, yet still a better winning percentage than the team’s inaugural year. 1995 on the other hand was different; the team qualified for the playoffs. The acquisition of power hitter and right fielder Larry Walker from the Montreal Expos gave the team even more offensive prowess but also another solid defensive skill-set in the field. The team had moved into their new home at Coors Field.

The Rockies finished the year with 77 wins and 67 losses, per the new shortened season agreement. They were the National League wild card team, the fourth and final seed in the NL playoffs.<sup>44</sup> The team lost the best-of-five series against the Atlanta Braves 4-1, losing leads in each one of their losses.<sup>45</sup> The Braves went on to defeat the Cleveland Indians in the World Series. Nonetheless, the Rockies were now viewed as a respectable up-and-coming team in the MLB. The next eleven years however did not produce a single playoff appearance. The next two consecutive years yielded winning records but were not enough to win the division or wild card spot for the National League. Larry Walker won the 1997 NL MVP batting .366 with 49 homeruns and 130 runs-batted-in (RBI).<sup>46</sup> The 1998 season was much the same except for it would be Don Baylor's last year managing, as the team could not produce a winning season and he was fired. By the end of his tenure with the Rox, Baylor's relationship with General Manager Bob Gebhard was deteriorated and the two were "barely on speaking terms."<sup>47</sup>

Jim Leyland became the Rockies manager only for the 1999 season. Leyland was friends with Gebhard which enticed him to leave the Florida Marlins. Leyland was previously the manager of the Marlins the previous two years and won the 1997 World Series. Front office changes angered Leyland, as Gebhard was forced to resign, the team brought in his successor Dan O'Dowd.<sup>48</sup> Leyland resigned at the end of the year, still with two years on his contract. Buddy Bell became the manager for the next three seasons until 2002. Once again, Bell could not procure a winning season and the Rockies remained very much as bottom-feeders of the NL West Division. O'Dowd thought it was time to clean house and looked for newer and younger talent. He traded members of the Blake Street Bombers Dante Bichette and Vinny Castilla away while Andres Galarraga

signed with the Atlanta Braves after the 1997 season. A new team, much different from the original cast was being formed at the turn of the century. During this time the new and lasting face of the franchise gained notoriety as a young first baseman from the University of Tennessee.

Todd Helton and the Colorado Rockies have become synonymous in recent history. Much like John Elway is to the Denver Broncos, Helton remained a loyal Rockie with the team his whole 17 year career while putting up Hall-of-Fame caliber numbers. Adrian Dater proclaimed Todd Helton was “the most accomplished and successful player in Rockies history.”<sup>49</sup> Practically his sole workmanship kept the team afloat and its fans interested in the product during the early to mid-2000s. Though his production faltered later in his career, his stats remained phenomenal. They included: 2,519 hits, 369 homeruns and 1,406 RBIs as well as his jersey number 17 retired by the Rockies will give him a change to be inducted in the MLB Hall of Fame.<sup>50</sup> Helton represents much more than an effective player. In the world of professional sports, many high-profile players seek employment for other teams, usually ones with the bigger paycheck and greater opportunity to win a World Series. Helton never faltered on his loyalty to the Rockies however, playing his entire career with the Rockies. This is more than admirable. Helton gave Rockies fans a figurehead to rally around, one that would eventually lead the team to its only World Series birth. Unfortunately for a Rockies fans, Helton’s idolization was deterred in 2013 when a DUI arrest in February reminded all he was a human capable of making mistakes.<sup>51</sup>

One point of importance was the addition of the humidifier for Coors Field. Because the Rockies play in Denver, the highest altitude city in the MLB, the air is much

thinner. This allows the baseballs to travel farther on contact because of its leather makeup of the ball shrinks due to thinner air. This caused many in the baseball world to place an asterisk next to the Rockies power batting statistics at Coors Field. James Whiteside explains how this hurt both Ellis Burks and Dante Bichette They lost the NL MVP race in both 1995 and 1996 “because most of their offensive output had been at Coors Field. Baseball writers, who voted the award each year, penalized the team because they believed playing at high altitude gave the Rockies’ players a huge advantage.”<sup>52</sup> While the evidence for a clear advantage is questionable, the Rockies nonetheless began to use a humidity system on the baseballs called the Humidor<sup>53</sup> at the beginning of the 2002 season. All baseballs used at Coors Field sit in the Humidor at 70 degrees with a 50% humidity setting before games.<sup>54</sup> What resulted in the future years were lower scoring games in Denver and more ease on pitchers, whether psychological or actual, knowing the baseballs were less susceptible to go farther on contact. Nonetheless, Coors Field remains a top hitting stadium in the MLB.

After Buddy Bell’s three seasons with the Rox, the team hired Clint Hurdle as manager. Hurdle remained with the team until 2009 season when he was fired mid-season. Under Hurdle however, the Rockies qualified for the playoffs for their magical playoff run to the World Series in 2007. The additions of such players as Brad Hawpe, Garrett Atkins, Matt Holliday and pitchers Aaron Cook and Jeff Francis were beginning to yield positive results. The first five years of Hurdle’s tenure in Denver the conclusion of the team by fans and the rest of the MLB community was they were underachieving. Management, under Dan O’Dowd felt comfortable with player personnel; it simply took more time for the team to reach its potential. When it did in 2007, Rocktober began its

origins. Rocktober refers to the Rockies presence in the MLB in October, the month the MLB playoffs are held. In Rocktober 2007, the Rockies also had significant performances from young players, pitchers Franklin Morales and Ublado Jiménez and shortstop Troy Tulowitzki. With the collection of new and old talent, the Rockies made an unbelievable run to the World Series.

In the middle of September 2007, the Rox were still 6 ½ games out of the National League West lead. What transpired was a 21 win, 1 loss strand of games that brought them into the World Series. The Rockies were then swept by the Boston Red Sox four games to zero. This Rockies team finally broke the franchise mold of “playing out the string of another mediocre season.”<sup>55</sup> They won many of the games by single runs as well as in extra innings and come-from-behind feats multiple times. Because the Rockies ended their final three game series against the Arizona Diamondbacks with 2 out of 3 wins, the team was scheduled for a one game Wild Card Playoff game against the San Diego Padres.<sup>56</sup> The game was considered an instant classic. Known as ‘The Slide,’ the extra inning game ended when left fielder Matt Holliday slid, head first, into home plate on a sacrifice fly in the 13<sup>th</sup> inning winning the game. This game became an instant Colorado classic game in professional sports.<sup>57</sup> The Rox were down two runs when at their turn to bat in the bottom of the 13<sup>th</sup> when they scored 3 runs to secure the win. Though the call at home play on ‘The Slide’ has been called controversial, video replay was not instituted yet and the call remained. In result “the play inspired a new round of calls for instant replay to officially determine umpire decisions on plays of significant consequence.”<sup>58</sup>



After defeating the Padres, the Rockies went on a tear and won their next seven games, defeating the Philadelphia Phillies three games to zero, and the Arizona Diamondbacks four games to zero.<sup>59</sup> Purple hysteria took over the city and Rocktober engulfed Denver residents. Though many ‘fans’ simply began to cheer for the Rockies exclusively when they entered the playoffs or qualified for the World Series, the civic pride generated from the Rockies success during the 2007 season nonetheless boosted the national perspective of the city and team. Longtime Colorado sportswriter Irv Moss explained the impact of the Rockies in Denver, especially during their World Series run. He states, “Not only have the Rockies transformed the image of baseball in Denver, they’ve got longtime observers talking about the beginnings of a long run success that could forever change the perception of how baseball is played here.”<sup>60</sup> In 2007 the Rockies defied many doubters and made baseball fans consider the Rockies to be a team to not be reckoned with.

The 2008 season ended as a disappointment. The team failed to repeat and qualify for the playoffs for a second year in a row. Star Matt Holliday was traded away for members of the Oakland Athletics, most notably left fielder Carlos Gonzales. ‘Cargo’, as he has been nicknamed in Denver, became a fan favorite. The Rockies began slumping once again in the 2009 season; Hurdle was fired and bench coach Jim Tracy was promoted to manager. The end of the 2009 season provided similar excitement of the season rally by the team, like 2007. The Rockies won 10 out of their last 16 games and secured a Wild Card berth once again.<sup>61</sup> The team did not experience the same playoff success as two years prior, losing in the Divisional Series against the Phillies three games to one. Since 2009, the last five and a half years have been unproductive for

the Rockies. Aside from individual praises from the likes of Troy Tulowitzki, Carlos Gonzales and Ubaldo Jimenez, the team has collectively played poor. No more playoff appearances and fruitless seasons have once again become the norm for the Rox. Jim Tracy resigned at the end of the 2012 season. Walt Weiss, a former shortstop for the Rockies, was hired as manager in 2013. Under Weiss's tenure, the team has not had a winning season.<sup>62</sup> His term as manager is unimpressive and the team in 2015 is currently in last place in the NL West.<sup>63</sup> Due to poor performances, General Manager Dan O'Dowd also resigned at the end of the 2014 season. Under O'Dowd's administration of 15 years, the team only yielded four winning seasons and two playoff appearances.<sup>64</sup> For the people of Denver, the hope for the Rockies to become a consistent playoff team remains a dream and not a reality. Nonetheless, the Rockies have added beneficial features to the city, especially with the revitalization of the LoDo area within Denver and the construction of Coors Field.

Coors Field added much to the once dismal area of Lower Downtown Denver. LoDo, also called Union Station is considered Denver's oldest neighborhood.<sup>65</sup> Many consider LoDo a separate entity, yet technically it is a portion of the Union Station neighborhood.<sup>66</sup> Founded by former Kansas state senator and prospector William Larimer and son, the area became one of the two bustling mining settlements, named Denver (City).<sup>67</sup> The other, named Auraria, rivaled Denver City. The two camps eventually joined forces to create Denver. LoDo "continued to boom as wholesale business established themselves around the railroad yards."<sup>68</sup> The district, located in the heart of the city's rail yard network, and Union Station, was the central transportation hub in Denver. The first settlement of Larimer is the current block of Larimer square,

between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> street on Larimer. Due to the Sherman Silver Purchase Act being repealed in 1893, development in Denver and especially LoDo halted. The era between the World Wars also contributed to the neighborhood's decline. Under the Eisenhower administration, the Interstate Highway System was created; causing cities such as Denver to be overlooked in the sense of certain streets were used less, the ones that were not directly accessed to the two Interstate Highways which surrounded the city. These two interstates are I-25, running north/south bound and I-70 running east/west bound. LoDo specifically struggled during this time period. The creation of larger roads also led to less train travel. Union Station went from 88 trains running through the station daily to only 1 or 2 post WWII when the Amtrak era of railroad travel began in the 1970s.<sup>69</sup> The subsequent decades led to the demolition of approximately 20% of the districts buildings.<sup>70</sup>

These adverse factors led LoDo to be forgotten as the prosperous community it once was. In the 1970s, DURA did not include LoDo in its 'Skyline' district, though it was in the heart of downtown.<sup>71</sup> Many of the industrial buildings in the district were left abandoned. The area was considered by many as a skid row. Crime and homelessness were the norms and "it was a place you did not want to be after dark."<sup>72</sup> The arrival of the 1980s revamped the image of the district to its original glory. First, in 1973, the 1400 block of Denver was designated as the city's first Historic District (Larimer Square). Then in 1988, the city and county of Denver officially recognized the area as the Lower Downtown neighborhood as a Historic District.<sup>73</sup>

What took place through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the next century was a massive revitalization effort from different interest groups and city government

bureaucracies to revamp and restore LoDo. Many urban planners and business moguls saw the potential benefit of investing in this district. The prime location of being in the heart of the city gave LoDo much potential to thrive as it had in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not as if this district was on the outskirts of the city. Examining the rise and expansion of the Central Business District (CBD), located just east of LoDo, the chances increased for LoDo to become a business hub as well. The addition of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street mall ride, which was built in 1982 assisted LoDo's new business ventures as its line ended into the LoDo area, which its current last stop is located at 16<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Place.<sup>74</sup> The addition of the mall ride brought more people to the downtown area where they had the opportunity to travel into LoDo, to check out the various restaurants and bars among other things that have erupted in the district.

Because of the rise of technology across the nation, but specifically in Colorado, a more diversified economy was implemented. This brought many ambitious business seekers to the city and these workers began their businesses and careers in LoDo. The most famous example of this is the Wynkoop Brewing Company, located at 18<sup>th</sup> and Wynkoop. Originally owned and operated by current Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, the Wynkoop Brewing Company saw a great success and continues operation today.<sup>75</sup> Wynkoop Brewing Company states that Hickenlooper and other 'urban pioneers' sought to brew beer and foster community within LoDo.<sup>76</sup> What resulted was one of the initial and primary businesses in the district which brought more consumers back to the streets of LoDo. The craft beer/microbrewery industry is one that has increased tremendously into the twenty-first century. Many breweries and brewing

companies have been established in Denver and currently are expanding into the suburbs in all directions as well as in mountain towns and Colorado Springs and Fort Collins.

All across the state, beer drinkers in Colorado flock to locally-owned independent breweries. In Denver specifically, the Wynkoop Brewing Company was one of the first craft breweries in the city. Other widely recognized breweries followed Wynkoop's example, including Breckenridge Brewery, which now operates out of five different operation facilities and includes their new 12 acre farmhouse-style restaurant and brewery in Littleton and Great Divide Brewery, which is expanding into the River North District of Denver with an added \$38.2 million production brewery.<sup>77</sup>

The River North Art District (RiNo), located just north of LoDo and the Five Points neighborhoods has transformed itself into a craft beer metropolis. Currently there are 11 breweries in the district.<sup>78</sup> The amount of beer drinkers traveling to the area will increase with the Denver City Council's approval of a new pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks located between 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> streets.<sup>79</sup> This gives pedestrians much easier access to the River North neighborhood to experience art and drink beer in the district.

It is important to note the craft beer industry is one of the city's most growing industries. From 2011 to 2013, the industry grew an astonishing 85%. In 2011, Colorado craft breweries contributed \$446 million to the state's economy and grew to \$704 million in 2012 and \$826 million in 2013.<sup>80</sup> These numbers speak to the high level and growing interest in residents of the state and Denver for independent beer. Since the 2009 recession, craft breweries in Denver and the state have increased 109%.<sup>81</sup> Having a diversified economy in a large city such as Denver is crucial for its survival. New

emerging industries like craft brewing are important for they create a new market of consuming as well as jobs for residents in the city. This industry focuses on garnishing individual relationships with the consumers and producers. With over 235 breweries in the state currently, the hope for continued expansion of this seemingly booming industry will be to continue expanding and not reach its limit until generations later. Political scientists Thomas Cronin and Robert Loevy of Colorado College believe “Colorado nowadays has a relatively diversified economy. Yet the state is forever trying to avoid the cycles of booms and busts that have dominated its economic and political past.”<sup>82</sup> Straying away from the primary reliance on natural resources and mineral mining as the state’s history has will help diversify and better Colorado and Denver’s economy.

Beer drinking is a common theme amongst Americans, especially at sporting events. The Colorado Rockies, since 1995, play at Coors Field, which represented this habitual beer drinking.<sup>83</sup> Named after the Coors Brewing Company in Golden, the stadium sells Coors products during games to its thirsty attendees. Coors pays \$1.1 million per year to the MLB for naming rights.<sup>84</sup> Coors Field became one of the MLBs most popular stadiums. The ballpark pays homage to the LoDo neighborhood with using bricks manufactured by Robinson Brick and Tile of Denver, a firm that has used their bricks in neighborhood construction for more than one hundred years and includes historical stylized patterns of colonial pillars and a clock which is similar to the one used in Union Station.<sup>85</sup> The brick-style architecture reminds residents of the industrial LoDo of old. Being exactly one mile above sea level, the stadium found itself as the most prolific offensive ballparks in history.<sup>86</sup> On an economic level, the construction of Coors Field “boosted a major redevelopment, already under way, of Denver’s dilapidated lower

downtown area.”<sup>87</sup> The opportunity for more than 50,000 people to flock to the LoDo/Five Points area of the city for the 81 home games could yield great amounts revenue to local restaurants and bars that are situated in and around the ballpark. David Martin, writing for BSN Denver, a local Denver sports radio/website Company believes:

Denver has grown up around Coors Field. The park has helped the economy gain strength and has made Denver an attractive city for people from around the country. It revitalized a destitute neighborhood and made it the go-to place for a night on the town, even when baseball isn't being played.<sup>88</sup>

There are however, still stipulations that have put Coors Field and Rockies franchise in a negative light and not as the beacon of hope for the surrounding area's urban renaissance. Some critics cite co-owner Charles Monfort's voicing of his personal religious beliefs through the team's annual Faith Day, held every year during a Sunday home game the second half of the season which provides a Christian-themed playing experience along with a Christian musical artist performing following the conclusion of the game. Dave Zirin, of the magazine *The Nation* believes Faith Day at Coors Field represents a transparency between religion, politics and major league baseball that is uncomfortable for some.<sup>89</sup> The separation of religious beliefs to business enterprises seems to be what some United Statesians want, citing this belief back to the 'separation of church and state' phrase used by Thomas Jefferson when addressing the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802 as well as the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution which “prohibits the government from making any law ‘respecting an establishment of religion’” as well as favoring non-religion over religion.<sup>90</sup> Monfort's personal issues aside, the notion of professional sports stadiums serving as genuine examples of architectural revitalization in cities is met with skepticism. Coors

Field, to such skeptics, is a demonstration of an urban area that undergoes massive renovations but what is left out of this 'feel good' story is the errant absence of "the vast majority of working-class and poor residents of those same cities" who had previously lived in those areas.<sup>91</sup>

Though the majority of LoDo up until its revival at the end of the twenty-first century was an industrial district, lower classes still lived around the area. Much similar to the changes in Auraria and Sun Valley, these residents have faced displacement due to urban revival. Where are these people to go? Some would argue it is a small detrimental consolation to the collective whole of better advancement for the city. The stereotype, whether true or false, that lower class people and minorities have higher crime rates than middle/upper class and white people, can be used as incorrect evidence of progress within a particular area of a city's development. Even if this were the case, the question remains as to where these certain 'undesirables' will move to. Surely some might move out of the city limits, but most would likely travel to another parts within the city, allowing them still closer access to places of work and education. To say urban revival/gentrification solves the problem of crime in a particular area in a city is a stretch because that 'crime' demographic would simply move to another part of the city, partially by potentially displaced people, but also the fact that the old neighborhood has now been revived, other non-renewed areas could now hold more crime. In the case of LoDo, the concept of 'new life' in the neighborhood only has created a place where the wealthiest of Denver can now live.<sup>92</sup>

Though the social mores of urban revival and gentrification seem questionable, the reality is, Denver has and will continue to transform its older and rundown areas into



newer ones. LoDo has much more renovations than the construction of Coors Field alone. Dr. Thomas Noel, Professor of History at the University of Colorado Denver clarifies that, although Coors Field did indeed add to the upbeat and revived image of the LoDo and Five Points area, it was not the sole gemstone of the district which was the catalyst that changed the entire neighborhood. He specifically states the addition of the Wynkoop Brewery, Tattered Cover Bookstore and tax breaks which were the initial precursors to the renaissance in LoDo.<sup>93</sup> The Mercantile Square, located on 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall between Wazee and Wynkoop streets emerged as one of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority's (DURA) projects at the beginning of LoDo's revitalization. Beginning in 1996, the Mercantile Square building was renovated to create a retail and office spaces as well as affordable housing units.<sup>94</sup> To finance the project, DURA issued

\$4 million in TIF bonds which, along with an innovative mix of public and private financing mechanisms including low income housing tax credits and state historic grant funds, enabled the project to be financed despite uncertain market conditions and the high cost of historic renovations.<sup>95</sup>

The outcome of these renovations on Mercantile Square created important business, office space and housing units. The buildings major tenants: Tattered Covered Bookstore, Dixons Restaurant and Wines Off Wynkoop all flourished and were one of the original projects through DURA in LoDo that helped capitalized reinvestment in the historic neighborhood.

Another DURA project in LoDo aimed to renovate areas in the historic Larimer Square, the area of Larimer Street between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets. The project, headed by the Larimer Square Parking Associates restored the long vacant Graham and Buerger buildings and also included redevelopment of a vacant parking lot on nearby Market

Street into a six-story, 310-space parking garage.<sup>96</sup> The historically sensitive structure provides much needed parking for the LoDo area and added 6,000 square feet of in line retail space along Market Street. The \$1.43 million contribution through DURA (via property and sales taxes) helped revitalize the block into one of Denver's most exclusive and luxurious places to dine and drink. The Square, currently owned by Jeff Hermanson since 1993, has leased almost 90% of its property to new merchants to fit the city's demand for versatility in the food and drink industry with forty retail and restaurant tenants in the block.<sup>97</sup>

Interestingly enough, DURA actually previously had plans to demolish the historic block in 1963. Led by preservationist and Larimer Square Associates figurehead Dana Crawford, the group fought back to create the city's first historic district (Larimer Square) in 1971 which then encompassed by the LoDo district.<sup>98</sup> This became an important step in preserving older parts of the city. DURA at the time focused on building larger and more impressive new structures. The change by the group to now working side by side with historic district demonstrates the cooperation to find a middle ground between restore older buildings as well as building newer structures as well. Visiting the LoDo area, it is easily visible to notice the reparations of older buildings as well as the addition of new ones. This is a use of smart growth in that preservation of historic buildings is critical in cities.<sup>99</sup> New ordinances are created to keep historic buildings up to code in neighborhoods such as LoDo. These buildings such as the ones in Larimer Square and the Mercantile Square bring out the historic character of their neighborhood through the older structures.

The LoDo and Five Points area has become a nightlife hotspot area in Denver. The area “is a hip enclave of see-and-be-seen bars alongside packed sports bars.”<sup>100</sup> Streets such as Market, Larimer and Blake contain many different types of restaurants and bars. Sports bars such as the Sports Column, Jacksons and Brothers Bar and Grill represent the professional sports fandom in the neighborhood and city. So long as there is a Denver sports team playing, these places are packed with fans/customers. During the Broncos Super Bowl run in the 2013-2014 season, these venues held many themed events which brought even more people to their establishments. The Viewhouse Restaurant and Bar in LoDo easily filled its 600 person capacity for the playoff games.<sup>101</sup> The Rockies especially affect this area, because not only do these restaurants and bars tend to the customers who stay to watch the game, they also cater to the crowd who attends the games at Coors Field, before and after.

The nightclub scene in LoDo is another large attraction for residents and visitors of the state. Rooftop bars such as the Cowboy Lounge and The Tavern and indoor clubs such as Beta and VIE serve the younger demographic to dancing, drinking and partying. This is a vast contrast of what the streets of LoDo looked like at night compared to 30 to 40 years prior. The streets are packed with people, attending nightclubs and bars. Though the fiscal gains in the revived district are very beneficial to the city, crime from these night-goers is still present. In 2012, the LoDo ‘night-life’ tax contributed 82% of the \$8.1 million earned in sales tax for the district.<sup>102</sup> All the same, from June 2012 to June 2013, there were 682 violent crimes reported in the LoDo neighborhood, mostly from incidents in or around bars and clubs.<sup>103</sup> This staggering number displays that although an area can be revitalized, a different crowd of people can still yield high crime

rates. People with assumedly more money are still capable and willing to participate in violent crime, especially if their minds are altered through excessive alcohol and/or drug use.

It is important to note the district just north of LoDo, Five Points, has also undergone massive revitalizations as well since the 1990s. Located north of LoDo, Five Points is where the downtown street grid system meets the neighborhood grid system, creating an interesting boundary of essentially five sides. Historically, Five Points has been a highly ethnic neighborhood with its residents being primarily African-American. Other high numbers of minorities such as Hispanics and Jews have lived in Five Points at one point or another. Similar to LoDo, the post-WWII period experienced an era of economic decline and a rise in crime which has remained the stigma of the neighborhood, though it now holds a Caucasian majority.<sup>104</sup>

Though its rich history is shadowed by its current few blocks of high crime, the neighborhood has been making its attempts to renovate the area. The celebrated Rossonian Hotel used to be home to one of the most popular jazz clubs in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Through a series of foreclosures and failed business attempts at the building, the structure still represents a part of the neighborhood's vibrant past. Even though formal plans have yet to be materialized, there is optimism the hotel will return to business, contain a jazz club and have the potential to expand to eight stories high. This would create a modernized yet nostalgic feel, one that keeps such a landmark useful and relevant that respects the neighborhood's character and integrity, according to communications director for Denver's Community Planning and Development department Andrea Burns.<sup>105</sup>

Another revitalization project in Five Points is a housing development at 2460 Welton Street, called the Wheatley. This site formerly housed The Phyllis Wheatley Young Women's Christian Organization and will now include mixed-used housing including affordable apartments and housing.<sup>106</sup> This project is set to be completed in the spring 2016. Having an increased in renovated affordable housing is vital for districts such as Five Points to maintain its community members. Having such projects ensures of a much less mass departure of residents being forced to move due to gentrification. This is important because it keeps the neighborhood culture intact and have the ability to bring other residents and visitors to the city for its authenticity.

The Colorado Rockies have and seem to be a mainstay in Colorado sports. For better or worse, the Rockies will remain as the city's professional baseball team. Their on-field performance is riddled with mediocrity, yet the few fireworks of star players and a World Series birth keep enough fans in the stands and aid in pumping money into local neighborhoods mainly via the food and drink industry. The Lower Downtown district has transformed from a mining settlement, to a skid row and back to a popular sports and nighttime area of the city. The revitalization effort to keep the neighborhood filled with more consumers and less criminals has turned LoDo into a safer and more enjoyable place to visit, though violence stemming from the bar and club scene still remains a problem. Five Points underwent restoration efforts as well. Their challenge is to renew old buildings that were once highly profitable establishments such as the Rossonian Hotel while still attempting to provide affordable housing for its residents and to maintain its historically diverse culture and demography. If successful, Five Points would return to a flourished and once again highly respectable area in the city to dine, listen to Jazz and

live. The Colorado Rockies aid in bridging the gap between urban revitalization attempts and providing adequate and sometimes extravagant sporting facilities for a city's professional sports teams. If the Rockies remain Denver's baseball team, look for the continued presence of people milling through the streets of LoDo and Five Points day and night.

## Chapter 6- Conclusion

The addition of professional sports teams in Denver has, without doubt, altered its reputation as a city. Different downtown areas that have, and continue to house the stadiums and arenas of these teams are affected in that these neighborhoods are, in many instances, revitalized. It is *critical* to note it is not solely the efforts of these sports teams' (Broncos, Avalanche, Nuggets & Rockies) home stadiums/arenas that altered these neighborhoods. For Denver, it has been a local effort through such governmental organizations as the Denver Urban Renewal Authority and grassroots movements that have ensured the positive renewal of downtown areas as well as the preservation of historical buildings also in those neighborhoods. Some districts have transformed completely such as Auraria. Once a historic ethnic neighborhood in the middle of Denver; Auraria is now the higher education centerpiece to the city and one of the popular entertainment districts of Denver. The detriment of completely transforming a district leads to large amounts of displacement for those earlier residents of a neighborhood as what occurred in Auraria. Other neighborhoods such as the Central Business District and LoDo have preserved more of their historical roots, in keeping industrial buildings intact, but have added more uses for these buildings, whether it was housing, offices, retail stores or restaurant and bar establishments. Other neighborhoods such as Sun Valley are still in their infancy in revitalizing their neighborhood. This neighborhood has focused its efforts to creating a more environmentally friendly area and utilizing mixed-income housing. Walking the tightrope of ensuring that current residents of a neighborhood such as Sun Valley are able to remain living there while other more

expensive housing options also are available is the difficult priority of such districts moving forward.

The addition of professional sports in Denver and the construction of their stadiums has become a positive secondary consequence of the renovation of older neighborhoods. Professional sports franchises/owners are first and foremost a business. Their goal is to maximize profits and, hopefully, though not exclusively it seems, to also produce the best possible product on the field/court to ensure the most victories possible. Owners however are in the business for their own benefit firstly, using “corporate skyboxes, personal seat licenses, and exclusive rights to parking fees, subsidies, and sales of food, drink, and clothing” endeavors to fatten their own pocketbooks.<sup>1</sup> This does not, by any means, combat the growing wealth inequality gap in the United States. At the same time however, if residents are going to continue to consume the professional sports team product (and everything it controls) these franchises will continue to grow and become more powerful.

Though professional sports franchises often appear to be greedy businesses, any sports fan would surely want professional sports teams in their cities. Aside from being a large entertainment for the masses, professional sports teams evoke an exceeding amount of civic pride for a city. The term ‘big-league’ city comes to mind when assessing a city such as Denver. This naming refers to the perception that Denver is considered a widely-known and respected city because of the publicity and success of its big four professional sports teams. This type of reputation plays a role in younger generations migrating to Denver. There are other factors of course that are more incentives for people to migrate to Denver, such as its legalization of marijuana, which is why 1/3 of newcomers to the



state have moved to Denver in 2014 according to Kim Easton, the director and CEO of Urban Peak, a non-profit organization that seeks to house and assist homeless people from the ages of 15-24.<sup>2</sup> These others factors are also important to study when determining the trends of the changing population of Denver. It seems as though both professional sports teams and legal marijuana are here stay in Colorado.

It is interesting phenomena how sports fans of potentially different backgrounds and belief systems cooperate with one another because they have the same goal in seeing their team win, similar to the actual teams' goal. The attraction to a sports team has the ability to break social barriers and unite people who otherwise possibly have nothing else in common. Denver is particularly viewed as a Broncos city. TV viewership ratings have yielded high amounts of Denver metro and state residents watching the Broncos play on Sundays. The continued consumption of sports franchises and their professional sport league affiliates will result in the continued expansion of an already multi-billion dollar industry. The landscape of Denver is one fueled by a changing downtown area through revitalization efforts and the continued presence of the Broncos, Avalanche, Nuggets and Rockies will continue to hopefully polish the city's image as an attractive and enjoyable place to live.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1

Three years before the AFL-NFL merger, the teams only played each other in the Super Bowl, the final game of the playoffs. Here is a photo of the logo of the first Super Bowl played in 1967.

Source: Google Images

Figure 2

John Elway, the legendary Denver quarterback who led the Broncos to five Super Bowls and two Super Bowl victories.

Source: Google Images

# First World Championship Game AFL vs NFL

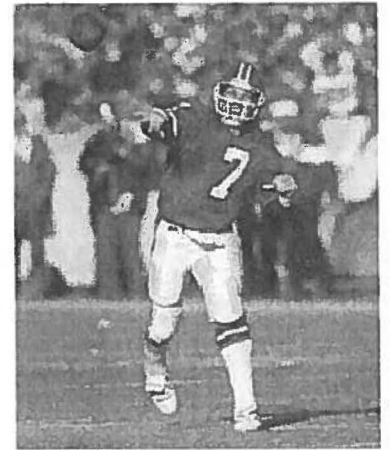


Figure 3

This decorating for the 2006 Broncos season of Larimer Square in Downtown Denver demonstrates the city's commitment to support the franchise

Source: Google Images

Figure 4

The Quebec Nordiques (left) were turned into the Colorado Avalanche (right) prior to the 1995 season.

Source: Google Images



Figure 5

An aerial view of the Auraria Higher Education Campus located in the Auraria neighborhood in Denver

Source: Google Images

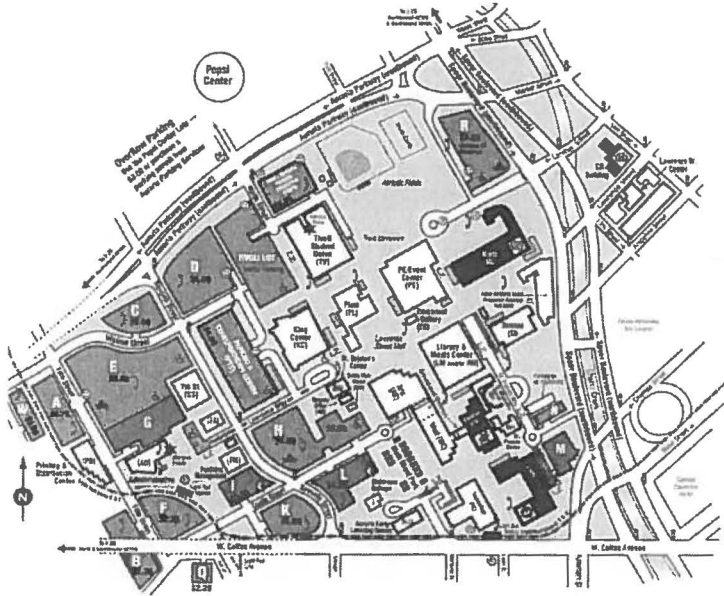


Figure 6

The Tivoli Brewery now serves as the Student Union building for the Auraria Higher Education campus in Denver

Source: *Denver Post*

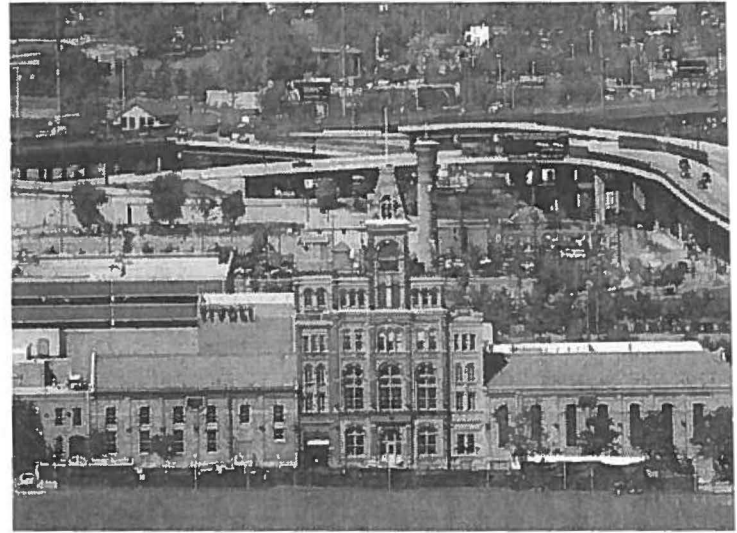


Figure 7

The Denver Rockets' Logo under owner Bill Ringsby. A market ploy by Ringsby to promote his trucking company.

Source: Google Images



Figure 8

The Denver Neighborhood of Sun Valley, in Red, located East of Interstate 25, West of Federal Boulevard between 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Source: Google Images

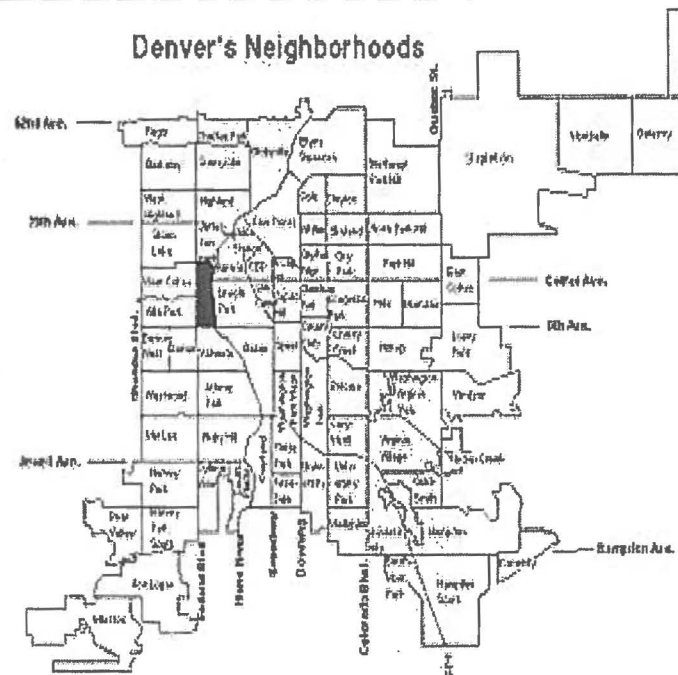


Figure 9

An image showing proposed changes to the Sun Valley neighborhood includes the “stadium festival street” along Lower Colfax in front of Sports Authority Field. (Provided by city and county of Denver)

Source: Denver Post



Figure 10

A picture of the Humidor located at Coors Field. The Humidor keeps the baseballs more moist and dense

Source: Google Images

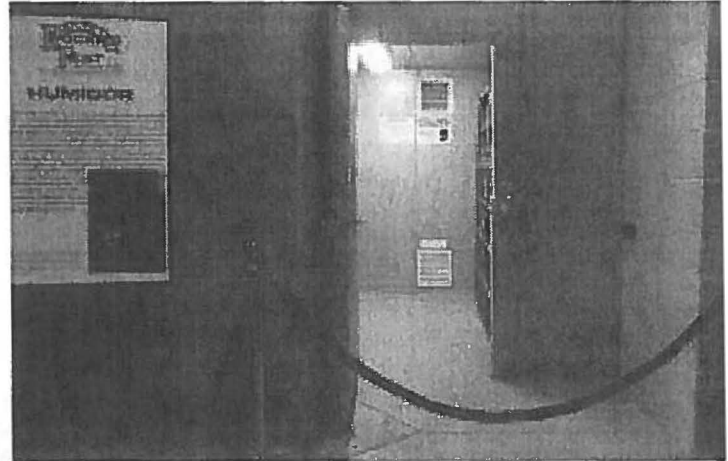


Figure 11

A map of Denver’s Neighborhoods. LoDo is located in the Union Station neighborhood, north of Auraria, south of Five Points and west of the Central Business District.

Source: Google Images



Figure 12

Coors Field, located at 20<sup>th</sup> and Blake. Coors Field is located at the border of the LoDo and Five Points neighborhoods

Source: Google Images



## Notes

### Chapter 1

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<sup>2</sup> Gerlad Gems, Linda Borish and Gertrud Pfister. *Sports in American History: From Colonization to Globalization* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2008), 39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Allen Guttman. *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia Univeristy Press, 1978), 138.

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<sup>13</sup> See Figure 1.

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<sup>15</sup> Whiteside. *Colorado: A Sports History*, 254.

<sup>16</sup> Larry Zimmer. *Denver Broncos Stadium Stories: Colorful Tales of the Orange and Blue*, (Guildford: The Globe Pequot Press, 2004), 9.

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<sup>20</sup> See Figure 2.

<sup>21</sup> .500 refers to winning percentage of a team that wins half its games. For instance, an NFL team with 8 wins and 8 losses would yield a .500 record, or 50% winning percentage.

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## Chapter 4

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>25</sup> Nate LeBoutillier. *The NBA: A History of Hoops- The Story of the Denver Nuggets*, (Mankato: Creative Paperbacks), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 15.

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<sup>28</sup> Whiteside. *Colorado: A Sports History*, 329.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 329-330.

<sup>31</sup> Funding Universe. "Denver Nuggets History." Accessed May 12, 2015.

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<sup>33</sup> LeBoutillier. *The NBA: A History of Hoops- The Story of the Denver Nuggets*, 29.

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## Chapter 5

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<sup>17</sup> Whiteside. *Colorado: A Sports History*, 353.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 357.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Bob Kravitz. *Mile High Madness: A Year with the Colorado Rockies*, (New York: Times Books, 1994), 12.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Whiteside. *Colorado: A Sports History*, 392.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 393.

<sup>39</sup> Dater. *100 Things Rockies Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die*, 221.

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<sup>41</sup> Kravitz. *Mile High Madness: A Year with the Colorado Rockies*, 245.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 244.

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<sup>45</sup> Dater. *100 Things Rockies Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die*, 221.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 61.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 100.

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<sup>51</sup> Mike Oz. "Todd Helton: The \$160 million baseball star who got a DUI going to buy lottery tickets." Available from the Yahoo Sports website. <http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/mlb-big-league-stew/todd-helton-160-million-baseball-star-got-dui-210547533--mlb.html>. Accessed July 16, 2015. 2/7/2013.

<sup>52</sup> Whiteside. *Colorado: A Sports History*, 392.

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<sup>54</sup> Dater. *100 Things Rockies Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die*, 44.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>56</sup> Up until 2012, four teams made up each League in the playoffs. If two teams were tied for the Wild Card spot, a one game playoff would commence. The current format takes two Wild Card teams that have the one game play-in.

<sup>57</sup> Dater. *100 Things Rockies Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die*, 25.

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## Chapter 6

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