A History - -
Colorado Flower Growers
And It’s People

By Dick Kingman
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INTRODUCTION

The following history of the carnation business in Colorado is a compilation of almost a century of notes, minutes, conversations, correspondence and any available information which tell the story of the lives of many men and women in this industry.

The carnation producers give credit to Colorado's climate, growth and geographical location for the success of the flower, but the industry was founded and developed by people who had the wisdom, tenacity and leadership to produce a product which carries a national reputation.

This story follows the industry from its early days in the 1880s to the present, more than one hundred years. The information available, in documentary form, is extremely limited for the very early years. In many instances some greenhouses are now in the third and fourth generation ownership, and these later growers are to be commended for continuing the traditions and improving the practices which are used today.

This book is separated into two sections. The first contains primarily history of the industry, while the second is an attempt to use as much family history as was available.

Names and specific greenhouse locations are used, and any omissions of either is not intentional. A great deal of cooperation was offered and appreciated. We have included much detail in both sections to show the development of family and business operations, and the only way to do this was to mention many members of families. Continuity had to be shown as much as possible.
It is customary in a publication of this kind to dedicate it to one particular person. This will not be done. The history of the Colorado greenhouse industry will be dedicated to all those individuals who have so faithfully and unselfishly dedicated themselves and their resources to support the growth of this industry in Colorado through group action. My personal thanks to all those who contributed something to make this possible.

If anyone comments that the history needed to be written, and a compliment were offered, I would simply repeat what John James Audubon said, "I stand on the shoulder of giants."

Dick Kingman

*****
THE CARNATION

The Carnation, Dianthus Caryophyllus, is native to southern Europe, as found in a wild state, growing outside and blooming in the warm summer months. The history of the flower itself dates as far back as 300 B.C. and was given its genetic name of Dianthus, from the Greek Caryon, meaning nut, and Phyllon, meaning leaf, was undoubtedly taken from the name of the clove tree (Caryophyllus aromaticus) because of the clove fragrance. The common name, carnation, is perhaps derived from the Latin carnis, flesh, and refers to the flesh-pink colored flower of the original type.

The English name, Carnation, has no particular meaning, but perhaps comes from the "Coronation", indicating great favor with royalty for events which required splendor and dignity. If the flower as formed did not appeal to them, the calyx was then split either with a penknife or scissors. Barbers of the day were about the only tradesmen with sharp tools, and it is reported many of them spent as much time shaving carnation edges as they did arranging the elaborate wigs so evident then.

According to historical records the flesh-colored flower gained stature in each century. By 1890 it had achieved considerable success, making itself socially acceptable for its spicy fragrance and precious good looks.

President William McKinley, during his Congressional campaign in 1876, popularized the red or scarlet carnation by designating Carnation Day in his home state of Ohio in honor of his birthday,
January 29. This definitely assisted Julia Ward Howe, author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," who began in 1872 in Boston to establish an annual observation for her mother. This was picked up by Anna Jarvis, the Philadelphia spinster who insisted people should not send flowers, candy or cards to their mothers. She said it was a time for meaningful remembrance, not store-bought gestures. Miss Jarvis started on the version of Mother's Day in 1906 in honor of her late mother, Mrs. Anna Reese Jarvis. Her patent office registration reads: "Second Sunday in May: Mother's Day." On May 8, 1914 Mother's Day became a national day by act of Congress, and in 1915 President Woodrow Wilson was authorized to proclaim the national observance each year.

Although not officially designated, the carnation was generally accepted as the flower with which to honor your mother. A strong influence toward this was made by John Wanamaker, the well-known Philadelphia merchant who one year bought 20,000 carnations to give to his customers.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE COLORADO CARNATION INDUSTRY

The carnation industry in Colorado started after the Gold Rush Days.

America was a new country, and Colorado was an outpost, known to those who migrated from European countries as the place to find fame and fortune in the richness of metals. As we know, not all found a vein at Cripple Creek or Central City or anywhere else, so they staked their claims in other endeavors. Denver in those days had no irrigation water, except that which could be drawn from the Platte River. In 1872 the city built an irrigation ditch to bring water from the Platte River Canyon into the city. Portions of this ditch are still evident in Washington Park, a reminder of Denver's arid and barren past. It is known that this ditch, and the availability of water for irrigation was the start of the greenhouse industry in the state.

Land cultivators who had come from Europe, found the brisk climate and bright, sunny days ideal for growing vegetables and cut flowers in greenhouses and irrigated plots. The result was a bustling floral industry with approximately 400,000 square feet of greenhouse glass by 1900.

The rich virgin soils of the region, the pure mineral-free irrigation water and bright sunshine worked wonders in producing quality floral crops.
Early growers soon found that carnations especially prospered in the high altitude climate with warm, sunny days and cool invigorating nights. Little by little, crop production was thrown more and more into carnations because of the size, vigor, and beauty of the flowers. A majority of the production was centered around Denver, but Colorado Springs was found to be equally suitable as a growing area, and a substantial number of greenhouses were constructed in the Colorado Springs area.

The first greenhouse in Denver was built in 1891 on a site near 7th and Larimer. This was constructed by the Treats Estate, which was English, for the purpose of raising vegetables for home use. It was a flue-type greenhouse, about six feet wide and sixty feet long. A fire box at one end of a tunnel beneath the benches heated the house.

When the first carnations were grown only a few varieties were available. Several well-known ones of the times were: Day Break Pink; Carthage, a muddy red; Laddie, a pink; C.W. Wells, a dark pink; and a red named Red Spectrum. The plants, set in May or June outside, were transplanted in late summer in the greenhouse. The plants, about 12 inches high at maturity, had three to five flowers per stem. They were contained in a metal wire cylinder about eight inches in diameter. When transplanted they fought to survive because of the heat. Fine dust and manure about four inches deep on all streets and roads was collected, thrown by the handful on top of the greenhouse and hosed down for shade.

Growing in these years was difficult and marketing presented another problem. It was done on a hit/miss basis with each greenhouse doing its
own marketing, mostly through a sales outlet at the greenhouse. The retail shops in business at that time purchased from the greenhouse and deliveries were made by horse-drawn covered carriages. In the winter charcoal heaters in the wagons kept the temperature above the freezing point.

Business flourished with the residents of Denver's tenderloin district. Mattie Silks and other famous characters frequently received floral offerings. Whenever one of the ladies of easy virtue shuffled off this mortal soil, a great desire on the part of her sisters in the profession to see her off into the next world properly lead to lavish floral tributes, both in quality and quantity. In purchasing for such an occasion, Mattie Silks flipped the pages of the book of floral designs to select something appropriate, when one of the girls accompanying her chanced upon a cross with Easter lilies. She remarked, "What a beautiful thing that would be for the funeral." Another girl, also on the buying tour, laughed boisterously and said, "Hell no! That wouldn't do at all for where she's going!"

A number of greenhouses were built in the nineties, many for growing vegetables and plants, when it was discovered that the carnation adapted extremely well to this climate. It is difficult to name the very first carnation range, as glasshouses were readily converted from one crop to another -- violets to vegetables to fresh flowers. But it is known that the glasshouses at Riverside Cemetery at 52nd and Brighton Blvd., Mauff Floral Company in the 1200 block of Logan St., established in 1880, Colfax Floral at East Colfax and Josephine, Park Floral at 17th and York, and Curtis Park Floral at 34th and Downing were some of the first. The Colfax houses, just west of the present site of
East High School, were on land leased from the school section a number of years prior to the construction of East High in 1922.

The name Park associated with other names will appear many times in the pages that follow. It became prominent first in the industry as Park Floral Company in east Denver. This company was started in 1879 by John A. Valentine, a realtor, who later became recognized as a national leader in the floral business and left his mark in many ways. Valentine was credited with being one of the founders of the floral order systems by wire. Orders by wire from other cities were filled in reality rather than by description. The requesting florist would order the number of pieces required for a particular event, and that number of pieces, made up, would be shipped to meet the deadline for the occasion.

Valentine, along with William Penn of Boston is also credited with coining the phrase or slogan which has been so prominent in advertising the product: "Say it With Flowers." John Valentine drew up the first rules and regulations outlining the expected conduct of members of Florist TransWorld Delivery Association at a national meeting of the organization in Rochester, N.Y. in 1910. Portions of these rules were later adopted as the Constitution and By-Laws of FTDA. In 1916 the association honored him at a national convention in Chicago for his efforts. He died in an automobile accident in Jarr Canyon, Douglas County, Colorado, October 5, 1917 at age 58.

Other early ranges during this time included Elitch's Garden range at W. 39th & Tennyson, which was begun in 1880. Mud Lake greenhouse located in Mt. Harris, now Westminster. The actual location
J.A. Valentine, Denver, was instrumental in the formation of Florists Telegraph Delivery and served as the first president from 1910 to 1912.
is near Hidden Lake, and the site of Frank Galasso's present greenhouse. Also, the August Schenkle place at 29th & Lowell; the Carl Haenselman, Sr. in the Englewood-Littleton area; Ben Iammarman place, called City Floral at Colfax & Rosemary Streets, which was later Ed Kornfeld's place; and the Charlie Benson operation at 2600 So. Grant, which was later to belong to the Crowley Brothers. These are only a few of the greenhouses built in the years around the turn of the century.

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CHAPTER II

THE SELLERS

As production increased in Colorado, there had to follow a more orderly system of marketing. Around 1900, shipping to a trade area was limited to Pikes Peak Floral in Colorado Springs, Park Floral of Denver, and several other growers in the Denver region.

N.A. Benson, an immigrant from Sweden and a progressive grower, was revered by some as the godfather of the carnation bonanza in Colorado. He discovered early that Colorado had the climate that most states did not for growing a quality carnation. He took advantage of this situation with authority by standardizing prices and insisting on quality. In August, 1909 across the street from Home Public Market, he started Denver Wholesale Florists in the basement of the Wyn Hotel, one of the foundation corners establishing the marketing of flowers, and selling practices as we know them today. Benson incorporated Denver Wholesale Florists with Fred Hall, W.C. Walter, Ben Boldt Sr., Emil Glauber, C.F. Maler and Lyle Waterbury. Within two years after the formation of this company, Benson had bought all the stock from the original stockholders, except C.F. Maler. The Benson range was located on the northwest corner of Hampden and Santa Fe, and the Maler range at 29th and Perry.

By 1905 some shipping had begun to a trade area, and when Denver Wholesale Florist Co., under the direction of N.A. Benson opened for business, the marketing of Colorado Carnations took shape in an organized system of grower to wholesaler to retailer and to customer.
Denver Wholesale Florists operated at the Wyn Hotel until 1917, when it moved across the street to the basement of the Home Public Market, now the location of the Denver Post. The company remained here for 29 years, and began operations at 1090 Cherokee on January 1, 1946, an historic date for DWF. As it moved into its new site it changed in many ways, most importantly it now operated under new ownership becoming a grower-owned company with
stock purchased by 33 Denver growers, many of whom are still around today. Denver Wholesale did not make another move until March, 1967 to its present location at 48th & Dahlia Streets.

One of the early shippers, if not the first out-of-state carnation shipper, was Pikes Peak Greenhouses, Inc., in Colorado Springs. In the early 1900s, J. Edward Johnson of the Pikes Peak Floral Co., began shipping into the neighboring states of Utah, Texas and Kansas. These were believed to be the first out-of-state shipments of flowers. Pikes Peak Greenhouses, or Pikes Peak Floral as it was then known, was a wholesale, retail and production enterprise. Today Pikes Peak is engaged in the production, shipping and wholesaling of cut flowers, and in the early 1980s opened a new concept in retailing under the name of Flower Stop.

The production facilities consisted of three separate ranges, Pikes Peak Range on Nichols Blvd. behind the wholesale house, Columbia Street Range on E. Columbia, and Burghard range on E. Fontanero Street. Another separate range is the former Davis Bros. rose operation in Lafayette, purchased by Pikes Peak in 1975, and is a total rose growing range. Pikes Peak Wholesale later expanded with a branch in Denver on Olive Street near the airport, and a branch in Houston, Texas.

In the late teens, production had increased tremendously in the Denver area. A number of hot-house vegetable growers converted to carnation growing. Cut flower shipments from this area were still limited because of the transportation available at that time. As the "iron rail horse" gained momentum and speed, the ability to move produce and cut flowers to other markets increased. Others who marketed flowers saw the opportunity to
Red Sims brighten a dining-car table aboard the Denver Zephyr Train.

expand and become a part of the total distribution picture. As marketing developed, the carnation gained prominence in Colorado along with dahlias, marigolds, chrysanthemums, and asters which were in demand by retailers. The Florist Review of August 27, 1914, carried advertisements of several Colorado shippers of cut flowers.
In the fall of 1917, Denver growers and florists prepared for the second annual flower show west of the Mississippi. Several shows had been held in the east, and the Denver Society of Ornamental Horticulturists staged a show October 24-26, 1917 at the Denver Auditorium. Large crowds attended the show. Exhibits were displayed by: Mauff Flower Co., Boldt-Lundy Flower Shop, C.F. Maler, L.A. Kintzele, George Brenkert, Cartwright Floral Co., and T.H. Timmer and Son. Carnations, like roses, were not at their best at the time of the show. George Brenkert of Washington Park Floral, showed a vase of 100 of his new carnation "Denver". The carnation "Denver" was a sport of Mrs. C.W. Ward, and was a shell-pink color. This was the first time this new variety was shown publicly, and reportedly attracted much attention. George Brenkert later entered this variety in the National Show in Washington, D.C. in 1921, and won a bronze medal against the two most well-known varieties of the time, Laddie and Matchless. This was, perhaps, the beginning of Colorado's long standing reputation of national award winners.

In about 1932, the third annual international flower show west of the Mississippi, was scheduled to be in Omaha. Shippers and growers were enthusiastic about this, and decided to send a contingent of their own with hundreds of flowers to display and show to the whole world. The committee was comprised of Bill Kash, Edgar Nieman, Les Davis, and Cliff Mann. They shipped flowers in advance, and the four committee members left on the evening train for Omaha, due to arrive early the next morning. It seemed logical to start a poker game. This went on all night, and you could determine how much a guy was betting, or had bet, from the amount of coal dust that gathered on his
They checked into the hotel, cleaned up, and headed for the auditorium where the flower show was to be held. They found that the flowers had been left near a kitchen in the hotel, where natural gas had leaked, and all the carnations went to sleep. Therefore, there was no display from Colorado at the Omaha show that year.

In 1919, the "carnation men" met in Cleveland, Ohio, because this was the first meeting after the Great War, and the city was chosen because it was within an overnight's ride for four-fifths of all florists in the United States. The "wheel horses" in the industry, from east and west, attended the meeting. It was further described as a meeting "of a band of quiet, earnest men actuated by an interest in common, and the wish to keep abreast of the latest developments in the business of growing carnation blooms for market." At that time, the American Carnation Society was an affiliate of the Society of American Florists, and had the reputation of being one of the most active bodies of SAF.

The Cleveland meeting was attended by only one Denver man, Adam Kohankle, who had been sent there by George Brenkert to handle the entry of the "Denver" carnation, which had been introduced at the Denver Horticulture Show two years earlier. This entry placed second in the "Any Light Pink" category. Carnation growers attending this meeting were not optimists, but enthusiasts. The concept prevailed that the carnation had at last come into its own, and right had triumphed. Prices for the carnations at this time, varied from $4.00 to $8.00 per hundred, and the Ruth Baur variety out of Indiana, was selling at $12.00 per 100, or $100 per 1,000.
George Brenkert and his flower delivery truck. Note flower decorations on the horse's head and bridle.
The reputation of Colorado Carnations had also come into its own. Growers were not only civic-minded, but promotionally oriented. In March, 1921, 100 specimens of the new carnation "Denver" were sent to the White House in Washington for Mrs. Warren G. Harding on Inauguration Day. They were furnished by George Brenkert. Both President-Elect Harding and Mrs. Harding loved all kinds of flowers. On Inauguration Day the new President wore a Colorado Carnation in his lapel. He carried on the tradition of President William McKinley, for whom Carnation Day and Carnation Week were named, the last week of January. President McKinley always wore a fresh carnation in his lapel during his term of office, and had fresh carnations delivered to the executive offices daily. He often gave his lapel carnation as a souvenir to people who took part in official ceremonies. His birthday, as has been noted earlier, was January 29, and this day is still recognized as official Carnation Day.

In 1919, the Fifteenth Census in the history of the United States was taken, and the U.S. Department of Commerce reported under the title of "Horticultural Specialties" the value of sales for floral crops in Colorado was $1,145,000. As of 1981, the U.S. Department of Agriculture figure on a comparable basis, was $31,827,000. The 1919 figure was significant, but doubled by the time the next census was taken in 1930. It is easy to understand with this volume of business that there were only five wholesale shippers in Colorado in the first few years of the 1920s. These included Park Floral Co., which was shipping its own, Elitch Gardens Co., shipping and selling for several growers, Associated Growers Flower & Supply Co.,
Davis Brothers Wholesale Florists Co., and Denver Wholesale Florists.

Such names as Park Floral-Elitch, and others were prominent grower-sellers. The Neff Brothers -- Zeal and Larry -- ran a floral wholesale operation at 12th St. and Arapahoe for about ten years. They closed shortly after the co-op was formed. Cliff Mann, known by most for his association with the Cliff Mann Floral School, operated a wholesale house with Earl Benson (no relation to the other Bensons) for about two years. Cliff Mann had worked for Denver Wholesale Florists from 1927-29, and had also worked for Associated Flower Growers, Inc. Earl Benson, a gladioli grower, needed someplace to market his product. He approached Cliff and they formed a partnership which included an old Dodge truck, some packing boxes and wrapping paper which Benson owned. The agreement was to use the material at hand, and the experience of Cliff Mann.

This became known as Rocky Mountain Wholesale, located at 16th and Boulder near Olinger's Mortuary. The partnership didn't last long, and Cliff bought out Earl for $750, which included a mortgage on the Dodge truck for $450, with $20 a month payments. This being the early 30s in the midst of the depression years, things were downright tough, not only for flower growers, but for everyone. A lot of bartering went on, and it was not uncommon to trade flowers with Sigman Packing Company for meat, flowers for coffee and donuts, and occasionally a trade with the Blue Goose. The Blue Goose was a well-known watering and mix establishment down on West 7th Avenue, having the reputation of never closing its doors during the prohibition years. You simply went in some other door than the front.
Cliff operated Rocky Mountain Wholesale until 1932, then going back to Associated and from there to DWF, where he stayed until 1946. In that year he and his wife, Ellen, started Cliff Mann Floral School, which gained a national reputation for training young people to be designers and shop owners. Cliff Mann was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in Colorado Flower Growers Assn. at the annual meeting held at the Adams County Fairgrounds in Henderson, Colorado, June 24, 1971. He was again singularly honored by Florists TransWorld Delivery Association at their annual convention held in Denver in the summer of 1976. Cliff and Ellen served the industry well in Colorado. Ellen passed away June 15, 1984.

Elitch Garden Company, one of the oldest companies of the early sellers, had been associated with the flower growing business for many years. John and Mary Elitch came here from San Francisco in 1880. John Elitch opened a restaurant called "Tortoni" on Arapahoe Street in downtown Denver. They bought an acreage in northwest Denver to grow vegetables for their eating establishment. The P.T. Barnum circus wintered some of its animals around Sloans Lake, and in the Spring as the new crop of circus animal babies came on, Mr. Barnum gave the extras to John Elitch. This is why on May 1, 1890, they opened Elitch Zoological Gardens. John died in San Francisco in March, 1891, and Mary decided to carry on their dream alone. She did for several years, and then married Thomas D. Long in 1900.

Long died in 1906, and again Mary Elitch Long was forced to carry on by herself. The theatre built a good reputation, but it was difficult to operate an enterprise as large as it had grown, so in 1916 John Mulvihill secured ownership of the
firm, then owned by a group of Denver businessmen. Mulvihill and his son-in-law, Arnold B. Gurtler, Sr., were responsible for turning Elitch's into what it is today — a world famous entertainment center and recreation park. Mr. Mulvihill died in 1930, and was followed in the business by Arnold Gurtler, Sr., and later by his two sons, Arnold Jr., and John Mulvihill Gurtler.

An early floral delivery truck used around 1910.
The greenhouses located at 38th & Tennyson, were in connection with the park, and handy for a number of growers in the northwest part of the city to gather their flowers for cutting and shipping. A number of prominent industry names were associated with the company as growers and shippers for a number of years. The retail end of the business also emerged from this company as Elitch-Long Flower Store, owned by Mary Elitch and her second husband, Thomas Long. The Elitch Garden Co. has not been in the wholesale flower business for some time, as it merged with the Park Floral Co. to form the Park Elitch Co. in 1938.

Park Floral Co., another pioneer in the industry, has a history that spans more than 100 years. The original Park Floral was started by John A. Valentine, born in Keosauqua, Iowa June 23, 1859. He began operations at 17th & York Streets in east Denver in 1879, and merged with Colfax Floral Co. in 1890 to form Park Floral Co. The firm also owned a store listed by location as 1706 Broadway, the site of Park Floral until 1974, when the total property was replaced by downtown development. This building, with stairwells on each side of the lobby, was built for display of potted plants with the wholesale and shipping operation in the basement.

Two other major stockholders in Park Floral Co. were Bolivar Ellis Gillis and Edgar Potts Neiman. Gillis came to Denver from Victoria, N.Y. in 1891, and was associated with Mr. Valentine for many years. Following Valentine's untimely death in October, 1917, the directors on November 1, 1917 elected Gillis, former vice-president, to the office of president. He served as an officer of this company for 40 years, and died in April, 1957. Edgar P. Neiman continued in the office of
A brochure of Park-Elitch showing some of their new colors.
secretary. Neiman arrived in Denver in 1904 from a turkey ranch in the Philadelphia-Pottstown, Pennsylvania area. His middle name was a family name associated with the founders of the city of Pottstown. He was active in the company until his death in June, 1951.

In 1923, Park Floral moved because of other construction in the vicinity of Josephine and East Colfax. The officers relocated the ranges to Hampden and Santa Fe on the border of a village called Petersburg, where they remain today.

To follow the history of this company, it is necessary to jump two decades into the Spring of 1938, when another grower-owned wholesale house started operations. This new conglomerate was Park-Elitch Wholesale Florists.

It began as a merger of three groups: Park Floral Co., Elitch Gardens Wholesale Co., and the Colorado Flower Market. The first directors were John Roberts, E.P. Neiman and Arnold Gurtler. Neiman became president, and following his death, Dick Braun assumed the presidency, serving for 12 years with Walter Lehrer as manager, and Louis Kintzele heading the supply department. It should be pointed out that only the wholesale operations of these three entities merged, while the stores and production continued under the companies. Originally, the following growers shipped to the Park-Elitch Co.: Dan Braun, Elitch Gardens, R.I. LaSasso, E. Brown, A. Zimmerman, C. Graul, B. Leonard, Cherry Hills, Adams City, Oliner, Louis Kintzele, Leo Hollberg, A. Konecny and Fred Lehman.

It operated at 1444 Wazee in downtown Denver, more commonly called the Old Elephant Corral. This name came from the fact that the Sells-Floto Circus housed their animals there in the off-season. It included a large corral used to stable horses.
and teams when ranchers and farmers came to town to
do their monthly or winter shopping. It later
became the location of Evergreen Specialty Co., and
still visible in the 70s were marks on the second
floor wall showing the flower prices for that
period. It is presently a modernized office
building which blends in well with the lower
downtown renovation.

Park-Elitch Wholesale Florists Co. operated
for 27 years, and on October 1, 1965, the firm
closed the door, and discontinued doing business.
At the time it closed, it was at 1451 So. Acoma St.

Now back to Park Floral Company. A
progressive company, the owners advertised in
national trade papers in the early teens. Their
motto was "Mile-High Plants at Sea-Level Prices."
The ads carried information on shipping points:
Galveston in 45 hours - $4.25 per hundred; Fort
Worth in 33 hours - $3.00 per hundred; Oklahoma
City in 28 hours - $3.00 per hundred. By
comparison, today's air shipping to any of these
locations takes only a few hours.

Park Floral, as a growing range and shipper,
still operates at the West Hampden address in
Englewood. In early 1985 notification was given
that Urban Renewal would, within a year, take over
the property, and Park Floral would be forced to
move.

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CHAPTER III

THE LATER SELLERS

From the early beginnings as combination retail florists and growers, the flower business in Colorado gradually expanded in all areas. For approximately three decades the growers prospered, the wholesalers satisfied a need of the industry by handling the products for the grower to the mutual benefit of both, and two separate entities evolved -- growing and wholesaling, each performing a specialized function for the industry.

This section covers a number of later sellers or flower marketers. It is difficult to list them in chronological order, because they did not come into the picture in that order, but rather on a basis of short time -- long life or vice versa.

In the summer of 1971, Davis Brothers Florists, Inc., at 4725 Independence St., celebrated its 50th anniversary. This half century of progress in the florist industry started in the early 20s by R.T. Davis, Jr., from whom has descended the present generation of Davis boys, later owners of Davis Brothers Florists. R.T. Davis, Jr. married Lucy Wilmore (1890-1978), the daughter of W.W. Wilmore, who owned and operated Wilmore Nurseries at 38th & Wadsworth in Wheat Ridge, the present location of Wilmore's. R.T. and Lucy set up their own place of business across the street. They had one son, Melrose W. Davis.

R.T., Jr. had originally started growing cut flowers in the fields as early as 1910. He and his father had shipped field gladiolii to eastern markets for a number of years. They were shipped in shoe cartons, a wooden box that came packed with
40 to 50 pairs of shoes in shoe boxes. This crop of field-grown stock ended at frost time, and in 1920 R.T., Jr. started to build the steel and glass houses, two of them 35 x 150 feet, at 37th & Jay Streets. Upon completion he called his two brothers, L.E. "Lee" and J.R. "John" back from Montana and Arizona, where they had been mining, to run the range and wholesale operation. R.T., Jr. decided to return to field growing. This was the origin of the name Davis Brothers.

Jack Davis, Cousins Keith Davis, Kent Davis and Ron Davis, pictured with Mel Davis, uncle of Jack and father of the twins and Ron.
A progressive company, steady growth was planned from the beginning. Three years later in 1924, there was more expansion, and by 1929 three new ranges had been built. This progress caused more growers to consign their flowers to Davis Brothers. Davis was Grower No. 1, R.E. Hill, Grower No. 2, Harry Forrest, No. 3, Jack Bement, No. 4, Weirick Bros. No. 7, and Homer Pearson, No. 11.

Growers in those years shifted houses as they do today, and in the late 1920s, Davis Bros. shipped for 12 to 15 growers. The number varied over the years, and the Davis Bros. Florists built a reputation of being a "quality house." By 1958, they had built four more carnation houses on Jay Street in Wheat Ridge, and between 1967 and 1969, they had completed the new carnation range and rose range at Lafayette.

There is a lot of personal history in the Davis family. John R. Davis had a son, John R. Davis, Jr., and a daughter, Ruth. John, Jr. or Jack, had been raised in the floral business, so in 1956 following the death of his father the previous December, he moved into the management of the wholesale house. Mel Davis, who was Jack's cousin, had three sons: R.T. "Ron", and twins, Keith and Kent. All three of these boys were also raised in the floral life, grew up working in the greenhouses, and after college assumed a role in management of them, and in the wholesale house. Davis Brothers operated out of the 37th & Jay Street address for forty years, and in 1962 moved into a new 37,275 sq. ft. building at 4725 Independence Street.

Jack operated the company with Mel and Mel's three sons for 14 years, and in October, 1970, sold out his interest to them. Again Davis Bros. was a
true Davis Brothers family enterprise.

The new Davis Bros. wholesale operation, by this time had approximately 30 growers consigning their flowers to them, and they had expanded their own operations by opening a new 80,000 sq. ft. rose range in Lafayette, and another small carnation range in the same vicinity.

Bob Echter and Don Rody, owners of Mountain View Wholesale Florists discuss shipping problems.
In the Fall of 1970, some changes started taking place in the shipping end of the carnation business in Colorado. Don Rody, owner of R & S Greenhouses, left Davis Bros. on October 23, 1970, and began shipping on his own. He did this until April, 1971 when he and Bob Echter of Echter Greenhouses in Arvada, another leading Davis Bros. grower, merged to form Rocky Mountain Wholesale Florists. This was not a new name in the business, although it had been dormant for a number of years, having been active in the early 1930s under the ownership of Cliff Mann. This merger of Rody and Echter started the new trend in shipping out of this area.

The new Rocky Mountain Florists had only two growers, Rody and Echter. Frank Galasso came in with them in July, 1971, followed by Charles Tracey in August, and Roy Obluda in October. Later they were to take on Wayne Pearson's two greenhouses, Center Greenhouses and Novacek Greenhouse. In January, 1974, Sam Amato, another large grower of Davis Bros., broke off on his own, and formed Amato Wholesale. He shipped only his own products at this time, but later shipped for his brothers, Jim Amato's Princess Greenhouse, and Amato Bros., owned by Joe and Gene Amato, Joe's son, Joseph G., and Shimada Greenhouse. All of these growers had previously been under contract to Davis Brothers.

About the time Don Rody left Davis Bros., Bob Briggs of Briggs Greenhouses, also left. Bob had just completed a two-year stint as president of Colorado Flower Growers Association. He had been one of the youngest presidents of the association, and had many new ideas on how things could be changed, especially in the marketing area. He felt the methods of marketing had to completely change, and was willing to invest his time, money and
efforts into making those changes. He entered several ventures, some profitable, some not, but came out with a new concept in selling: a garden shop, modernized and located on the greenhouse property. Not new in physical layout, since many greenhouses had a retail shop attached, but the methods used for selling, displaying, promotion and getting the job done, were new. Bob Briggs was an innovator who made some of these things happen.

Later elected as the first Republican County Commissioner in Adams County, he served one four-year term, then was defeated the next time around. He leased the greenhouse, and later sold it to pursue other interests. It was leased for several years, and in July, 1984, was sold to Frank Teti, Jr., and Gary Green, partners in the wholesale operation known as Colorado Gold.

Davis Brothers, by the mid-1970s, had perhaps lost more than three-fourths of their production, and two weeks before Valentine's Day in 1975, the rose range at Lafayette froze completely. This took the entire Valentine's Day production off the market, and undoubtedly was one of the reasons for Davis Bros. to file under Chapter XI of the Federal Bankruptcy Act on October 22, 1975. They had not done any work on the rose range to speak of, since the freeze in February, and eventually closed it completely October 2. The bankruptcy was a serious blow to a company that only four short years previously, had celebrated a half-century of success in the flower business.

The proceedings dragged on and on, with the court destined and determined to keep this company in business. Approximately 16 months later, the confirmation of a plan was adopted by the court to allow Davis Bros. to stay in operation. They could present two options to their creditors: 1) The
creditors could accept 50 percent of the debt over a three-year period without interest. Or, 2) the creditors could accept 66 2/3 percent over a six-year period without interest. The final settlement date by the court was January 27, 1977, and not only the association, but many growers and other wholesalers lost considerable sums of money. It was reported to the membership of CFGA that all the funds past due from Davis Bros. growers, which amounted to several thousands of dollars, was completely wiped off the books.

At the time of the bankruptcy, growers who had been shipping to the Davis Bros. wholesale house for the past two decades, determined they were in jeopardy. Growers still consigning to Davis worried about a complete Chapter XIII Bankruptcy, where they would stand to lose all the monies due from consignments. Consequently, many started to look for new sellers. As mentioned before, changing wholesale houses was not new, growers had been doing it for years. Some had shipped to every house in town and, when things were tough, growers' contracts were treated like stock certificates of former bankrupt silver mining companies.

Several turned to existing houses, and the local industry became fearful of the strength being concentrated into too few strong houses. This resulted in the beginning of a new wholesale house called Mountain View Wholesale Florists, which started in October, 1974. They also began operations in the old Denargo Market, and within a short time moved to a location in the vicinity of 38th Avenue and the Valley Highway at 3445 Fox Street. The principals in this house included Dick Braun, Harry Gobert and George Brinkmann. Dick Braun had, by this time, liquidated all his growing
areas on East Evans Avenue and South Jackson Street.

They started with about seven growers and gradually increased to twelve, later dropping back to as few as six. Eventually, Harry Gobert, the successful owner of Bonnie Brae Florists, a well-established and respected retail shop on South University, and Dick Braun bought out George Brinkmann. George left, and for several years operated his own shipping business under the name of Brinkmann Wholesale Florists. In the Spring of 1985, he again returned to Mountain View Wholesale to head up its shipping section.
CHAPTER IV
MORE EARLY SHIPPERS

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "There's a mighty human side to business when you really get acquainted with the men in it." This quotation appeared in a catalog printed by Associated Growers Flower and Supply Co., located at 1731 Wazee Street in Denver, in 1929. The catalog is a comprehensive listing of all supplies and cut flowers available to customers. It goes into the history of the growers associated with this company, many of whom were leaders in the industry during those years. These gentlemen left their mark in the history of marketing of carnations and other cut flowers from the Colorado area.

One of the outstanding companies which grew for Associated was Kerl Brothers -- Wallace, Waldo and Walter. Wallace Kerl came to Denver in 1907. His first job was as supervisor of landscaping for one of the large cemeteries in Denver. He went to the war, and upon returning he started a greenhouse business in Englewood. Wallace wanted to establish a number of greenhouses. From the small Englewood range he progressively moved to three Denver locations. An active association member, he became president of the growers association in 1949. Both Wallace and Walter received Honorary Life Memberships in the Colorado Flower Growers Association in 1958.
Associated Wholesale located in the 1700 block of Wazee Street.
The first location at 150 S. Madison Street, is now torn down, the second at 301 S. Harrison managed by Waldo, and the third at 4300 E. Exposition Avenue, managed by Walter. The three brothers formed a partnership in the early 1920s, and they continued to enjoy the same success for which the Kerl family seemed destined. The second range at 301 S. Harrison was built by a man named Richman, an uncle of the Kerls. Richman sold to Joseph and Agnes Pigman in 1939, who operated it for many years. In 1958, Frank Kirschner bought the third Kerl range on East Exposition, torn down in 1970. Eventually all the ranges started by the Kerl brothers were sold off. Wallace Kerl, the last of the brothers to survive, passed away in 1981.

Another leader in this company and the industry was George Brenkert, owner of the Washington Park Greenhouses. Brenkert came to Denver around the turn of the century with a rich background of experience in the greenhouse business. After working for other greenhouses for a short time, he soon had the assurance that he could make a success in his own operation. He outgrew the modest greenhouse near Denver University, and acquired the Washington Park Greenhouses, located at 1296 So. Race Street, Washington Park Floral's home for many years, owned and operated by his son, Bud Brenkert.

In August, 1925 the Adams City Greenhouses were built by Charles Franc, Wallace Kerl, George Brenkert, and William Kash. Kash was the manager. He came to this area with experience in growing both carnations and roses at the E.G. Hill Co. of Richmond, Indiana. Before becoming manager of Adams City Greenhouses, he held the same position at the Bright Spot Greenhouse of Denver on the
corner of 4th and Josephine Streets. Harlow Leeper bought the Adams City Greenhouses from the William Kash estate in September, 1962, and operated them under the same name until he sold out May 15, 1973. They were dismantled and torn down in 1974.

George Brenkert with Son, George Brenkert, Jr. in Washington St. greenhouses, 1919.
The Franc Greenhouse was an example of the advantages of specialization, and this range grew roses exclusively. Across the Atlantic in Bohemia, the Franc roses were known many years before they gained a reputation in Colorado. Charles Franc had three sons reared under the influence of the Franc tradition to do one thing well -- grow quality roses. Edward Franc managed growing at his father's range built in 1903, at 301 Harrison, and originally built by Frank Foy and Ralph Gray. Franc bought out Ralph Gray, and later bought out Foy. It was torn down in 1921 and rebuilt, then operated under Franc's ownership until 1943, when it was sold to a Texas firm. They, in turn, sold it to Joe Ferris, who sold it to a furrier in Denver. In 1948, Gilbert Weakland bought it, later turning it over to his son, Roger. Roger then sold it, and operated it under the 3rd Avenue Greenhouses.

Godfrey Franc, another son, was foreman of one rose section of the Adams City Greenhouses, and Rudolph, the third son, worked in marketing and grading for the same company. G.C. "Godfrey" Franc, most well-known to the early growers, ran the G.C. Franc Greenhouses at 3444 S. Emerson in Englewood since 1944. Godfrey gradually changed this rose range to carnations in the late 40s, selling the land to Swedish Hospital in 1971. The range was then leased by Gordon Koon, keeping it as a carnation range, but as it was gradually dismantled, it emerged as a garden center and retail flower shop.

Associated operated until April, 1958, when the owners George "Bud" Brenkert and Wallace Kerl closed the doors. John and Bob Byerly bought some of the equipment in the building, and opened under the name Associated Wholesale Florists.
Charles Franc & Sons' range on South Emerson St. in Englewood. This range was noted for rose growing and is now part of Swedish Hospital.

Walter E. Callaham was originally a grower in this area. He grew field gladioli in Arvada in the early 30s, and at the urging of many retailers and friends, he opened Callaham Wholesale Florists Inc. at 21st & Welton Streets. This was 1953. Both he and his wife, Irma, deeply involved in the advancement of the floral industry, made many valuable contributions. Walter died in the Spring
of 1960. Irma and son, Robert J. Callaham, continued to be active in the service of the company. Robert was manager of the supply department because he had worked and been involved in the company since it opened. Irma died in November, 1976 and all the family stock in the firm went to Bob and his sister, Mary Harward.

Following the death of Callaham this company experienced some difficult times. After several years of losses, serious consideration was given to liquidating the business. On the advice of a bank and some financial advisors, Arthur Wise was engaged to assume management of the corporation. Because of the expert abilities and management techniques of Arthur Wise, Callaham's made a slow turn around, and by the mid-70s was a dominant factor in the wholesale business in Denver. In 1981 Wise took semi-retirement, and turned the company over to Jack Southard, who he had trained to become manager. In 1982, Callaham's moved from their location on Welton Street to the Denargo Market, more than doubling the square footage of the Wholesale house.

In 1980, Bob Callaham also took semi-retirement, and moved to his home in Grand County. He spent his time improving his property and in recreational activities. He died March 31, 1985, leaving Mary Harward as the only Callaham family member with stock in the company. Jack Southard was replaced as manager, and in August, 1985, he opened his own wholesale operation, naming it Jack Southard's Wholesale Florist and Decorative Products at 4900 Acoma Street. Gordon Harward, Mary's husband, became general manager of Callaham's in October, 1985.

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CHAPTER V

"THE ASSOCIATION & COOPERATIVE"

Over a half century ago, February 28, 1928, twenty-seven growers of cut flowers in the Denver area met at the New Manhattan Restaurant, and adopted a concept as old as history itself — "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." They held the meeting to propose the formation of an association of flower growers, whose purpose would be: "That great help would be given each other, and that the trade conditions could be bettered by such an organization." This began the establishment of an association which has prospered under various names for the past 57 years, and in fact closely resembles the objectives and purposes outlined in the present by-laws.

Many names on the rolls of that meeting are still known today. The list is printed because of the significance of that event:

Walter Barth  Ernest Hollberg  R.E. Toothaker
T.H. Binder  Leo Hollberg  Harry Trimmer
Dan Braun  Wallace Kerl  Robert Vogeler
Harold Crowley  C.E. Lambourn  Henry Weiland
Russel Emsbach  Walter Larsen  Alfred Zimmerman
Martin Erickson  W.G. Lehrer  Maynard Weiland
John Ferris  J.T. Roberts  C.H. Newlander
H.W. Forrest  Max Luthi  C.A. Rolin
Chas. Franc  C.L. Richmond
Chas. R. Green  Conrad Lengenfelder
T.H. Trimmer became temporary chairman, and later in the evening those present elected John Roberts as permanent chairman. John Roberts appointed the following committees: Membership, Vigilence, Taxation, Carnation Marketing, Sweet Pea Marketing. It was agreed there would be no by-laws or constitution.

The next meeting was held March 26, and at this time members were assessed one dollar. Thirty-one dollars were collected. At this session the Vigilance Committee reported that Piggly Wiggly stores sold all kinds of flowers at reduced prices, and they warned that this practice was very bad, if not disastrous for the flower business. They passed a resolution "that it be the sense of this meeting that all members, as far as possible, confine their wholesale business to regular flower sales channels." In the early months of the "Association" subjects of mutual interest were discussed. Selling of flowers by the "Pigs" (Piggly Wiggly) was brought up at every meeting, and the minutes at times stated it was difficult to tell who was chairman. In the Fall, the coal strike was prominent in the minds of growers, and some funds were collected for joint advertising. In an October meeting in 1927 -- prior to the formal organizing of the association -- someone recorded that a straw vote had been taken on the upcoming presidential election. The results showed eleven votes for Hoover and two votes for Smith.

Research discussion dominated all meetings. The concept of the organization was that trade conditions could be improved, and without question this included the improvement of growing to producing a better product. Various speakers talked of the advantage of making cuttings without the use of a knife; the need for clean benches --
free from disease; planting in two-inch pots instead of three-inch.

The experts of the day said that each carnation plant should produce ten or twelve flowers. Some were getting six or eight, and others as high as sixteen. It was agreed a plant would not pay for itself at six or eight flowers unless overhead could be cut.

In the Spring of 1929, members heard two important talks at growers' meetings: one by Louis Kintzele on expansion of glass in the area, and how it affected pricing and over-supply; another by John Roberts dealing with the subject of marketing by growers. Some sold through wholesalers, some to hotels, some were price cutters, some sold only in Spring. The lowest on the pole was the man who sold retail at the greenhouse. The faults of the retailers were expressed loudly. They were considered to be poor merchandisers, and the growers generally believed it was not the retailers problem that they were not in step with the trend of the times. Following these timely talks, the annual meeting of 1929 ended with the report that the treasury showed a balance of $8.67.

In the first months of the organization times were tough. Dues were two dollars per year payable the first of March and September. It became a practice to auction off old coins, fossils, left-over cigars, and almost anything that would net funds for the treasury. Finally this plan was abandoned as being too time-consuming for the value gained.

As a comparison, just forty years later in 1969, when the organization had reached its prime, the dues collected reached a total of $249,896. The carryover at the end of the fiscal year was $50,973. Of course, everything improved
economically from 1929 to 1969, but this figure is shown to indicate the fantastic things that happened to this industry in a span of forty years.

At a meeting November 4, 1929, Louis Kintzele said the group had been controlled long enough by the older generation, and suggested that some young blood take over. Walter Lehrer was elected unanimously as the president for the coming year. The minutes record this happened only after the group voted that Harry Weiland was there and made the motion, when in fact Weiland was absent.

Walter C. Lehrer was born May 20, 1900, and when he was only 20 years old, he founded Lehrer's Flowers. Born in Denver, he graduated from North High School, and attended Colorado A & M College. He married Guildee Dulamine January 17, 1925, and raised a son, Charles, who lived in Wheat Ridge, and a daughter, Carol, living in Colorado Springs. Walter had acquired an interest in some growing ranges in addition to operating several Lehrer's retail stores. He held positions of leadership in all phases of the industry, serving as general manager of Park-Elitch Wholesale Florists Co., and Callisons. Lehrer made many contributions to the floral business in the state, spending his entire life here, except for part of his retirement years in Arizona. He passed away May 6, 1978.

In 1930, Louis Kintzele proposed an ambitious advertising budget of $6,500: $4,000 for the Mountain & Plain States Florist Convention, $1,000 for trade papers, $500 for National Activities and $1,000 for grower-retailer cooperative advertising. Since there was no money and many delinquents, something had to be done. Sam Shraiberg suggested the money be raised by percentage. Hotly contested, it finally passed after seconds by Harry Harlow and Louis Kintzele. This began the system
Walter G. Lehrer was a grower, wholesaler, retailer, organizer and leader in every facet of the floral industry.
of deductions by the houses rather than a dues formula.

At the very next meeting another idea was born. It seems that Colorado carnations were being shipped to eastern markets with a label on them. This label was being removed and put on other blooms and re-shipped as Colorado's. To prevent this, Henry Weiland suggested some sort of a printed string, or seal be placed on all bunches. This plan was adopted, the tag was used, and from this -- 25 years later -- came the identification concept and trademark seal under the name COLORADO CARNATIONS.

In February, 1931 at the annual meeting, Leo Hellberg was elected president with Ralph Hill as vice president. The minutes reflect that the Colorado-Utah Coal Co. furnished the cigars for the second time in a year. Harold Crowley gave numerous reports over the year in burning of natural gas and oil on a test basis. This probably accounted for two boxes of cigars in one year, especially since lignite slack was going for $3.25 per ton, and screenings could be picked up at Erie and Firestone for twenty-five cents for a pick-up load.

An ironical note should be mentioned here. Harold Crowley, at that time, operated the Grant Street grange with his brother, Ray. While using coal, they had tested the use of gas and oil as a supplemental source of fuel. Later, in 1949, when the Crowley Bros. range was built in the 7000 block of South Santa Fe, it also was set up as a coal burning furnace-heated range. When the boiler was turned on, a puff of black smoke would belch from the stack for a short time, irritating the neighbors to the east on the hill. They reported it to the Environmental Protection Agency, which in
1972 decided their ultimatum from Congress was to "preserve and protect what clean air there was left in the world," and they forced Crowley Bros. to convert to gas at an approximate cost of $40,000.

Then to add further to the confusion of this issue, Bill Crowley, owner of Crowley Bros. at present gave serious consideration in the early 80's to convert all the heating facilities at this location back to coal again, because of the "shortage of natural gas" as reported by the government.

Times were extremely hard in the early 30's for the growers, which may have caused well-attended association meetings. In many instances, retailers were invited to attend so they could be openly criticized by growers for their selling methods. Association members had been able to exert their influence, and get a grower appointed by the Governor to the important Hail Association. They successfully obtained a statement of policy from the cemeteries regarding the placement of fresh flowers in vases at the cemeteries. Another strong effort in 1935, involved the push to get the carnation named as the National Flower. It was pointed out that the rose belongs to England, the lily to France, and the carnation was logical for the United States. In 1976, this matter was still being discussed in Congress, and in 1985, a bill was introduced in Congress to make the rose the national flower.

Regardless of the poor market, in March, 1930, the growers and retailers jointly agreed on an assessment. The growers were to allow one percent to be deducted on everything sold to retailers, they would then add one-half percent, and the total one and a half percent would be turned over to the Advertising Committee. Although
not unanimous, Leo Hollberg and Walter Lehrer assured the association members that this was only a six-month pact, then to be evaluated for results. This money was to be used for billboards and newspapers with a definite schedule set up and approved for advertising prices for Mother's Day.

Ray Crowley, Leo Hollberg and Harold Crowley visiting during a greenhouse tour.
A very accurate set of minutes of meetings from 1928 through 1934, was discovered in 1971 by John Hollberg in a file cabinet that had not been cleaned out for 37 years.

Walter Lehrer was secretary and president during that period, and did an excellent job keeping records. These minutes reflect many subjects which are still current today: the suggestion that directors and officers not be elected at the annual meetings; the presentation of awards for Outstanding Service; the donating of excess blooms to charities; and the one question in everyone's mind -- how come Ralph Hill could go fishing so often?

Letterhead of association in Feb. 1930. President was Scott Wilmore and this sheet showed balance in bank on Feb. 6 of $7.57.
Figures show in 1929 the total dollar volume of floral and horticulture production in Colorado was $2,300,000. Ten years before it was $1,145,000. Production had increased and doubled in those ten years, and times were difficult. It was necessary for the association to make its second yearly assessment, the first time this had to be done since the organization was formed. All the old coins, fossils, and whatnots had been auctioned off, and even cigars at one meeting were auctioned twice, netting the treasury only $3.28.

Over-production caused much discussion at meetings in the early 30s. Louis Kintzele said he was as much as 50 percent over-produced the previous Fall, and stressed it was his opinion growers should plant according to color. He suggested 50 percent be in light pink, white and red, and the other 50 percent be in dark pink. This prompted more thinking along the lines of production and marketing, and Leo Hollberg suggested every wholesale house could profit by furnishing itself with a field man whose duty it would be to help their growers in matters of colors, varieties, and timing of crops. This was a decision that tied in closely with the association of Colorado State University, and the growers in the Denver area. In 1931, the growers were instrumental in securing Professor Starke's services from Colorado A & M College to assist growers in the Denver area.

The association held the first Field Day April 7, 1930, beginning at Colorado Floral Co., then to Herman Hollberg's, the Barth range, the Crowley range, Christian range, and ended at the Robert's range. A meeting followed with members deciding to have at least two field days, Spring and Fall, each year.
The first Field Day was April 7, 1930. They continued for many years. This is program for the tour Nov. 7, 1957. Note in upper right Harmon wanted to sell seventeen and a half acres and the comments on growers ranged from good to poor.
Henry Weiland became president in 1931, and immediately initiated a new system to increase the treasury. A fine of ten cents was to be levied on anyone calling any other grower present by anything but his first name. Weiland paid the first fine, and a total of sixty cents was collected the first night.

On December 7, 1931, just ten years before Pearl Harbor, a meeting called a "Blues Meeting" was held. November had been a trying month, finances were at a low ebb, and many ugly rumors circulated. It was reported that consignment flowers were still being shipped to Chicago, and quoted in New Orleans at $15 per thousand, and even worse, some independents shipped direct on a consignment basis to the South. As a method of cheering up the group, Secretary Ralph Hill proposed a cooperative effort in finding unit cost of blooms in the belief that this statistical data would solve the situation of the low prices. They could not continue to produce carnations and sell them for a price below production costs. Hill wrote in the minutes: "This proposal, needless to say, received the same enthusiasm afforded the rest of the meeting."

At the meeting in early 1932, with all the wholesalers and shippers in the area, it was resolved there would be absolutely no more disposing of surpluses by shipping consignment flowers.

Some cooperation had been obtained with the discussion of growers with retailers and wholesalers. The growers had been the leaders, forcing the problems at hand to be solved by all those concerned. It was reported time and again that the growers had the organization, they had the strength, and if agreements were to be made, it
must be through the association and the members.

In the Spring of 1933, talk began on the formation of a cooperative. Regular meetings of the organization were still being held in the Spring, and times were more difficult than they had been the previous Fall. Complaints of overproduction still held center stage, however it was learned that 15 of the largest cities in the country were receiving an average of about 3,000 cuts per week. The problem was not entirely due to over-production, for the trouble appeared to be in the distribution system.

For some time, a number of growers had been looking into a law or act that had been passed by the State Legislature in the early 1920s. The Colorado Act followed the Federal Agricultural Act, permitting agricultural groups to unite to establish prices based on supply and demand, and have some control over their own market. Immediately a committee was appointed to start to draw up by-laws and articles of incorporation. The term "flowers" was used to cover all crops, and the assessment for operating expenses was limited to one percent. Cooperative agreements had been made with wholesalers, retailers and growers, and on June 12, 1933, the motion was unanimously adopted to start the Colorado Flower Growers Cooperative Association. Expenses were kept to a minimum. Employees consisted of one bookkeeper and Henry Meyer.

In the Fall of 1933, things appeared to be picking up. The glut seemed only temporary, and optimism prevailed at the Fall Field Day. It was held at Roberts Rose Co. with 42 attending. The group was entertained by several selections on the accordion by Mr. Lasasso, some comedy by Leo Hollberg, talks by Louis Kintzele, Ralph Hill and
Henry Weiland.

The first bulletin of the Co-operative carried general information on the provisions of the new association. A one percent levy was placed on the wholesale selling price of all cut flowers. Membership certificates were issued with the fee set at $25.00 with officers elected by the 65 members, nearly 100 percent of the growers and wholesalers in the area. To serve as President was John T. Roberts, Jr., Vice President, John R. Davis, and Secretary-Treasurer, Walter G. Lehrer. Directors included Louis Kintzele, Martin Erickson and E.P. Neiman.

At this time, the Board searched for a location of the flower market, and selected the site at 1420 Wazee. By the order of the Board and under the terms of the contracts signed by each grower, all greenhouse grown flowers were directed to be delivered to this address. The order went on to state, "This means that after this date, there will be no peddling or direct delivery of greenhouse flowers to retailers."

Uniform grading was to become effective at once -- First grade consisted of 26 good flowers of fine color and fullness -- straight stems of sufficient strength to support the flower, and to be not less than 18 inches long overall. Price, three cents. Shorts consisted of 26 good flowers of good color and fullness, straight stems and not to be more than 15 inches overall. Price, two and a half cents per bloom. Seconds were to be bunches of 26 flowers of irregular color and fullness, stems of 12 inches, and the price was two cents.

The rules of the cooperative on grading, planting and selling to outsiders were rigidly enforced with fines levied in many cases. A constant subject at all meetings was the "pigs",

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who had been selling twenty-five cent bouquets. A vigilante committee set out to find where they were getting the flowers. This resulted in a contact made with the management of Piggly Wiggly stores. No report was ever made as to where the flowers came from.

The policing system continued to be effective. Growers could not produce a smile for the man who wanted to buy cheap and say, "I am sorry -- I would like to give you stock, but I must pay the coal man."

The Cooperative first set up in temporary headquarters at 2500 15th St. Henry Meyer, formerly with Park Floral Company, was in charge. Walter Lehrer, as Secretary-Treasurer, wrote daily and weekly bulletins for the members. More growers signed up each week, and directors expressed the thought that 100 percent membership could be secured.

The bulletins were straightforward and direct. All members had signed the binding agreements pertaining to grading and selling to retailers at the below published cost. It seemed a few retailers still badgered some growers to sell out of the greenhouse at a price they wished to pay.

Grading was a constant problem. A quote from the bulletin dated October 20, 1933, reads as follows: "SOME of the stock is still coming into the market in terrible condition. If we expect to ship our stock into distant markets, and command the price we are asking, or intend to ask, it must be graded with more care. Thrip, the tiny bug ormite, is bad in many cases, and ruins the sale of every bunch of flowers when it becomes noticeable. A first grade carnation should be first grade in every respect -- free from thrip marks, full
flower, stiff straight stem. Let us start now and put only the very best in every bunch of first grade carnations. We are going to find that it is absolutely necessary, so you might as well start right now." From a January, 1934 bulletin -- "We admonish the growers not to include all the thrip-eaten flowers, which should be consigned to the rubbish box."

These quotes are mentioned only because of the apparent long range effect these bulletins had. No doubt these tough restrictions had their impact on the Colorado Carnation for the next fifty years. Grading was used prior to this time, however, the agreements signed by growers, and the adherence to these agreements during the period of the Cooperative has certainly paid off for the reputation of the Colorado Carnation.

In the early Spring of 1934, the Cooperative probably began to reach its peak. Agreements with most retailers and growers had been signed, and were effective. The market had been stable with First Grade Carnations bringing a $.05, Short Grade bringing $.04, and Second Grade bringing $.03. The growers looked forward to the FTD Jubilee Convention to be held in Denver the first week of September.

At a meeting in April, 1934, L.A. Kintzele was elected to represent the wholesalers, and the following were selected to represent the producers -- Leo Hollberg, Fred Lehman, Homer Pearson, John T. Roberts, C.B. Sprague, and A. Zimmerman. In an exceptional meeting, Homer Pearson gave a talk on "Feeds and Feeding", which could not be surpassed by any follower of the subject, and Leo Hollberg provided the entertainment with a talk on the "Frenzied Fantical of Foolish Filosophies." The following meeting in June, was set up for a "Show &
Tell" session, and everyone was encouraged to bring along some unusually handy contrivance, knife, cultivator, or anything new. This was billed as a meeting that could start you on your way to fame and fortune. A commitment had already been made by John Bement, who planned to demonstrate a gadget guaranteed to keep the knife scars from your thumb.

By the Spring of 1935, the Cooperative put together some figures on numbers sold. The report read that there were 10,329,408 carnations cut by members, and of this number 8,814,922 had been sold, a whopping 85 percent. Net return to the grower was $.0307 each.

Two years after the Cooperative was believed to be the answer to all industry problems, a notice was posted on May 16, 1936, that a considerable number of members had given notice of their election to terminate their contract effective June 1. The Board accepted these, and offered to terminate other contracts. This was, in effect, the demise of the Cooperative. No comments, blame nor reason for this action, are recorded or suggested in either minutes or conversation.

The growers in Colorado had been meeting regularly for a number of years by the Spring of 1936. They met as growers, as a cooperative, as an association, and as members of wholesale or shipping groups. The common conversation at most meetings concerned production, quality and new ways to do a better job. Suggestions had frequently been made that more research was needed to improve the product. Many individuals had taken the initiative in pursuing this through the college at Ft. Collins. Various individuals from the college,
The Horticulture Building on the campus at Ft. Collins was one of the main structures around 1900.

and at the State Department of Agriculture, provided limited services.

Homer Pearson, owner of a greenhouse in Wheat Ridge, and an active leader in the industry, had been an advocate of securing technical assistance in research for a number of years. In the Spring of 1936, Leo Hollberg, Homer Pearson, and Ralph Hill were appointed to a committee to investigate the possibilities of securing a graduate floriculturist from Ohio State College to work in the Colorado area. The growers' group at this
time, pledged $300 to obtain such a person. After some contacts, an appointment was finally made with President Charles A. Lory of Colorado A & M. Leo Hollberg, Wallace Kerl, Ralph Hill and Homer Pearson met with President Lory to explain the problem. The conversation was friendly, until the committee reached the point of making demands. Finally Pres. Lory told Homer Pearson, "Young man, you don't realize what happens in politics, therefore, you can't understand the college's position, and the reasons why we can't offer you the help you want." That ended the meeting.

On the way back to Denver, Pearson decided to increase his efforts to be elected to the State House of Representatives. He pledged to the others in the car that this industry would be represented in the political arena if he had anything to say about it.

The Pearson family history tells the story of Homer Pearson's success in politics. He attained some of the highest political positions in the State of Colorado. As a result of the election and the efforts of some individuals, especially Pearson, things did begin to happen in the research area at the college.

On July 1, 1936, William E. Gunesch came from Ohio State to Colorado A & M to begin his career in Colorado. He worked at the college until 1939, when he assumed the position of Deputy State Horticulturist, State Department of Agriculture. He served in this capacity until October 1942, when he became Fieldman for the Park Elitch Company. Bill Gunesch stayed with Park Elitch Co. until July 1951, when he assumed management of Park Floral Co. located at 1090 W. Hampden Avenue, in Englewood.

Park Floral Company was a stock company owned by B.E. Gillis and E.P. Neiman. A long established
firm in the area, it had taken many steps to help the industry. In 1938, a concerted effort was being made by labor groups to unionize the growing industry in Colorado. Park Floral appeared first on the list for the organizers. To avert a strike and avoid unionization, sections of the large range were leased to individual growers with everything they grew being consigned to Park Elitch Company. They paid their own help, bought their own supplies, and paid a portion of the rent and heat -- a unique setup. But the problems created from this system also created others. In 1953, it reverted to company ownership.

Bill Gunesch resumed overall management of the company with options to purchase stock. At present, there is not much owned besides what Bill, his wife, Ruth, and son, Mike, own. Bill Gunesch made many contributions to the floral industry in Colorado, such as: field man for the college -- field man for a wholesaler -- as a grower -- a wholesaler -- a researcher, and almost every facet of the business.

By the end of 1936, the Carnation industry began to settle down. There seemed to be a concentration on research and techniques for growing. The college provided a field man. Bill Gunesch attended all meetings, held regularly at the Oxford Hotel. Experiments were conducted at various greenhouses in the area, and reported on at the meetings. At a meeting in February 1938, a special report was given on how to get rid of dandelions -- use Mercuratic Ethyl Sterate 1 to 200 in Kerosene - 1 (litre) to 100 square feet. Reports were made on pinching, fumigating, humidity and other greenhouse problems. Much discussion was held on heating, the availability of coal, and the possibility of utilizing other methods of energy.
Short courses took place at least twice a year, one of the most successful in the Fall of 1937. About 100 attended the visitation to the following establishments -- Wallace Kerl's, Alfred Zimmerman's, Brown's, both Fred and George Lehman's places, Max Luthi's, Miller and Vogel's, Chas. Franc's, Shraiberg's 5th Avenue's and Adam's City for dinner of venison and steak. Previous tours had been held in Colorado Springs with an excellent attendance. Ernest Swartchauf gave a talk on how they spray and fumigate at the Pikes Peak range. At a meeting following this tour, Mr. Neiman and Wallace Kerl gave a report about the recent short course in Omaha, Nebraska, which also included a report on the poker games.

In October, 1938, the growers took a trip to the Cheyenne Field Station. Experiments on root growth were viewed with interest. The growers felt complete cooperation between the Field Station at Cheyenne and Colorado A & M would be a healthy relationship. The Cheyenne Field Station, located just west of that city, was an active Horticulture station. Cooperation existed between the station personnel and the staff at Colorado State University. Periodic visits were continued for many years, and perhaps the last one was in 1970. United States Senator Gale McGee, from Wyoming, staunchly supported Horticulture and the Field Station, but when he was defeated in his bid for re-election in the 70's, the Field Station's budget was reduced to practically nothing.

During the years from 1936, through the beginning of World War II, to mid-1942, regular meetings were held with good attendance of growers. A number of people prominent in the industry today served as officers and leaders during these years. The minutes show Homer Pearson served as President
in 1936; Robert Voegler in 1937; Herman Oliner, 1938; John Bement, 1939; Len Weirich, 1940; L.R. Bud Kintzele, 1941; Harold Crowley, 1942; and Axel Alenius in 1943. During these years many subjects were discussed and resolved. Many were continuing discussions that still dominate the conversations of the present association meetings.

To compare the similarity of common problems, a few of these are mentioned -- Cheyenne Field Station cooperation -- Grades & Standards -- Representation on the State Board of Agriculture -- importance of legislation -- Allied Florist cooperative Advertising -- Affiliation as a group with SAF -- Exchange of bulletins with other areas -- Short Courses -- Tours -- State Inspections -- The Energy situation -- Union propaganda -- The Annual Picnic -- The levying of an assessment for Advertising and Research -- Field Days -- Flower Shows that could be viewed by the public -- and the suggestion by Mr. Weiland that Colorado Trade Mark its flowers so they could be identified by the public as being superior quality.

In the early 40s the younger generation came on the scene, for example, Ray Crowley, younger brother of the 1942 president, and Lee Kintzele, younger brother of the 1941 president. Both these young growers had attended meetings for some time, but now they began to make motions, second motions, and in fact make recommendations as to how this association should be run. They said little at first, but as time passed, they emerged as future leaders of the industry. Leland Kintzele was elected as the treasurer of the association at a meeting on February 5, 1941. Their background, along with the history of the families, will be covered as they came into leadership.
Lee Kintzele, Ray Crowley, who was then Secretary of the American Carnation Society, and Bud Kintzele inspect flowers at DWF.

Harold Crowley, President in 1942, assigned the task of writing By-laws of the association to a committee of five. Any three of the committee (not named in minutes) were empowered to write and bring to the meeting in April, some by-laws for the group. The entire meeting of April was devoted to the discussion of this subject, and following
numerous motions and amendments, no action was taken. A motion, made to either accept them or rewrite them, failed. At the next meeting on May 6, 1942, Ralph Hill revised some sections, and after another lengthy discussion a motion, by Leo Hellberg that they be accepted, passed unanimously. The by-laws at that meeting, were basically the Articles of Incorporation filed with the Secretary of State in December, 1956.

In the Fall of 1942, the floral industry began seriously to look at the effects the war and economy would have on the flower growing business. At that meeting, the government reported that tires for trucks would have to last through 1943. Repairs on trucks would be limited to a total of $500 annually. The government further reported there would be a movement of six million men out of non-essential business into essential business within six months. The floral business was considered non-essential. The report went on -- Canada and England could produce 25 percent of the total amount of flowers needed, and it could be possible that the government would require floral production be cut drastically in this country. The growers, as a group and individually, became extremely war conscious. Many of the younger men were leaving to join the service, and the help situation became critical almost overnight.

Monthly meetings continued, and growers talked of assisting in the war effort. A blood donation committee was formed, flowers to be donated through Gray Ladies groups, and every grower was encouraged to buy War Bonds. In March, 1943, the Victory Garden program got underway for the coming Spring, with the greenhouse operators urged to be instructors for the victory garden planters. It was estimated there would be 50,000
victory gardens in the Denver area, and many people needed instruction in growing, if results were to be obtained.

Meetings settled into one location on the same day each month -- Thursdays at the Oxford Hotel. The first meeting there occurred on September 6, 1944, continuing in that location for many years. Any old timer, or the newcomer will vouch for the lengthy meetings, the good times, and the major decisions made at the Oxford. One proposal by a local advertising man suggested Colorado consider locating a holiday post-season football game called the "Carnation Bowl" in Denver. Strictly a promotion scheme, an appointed committee studied its merits, but finally scuttled the idea on the basis of Denver not being a "sports conscious" community. The gamble would be too great.

Again the idea came up, after the popularity of football surfaced in this area in the 50's and 60's. It was pursued by the American Carnation Society, and in the mid 70's a great deal of effort went into it following the moving of the American Carnation Society offices from Philadelphia to Denver in 1975. San Diego then entered the picture because of the tremendous production from the Encinitas area. It was finally determined by an appointed committee (non-flower growers), that there be a Carnation Bowl for the Western Athletic Conference, to be held at the end of each year, when most bowl games are played. The site -- San Diego. It never gained the notoriety hoped for by the selecting committee.

*******
In June, 1948, an agency presentation was made to the growers by Mr. Clair Henderson and Mr. Arthur Rippey of Rippey, Henderson, Bucknum & Co. on the merits and value of advertising. Special emphasis was made on a registered trademark which would later be "the seal". The seal, as it was developed by the agency was implemented on Mother's Day, May 4, 1950. It was registered as "Genuine Colorado Carnations", but the seal itself carried only two words "Colorado Carnations".

The clamp carnation seal adopted by the association after 25 years of discussion. Four seals were to be placed on each bunch of standards and fancies.
These little clamp-on seals were very attractive. The plan was to put it on each bunch of 25 fancy and standard carnations. If the bunch was then split, there would be a good chance of one getting on as many as four arrangements. They were hand squeezed on the stem just below the bloom and did attract attention. As you might guess, many seals were used, and the growers spent much money buying them, and in labor costs. It was a labor-intensive process. In early 1971, it appeared that some growers, and some houses, were not using the seal for various reasons. The first major effort seemed to be to get everyone to use them, or at least make it easier to use them.

A new seal was developed, which could be put on by expensive machines. It was just not as pretty, did not look as good as the hand-clamp one, and most growers did not accept them. This program continued for several months. In 1971, the question again came up as to who was using them, and who was not. The CFGA Board of Directors kept this item on the agenda for many months. Finally, it was to be resolved by taking a mail referendum of all the members. Completed in December, 1972, the survey results showed that 54 wanted to keep the seal, and 53 wanted to discontinue using it. A total of 5,821,000 square feet was represented in the survey, and the Board decided that there was such a split it was not worth pursuing any further. On January 18, 1973, a motion was made to remove the item from the agenda, and every grower was on his own. Naturally, this was the demise of the Colorado Carnation seal. In August, 1984, the registration for the seal was renewed through the U.S. Patent and Trademark office for another twenty years. It is available for use by members of the association.
The Rippey, Henderson & Bucknum Advertising Agency served the association in many capacities for the next 21 years. The contributions made by Harry Lazier, as account executive, and the agency were undoubtedly responsible, through working with the publicity committee, in developing the reputation of the Colorado Carnation as a superior product in the industry.

The "association" has been mentioned many times. It was merely the name under which growers met monthly to talk about new methods of growing, and ways they could commonly solve their problems. Since the industry began, and organization started in the methodology of shipping from this area, the "association" had gone under several names -- Colorado State Flower Growers -- Colorado State Florists Association -- The Cooperative -- Colorado Growers Association, and others. On May 3, 1951, a motion was made by Ralph Hill (Homer Hill) to change the name from Colorado State Flower Growers Association to Colorado Flower Growers Association, and it was not until the 27th of December, 1956, that the Certificate of Incorporation was filed with the Secretary of State. It was signed by three well-known names in the business -- John R. Davis, Jr., Raymond B. Crowley, and William E. Gunesch. It was duly notarized and filed, and it became the official "Association" of the flower growers in the State of Colorado.

Many individuals served in the office of the Association as Secretary, such as Ray App, who started February 7, 1945, and served many years. He was perhaps the first paid secretary, followed by many volunteers over a number of years, but the first full-time secretary was Doris Fleischer, affectionately known as "Doris the Florist". Doris served the growers and capably ran the affairs of
the organization until Oct. 31, 1964. She left of her own accord, and was replaced by Dorothy Conroy.

Dorothy also capably handled the affairs of the Association on her own, often assisted by the elected grower president, and the advertising agency. She stayed with the group until April, 1969.

There was strong talk in 1969, that the organization needed some strong staff direction. It was in the market for a paid executive, who could administer the association, perhaps do some lobbying at the legislature, and direct the various activities of the committees. The three most active groups then were Advertising & Promotion Committee, Research Committee and Traffic Committee.

The Advertising & Promotion Committee was deeply involved at this time with a project called "CARNATIONS -- Elegance in Floral Arrangements," a hard-cover book printed to help sell carnations. It was designed to show a simple floral arrangement, and on the opposite page were drawings showing the simple method of putting together the arrangement pictured. This program, being handled totally by Harry Lazier, account executive of Rippey, Henderson-Bucknum Advertising Agency, was perhaps one of the most misunderstood undertakings of the association. Contracted to be printed in Denmark, a delivery of 30,000 copies was to be made in late 1968, and early 1969. Lazier took inspection trips to Europe to review the book's progress, and several experts were retained to assist in the marketing of the book, since it was a completely new field to the association.

Aware of the discussion to hire a manager or administrative executive, Dorothy Conroy left the association to work for Davis Bros. Wholesale
Dick Kingman, first Executive Director of the Association hired in 1969.
Florists as personnel manager. She was a very capable person, and knowing the industry, fit in well in her new position.

In June, 1969, after interviews with many applicants, and publication that the association was seeking an executive, one was hired to begin work August 1. His name was Richard G. "Dick" Kingman, who had over 12 years of association management experience in Colorado. Dick Kingman started to work as executive director, and immediately attended the Society of American Florists meeting held in San Francisco. At the time of the convention, it was reported that Harry Lazier was leaving the advertising agency, and consequently would be giving up the account of the flower growers.

Several major events took place within the next few weeks. The new manager began work and, of course, of prime concern was to look at the large inventory of books, the tremendous costs that had accumulated in publishing the book, and the question of what to do with them. A final resolve was that the books would become secondary to the administration of the association for the manager, and it was agreed that a period of five years would be set as a goal to dispose of the inventory of approximately 23,000 books. Three months short of the goal of five years, on May 1st, 1974, the last book report was issued to the Board. It showed a gross income of $91,900 from sales, and estimated expenses of approximately $250,000, over a seven-year period. These figures are mentioned, not to criticize the committee who approved this venture, nor to put the blame of the loss attributed to this project on any one person, but to show that this was an important project, and very much a part of the history of the association.
# CHAPTER VII

## MEMBERS - 1971

The following membership list showing the general locations of the greenhouses was indicative of the support the industry received from all the growers in the area.

**COLORADO FLOWER GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**GROWER MEMBERS**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Greenhouse</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams City Grhs.</td>
<td>Harlow Loepner</td>
<td>Commerce City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Adler</td>
<td>AL Adler</td>
<td>Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alenius Floral Co.</td>
<td>James Alenius</td>
<td>Denver-3rd &amp; Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amato Bros. Grhs.</td>
<td>Jim &amp; Eugene Amato</td>
<td>Commerce City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Grhs.</td>
<td>Fm. Storrs</td>
<td>Denver-2nd &amp; Steele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Grhs.</td>
<td>Dick Bailey</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balistreri Grhs.</td>
<td>John Balistreri</td>
<td>Denver-N. Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrett's Grhs.</td>
<td>Wallace &amp; Reva Barrett</td>
<td>Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bates Grhs.</td>
<td>Earl &amp; Ruth Bates</td>
<td>Wheat Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonds Floral Co.</td>
<td>Jack Bement</td>
<td>Denver-W. Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester R. Benson</td>
<td>Lister B. Benson</td>
<td>Denver-W. 8th Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>Mel, Ron, Keith, Kent Davis</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Valley, Inc.</td>
<td>Robert L. Kretz</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Braun Floral Co.</td>
<td>Dick Braun</td>
<td>Denver-E. Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton Grhs.</td>
<td>James &amp; Frances Kiyota</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruggenthies, Inc.</td>
<td>Hank Bruggenthies</td>
<td>Denver-E. Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.R. Buck Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>Gerald Bean</td>
<td>Denver-W. Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busch Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>Bernard Busch</td>
<td>Denver-Welby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnation Cuttings, Inc.</td>
<td>Ernie Hendrickson, Mgr.</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnations West Inc.</td>
<td>Gene &amp; Evelyn Yoshihara</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carr St. Grhs.</td>
<td>Carl Nelson</td>
<td>Arvada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartwright Floral Co.</td>
<td>Emil &amp; Elythe Baur</td>
<td>Denver-E. Alameda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center Grhs.</td>
<td>Pete, Frank, Carl Yantarno</td>
<td>Denver - Welby</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Floral Co.</td>
<td>Edwin Kornfield</td>
<td>Denver-14th &amp; Kearney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Roses</td>
<td>Jim Frizzell, Mgr.</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Shrubbery</td>
<td>Chris Marsh</td>
<td>Golden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crestview Floral</td>
<td>W.K. Ebmann</td>
<td>Ft. Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowley Bros. Inc.</td>
<td>Harold &amp; Ray Crowley</td>
<td>Littleton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown Hill Cemetery Assn.</td>
<td>D.L. Gaudio</td>
<td>Denver-9th &amp; Wadsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacona Grhs.</td>
<td>Al Hall</td>
<td>Denver-West Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dardano Grhs.</td>
<td>Frank Dardano</td>
<td>Wheat Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Bros. Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>Mel, Ron, Keith, Kent Davis</td>
<td>Denver-9th &amp; Depew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliott Bros. Grhs.</td>
<td>Joe &amp; Bill Elliott</td>
<td>Commerce City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliott Grhs.</td>
<td>Marion &amp; Dorothy, Clara Elliott</td>
<td>Denver-W. 27th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emsbach Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>Russell, Don, Robert Emsbach</td>
<td>Broomfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Buser</td>
<td>Anthony Buser</td>
<td>Wheat Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buser Grhs. Inc.</td>
<td>C.B. Bob Buser</td>
<td>Greeley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

81
TOTAL: 147 Members with approximately 6-1/2 million square feet of carnation production. The peak was reached in July, 1974 with 7,402,374 square feet.
The post-war years in the late 40s were prosperous for the flower growers. By resolution of the members, one-half of one percent was allocated to the Research Foundation at Colorado State University, and Professor A.M. Binkley reported the greenhouses being built at the college would cost over $65,000. Homer Pearson was now Lieutenant Governor, and in a political position to influence money decisions in the state, so the association was firmly established in the research field. The year 1948, ended on an extremely happy note. Homer Pearson reported the new greenhouses at the college had boilers, and only more funds were needed to interest some graduate students in attending Horticulture Graduate School at Colorado A & M to get into full operation.

It is important to note here the educational facility at Fort Collins was first called Colorado A & M College. Then in 1957, it became a university, and was called Colorado State University. To avoid confusion, further mention of it will be referred to as CSU.

It was not until 1969, when Dr. Kenneth M. Brink assumed the position of Head, Department of Horticulture, that any consideration was given to any remodeling or renovation of these greenhouses. This was twenty-one years after they were built. He presented his proposal to the university administration, and it received about as much
enthusiasm as a bushel of apples would in a
carnation cooler. For four years beginning in
1974, this was proposed in the budget as Phase I --
Greenhouse Renovation. In 1978, Dick Kingman, the
Executive Director, who had considerable experience
lobbying at the legislature, believed this was the
year. Without the blessing of the CSU
administration, and through diligent hard work and
good contacts, it was approved by the Joint Budget
Committee and passed by the House and Senate Long
Bill caucuses. The amount allocated for renovation
was $482,000. Dr. Ken Goldsberry, Professor in the
Department of Horticulture, was assigned the task
of overseeing the complete rebuilding of the
complex. It took some time, and was dedicated in
1979, serving as an attractive addition to the CSU
campus.

For some time, Professor Binkley had sought a
man to come to the college in the research area.
Mutual funding had been arranged through the bi-
annual appropriation of the extension service at
CSU. In April, 1949, Chairman Ralph Hill reported
word had been received that W.D. Holley had agreed
to accept the position of station operation at CSU,
to report the first of June from Connecticut
University. Professor Binkley predicted CSU
Experiment Station would be as well equipped as
Ohio state and Cornell. By Fall of that year, W.D.
Holley, or Bob Holley as he became known, had
scheduled a field day for November, and suggested a
bulletin be printed monthly to be mailed to all
members. Bob Holley, for all practical purposes,
became the field man for the carnation industry in
Colorado. He taught at the college, called on
growers, and in general filled the bill of being
the trouble shooter and problem solver for growers.
State Agricultural College
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO.

Number of College Buildings ........................................ 10
Number of Courses of Study ........................................ 7
Number of Professors and Assistants .............................. 39
Number of Students Registered 1900-01 .......................... 387
Number of Books in College Library .............................. 11,000
Value of College Property ......................................... $246,094.55
Value of Station Property .......................................... $27,892.65

All College Departments open to both sexes. Tuition Free. No fees of any kind.

Front cover of a handbook printed by the College explaining the program. Note the "TUITION FREE".
PRINTED 1903
Perhaps a volume itself could be written on the accomplishments of Bob Holley, the varieties he developed, the research work he did, and his contributions to the industry. Perhaps too, it would be simpler to state that 25 years later, almost to the day, the Colorado Flower Growers Association paid tribute to W.D. "Bob" Holley by staging a Bob Holley Night. 250 people attended from all over the country, and many gifts and honors were bestowed upon him pending his retirement June 30, 1974. Many groups and individuals spoke of Bob's accomplishments, and made presentations.

The highlight of the evening was the formal dedication ceremony conducted by Dr. K.M. Brink, Head, Department of Horticulture at Colorado State University.

Professor W.D. Holley, in 25 years as a faculty member at Colorado State University, has achieved an outstanding record of accomplishments and contributions to his department, college and university and in the field of horticultural science. He has established himself, and is duly recognized as an outstanding and distinguished research scientist, and his accomplishments are recognized throughout the world. He has made numerous and many highly significant contributions to the Colorado, national and international leadership, has established Colorado State University as the carnation research and teaching center of the world. Professor W.D. "Bob" Holley has laid the foundation for
establishing C.S.U. as the world recognized "Center of Excellence" for floriculture research and teaching.

Brink then read a letter from Dr. John W. Thimmig, President of the State Board of Agriculture, Governing Board of Colorado State University. The letter indicated that at its meeting, April 19, 1974, the State Board of Agriculture took action to place a name on the horticulture teaching and research facilities located at 630 West Lake Street. The action was to name the facilities in honor of Professor W.D. Holley, scheduled for retirement June 30, 1974. Specifically, the name approved is the W.D. Holley Plant Environmental Research Center, or PERC, as it is known on the CSU campus. In his letter, Dr. Thimmig wrote, "Professor Holley's contribution to the teaching and research program of Colorado State University, and to the floriculture industry in Colorado and the nation, has been outstanding. The Board's action was unanimous, and is indicative of the high regard we all have for Professor Holley."

This is probably an appropriate time to bring up the name of Dr. Ralph "Tex" Baker, Professor, Plant Pathology, CSU. Tex was supported by a CFGA Research Grant, and has made numerous contributions to the industry with his experiments on carnations at the college, and in growing ranges in the area. Tex recalls the assistantship he received from CFGA was probably $1000 a year. That same sponsorship of a graduate student today averages around $10,000. Not only everyone in the industry in Colorado, and in science, knows of Tex Baker, but he is known throughout the world for his investigations in plant diseases. National
Dr. Tex Baker, CSU is examining a Sweet William virus indicator plant in 1948, with W.D. Thomas on the right.
Aeronautics & Space Administration selected him a number of years ago to be involved with them in studying space biology. He has traveled to almost every growing area of the world, and made many contributions to our industry.

This is perhaps an appropriate time to also mention two more individuals at the college who have made many contributions to the Colorado industry.

Dr. Joe J. Hanan joined the staff at CSU in 1963 after receiving degrees at Missouri, CSU and Cornell. He has been the leader of the floriculture investigations team since 1975, and has done extensive research work in pollution, nutrition, salinity control and culture of carnations and roses in cooperation with the Research & Education Committee of CGA. In the last few years, Hanan has been deeply involved in computerization of greenhouse environmental control.

Dr. Ken Goldsberry has also been at CSU for a number of years. He received his degrees at CSU and Iowa State. He became involved with the growers in setting up the Bedding & Pot Plant Association in the 70s and assisted them in various research projects. Goldsberry has always had a sense of the future for the industry, and continually worked on new crops and new marketing methods to assist the growers. His work on CO$_2$ fertilization and greenhouse covers is known throughout the country.

Both of these gentlemen have had the keen interest of the Colorado grower in mind in all of their research efforts. They definitely have made a strong contribution to the greenhouse industry in the state.

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CHAPTER IX
TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

In the late 1940's the wholesale houses had a tremendous influence on the association. They became stronger because of closer organization of the growers within the group, and perhaps felt they could exert more pressure on the growers through concerted action. One of the subjects which was often discussed was the formation of a Traffic Committee. Since more flowers were being moved by air then the association should become more involved in the control of shipments. O. Ben Haley, Jr., then manager of Denver Wholesale Florists, through perseverance and hard work pushed for, and got the association to form a traffic committee. Its purpose was to be the watchdog for the growers and wholesalers in the area, in the movement of the product. The theme of "it doesn't do any good to grow them and sell them, if we can't move them", was taken seriously. Some growers had difficulty understanding why this function of the growers' association should finance an operation beneficial to the wholesaler, when the grower was paying the wholesaler a commission rate he believed took care of such projects.

At any rate, it functioned within the association, and worked closely with national groups. It may be the forerunner of the Traffic Committee of the Society of American Florists, and for many years Colorado was a leader in this field, working for the betterment of not only the growers in Colorado, but the entire industry.

Curt Morgan, Traffic Manager of DWF, became the leader of the traffic movement in the entire
country. Curt came to work for DWF in 1963. A native of New York, he attended Denver University and obtained a Masters Degree in both Transportation and Marketing. He was one of the few experts in the field, and in assuming a leadership role in his field, became extremely valuable to the company. Curt served as Chairman of the SAF Traffic Committee in 1973-74, and set up several national meetings and seminars for transportation people.

To go back a little in the traffic field -- the committee included John Byerly of Associated, Dave Cluster of Park-Elitch Co., Ben Haley of DWF, Bob Massaro of Davis Bros. and Art Wise of Callaham's. The committee, with the same members, functioned compatibly for about 10 years, but some friction arose concerning the growers financing the work they felt rightfully should be done by the wholesale houses, to whom they were paying commission. At a meeting on April 5, 1951 Ben Haley, the inaugurator of the committee submitted his resignation from the committee, and made a motion that the committee be abolished. The motion was defeated, along with his request to resign. The traffic committee continued in business.

About 10 years later on March 1, 1961, the association retained Gerald Boyle, a well-recognized traffic consultant who had his own business under the name of Mountain States Commerce & Traffic Services, Inc.

Gerald Boyle served the committee as a consultant, and at one time for a period of a year in the mid-70's, served as Committee Chairman, because of poor attendance, a quorum could not be obtained, and with Gerry serving as Chairman, the other two or three members who faithfully attended could at least pass motions and make decisions.
At the beginning of the budget year 1977-78, the committee made the decision to not renew the contract for Mr. Boyle, and he was no longer on retainer for CFGA. This action was taken because of the lack of any concrete action to be taken, the infrequency of the traffic committee meetings, and the almost "give up" attitude that prevailed on a local and national level, that to spend dollars on top of dollars to fight the national controlling boards which affected the rates of moving our product, had almost become useless. The committee continued to function on a limited basis for a couple of years with no major projects in mind, but with the thought they would be available and ready to assume the responsibility assigned them if requested.

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CHAPTER X

THE LATE ASSOCIATION

Some of the material in this story concerning wholesalers goes back to the early 1970s. However, in the 1970s more probably happened in this industry in the way of change, than had happened in the previous thirty years.

Denver Wholesale Florists, the largest of the houses in this region, and in fact, perhaps the largest facility of its kind in the country, started through some major changes. O. Ben Haley, general manager of the company for many years, and perhaps the man most responsible for building the company into a multi-million dollar operation and the Board of Directors came to the conclusion that Ben Haley would some day be retiring, and the search started for a replacement.

Ben Haley had been a grower. He grew up in the greenhouse business and had been successful. It seemed, at first, the way the company was structured, no one except a grower could be general manager. In other words, a good management man from outside would not be able to run the company, make a profit for the close-knit grower stockholders, and still keep the growers pacified. A number of top level industry people were interviewed, and the talent search was on.

At the Society of American Florists meeting in Boston, July 29, 1976, it was announced that Douglas Gordon, Assistant to SAF Executive Vice
President, John H. Walker, would leave SAF and begin work at Denver Wholesale Florists on September 1, as assistant to O. Ben Haley, with the thought he would take over as General Manager within six months or a year. On February 4, 1977, Doug Gordon was made General Manager of Denver Wholesale Florists Company, and on July 31, 1977, O. Ben Haley retired temporarily as General Manager.

Doug Gordon served as General Manager for three and one-half years, and in October, 1980, he was accidently killed in a hunting accident. He was followed by Ray Bozeman, who had been sales manager, branch manager, and held many responsible positions in DWF for a number of years. Ray Bozeman served as General Manager until April, 1982, when O. Ben Haley again returned to manage the company. Marion Elliott became President of the company, and early in 1977 the sales manager of DWF, Ron Samuels, and four of the sales staff left DWF to go to work for Pikes Peak Wholesale Florists at the Denver branch. This company was an offshoot of Pikes Peak Greenhouses, Inc. in Colorado Springs, which operated both greenhouses and a wholesale house.

As with any grower-shipper operation, the new Pikes Peak facility in Denver needed growers and the most logical place to turn was to the present growers in this area since the expansion of the early 70's ended in 1974, and very little had taken place since then. Several long-time growers of DWF moved to Pikes Peak, and with their own production represented several hundred thousand feet of both roses and carnation production. C.B. Euser, a large grower of both roses and carnations, Herb Ventker of Canon Floral Co. in Canon City, L.R. Kintzele, Inc., former president of DWF and
lifetime grower of that company also left to ship to Pikes Peak Wholesale Florists. Very little cooperation existed between the shippers in this area for many months. Each house was struggling for the customers they thought they deserved, or were entitled to from the sales forces that shifted from one shipper to another. Quite some time passed before tensions started easing and the Colorado "esprit de survival" took over again.

In the meantime, the market went through its regular cycles -- up during the holidays, and down to the depths in the summer. The imports had really taken their toll by the mid-to-late 1970's. Colombian flowers had at least an estimated 35 percent of the total U.S. market by the beginning of 1978, and over 60 percent by 1982. The only thing that slowed the Colombians down was the filing for injury through the International Trade Commission in 1976. The decision came out in July, 1977 that there was no apparent injury to the floral industry, therefore, no agreements would be set up under the 1974 International Trade Act. Many believed this was almost the coup de grace for the industry. Growers faced inflationary costs for operations ranging from 600 percent increases on fertilizers, to treble costs of energy. There seemed no end in sight. The Spring of 1977 proved to be an excellent market for a number of reasons -- cold weather in Bogota, no crop in California, and then came the summer when many large growers decided to carry over their crops instead of planting. This put many thousands of blooms on the market, and depressed it even further. Dump ran as high as 35-40 percent, and many had not paid their last winter's fuel bills.
LIST OF GREENHOUSES OUT OF BUSINESS SINCE 1973 (All greenhouses on this list grew carnations.)

As of November 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenhouse Name</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams City Greenhouse</td>
<td>115,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alenius Floral</td>
<td>43,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wm. Storrs Greenhouse</td>
<td>17,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrett’s Greenhouse</td>
<td>24,650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bement Floral Co.</td>
<td>26,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lester Benson Greenhouse</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Braun Floral Co.</td>
<td>173,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruggenthal</td>
<td>30,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown Hill Cemetery</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Brothers Greenhouses</td>
<td>144,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elliot’s Valverde</td>
<td>60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ericksons Greenhouse</td>
<td>18,100</td>
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<td>Fullerton Greenhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ralph Gross Greenhouse</td>
<td>38,500</td>
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<td>Gulley Greenhouse</td>
<td>32,800</td>
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<td>Hannigan Greenhouse</td>
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<td>Homer Hill Greenhouse</td>
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<td>R.E. Hill Greenhouse</td>
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<td>Wide Acre Floral</td>
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2,253,585 Total Sq. Ft.

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The term, or phrase "Marketing Order" needs some mention in this history. A Marketing Order is a vehicle through which agricultural products can better guide their course in the marketplace. A number of provisions are allowed under the Agriculture Marketing Act of 1939. A commodity group can elect to include grading, shipping, research, promotion and any number of things which might help them obtain a better price for their product. Several agricultural commodities in the state were operating successfully, and L.R. Kintzele, Chairman of the Agriculture Commission in the early 70s, believed this was part of the salvation of the carnation industry. In the Fall of 1969, when Bud Kintzele was President of DWF, he initiated talks on the subject and, after appointing a committee, a draft was presented to the growers, approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture, and brought to referendum following hearings in May of 1970. It lost by only two votes in numbers of growers, and although the square footage provision passed, it failed by number of growers. This meant that the small growers were not as much in favor of having a marketing order as was first believed by all the large growers.

In the Fall of 1970, discussions again came to the surface although this time another vote was not taken. The big thing during these times seemed to be to find a method to control imports, or at least legislation to help in getting some orderly
marketing for imported carnations. A national committee was formed with O. Ben Haley as chairman. This committee functioned very effectively until after the filing was refused. The three or four members from Colorado devoted much time and effort to the committee, and O. Ben Haley spent endless hours of time and money to make the committee productive.

The concept of a national or federal Marketing Order was proposed with California. Nothing could be guaranteed that this would stop imports or even hamper their growth, but a lot of time and money was spent to try to get a joint order. A final draft was approved by the Colorado growers, however, it never got off the runway in California. The growers in Southern California thought the marketing order would benefit the growers in Northern California more than it would them, so it never really received a fair hearing in either area.

Colorado again took the leadership on its own, and in the Spring of 1978, the Board of Directors of CFGA voted unanimously to proceed with a Marketing Order for carnations for Colorado.

In August, 1978, at the first general growers' information meeting, the order was explained, pointing out very vividly that the idea was to include those not paying into research and promotional efforts. If they objected, they could have their turn at the hearings, and for the first time in several years it appeared the growers associated with each other through CFGA would stick together and force those not paying to carry part of the load. The group recommended unanimously that the letter be forwarded to the Commissioner of Agriculture requesting that hearings be held and a referendum be called for in early September. A
referendum was held on January 15, 1970, and the order soundly defeated. The dissenters had won again, and it was obvious to all in the industry in this area there would never be a marketing order in Colorado, nor a combination of an order of any kind or type. The carnation growers were on their own as far as promotion of the product was concerned.

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CHAPTER XII

BEGINNING OF THE MERGER

At the end of May 1979, the audit report showed dues income of $195,000. This was about two-thirds of the amount paid in dues only seven years before. The carnation industry was slipping in Colorado for a number of reasons. Perhaps mostly because imports had increased dramatically, cost of fuel continued to rise, and there was very little expansion in the greenhouse business and none in carnations. This subject was not new to the growers, to the Board, or members of the association. It had been a primary subject of conversation for some time. Colorado had for too long been a one-crop state, and the association a one-crop association. The conclusion seemed to be that something had to be done, and the timing was right to do it now. These were perhaps the darkest days the association had ever seen. No one particular person had the solution, but collectively everyone knew something had to happen.

A steering committee was formed to investigate the possibility of merging the Bedding and Pot Plant Association, the Rose Growers and the Carnation Growers into one group. This appeared logical, economical and feasible, until it was suggested to the leadership of the three groups. The rose committee was already under the CFGA name, so no obstacle existed. It was the Bedding and Pot Plant Association and its small membership. This group had only been activated and incorporated for a few years, and maintained a high standard for themselves as individualists who could and would
control their own destiny in the floral industry. Their budget was not large, their dues were nominal, and they employed a part-time secretary to run the association. With no money in reserve, they had carried on research at CSU through the leadership of Dr. Ken Goldsberry for several years. Financial matters did not bother them as far as a merger was concerned, but they did not want to lose their autonomy as an association.

To elaborate on the six to eighteen month period it took to iron out all the problems of merging two organizations, could fill a volume by itself. To recap it and make it "history-worthy", we could say three people served with distinction and honor in accomplishing what seemed an unsurmountable task. John Shelton of Veldkamp's, later manager of DWF, Tim Haley of Pikes Peak and Dave Tagawa of Tagawa Greenhouses, Inc. met for hours on top of hours molding, shaping, trimming, tuning and honing some rules and regulations which would be adopted by the memberships of both groups into one which would be known as the Colorado Greenhouse Growers Association, Inc. This came about by a vote of the membership on June 7, 1979, and dues at the rate of three-fourths cent per square foot were assessed beginning July 1, 1979. Dues were increased by vote of the membership to one cent per sq. ft. and ratified by vote of the Board of Directors on November 12, 1980.

The new organization followed all the legal steps to become one by changing the name, electing directors, setting up new by-laws with Bill Crowley as Chairman, which were compatible to all. (NOTE: This was almost a miracle within itself. After several years the by-laws are still working, and at present it would appear only some minor changes need to be made.)
The objectives of the new association were simplified from the previous organization. Research and education without any promotion became the style of the day. Each commodity would share an appropriate cost of anything done which benefits all members, and each commodity, in turn, would have funds available to expend on projects they wished to support. Although the budget is presently only about one-third of the association budget in its heyday of the early 70's, it supports a strong and viable association office which seems adequate, compared to the times the industry is going through.

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PART II
"THE FAMILIES"

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Floral industry in Colorado is a story of the most important element -- the people, families whose offspring continued in the industry, perpetuating their parents' dreams of making it easier for the children than it had been for themselves.

This section will deal with a number of families in the business. There was always a close connection between all growers through marriage, partnerships, neighbor relationships, part-time employment, and brother-in-law and sister-in-law help. The families covered are mentioned not because of the number of families involved, not for the contributions made, but in many cases only because the information available came from those families, and not from others.

There is no doubt, however, that these families are an integral part of the history of this business.
The Amato family is very much a part of the later generation of growers. Jenny Spano, the sister of Clara Elliott, married Ralph Amato. Ralph Amato came to this country with his family when he was a young boy from Naples, Italy. The marriage of Jenny and Ralph produced four boys and a girl -- Joe, Geno, Sam, Jim and Angeleno. All four brothers eventually went into the greenhouse business. In 1957, Geno and Joe became partners, and built in the same area near Sonny Elliott. In 1960, Sam built 47,000 sq. ft. there, and put the entire crop in carnations. Jim Amato followed suit with 30,000 sq. ft. in another area on East 66th Avenue.

Joe Jr., Joe Amato's son, took over the operation of the greenhouse belonging to his father and Uncle Geno in 1980, and renamed it Moonshine Greenhouse. Sam had planned on changes after he had been growing about ten years. The Amato brothers had shipped all their carnation production to Davis Bros. Wholesale. But in 1972, Sam started his own wholesale house, calling it Amato Wholesale Florists, and eventually took all the production of the family. After ten years of growing, Sam decided to build another range. He ventured to the Brighton area, and on Highway 7 between I-25 and Brighton, he built 100,000 sq. ft. carnation range. In January, 1983, Sam sold out the wholesale house and the Brighton range to Jeff Cross and E. Eugene Lotspeich. The Commerce City area is committed, and sold to Metro Sewer District for expansion of
the metro sewer plant. The entire ground area is to be vacated by June, 1986.

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John Balistreri was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1909, the third from the last in a family of thirteen children, nine boys and four girls. John's father, Andrew Balistreri, was born in St. Elia, Sicily, married Mary Busalacchi, and came to the United States in the 1880s. They journeyed to Milwaukee because they had relatives there, and it was much easier to settle in with your own kin. John came to Colorado on vacation in the early 30s, and in 1935 came here and married Josephine Elliott, the oldest daughter of Joe Alioto (Elliott) and Clara Elliott. They moved back to Milwaukee, then in 1943 moved to Denver to a house on 66th and Washington. John and Josephine had three children -- Joe, born in 1939, John, in 1942, and June, 1945.

John Balistreri worked for the Colorado Southern Railway, because he had been a railroader before coming here. He watched the greenhouse industry business grow, since many of the family were going into the business. In 1961, he built his first greenhouse on 67th and North Washington, known as the Copeland Ranch. The structure was two glass-covered houses 114 x 114 ft. He raised the children in that neighborhood, and the oldest son, Joe, became a partner with his dad. Joe married Eleanor Rubner in 1964. Eleanor was from Colorado, but her father had gone to school with John's younger brother, Salvatore, and younger sister, Nina, in Milwaukee. Joe and Ellie had three children, two girls and a boy. John started retiring in 1976, and helped in the greenhouse by
watering and feeding in the mornings. Eventually Joe took over the Balistreri Greenhouses on his own.

The second son, John A., to distinguish himself from his father, followed in the business. He started to work for the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, then left to build his own greenhouses in October, 1961. John had married Birdie Belding by this time, and was ready to raise a family. He became more involved in the greenhouse business. Birdie and John had three children -- two boys, John and Eddie, and a girl, Julie.

Young John became very active in industry affairs, and in 1975 through 1977, served as president of the Colorado Flower Growers Association. In 1977, he received the "Distinguished Service Award" at the annual meeting in June. He continued to be active, and in 1978, was elected to the presidency of the American Carnation Society. He served for two years. John was also elected to the Board of Directors of the Denver Wholesale Florists Company, and continued until his resignation in 1983.

The Balistreris have made a distinct contribution to the industry in Colorado, although they would be considered newcomers by the standards of the early industry.

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If you have ever seen any old photographs of Denver around 1900, you noted there wasn't much development outside downtown, or along the river or railroad tracks. A few scattered farms appeared here and there, and one such place was a dairy located in the vicinity of Colorado Boulevard and Mexico Avenue. This dairy was owned by Daniel Braun. Dan Braun liked to grow flowers, and believed there was a market for them. He soon knew this was a good flower climate, so he built greenhouses.

Daniel Braun fathered two sons, Daniel P. and Richard W. These boys grew up in the dairy and flower business in the vicinity of the Safeway Headquarters building at East Mexico, South Jackson Street, and Colorado Blvd. Young Dan married Teah Pricer, and they had three children -- Danna Lee, Richard G., and Joan M. Of these children, young Dick, as he was called (so as not to confuse him with his uncle, Dick Braun), was born July 9, 1933, and became very much a part of the floral industry in the state. His father, Dan, worked for some time for Beatrice Foods. His Uncle Dick went to Denver University, received his degree in accounting, and had been an all-conference guard in football at DU. Dick Braun married Helen Ransom and raised two daughters, Kay and Sue, neither of whom stayed associated with the flower business.

In those days, there weren't too many growers, and a sort of fraternity existed, not only for the exchange of ideas, but socially as well.
Many stories have been told of the annual picnics held in the summer following the planting and clean-out at the end of a season of hard work. In 1928, the annual picnic took place at Daniels Park, south of the Littleton area. An excellent crowd had the usual good time with ball games, refreshments, and all the good things that go with a summer picnic with friends and associates. But the elder Dan Braun suffered a severe cut on his arm with a glass container. He washed it off in a nearby horse trough, and within a week died from blood poisoning. He had been married a second time, and the surviving Susie Braun decided she did not want any partner relatives in business with her.

Things did not go as well as planned. In 1935, the banks had foreclosed on many businesses, and the Silver State Bank held a mortgage on a couple of the Braun greenhouses. The bank decided these greenhouses needed better management, and approached Dan and Dick, asking them to take them over, since they had previously been successful in the business. They became partners. At this time, the greenhouse grew tomatoes, and did very well. They were known as the largest tomato greenhouse range west of the Mississippi.

In the meantime, they had purchased a greenhouse, called the Colorado Floral Co. at 5001 East Evans Ave., about a mile "as the crow flies" from the home place on East Mexico. This partnership lasted only two years, and in 1937, the Braun brothers agreed to separate. Dick kept the home place (Jackson St.) and Dan took the Evans greenhouses. A stipulation in the separation of the partnership stated Dick was not allowed to grow tomatoes because Dan did not want to compete with his brother for the same customers. So all during
World War II, Dick raised carnations, and Dan raised tomatoes. Carnations made good money, and the tomato business did not.

Young Dick grew up at the Evans Greenhouses. He worked every summer, most of the time at the business. Gradual expansion took place, and the crops changed from vegetables to floral. Dick went to CSU, majored in Floriculture, and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1955. He joined the Navy, became a pilot, and following the sudden death of his father in 1959 returned home in 1960. He immediately decided to get into the flower business in a bigger way, leasing George Newberry's place nearby which he ran for two years. Next, came Al Zimmerman's place for two years, then the Iliff Greenhouses for six years.

In addition to running the Evans place, he took over Uncle Dick's home place in 1968, and operated it until it was torn down for development in 1975.

In mid 1974, the family estate of Daniel Braun, (young Dick's father), wanted to liquidate their assets, and the Christmas crop cut in December that year, ended the last production from Evans street. This had been a grower-shipper operation since the demise of Park-Elitch in 1967, where all the production of this family had gone since Park-Elitch opened as a wholesale house.

Dick had married Dorothy Le Baron in 1956, a year out of college. They had three children -- Gayle, William and Daniel. Dick, vitally interested in the flower business, had grown up on Evans next to the greenhouse, and decided he would become active in the affairs of the industry. He joined the American Carnation Society, and wanted to compete in the famous flower shows held each year at the annual conventions. The first one he
entered was 1963 in Dallas. He won first on 11 vases of different varieties, three seconds, two thirds, but no gold medal. He couldn't understand this, so he volunteered to be Show Steward at the Chicago show in 1964. He must have figured something out, because that year he won a Gold Medal and a Silver Medal with a red variety.

Tom Eakins, Bob Sandidge, Manager of Braun-Eakins Co. congratulate Dick Braun after winning the Gold Medal at the San Francisco Show in 1966. Dick had also won the Gold at the 64 and 65 shows.
In 1962, Charles Trombetta of Marboro, Mass. showed at the Miami convention, and won both a gold and silver medal. A proud eastern grower, he immediately said he would have a medal struck which would be called the Charles Trombetta Gold Medal Award. It was to be awarded to the one exhibitor who wins both the gold and silver Witterstaetter Sweepstakes Medals at the same annual exhibition, or to any exhibitor who wins the Gold Witterstaetter Sweepstakes Award Medal in two consecutive annual exhibitions. Trombetta looked forward to the next year when he would possibly win a gold medal again, and have a shot at the Charles Trombetta Gold Medal for himself.

Dick Braun, Dan Braun Floral Co. had other ideas. He won the Trombetta Gold Medal Award in 1964 at Chicago, again in 1965 in Philadelphia, and repeated in 1966 at San Francisco. No other grower ever won the Trombetta award again. Braun, in those years developed a reputation as a quality grower. He also won the S.S. Pennock Award. It didn't take carnation growers around the country long to recognize the name of the Dan Braun Floral Co. in Denver.

The two Braun boys, Dan and Dick, and young Dick, were very much a part of the history of the carnation business in Colorado, Dan was innovator in growing. He worked diligently on labor-saving devices. He pioneered automatic watering by working with Gates engineers on the automatic system to make it more efficient. He instigated liquid feeding, steam sterilization, and worked in the development of air conditioning with Bill Leonard. As in most partnerships and families, one member is a grower type and the other a business type. Dan was a grower, and it followed his son, young Dick Braun, was also a grower.
The Byerly name is well-known to the later generation of people in the floral business, having been involved in the growing, wholesaling and retailing segments for the past 35 years.

John and Bob Byerly were born in Mobridge, So. Dakota. Their parents moved to Bismark, then the three boys and two girls in the family were raised in Mandan, just across the river from Bismark. John was destined to be in business, and opened a new type hand-packed ice cream store while still in high school. He sold the business when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. The Corps sent him to Noumea, New Caledonia where he became active in operating the Post Exchange for the Marine base. He spent most of the war in the South Pacific. Returning to the U.S. he was stationed in Washington to run the Bowling Field Post Exchange, comparable to Marshall Fields in Chicago.

Byerly decided in the late 40s, to again come West. Although not acquainted with the floral business, he purchased a flower shop named Lehrer's at Speer & Federal, the present location of Berry's Restaurant, and diagonally across from the old Hover Ford Motor Co. After a very short time, the place burned down. He discovered a small neighborhood store at 38th & Irving Streets for sale. With some financial help from the realtor, he purchased the building, now the headquarters office for the present 14 Lehrer's Flower stores, the wholesale and growing operations.
John Byerly, center, discusses industry matters with Chuck Haley, left, and Gordon Koon, right, at a CFGA meeting.
Following the opening at the new location, he called his younger brother, Bob, who had been his partner since he was 12 years old. Bob was married and still living in North Dakota. He and his wife Fran, then moved to Denver, where Bob managed the Lehrer's Aurora location. As the company purchased growing locations, it became apparent the wholesale operation would be a large part of the business. John met with Bud Brenkert regarding the Associated Wholesale, one of the oldest wholesale houses in Denver in the 1700 block of Wazee. John was interested in buying a third interest in the operation. After several meetings, the wholesale house closed. John bought some minor pieces of equipment, then opened it again in March, 1958 as Associated Wholesale Florists.

Bob became manager of the wholesale house, and it soon became a leading wholesale operation with trucks running to Wyoming, North Dakota, Montana, South Dakota and Kansas, making deliveries of cut flowers, green foliage plants and blooming plants. The supply department expanded, and a manufacturing division was established for making arrangements of artificial and dried material.

This major operation remained on Wazee Street in lower downtown Denver for about 25 years, when the company decided to enter into a new concept of marketing flowers. This is Lehrer's superblock located in a 35,000 sq. ft. marketing center at 2100 W. Mississippi. A $1.5 million remodeling job is bound to attract attention as a new marketing concept in the future. Bob Byerly moved to the location, setting up the new operation, but suddenly passed away of a heart attack October 25, 1983. Bob had made many contributions to the industry. An association member, he served on the Board of Directors and a number of committees.
The growing operation of this company is also an interesting story. The Binder Greenhouse at 49th & York St. became the first one purchased. Also a retail shop, Byerlys operated it this way through three major wipe-outs by hail, fire and hail. It is presently used more for a holding holiday make-up area for delivery and refrigeration. Another early purchase was the Quinn place at 29th & Newland Street. This was almost a matter of necessity. They couldn't buy poinsettias for Christmas in the early years of retailing, so they bought Quinns to grow them there. It also became headquarters for their delivery fleet as business grew. Quinn's closed as a growing operation in 1978. In 1965, they built the Applewood location as both nursery and greenhouse. In 1974, they bought the Parker Road site near Franktown. It was owned by Dick Miller, brother of Don Miller at Parker. After Dick died in an automobile accident, the estate put the greenhouse up for sale. It contained 31 acres with a greenhouse of 50,000 sq. ft. Finally in the summer of 1984, it sold to a nursery operation. The only other active greenhouse location left was the Graul Greenhouse at 44th & Wadsworth. John Byerly bought it in 1975 to grow green and blooming plants. It is now the home of Lehrer Plant Leasing Company.

It is obvious from the number of locations, and type of operations owned by John Byerly, that his business transactions in the floral industry have had an impact on the progress of horticulture in Colorado. John has also taken time to serve on numerous committees, boards of directors of national groups, and served two terms as a representative from the Jefferson County area in the Colorado State Legislature.
William Crowley was a state boiler inspector around the turn of the century. He thought an opportunity existed in the greenhouse business, as he inspected them, and in 1922, he purchased the Englewood Greenhouses, located in the 3600 block between Acoma St. and So. Broadway. His son, Harold, had just graduated from high school, and had attended one year at the Colorado School of Mines. In 1922, after Harold finished his first year of college, his father thought this would be an excellent summer job for him. He put him in charge of the greenhouse, and Harold was associated with the business from then until retirement. Harold married Tilma Ochsner in 1935, and they had five children -- Alice, Margary, Jeanette, William and John. Three years later, he was joined in the business by his younger brother, Raymond, at the Englewood location. That same year, Ray married his wife, Dolores, and they were blessed with seven children -- Dennis, Michael, Kathy, Tim, Terry, Peter, and Elizabeth. Of all these twelve children, only one ended up in the greenhouse business, and that was Harold's son, Bill, the present owner of Crowley Brothers Greenhouses, Inc.

This is how it all came about. Harold and Ray sold the Englewood Greenhouse to Otis Fullerton in 1955. Otis had an older brother, Lyman Fullerton, who was also associated with the greenhouse field for many years. They both had worked for several carnation growers in the area. They then purchased the Charles Benson Greenhouse
Ray and Harold Crowley look over their crop on 26th & Grant Sts. This was one of several locations of the Crowley family over a number of years.
at 2600 S. Grant St. Charles was a brother of N.A. Benson, prominent in Denver Wholesale Florists Co. Out of the Grant St. Greenhouse came a sport of Red Sim named Crowley Pink Sim. This became the standard pink of the industry from 1945 until the present. The royalties from this variety encouraged Harold and Ray to expand their operations. They purchased land on South Santa Fe Drive, and in 1946, started building a range, which is located at 7000 So. Santa Fe, and called the Littleton Range.

Harold and Ray incorporated their business in 1959, and looked forward to more expansion, and some good years ahead. Harold served on the Board of Directors of Denver Wholesale, and was elected president of that company in 1955. He held that office for 11 years. At the annual meeting of the growers association in 1966, Harold was awarded the Distinguished Service Award, and in 1972, he received a special award from the Flower Growers Association for 50 years of Active Leadership Service in the industry.

Ray Crowley also became active in industry affairs. He served on a number of committees of CFGA, and was elected president in 1964. Particularly active in the American Carnation Society, he was named ACS Man of the Year in 1969. In mid-1972, Ray became ill, and within a few months died of cancer, at the age of 55. This put a whole new perspective on Crowley Bros. Inc. Harold and Ray had jointly owned the stock, and suddenly Harold again was the sole owner of the two ranges, Grant Street and Littleton. A son-in-law, Marvin Briggs, married to Harold's oldest daughter, Alice, had been the grower at Littleton for 23 years. The logical thing seemed to be to sell the stock to Marvin Briggs and his son, Bill Crowley,
Ray Crowley, his wife, Dolores, and Chuck Haley, at the head table of a CFGA meeting in 1970.
who wanted to get into the greenhouse business. Marvin and Bill purchased the stock in 1974, and operated it for several years until 1979, when Briggs decided to get out of the business, and sold his stock to Bill and Carmen Crowley, now sole owners of Crowley Bros. Greenhouses, Inc.

The Littleton location of Crowley Bros. has much history of its own. It is the range which was forced to be converted from coal to gas, and it suffered extreme damage in the 1965 flood. On July 3, 1967, it had both the good and the bad. Carmen Hutchison and Bill Crowley decided to pay a visit to his folks to give them some exciting news. Carmen wore a new diamond ring on her third finger, left hand, and wanted very much to tell Bill's folks about it. Harold came home from the greenhouse, sat down and ate lunch. Following lunch, he went out to the garage, but came back with a gunny sack full of ice. His wife, Tilma, asked, "What's that for"? Harold answered, "We were hailed out before lunch on the complete east range!" Carmen said it sort of ruined her engagement announcement to her future in-laws.

Bill went to Colorado State University, but did not major in horticulture. He was an economics major, and took a few elective courses in horticulture. When he was a junior in 1966, he toured Denver with one of the horticulture Professor's classes. The tour group visited Denver Wholesale, and as they walked through the front office, Bill stuck his head in the door and said, "Hi, Dad." This was a shocker to the tour professor, who had no idea Bill was connected to the industry by relationship, since he was not a horticulture major and, of course, had no idea his father was president of DWF.

While Bill was at Fort Collins, he and George
Traeber built a greenhouse outside of town. Not encouraged to do this by his family, he had a desire to get into the business, and felt his place in the line of succession through all the Crowley family, would never come to pass. Upon graduation, he sold his interest to George Traeber, who later sold the greenhouse to Prof. W.D. "Bob" Holley, about the time of Bob's retirement in 1974.

Bill had worked for his father, for Ed Kornfeld and Park Floral in his growing-up years, and his interest and experience qualified him for his take-over of the Crowley Bros. Greenhouse to carry on a tradition of more than 60 years.

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George Echter came from Bavaria when he was a young man. The family in that country had been in horticulture for generations, and Echter followed the footsteps of his family, except he decided to pursue it in a new world.

When he came to this country, he worked for a time in Portland, Oregon, then moved on east through Canada, and into the Minnesota area near Worthington. He married Opal Kramer there in 1917, and they raised four boys -- Paul, Don, Bob and Jim. In Colorado growers are familiar with Bob and Jim.

The Echter family built their first greenhouse in Sibley, Iowa, just across the state line. The boys grew up in this environment, but knew there was not a big enough market for any expansion. Eventually Bob and Jim moved on, and the two older brothers stayed there. Don's son, Greg, came to the Denver area in 1985 to pursue his career in the industry, and joined Tony Euser's Blue Sky Flower Farm.

Bob Echter served in the Air Force as a bombadier, and while stationed in Big Spring, Texas, met Mary Lumpkins. After he was transferred to Tampa, Florida, they were married in 1945. Following his discharge, he worked a year in the Tampa area for a citrus cannery in accounting. The weather was not that agreeable, so the Echter's came to Colorado to see what this climate was like. They settled at first in Colorado Springs, and Bob went to work for Pikes Peak Greenhouses in the rose
Bob Echter, on the right, receives award from Pomeroy Thomson at an American Carnation Society meeting in Boston in 1964.
range. After a few months, he decided if he was going to be in this business, he might as well get educated. He enrolled at CSU in Ft. Collins in 1947, and graduated with a degree in horticulture after three years of going full-time including summers. He recalls classmates with recognized names such as Pearson, Fullerton, Obluda, Koon, Farmer and others.

Following graduation, he came to Denver to manage the D.S. Grimes greenhouse at about 30th & Federal Blvd. He stayed there a year, and then moved to manage John Lyttle greenhouses on Depew Street. In 1954, he leased the Lyttle greenhouses, and then purchased them in 1956. Three years later, he was joined by brother, Jim, and together they bought the Bill Bluemel greenhouses on 52nd & Garrison Streets in Arvada, which is the present location of Echter's.

In 1960, Bob sold the Depew Greenhouses to Roger and Harry Farmer, and decided on a building program on Garrison St. Additions were added every couple of years, and in 1965 he bought out Jim, who decided to move to a new growing area, Encinitas, California.

Bob and Mary raised a family of six children -- Steve, born in 1949, Randy, 1951, Susan 1953, Dana, 1958, David, 1960 and Tammy, 1965. They built their home adjacent to the greenhouse on West 52nd Avenue, and continued a greenhouse building program which was completed in 1975, with a total of 107,000 square feet.

Steve graduated from the University of Colorado in 1971, and upon graduation, decided there were probably opportunities in the family business other than cleaning out benches, pouring cement, and replanting, which he had done as a growing young man. Bob offered him a position to
make some changes, and in 1979, the Echter greenhouse sold plants and other things out of the greenhouse, which for years had been one solid carnation operation. The next five to six years showed a dramatic change in the operation of Echter's greenhouses. Carnations occupy approximately 30,000 sq. ft., but the balance is in garden center and seasonal crops, sold both wholesale and through the retail outlet. It is one of the finest garden center operations in Colorado.

In 1982, Bob and Steve got a boost when Dave Echter returned to the family business. Both Steve and Dave became active supporters of the association, willing to do their share of extra details to improve the industry. They will undoubtedly follow in the footsteps of their father, and many family members before them who were associated with horticulture and the nursery industry.

In the peak carnation production years, Bob Echter became known as one of the quality growers in Colorado. He attended American Carnation Society meetings, and showed regularly at their annual flower shows. Most of the time being in the winning categories with awards such as, the Anna K. Ball Award; the Joseph H. Hill Award; the W.W. Thomson Award and dozens of gold, silver, bronze and sweepstakes awards. Bob Echter made many contributions to the industry in Colorado, and to think carnations and Colorado, one cannot help but think of the name of Echter.
Although you could call them the late comers in the flower growing business, the Elliots and all the relatives in the greenhouse industry are not really newcomers to the growing end, nor to the Denver area. They have been here since the turn of the century, and are very much a part of the history of Colorado flowers.

It all started with Joseph Spano. He married Mariana Petrucci in Sicily, and they raised six children. The oldest was Joe, then Jennie, Salvatore, Samuel, Anthony and Clara. All these names will appear in other families, because of the custom to name the first boy after the paternal grandfather and the second son after the maternal grandfather.

Of these children, who came to the United States with their parents in 1902, we will concern ourselves at this time with the youngest daughter, Clara. Clara was born in Palermo October 12, 1896. Her parents were gardeners in Sicily, which had a great deal to do with the future of her life and her family. She married Joseph Alioto in 1912, and raised four children. All four are well-known in the state's flower business. Josephine, the oldest, is married to John Balistreri. Mary married Anthony Rosa, who died at the young age of 45 years, and then she married Mariano (Mike) Balistreri. Marion (Sonny) is next, and his wife is Dorothy Guerin, then Anthony (Nanny) who married Wilma Thurman.
It would seem appropriate at this time to explain the difference in the two names, Alioto and Elliott. Joe Alioto was well-known in the lower part of downtown Denver, where he peddled his produce. He always carried the best vegetables, and was sought out by the buyers. When he wouldn't show up, they would say, "Where the 'els eliot?", dropping off the "0" from the name. He soon became known as Elliott rather than Alioto, and nothing indicates that an official name change was ever recorded.

To explain each family's history as it relates to the industry and their part in the history, it perhaps should be done in chronological order as much as possible.

Joseph Alioto was the son of Mariano Alioto (1859-1915). Joe was born in Sicily October 15, 1891, and died October 10, 1964. He came to this country when he was 12 with his family. Sailing from Sicily on the ship, SICILY, they landed at Ellis Island April 27, 1903. Many of the emigrants from Sicily in those years went to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, perhaps to renew family ties in a new world. Or that was the quickest and best way to find where they wanted to locate and make their living. Many from Wisconsin traveled to Colorado, and liked it here. Employees were needed by the railroads, in the timber business, and in other enterprises. The Aliotos had been raised near the ocean, and made their living as fishermen. Some of the Alioto family went further west to San Francisco, where the fishing industry was centered at that time. One of them later became mayor of that city, and the Elliotts (Aliotos) in Denver still have numerous relatives in the bay area.
Sonny Elliott served as president of the Association in 1973.

The first son of Joe and Clara Alioto was Marion (Sonny), born on a farm in the Arvada area in 1918. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to the Copeland Ranch, now located in the vicinity of 64th Avenue and North Washington St. He attended schools in Globeville (Retreat Park), Welby area and Mapleton School.
In December, 1936, Sonny married Dorothy Guerin. Dorothy, born in Jamestown, Colorado, lived in Boulder through the sixth grade in school. Her family then moved to the Derby-Adams City area where Dorothy graduated from high school. Dorothy was known as the family historian, and for years gathered information on both sides of the family. Members of this association were saddened to hear she passed away November 1, 1985.

The location of Elliott Greenhouses at 6141 Steele Street is a story in itself. Clara's two older brothers, Salvatore and Samuel Spano, owned 110 acres of bottom land in the vicinity of the Public Service Company Cherokee Station. In 1949, following a number of years of truck farming, they sold the property to their brother, Anthony, (father of Peppi and Jimmy Spano), and their two sisters, Clara, Joe Alioto's wife, and Jennie, who is Mrs. Ralph Amato. This accounts for the location of the Spanos, Amatos and Elliotts all living in the immediate vicinity of one another.

Sonny and his father then bought 30 acres of this land in 1943 to do their own farming. They raised cabbage, broccoli, peppers, onions and were the largest growers of pascal celery in the state. They sold their products at the Denargo Market. Sonny had thought of building a greenhouse to start celery. He and his mother visited a number of greenhouses in the area. One Sunday they stopped at Kenneth Lawlor's on 29th Ave. & Lowell Blvd. Kenneth was the most helpful grower they had encountered in their rounds of visiting growers. Sonny and his dad thought they could use the greenhouse for celery, and for carnation plants in the off celery season. The only problem was the carnations were ready to market at the same time they needed the space for celery.
Kenneth came faithfully to visit every week following the construction of the first two Elliott greenhouses in 1949. They were 28 ft. by 108 ft. Once they found the two products were not seasonally compatible, they converted over to carnations and share-cropped the rest of their land. There was really not that much land left, because in 1943, they had sold 13 acres -- called the Mayfield Place -- to Sonny's sister, Mary, and her husband, Anthony Rosa. The Rosas later sold it to Public Service Co. for the Cherokee Plant.

About three years later, the Elliotts expanded their range with Lord and Burnham Greenhouses, and in 1957, Sonny and Dorothy built their home next door. These were good years in the carnation business. When the rest of the family and relatives saw Sonny and his Dad expand their place, and build a new home, they knew there must be money in the flower business. It blossomed from then on. The next place to be built was by S.T. Spano on 52nd, then Amatos, then Balistreris, and on it went.

The youngest son of Clara and Joe, named Anthony and nicknamed "Nanny," stayed in the Arvada area after the rest of the family moved north, and he farmed his own property until 1947.

Joe and Clara Elliott had started building their home in 1943. They bought material and worked on it as time allowed. They had done the framework, including rafters, when the War Materials Board representative informed them they could not finish the house, because of the wartime materials shortages. The house remained that way until after the war. It was finally completed in 1946. In the meantime, they had been living in one of the employee houses on the place. When they moved into their new home, son, Nanny, then moved
into the house where his parents had lived, and began farming the Elliott land. Nanny built his house nearby in 1954, and his greenhouse, Steele St. Greenhouses, in 1952. He operated the greenhouse until 1980, when he leased it to Ralph Dunbar, who married Judy Elliott, Nanny's niece. Judy later built near Brighton, and named her place Sable Blvd. Greenhouses.

Nanny married Wilma Thurman, a local girl, in 1939 and they had three children, Shirley, born in 1940, William (Buddy) born in 1941, and Joseph (Jumbo) born in 1945. The boys got their nicknames from their grandmother Clara, who called them "Bubba" and "Jumbo" when they were babies. Buddy married Donna Falbo in 1961, who was raised just two blocks from their present greenhouse at 64th & Lowell Blvd. Jumbo married Gladys DeSantis, a north Denver girl, in 1965. Together the boys had started building their greenhouses in 1964. They completed both ranges of approximately 30,000 sq. ft. in 1972, then dissolved their partnership with both taking a range for themselves. Buddy named his Mountain View Greenhouses, and later changed the name to Elliott Gardens, and Jumbo named his Alioto Greenhouses. They both built homes adjacent to the greenhouses, and in 1983 their father and mother built a home in the close vicinity after selling the property on Steele Street.

The other two members of the family were Josephine, the oldest sister who married John Balistreri, who had come from Milwaukee, and sister, Mary, wife of Anthony Rosa. All four offspring of Joe Elliott and Clara Spano ended up in the greenhouse business.

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THE EUSER FAMILY

Gerrit and Barbara Euser lived in H.I. Ambacht, Holland (South Holland), and raised seven children. In the flower business in Denver, we know three of them. Nellie is the oldest, and works with Bob Euser at his range. Anthony is the oldest boy, and Bob is the fifth child of the seven.

Anthony (Tony) was born March 30, 1923 in Holland, and came to the United States, landing in New York on his 24th birthday in 1947. He was sponsored by Frank Dykstra, who had been active in the flower growing business for a number of years in Colorado, and who then owned a greenhouse and an outside growing area in Brighton, raising glads and fall astors. Tony worked for Frank one year, and then became a salesman for Western Seed Co. He sold for that firm from 1948 to 1952.

Tony met his future wife, Jean Flautz, a Kentucky girl who was attending Denver University, at the Central Christian Church in downtown Denver. They were married in 1948 following Jean's graduation from DU. In 1952, they started a new concept in nursery and flower selling, when they opened a new type garden center in downtown Aurora. In 1954, Tony sponsored his sister, Nellie, and she arrived here later that year. Nellie worked in an insurance office in downtown Denver for a couple of years, and then went to work with Tony in Aurora. She worked there 11 years, then bought the inventory and business from him. She operated it on her own for five years, selling it in 1972 when she started working for her brother, Bob, at the main range on 32nd Avenue. She has been his right
arm since that time. Bob's story appears a little farther along in this history.

Tony, in the meantime, bought 160 acres north of the city along I-25 near Broomfield to build new greenhouses. This was 1959. He very quickly sold off 80 acres to Beef Breeders Inc., in order to have capital for those greenhouses. The first range was 30,000 sq. ft. for carnations in 1963. He then added another 30,000 in 1966, 30,000 in 1968, and then started on a four-phase program with Ikes-Braun Greenhouses for 50,000 sq. ft. in the years 1972, '74, '75 and '76. Other ranges were completed after that, and he ended up with 509,000 sq. ft. in 1979. Anthony, Jr. came home from Northwestern University with a Masters Degree in Business Administration in 1977, and started his career in the industry.

Tony, Jr. was the youngest of the three Euser children. Barbara was born in 1949, and is now married with two daughters. She is an attorney, as is her husband. Dora, born in 1951, has taught all over the world. She was in the Peace Corps, and she married Rockford-King, an Englishman. Tony and his wife, Peggy, have three daughters. In the last few years, Tony, Jr. has taken over the greenhouses started by his father and mother, Jean, to leave them more time to enjoy semi-retirement. Both Tony and Jean are avid skiers, mountain climbers, cyclists and hikers. They have hiked and skied all over the world.

In 1954, as previously mentioned Tony, Sr. had sponsored his sister, Nellie, to come to the U.S., and he did the same for his younger brother, Bob. Bob was married June 17, 1952 to Tonny Van Dorp, and they planned to come to America on their honeymoon. However, things did not work out that way at the time, because Bob's papers did not come
through. Finally arriving in Denver in September, after a freighter trip from Holland, they moved into the Happy Landing Apartments, less than one-half mile from the present home and greenhouses.

Bob's first job was with Mr. Thompson, a partner of Earl Bates and Gudmund Jensen at the 32nd Avenue Greenhouses. He had put in seven years when Thompson died, but continued working for the widow for about one year, buying the operation from her August 1, 1959. The place had 15,000 sq. ft., and over a period of four years, Bob added 30,000 sq. ft., improving the house on the property into a lovely home. He was raising a family while starting on the greenhouses expansion. Son, Gary, was born in April, 1953. Gary married and has three boys. Son, Harry, was born in 1954. He is also married with one daughter. Bob and Tonny's third child is Adrian, a girl born in 1974. Both sons are active in the business with their father.

Euser's expansion program was in segments of 50,000 sq. ft. at a time. He first built on Indiana St. in 1966, putting it all in carnations, adding another 50,000 in 1969. Then, in 1970 and 71, came another 135,000 sq. ft. for rose production. His first constructed range on McIntyre occurred in 1973, and three years later this range was 320,000 sq. ft., all in roses. This completed the building program Bob had started in 1959. The 32nd St. & Pierce location, known as the home place, always had been a propagation area, but immediately after taking it over, Bob commenced the serious business of growing carnation cuttings. Visualizing a market for cuttings, he increased his sales in them from 10,000 for the first year, adding 100 percent each year until, at present, he is selling approximately three million a year.

He had always been a DWF shipper, but in 1977
he left Denver Wholesale Florists, where he was one of the largest shippers and on the Board of Directors, and formed a partnership with Charles T. Haley of Pikes Peak Greenhouses in Colorado Springs. Together they opened a Denver branch. This partnership lasted until February, 1985, when Bob purchased Haley's share of the wholesale operation to become his own grower-shipper, selling only his own production. It is interesting to note that Bob shipped to Davis Bros. for eight years, to DWF for eight years, and was associated with Pikes Peak for eight years.

Euser has been an active participant in industry affairs since arriving in Colorado. He served as Chairman of the Rose Committee of the Colorado Greenhouse Association for three years, as Governor of Roses, Inc., for three years, and a director of Denver Wholesale Florists as a member of the SAF-AFMC committee. He was elected to the Growers Council of SAF, and as an SAF director. He ran for vice president of SAF in 1983, but was narrowly defeated for this high national office. Two years later he would have become president. He has since been encouraged to run again, but has many responsibilities to his company and his operations in Colorado and other parts of the world. The Eusers have definitely made a contribution to the floral industry in this state, this country, and abroad.

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The Gerace name is associated with Welby Gardens, and that places the location of this family among many more greenhouse families in Western Adams County. Alex Gerace was the son of Carmen and Philamena Gerace, who came from Calibraria, Italy, in 1900. They settled in this area, and Alex was born in Lafayette, near the coal mine area where his father worked. His father died when Alex was two years old. He grew up around Welby, and married Ester Pugliese November 6, 1938. Ester was the daughter of Carmen and Rosina Pugliese who came from Bari, Italy, and settled around the Irondale area.

Alex grew up working in the truck gardens around Welby with his stepfather, Frank Serratore. He bought 20 acres of his own in 1943, and decided that he needed more space to start plants, so built his first greenhouse which was 35 x 60 feet, in 1949.

Alex and Ester raised six children. The first born was Philomena in 1940, Carmen in 1941, Rosemary, 1943, Alex, Jr., 1948, John, 1949 and Marie, 1954. The children grew up working with their parents in the field and greenhouses, and all married and live in the near vicinity of the greenhouse complex. The three boys -- Carmen, Alex and John are all involved in the growing operation, and have been innovators in every phase of growing, shipping, selling, transporting and marketing their own products.
Following the first buildings made of glass, every other year they added more houses, and in 1961, built their first fiberglass house. In 1963, they built a steel-frame house, and again expanded every other year until they reached well over 200,000 square feet of growing and propagating area.

Alex, Jr. graduated from the University of Colorado in Business Administration, and there is no doubt his education benefited him when he opened Welby Garden Center in 1972. Ester said it was necessary to open the Garden Center, because they couldn't keep people out of the greenhouse, and they got in the way.

Welby Gardens ships to a large marketing area. They started in 1978 shipping to Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Louisiana, and continue to supply those markets with bedding plants and other green plants. The Gerace family has made many contributions to the industry in Colorado, and is one of the few families who built in the World War II years, who didn't grow carnations.

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In any discussion of the floral industry in Colorado concerning its growth and development, inevitably the name Haley comes up. The name was not only synonymous with greenhouses in the State, but prominent as a name associated with business, livestock and real estate in Colorado and Wyoming prior to the turn of the century. Ora Ben Haley, Sr. came to Colorado from Wyoming in 1908. He received his early education in Laramie public schools, and later attended the University of Colorado at Boulder. Haley entered the same business as his father, who was in livestock investments and real estate. When he came to the Denver area to settle, he located west of Denver near the community then called Mt. Morrison. His first ventures in the flower business were as a hobby. He built his first small greenhouse in 1913, and established Junglewood Inc. in 1924.

Rumor has it that Junglewood got its name from a hobo. Covered with lots of trees and shrubs around the greenhouses and the building, the site was near the old railroad line which ran west from Denver in those years. Because of the shade and location, it became a haven for hoboes and waywarders who didn't hesitate to stop off at the nearest house and ask for a handout. One summer day this happened, and when refused, an old hobo remarked, "Don't want anything anyway from this old junglewood!"

By 1935, the senior Ora Ben Haley devoted himself full-time to commercial flower growing.
Originally, Junglewood specialized in the culture of snapdragons, and Haley originated several new varieties. In the early 40s Junglewood White and Junglewood Yellow became well-known throughout the country.

Haley and his wife Maud, a Missouri girl, had two sons, O. Ben Haley, Jr., and Charles Tiffany Haley, and four daughters: Carla, Mabel, Juliania and Patricia. Haley passed away July 19, 1953 at 70 years. Surviving were his widow, all his children, two sisters and twenty-one grandchildren.

The oldest son, Ben Jr., was born in 1910, and grew up at Junglewood. He was educated at Regis High School and the University of Colorado. In 1932, he left Colorado and moved east to Chicago. He worked for a time for Marshall Field Co., later went into the industrial field and became sales manager of National Cylinder Co. He moved to several locations including Detroit, Milwaukee and Indianapolis. Ben married Helen Baker in 1938, and four of his nine children, Ben III, Patricia, William and James were all born in the East. After moving back to Colorado in 1944, the Haleys had five more children: Thomas, Kenneth, Daniel, Richard and Margaret. Jim, Dick, Tom and Bill all remained in the floral business. Helen Haley passed away in Denver, March 20, 1983.

About a year after his move back to Denver in 1945, Ben along with Leo Hollberg and Harold Crowley, acquired the stock of Denver Wholesale Florists Co. At this time, 33 growers shipped on a consignment basis to DWF in the Home Public Market, 15th & California Streets, the location of the present Denver Post building in downtown Denver. The Post wanted a new larger building, and preferred this space.
Following the sale of DWF on December 31, 1945, the new owners moved the wholesale house on New Years Day, January 1, 1946, to 11th & Cherokee Streets. On Wednesday, January 2, they opened the business. The former owners never operated the company in the new location, and the new owners didn't operate in the old location. This was an accomplishment both parties were proud of.

When the new company opened, Harry Harlow was manager and Ben Haley was secretary-treasurer. That year, Leo, Harold, Harry and Ben attended the SAF Convention in Chicago. Harry held all the train tickets, as reservations and tickets on the Denver Zephyr were hard to come by in those years. When they prepared to come home, Harry couldn't find the tickets. They took a taxi to the station, hoping their names would be on a manifest, and they could still get on the train. They searched everywhere, and just as the taxi unloaded them at La Salle Street Station, Leo Hollberg said to Harry Harlow, "Look in your other inside side pocket." Bingo -- the tickets were there.

In February, 1957, O. Ben Haley, Jr. assumed the management of Denver Wholesale Florists Co. The company prospered at this location, and did not move again until 1967, when they moved to 48th & Dahlia Streets, the present site. On July 31, 1977, nearly 33 years after O. Ben Haley, Jr. started to work for Denver Wholesale Florists Co., he retired as general manager. However, this was not the end. In March, 1982, Ben returned as general manager of the company at the request of the Board of Directors to work for a period not to exceed one year, until a few things could be straightened out.

There is no doubt O. Ben Haley, Jr. made his mark, and left his brand on the floral industry in
Colorado. He was a leader in the company, in the association and nationally. He served on the Board of Directors of SAF, and became president of the Society of American Florists in 1960. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the Colorado Flower Growers Assn., not once, but twice in 1963 and 1975. This was an honor bestowed on only one individual, Ben Haley. O. Ben Haley, Jr. was a charter member of Safe Endowment, and in 1966, was inducted into the SAF Hall of Fame.

Chuck Haley also grew up at Junglewood, getting his education at Regis High School and the University of Colorado. He married Ruth Martin, a Boulder girl, in 1941, and they raised a family of five children: Ruth, Susie, Charlie, Tim and Chris.

Following his father's death, Chuck ran the greenhouse at Junglewood for about two years. He then moved to Colorado Springs to manage Pikes Peak Floral Co., which he had purchased from the Leo Hollberg Estate. Hollberg passed away in 1955. Chuck bought Pikes Peak with some stock being owned by Arthur Vos, Jr., a member of a bakery family in Denver for many years, and Jim Kelly, who had been with Denver Wholesale Florists for ten years, and prior to that with Park Elitch Co. In 1974, Jim Kelly retired from Pikes Peak. Following his retirement, the company owned by Chuck and Ben Haley acquired ownership of all the stock in Pikes Peak Greenhouses and Wholesale House.

At present, Pikes Peak Greenhouses stock is entirely owned by the Charles T. Haley family. Pikes Peak Wholesale stock is owned by Chuck Haley and C.B. "Bob" Euser. Pikes Peak of Texas, a wholesale house branch, located in Houston, Texas, is owned by O. Ben Haley, Jr., Jim Haley, Dick Haley, and Darlenna Vurlson, who is the sales
manager. Pikes Peak Wholesale also has an interest in Pikes Peak of Texas.

Junglewood closed as a growing operation in December, 1981, after being sold as an office park complex. Following this move in the early months of 1982, several major changes were made, in order to accommodate the estates of the Haley families.

Chuck Haley was as active in the business as his brother, Ben, had been. Chuck became president of the Colorado Flower Growers Assn. in 1970-72, the first full year the association had hired a full-time director. He was instrumental in the formation of the Rose Committee, which he called the Western Branch of Roses, Inc. Haley initiated the inventory of greenhouse space in 1972, by having the office mail out cards to growers to obtain information on the crops they grew and the square footage they covered. Colorado is the only state in the country which has an accurate square footage survey of all crops on an annual basis. His service earned him the Distinguished Service Award at the completion of his term as president at the June, 1972 annual meeting. He continued to be active, serving on the Board of Roses Inc., and became president of the National Association in 1977. He was later elected to the Board of Directors of the Joseph H. Hill Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Chuck's boys, Charlie and Tim, entered the business after completing college, Charlie from Colorado State University, and Tim, from the University of Colorado. Chuck worked for Kitayama Bros. in California and New Orleans in the wholesale end of the business. Tim started in the growing area after receiving his degree. He became a vice president of the company in charge of
production, while Chuck was a vice president of sales.

Both sons have followed the tradition of the family. They have served the industry as active association and committee members in local and state associations, as well as the national groups. In 1985, they purchased Pikes Peak Greenhouses, and all its entities from their father.

Another Haley family member, Carla the oldest sister, became involved in the flower growing business when she married John Jacob Wiebenson. John was born in Cleveland in 1897. He grew up there, and received his engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. He came to Denver in 1930, then moved to Sumner, Wash. and back to Ohio before returning to Morrison in 1947. He grew carnations at the Junglewood location for many years. Carla Haley Wiebenson passed away in 1937.

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The name of Hill was well-known in the industry. The father, Edward D. Hill, a school teacher in Iowa, came West to Nebraska, then arrived in Colorado to become a market gardener around the turn of the century. The Hill family consisted of six children: Ralph E., Ernest L., Pearl, Blanche, Homer, and Floyd. They grew up in the growing business. Their father was the first to raise outside head lettuce in this area, starting in hot beds and transplanting outside. He also grew flowers, and won a first prize at a fair for sweet peas, which had extremely long stems, and four florets on each stem.

The oldest brother, Ralph, was the first to work in a greenhouse, starting with potted plants at City Park Floral, 16th & Josephine. He later went to Elitch's as a rose grower, staying there for a number of years until he joined the Army in World War I. After the war he moved to California to open a retail florist shop, and ended up becoming a plasterer. He returned to Denver in that job, and married a sister of Mrs. John Bement, whose husband was a carnation grower.

The second brother, Ernest, also worked at Elitch's until he joined the Navy. After his discharge, he worked for Conrad Longenfelder, a carnation grower, then to Brenkert's, until Hill's Inc. was formed in the Fall of 1927. The location of Hill's Inc. was 1330 So. Irving St. in Denver. Following the death of Ralph, December 26, 1952, it was operated by Bob Buck, the son of Blanche Hill Buck. It was sold to Ralph Gross in April, 1974.

Homer, the second youngest, followed in the footsteps of his older brother, employed by
Elitch's at age 15 as a rose grower, for $30 a month. Homer also worked for Longenfelder, and Mahler's and Mauff's greenhouses. He spent a short time in California growing roses, and in 1928, went to Davis Bros. Florists as head carnation grower and field man. In 1935, he bought the Brungess range on West 32nd Avenue, and continued to work for Davis for two more years. He won many prizes for carnations, with distinctive awards, such as the S.S. Pennock Award, and recognition from the association as "Mr. Carnation".

In 1942, he hired Dick Hannigan as field man for Davis Bros. Dick had worked for Bill Gunesch for the State of Colorado originally, until approached by some growers to come to work for Davis Bros. Dick worked at Davis's until 1949, when he left to manage a range owned by Cedric Sprague and Harold Sprague, which had been built in 1923. In 1957, Dick Hannigan bought this range, located at East Evans and South Ogden Streets in Denver. He had shipped to Davis Bros., finally selling his place in 1973.

In the late 20s, the carnation and rose growers in the northwest part of the city knew they had a good thing going when another Hill boy, Floyd, became involved. He started at 11 years old at Mahler's greenhouse, then Elitch's and to Brenkerts. Floyd also worked at Trimmers, helping to peddle roses after work hours in the growing areas. In 1927, he decided to work for Hill's Inc. After spending a few years there, he went out on his own by leasing the Blue Ribbon Greenhouse at Orchard & Poplar, in 1932. He was introduced at a growers' meeting for the first time December 5, 1932. Carnations weren't too good in those years -- the cut was about 500 per day, and the check at the end of the month was only $27.
In 1937, Floyd bought the Longenfelder Greenhouse where they grew carnations, roses, mums, pompons and bedding plants.

Ralph E. Hill was followed in the business by his son, Ralph, Jr., who returned from World War II in July, 1946, and immediately started building his own greenhouse at 1420 So. Irving. He cut his first flower September 5, 1946, and 28 years later to the day, September 5, 1974, sold his greenhouse to John Valentine and O.B. Barmore. Ralph died in November, 1984, in California.

Homer Hill was also followed in the industry by his son, Homer, Jr., who with his father, operated the range on West 32nd Avenue. They expanded in 1965 to a new range at 14450 West 50th Avenue. Homer then retired, and his son operated both ranges until early 1979, when the 32nd Avenue range was torn down.

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The trunk of the Hollberg family tree sprouted in Colorado in the flower growing business in 1890, and through two branches, covered a span of 100 years and four generations. It started with Frank Hollberg (1859-1917), who was born in Germany, and came to the United States in 1880. He worked on ranches and at sawmills in the West, settling in this area because one of his best friends from his hometown in Germany, C.F. Tegeler, had a brother in Denver. He lived in the Valverde area (West Alameda), around 1890, and received his naturalization papers that year. In 1897, he married Florence Loew, an Indiana girl, and obtained the deed to the property which was called the home place in 1898. He grew celery and hot bed crops, then built his first greenhouse for tomatoes, lettuce, radishes and cucumbers in 1904.

Such tomatoes: Some of them reached 6-8 inches in diameter, weighing 2-3 pounds each. Of course, there was no market for this size tomato, but Frank was so proud of them he decided to find a market. He approached the commissary of the railroad companies, and they bought an idea. They sliced these large tomatoes and served one slice with a little dressing and lettuce for a salad on the dining cars -- fancy eating places in those days. One slice this large was considered a real delicacy for the traveling rich.

Frank and Florence Hollberg had five children: Leo, Ernest, Herman, Vera and Frieda. This portion of the history of the Hollberg
families will cover the two main branches -- Leo and Herman, because they are the ones who continued in the business as growers.

In order to somewhat keep the locations of these greenhouses separate, it might be well to define the locations. The "home place" at 700 S. Jason, ran from the Platte River to So. Jason St., and the 728 S. Lipan St. place ran from So. Jason St. west to Lipan St.

Following the death of Frank Hollberg in 1917, Ernest Hollberg, who was 17 at the time, ran the "home place" at 700 S. Lipan with his mother. Florence remained a widow for two years, then married C.F. Tegeler. Tegeler had been best man at Florence and Frank's wedding, and as mentioned, had come from the same town as Frank, in Germany. At the time of the new marriage, he owned a greenhouse at 852 S. Jason. After running the greenhouse for two years, young Ernest decided he did not want to stay in the business. But older brother, Leo, did, and in 1923, when he was 25, he took over the 728 S. Lipan St. greenhouse as his part of his father's estate. At this time, Herman "Ham" Hollberg, the third son, born in 1903, moved back to the "home place" with his wife, Evelyn. The 728 S. Lipan greenhouse was sold to Frank Kirschner, the brother of Leo Hollberg's wife, Grace.

The first branch of the Hollberg tree we will cover, will be Leo (1898-1955). Leo had a keen interest in greenhouses. Only 19 when his father died, he immediately assumed much responsibility for the family, and started to build his own empire in greenhouses. By 1938, he had taken over the Barth Greenhouses at 3665 S. Huron in Englewood. The Silver State Bank, which had loans out to several greenhouses in Denver, approached Leo to move into this location and take over.
Leo Carl William Hollberg
June 1898 - August 1955
Leo married Grace Kirschner, and they had three children: Frances, 1921, John, 1922, and Clair, 1932. Frances, known as Fran, married H.E. Peterson, called "Hep". They went into the business by buying the original C.F. Tegeler place, owned by John Kirschner, Frank Kirschner's brother. Fran and Hep had two children: David, 1942 and Nancy, 1943. Nancy stayed in the industry by marrying George Niedens, who moved to California and became owner of AS-H-NE Farms, Inc. of Mipomo, California. AS-H-NE is a flower growing and shipping operation, with several growing ranges. Eventually the old Tegeler-Kirschner-Peterson place was torn down because of industrial development, and its location in the South Platte flood plain basin.

John was the first son in the family, and more than willing to follow in the shoes of his father and grandfather. He married Regina Gobatti of Pueblo. Her family was extremely active in the business of that city. Following her graduation from Denver University in 1949, she took a position with Pikes Peak Greenhouses in Colorado Springs. At the time, John Hollberg was greenhouse manager, and Frank Dykstra was sales manager for Leo Hollberg and Arthur Vos, who owned the range. While John was managing this operation, he hired Gordon Koon, a new graduate student out of Ohio State, a native Colorado boy who will be mentioned later.

Following his father's death in 1955, John ran the South Huron Greenhouses with his mother until 1960 when he bought it from her. He operated it until 1973, when he suddenly died. Although John was only 51, he left his mark on the industry in this state. He was involved in a number of family operations and other ventures. He bought
the Sullivan Greenhouse on South Havana St., west of Parker Road in the Aurora area, in 1970. The Sullivan range was so named because, at one time, there was a settlement south of Aurora, in the vicinity of the base of what is now Cherry Creek Reservoir, called Sullivan. The greenhouse survived, though the community did not.

Henry Wislander owned Sullivan Greenhouses. Born in Sweden in 1885, he moved to Leadville with his family in 1886. He came to Denver as a young boy, and attended Grant Junior High. His first job was to work for N.A. Benson in the old South Side Greenhouses, where he learned the rose growing business. He later purchased these greenhouses, and in 1933, acquired Montclair Greenhouses in the East Denver area. In early 1930, he bought 90 acres of land in Sullivan, and in 1935, began building the Sullivan location. By 1954, all operations and locations were consolidated. When Henry Wislander died, his daughter, Gertrude, and her husband, Walter Dietz, ran the greenhouse. To settle the estate, the Sullivan place, in 1972, was sold to John Hallberg.

John was basically a carnation grower, and roses were something different. He began moving the plants to the Hollberg Greenhouses on South Huron, in the middle of summer. It was believed then that this could not be done, but John did it successfully. The Huron St. Greenhouse became a mixed flower range. About 18 months later, the Sullivan range was sold for development.

Hollberg maintained a steady and loyal crew, and in several cases, employees remained for many years. The Busmires are a good example. John Busmire worked for John for several years, and his son, LaVerne, grew up and also worked for John. LaVerne stayed on with Regina, and managed the
greenhouse following John's death, and later moved to California.

Another longtime and faithful employee was C.T. "Bud" Echman. Bud was well-known to many growers because of greenhouse tours and visitations to the Hollberg range. Bud has a great sense of humor, and perhaps one of the most memorable tales occurred one night, in the middle of January. They lost power and heat in the greenhouse. John, Bud and anyone else they could find, started to work on restoring the power. The boiler room, as in most old greenhouses, was in a sub-basement with a large pit around it, probably five feet deep. Of course, with the water leaking, and the pipes frozen, this area was a real mess. Bud had the flashlight. But, in searching around in the pitch dark, he flashed the light in the pit and said, "John, when we have so much to be done around here right now, what are you doing down there?" John Hollberg always enjoyed telling this on himself.

The third child of the Leo Hollbergs, was Clair. Clair, born in 1932, was educated in the Denver area, and became a registered nurse. She married Warren "Satch" Harvey. They had four children: W. Paul, Dianna, Susan and Lesa. Paul is associated in the industry with George Ball Co. as a district representative in the San Francisco area.

Satch Harvey's first greenhouse in Bear Valley, was purchased from the builder, Barth Greenhouse. It was sold to Gordon Koon in 1964, and developed into a large carnation range called "Gordon's Greenhouses of Bear Valley". The last Hollberg place to survive at 3665 So. Huron, was operated by Regina and her three sons, Leo, John and Kurt. They operated it for eight years until it was finally closed, in December, 1981.
The location of these greenhouses, consisting of more than 200,000 square feet, was on Hampden Avenue across from Cinderella City. The property is jointly owned by Fran Peterson, Regina Hollberg and Clair Harvey, and will undoubtedly be developed into some type of office complex.

The second branch of the Hollberg tree is that of Herman Hollberg. Herman, or Ham, was born in 1903, and died two days after Christmas, in 1948. The third son in the family, he always had an interest in the floral business. He worked for Denver Wholesale Florists, and in 1928, bought the Ferris Greenhouse at 3541 S. Galapago, in Englewood. Herman married Evelyn Woods in 1926, and they had two children: Wallace and Barbara.

In 1938, the "home place" at 700 S. Jason became available, and Herman bought it. The family ran it for ten years until his death. Wallace (Bud) was 21 years old at this time, and he continued to operate it with his sister, Barbara, with their mother as general partner. A couple of years later, Bud decided to get married and branch out on his own in the business. He married Lorana Kirklin, and bought one-half of the Neal Harmer greenhouse at 4500 E. Jewell Avenue. He leased the other one-half for a year, and when the lease expired, he bought that half. Bud and Lorana had four daughters: Lorie, Sandra, Christine and Debra. Bud thought it was necessary to branch out more, so in 1955, he leased the Bright Spot Greenhouses at 2410 E. 5th Avenue.

This lease was for ten years, with an option to buy. In 1958, he sold the old Harmer place on Jewell Street, and bought 62 acres in Parker, where he and Lorana built a home, and completed 175,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse, in 1962. In 1964, he formed a corporation with Tom Naylor and Rex Hatch called
H-N-H Corporation, which stood for Hollberg, Naylor and Hatch. This corporation bought the Bill Leonard greenhouse, called Cherry Creek #2 at that time, which had burned down in 1968, and the old Cherry Creek greenhouses at 5050 Leetsdale Drive. The Leonard place on South Parker Road was later purchased by the Tagawa Brothers.

The H-N-H Corporation operated for three years, and Bud Hollberg bought the Leetsdale Greenhouse, and Rex Hatch and Tom Naylor bought the Parker Road location, which Rex managed. This corporation then split up, and Bud continued to operate the greenhouses until 1979, when they were closed. Bud was an active part of the greenhouse industry in the state. Raised in the business, he was an active leader in industry affairs. He served as president of the Colorado Flower Growers Assn. in 1967-68, and was on the Board of Directors of Denver Wholesale Florists for nine years. He made many contributions through the years.

The youngest daughter of Frank Hollberg was Frieda, who was only six when her father died. She married Fred Vetting, who became owner of Rocky Mountain Seed Co. The connection to the seed company comes through the Tegeler family. He was the second husband of Florence Hollberg. The Vettings have been involved in the seed business for many years, and their son, Frank Vetting, runs the wholesale division of McCarthy Floral Co. in Williamsport, Pa. He graduated from Colorado State University in horticulture, and spent a number of years in the military service, finally returning to follow a career in the footsteps of all the family before him.

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Louis Kintzele came from Michigan City, Indiana, the home of the Weilands. He first came to Colorado in 1906, for his health, as many did in those days. Tuberculosis brought many to this climate, and Louis Kintzele was no exception. He decided early he would get into the greenhouse business, and purchased the Schuman place at 38th & Sheridan. He could not make a go of it at this location, returned to Indiana, and came back in 1911 to buy the Colorado Floral Greenhouse on So. Lowell, off Morrison road. It was built in 1888.

Kintzele and his bride, Mary Conlan, had five girls and three boys, all born in Denver. Two of the boys, L. Richard and Leland Thomas made their mark in the floral industry, in many ways. Richard (Bud) was born in 1909. He spent his youth growing up around the greenhouse, and eventually became deeply involved. Both he, and Leland (Lee) stayed in the business, and bought their father's place on So. Lowell Blvd., in 1947.

Louis Kintzele passed away in 1961, at the age of 77. Bud married Adele Humphreys in 1932, and raised a family of two boys and two girls, none of whom stayed in the greenhouse field. Bud followed his father in being active in the industry. He was president of the Association in 1941, and throughout this history you will see many mentions of the Kintzeles. Louis's thoughts on advertising, his belief in research, his pursuance of excellence in growing, and his determination to promote the product you grew, and the control of
how it was to be marketed, were part of his business philosophy.

The Kintzeles marketed through Denver Wholesale Florists, and at one time, Park-Elitch Wholesale, but returned to DWF. Bud was elected to the Board of Directors in 1955. He served as President of the Board from 1966 to 1977, and resigned in 1978. Active in politics for many years, he was appointed in 1954, by Governor Dan Thornton, to serve on the Agriculture Commission. This lasted 18 years, seven of them as chairman. When he resigned, his vacancy was filled by Ray Crowley.

Kintzele's proudest moment was to be endorsed by the four most prominent agriculture groups in the state: The Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, Colorado Cattlemen's Assn., and the Colorado State Grange, to be the agriculture representative on the Air Pollution Control Commission when it was established in 1971. Bud also served as Director of the Board of Florists Mutual Insurance Co. for 25 years.

Lee Kintzele, born in 1915, was also an activist when it came to the industry. He went to work for Denver Wholesale Florists full-time in 1955. He rose rapidly to become sales manager of the largest wholesale house of its kind in the United States. Lee had attended association meetings since he was very young. Often the record keeper, he did an excellent job of keeping things in order. In 1945, he became secretary of the American Carnation Society because of the strong ties of the local members to that national group, and in 1960, was elected president when the society was at its peak. Lee's work in the formation of a strong national wholesalers group netted him an outstanding honor. The Wholesale Florists, and
Florist Suppliers of America, named their annual convention distinguished service award after him, calling it the Leland T. Kintzele Award.

He married Laura Braden in 1940, and they had one girl, and four boys. The boys worked summers at the greenhouse, but none remained in the business. Lee died from heart disease in February, 1972, at a time when his life was extremely productive. He left behind a nice family, a proud heritage, and innumerable contributions to the industry. He was loved and respected by all those who worked with him, which is obvious from all the testimonials he had received in his life, from the Colorado Flower Growers Assn. Distinguished Service Award, in 1960, to the Leland T. Kintzele Trophy, presented each year at the annual flower growers golf tournament.

There can be no doubt, the Kintzele family deserves to be recognized as an integral part of the history of the flower growing business in Colorado.

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Some major influences have affected the flower growing business in Colorado, both internal and external. In 1966, an external force had a tremendous effect on the carnation market in Colorado. It was the expansion of the Kitayama Brothers' growing operations at Union City, California.

Within a period of three to four years, Kitayama Brothers' expansion at Brighton reached square footage of 1.1 million sq. ft. This was the largest carnation range in the State -- almost mind-boggling to local growers. As you have read, Colorado was a growing area consisting of many smaller type greenhouse ranges. Perhaps 60 percent of the growers made a good living from greenhouses which were under 50,000 sq. ft. In 1980, an accurate analysis of square footage as to percent of production indicated there were still 44 percent of the growers under 30,000 sq. ft., and only four percent over 150,000 sq. ft. The other 52 percent of the growers represented 71 percent of the production, and ranged from 30,000 to 150,000 sq. ft. From these figures, you can see what a shock it was for the local carnation growers to see over one million sq. ft. spring up in such a short time.

Kitayama Brothers from California, is a closely held corporation owned by the four brothers in the family: Tom, Ray, Kee and Ted. Ray was chosen to move to Colorado, and became manager of the Brighton branch. Their reasons for coming here were to spread the risk of growing, and take advantage of two geographical locations. In this
Kiyo and Ray Kitayama at the annual Christmas Party, in 1972.
way, they could offer customers both California and Colorado carnations with a broader product mix.

Early after they opened the Brighton operation, they knew they were not going to be a one-crop greenhouse, which was common in Colorado. They planted roses in 1967, and by the time the greenhouses reached a million sq. ft., there were approximately 33 percent roses, 57 percent carnations, and 10 percent mums and pompons.

They marketed these crops through their own sales company, Colorado Floral Products, Inc. This part of the operation was managed by George Brinkmann, a Texas boy who graduated from CSU in floriculture, and chose to remain in the Denver area. George left Kitayama Bros. in 1974, and became associated with Don Rody and Bob Echter in their new venture, Rocky Mountain Wholesale Florists. He later joined Mountain View Wholesale, and after several years became a broker on his own, operating Brinkmann Wholesale Florists Company.

A parallel company, Greenleaf Wholesale Florists, Inc., the marketing agency for Kitayama Bros. also owned by them, was moved to Brighton in 1972. This location then became the central office for handling all the branch stores accounting, including billing, payroll and all computer work done by the company.

From the time Ray Kitayama came to Colorado, he was association-oriented. He indicated immediately the company would become active dues-paying members of the group, and would support the industry in every way possible. Since the Kitayama Brothers' operation at that time, comprised almost 20 percent of the total Colorado production, this was good news to association members, who had supported the organization for so many years.
Kitayama Brothers did support the association strongly. They furnished members of their staff to serve on committees of the organization, and were always generous in sending a large contingent to the social functions of the association. Since Ray was the principal of the company, he served on the Board of Directors of CFGA, and in 1972, was elected to the presidency. He served in 1972-73, with distinction. When Ray came to Colorado, he brought with him a lovely wife, Kiyo, and four children: Jean, Stuart, Scott and Robert. Well-known to everyone, Kiyo worked in developing the company, alongside Ray, since the day they arrived. In 1975, Kiyo became ill with cancer, and died at the Kitayama home in Brighton, June 1, 1976. Kiyo, a registered nurse, received her education and training in California. She was a member of a well-known growing family in the San Jose area, and was returned to Fremont, California, for burial.

The association scheduled their annual Christmas Party December 8, 1978, at a restaurant in Wheat Ridge. Everyone planning to be there, looked forward to a good time, since this was a yearly social event, well-attended by growers ready to kick-off the holiday season with fellow growers and friends. The happy spirit was greatly dampened, however, because the night before Kitayama Brothers at Brighton had experienced one of the most dreaded things that can happen to a greenhouse -- a fire. It was disastrous: The worst fire in the country for such a large range. The weather was extremely cold, so what did not burn, froze from lack of heat from the central system. Hundreds of thousands of poinsettia plants were to be shipped the next day, and the sight of those plants in full bloom, drooping and drenched with frozen water from the fire hoses, was a sad
Part of the Kitayama Brothers' range after the Dec. 7, 1978 fire. This was the worst greenhouse fire in Colorado, and it took several years to rebuild.
and sickening sight. Anyone who saw it could never forget.

Help from neighbors, fellow growers and friends, poured in day after day to help with the cleaning up process. It took several weeks just to clean up the debris, and then the rebuilding process started again. This time, a new plan was established for service building and office complexes -- separated farther from the greenhouses themselves. Ray and his family perhaps averaged more hours per day in the rebuilding than anyone would want to estimate, but it was done and within a few months, you would not recognize it as a place which had experienced such a catastrophe.

In 1966, when Ray first started building in Brighton, he hired a young man named Tim Matsuno, from that area. Tim did not know anything about growing flowers, but was eager to learn, and learn he did. He quickly rose into management for the company, becoming a respected member of the floral industry. Tim worked hard and gained experience. He assumed more responsibility as time went on, and when Ray separated from the Kitayama family in the Fall of 1981, to go into the green plant business on his own in Florida, Tim was appointed to the position of manager of the Brighton plant. This was the first time anyone other than the family had been in this position.

Ray Kitayama re-married in 1977, a lady whom he had known since high school in California. She was Kimi Fujii.

The Kitayama Brothers, Ray in particular, left their mark on the Colorado floral industry. They believed in a different type marketing than the growers in Colorado were used to. They grew the product, shipped it to one of the many wholesale branches they owned as Greenleaf
Wholesale, and depended on a good local sales force to move it to the retailers, jobbers and consumers. The company and the brothers, made many contributions to the Colorado industry, and everyone associated with them became a part of the team.

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Gordon Koon was introduced at a growers' meeting January 5, 1960, by John Hollberg. John said Gordon was a CSU student in horticulture, and had just recently earned his master's degree in horticulture under Professor Alex Laurie, at Ohio State. He attended Ohio State on a Roses Inc. Fellowship, deciding once and for all, he would be a floriculturist instead of a nurseryman. In introducing Gordon, Hollberg referred to him as a promising young man with lots of ambition, and that he would be managing Pikes Peak ranges in Colorado Springs. Gordon stayed at Pikes Peak for four years, then spent ten years with Frank Kirschner managing ranges in the southwest part of town.

Gordon wanted to have his own operation. He got that chance in 1964, when the old Barth greenhouse at So. Sheridan and W. Hampden, across from Fort Logan National Cemetery, became available. The Barth place had been sold to Leo Hollberg, who sold to Warren P. Harvey, son-in-law of Leo Hollberg.

It was built in the early 1930s, with the original range of 56,000 sq. ft. on 15 acres of land. Gordon immediately started an expansion plan. The range was purchased at around 80,000 sq. ft. He soon added another 20,000 sq. ft., and this expansion continued until, by 1972, he had increased the size of the place to 221,000 sq. ft. When all the expansion was completed, Gordon's Greenhouses totalled 300,000 sq. ft. at the same location. Part of the area was converted to Steve
and Sue's Garden Center. Steve is Gordon and Helen Koon's oldest son. A progressive, he developed a hard-to-find business into one of the busiest centers in the metropolitan area.

Things were changing rapidly in the carnation economy, at this time. Imports were increasing dramatically, and anyone with short-term money, borrowed at high interest rates, faced difficult times. Gordon made what he thought was a sound business decision, deciding to sell out to the townhouse and condo development trade, in 1981. This property was sold for development, and many of the greenhouses were salvaged by other local growers who wanted to add more square feet.

Earlier in the 70s, Gordon had ventured into other greenhouses by purchasing and leasing. In 1972, when Swedish Medical Center bought the Godfrey Franc property for future development of the hospital, they left some of the greenhouses standing. These were immediately leased by Gordon, and in March, 1975, he opened up the Englewood Garden Center at Emerson & East Hampden Avenue. He grew some carnations in those houses, but as time went on, and the carnation market did not improve, he continued to tear down the old houses, and concentrate more on the garden center and retail shop. In the late 70s, Gordon set up his second son, Brian, in business at the Emsbach Greenhouse on West 27th Ave. and Pierce St. in West Denver. This place was owned by Bob Emsbach, who had grown up in the firm. He took over from his father, Russell J. Emsbach, a grower in this area for many years. Gordon and Brian opened a garden center called Sloans Lake Garden Center, in 1978. They operated it until 1982, when it sold to Bill DeGarno.
An aerial view of Bear Valley Greenhouses on W. Hampden & Sheridan Blvd. Gordon Koon purchased the original 24,000 sq. ft. & 15 acres from Warren & Clair Harvey on Jan. 1, 1964. By the time the building program was completed, there was 300,000 sq. ft. of carnation production. It was sold for apartment and condo development in 1981.
Gordon was a leading researcher in his greenhouses from the time he started. He continually sought new and better methods of doing things to benefit the grower, and improve the quality of the crop.

He had been elected to many positions of responsibility in the industry, serving almost as a perennial member of the research committee of CFGA, and motivating many growers to also offer their services. When the Growers Council of the Society of American Florists was established in 1972, Gordon became the first chairman. He then proceeded to serve on the Board of Directors of SAF, and would have run for the vice-president's slot in 1982, but that is when he started to wind-down, and sell out his greenhouses. Because the position of SAF rotates from grower to wholesaler every third term, there is no doubt that Gordon Koon would have fit in the timely spot as president of SAF, in the early 1980s. He made many contributions to the industry, to the Association, and to the community. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award in 1969, and in 1975, was given a Special Recognition Award by the Association. Gordon Koon certainly earned his national reputation as one of the leading growers in the United States.

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If any name is familiar to an old-timer in the carnation business, it is Maler. C.F. Maler built the range called the Maler Place on West 29th Ave. & Perry, in 1902, definitely the Cadillac of the industry. When he expanded in 1924, he purchased a used coal boiler from the Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation.

Maler had two sons, C.F. Maler, Jr., and George W. Maler, both following their father in business.

His second son, George, who in later years became the most active of the two, was born February 22, 1901, in Denver, at 3900 W. 29th Avenue, living his entire life on the same property. He worked in the greenhouse as a youth, and at the time of his death, January 20, 1964, he headed Maler, Inc. Active in the affairs of the industry all his adult life, he was a charter member of the Flower Growers Cooperative and the Flower Growers Assn., serving as president in 1957-58. During his term as president, the Association was incorporated into a non-profit organization for the benefit of the growers. The Maler Company was one of the original stockholders of the Denver Wholesale Florists Co., the only "old" stockholder who did not sell to N.A. Benson, when Benson incorporated DWF, in 1909.

George gave many years service to the national organization, local civic groups, and service clubs. A memorial to him stated, "he was a man who did not know how to be unkind." He married
Ida Roesch October 3, 1923, and had one son, George, now an associate dean, College of Electrical Engineering at the University of Colorado. The senior Maler earned the respect, admiration, and affection of his family, his many friends, and business associates. He was considered a leader for all the years he devoted to the industry.

Roger Weakland, in 1964, leased the Maler Place on West 29th, and operated it until 1973. It was sold to John Byerly of Lehrer's on June 27, 1975. It operated as a greenhouse for a few years, but as the neighborhood closed in with high-rise apartments and new buildings, the greenhouse eventually discontinued operations. In the Fall of 1983, the property was cleared and leveled, and development began on Maler Gardens.

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Don Miller's father, Frank Miller, (1906-1975), was one of the early growers of cut flowers in this area. He and his wife, Ida, (1908-1962), were one of the many families settling in the area bounded by East Alameda and Virginia and Leetsdale Drive, known as the Harmon District, and near what is now Glendale.

In 1929, Frank Miller and his partner, Joe Vogel, owned about 17 acres in this vicinity. They had a greenhouse, 60,000 sq. ft., to grow poms, astors, sweet peas, snapdragons and almost any crop that would sell. They delivered their product to Denver Wholesale Florists where Frank Miller was a charter member.

After the war, in 1946, they switched to the same crop everyone else was changing to -- carnations. They sold well, and the return per square foot was much better than miscellaneous crops. The wholesale house built a better market for that product than any other.

Ida Miller died in 1962, and a year later, Miller's partner, Joe Vogel, passed away. The Millers raised two sons, Don, born in 1934, and Dick, in 1937. They went into business with their father, and each had a family. Don married Viola DiSalle, and Dick married Shirley Sutton. Don and Vi adopted two children, Mark and Mari Ann, and later had two of their own -- Michelle and Donald.

In 1966, they sold the property for commercial development when Colorado Boulevard began to grow into one large strip of office
complexes, car dealerships, and restaurants. Don and Dick both decided to move to an area where development seemed a long way off. They moved 20 miles to the South in the Parker area. Don built about one-half mile west of the center junction of Parker, where he bought 21 acres. Dick moved even further South to the Franktown area.

Don's first greenhouse here consisted of 40,000 sq. ft. He added another 20,000 sq. ft. in 1969, and 20,000 sq. ft. more, in 1972. He hay farmed, and raised some livestock on the balance of the property. He continued growing carnations, never converting to other crops, as did some growers. In 1971, Dick Miller was killed in an automobile accident. He left his wife and four children, so Frank and Don operated the range until the estate could be settled. Several months after Dick's death, the property and greenhouse were purchased by Associated Greenhouses, owned by John and Bob Byerly.

The Millers always shipped to Denver Wholesale Florists because of their father's ties as a charter member of DWF. Don served on a number of committees at the wholesale house, and on the Board of Directors of Colorado Greenhouse Association. The Millers, over a period of 60 years, made a strong contribution to the flower growing industry in the State.

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The Newberry family is another well-known one in the floral industry in Colorado. All but one, of the five Newberry brothers became involved in the greenhouse growing business. They were: Weldon, Harold, George, Frank and Hillyard, the oldest and non-grower. In 1945, Weldon, Harold and Frank, bought the old Neff Greenhouse at 201 Garfield. They dissolved the partnership in 1950, leaving Harold and Weldon. Part of the arrangement was to buy a greenhouse for Frank, the youngest. It turned out to be the Courtwright Place at 6341 So. Spotswood. He grew carnations in this Littleton greenhouse until 1978, when he sold it for development.

The next step in the ownership of the Garfield operation, occurred in 1971, when Weldon bought out Harold, changing from carnation production to potted plants, then Weldon went into the retail business. This greenhouse is still operating, and is one of the few left in the entire Cherry Creek area, located at 2nd and Harrison St. Weldon died in November, 1984.

George Newberry first got into the business in 1944, when he bought a small place at 4800 E. Evans, selling it in 1948 to Chet Brewer, who was formerly an "Uncle" Dick Braun grower. George then bought Al Zimmerman's place at 3900 E. Mexico, operating it until 1959. It is now the present headquarters of Safeway Stores for several states. George purchased his next greenhouse at 1350 S. Ulster St., in 1957. He operated both places for
Newberry Greenhouse located at 2nd Ave. & Harrison st. It was originally built in 1889. The southeast sections were renovated in 1984 by Weldon Newberry's only daughter, Paula Newberry Arnold.
two years, while he was moving to the new location on Ulster, and the other property was waiting for development. At the new location, he converted over to carnations only. On May 31, 1967, hail nearly wiped him out. When other growers heard about it, they came over, brought their own hired help, and covered the greenhouse with poly, to save the crop. Two weeks later, George cut more flowers for a single day's output than he had ever cut before.

In 1979, George and Corine Newberry decided they wanted to sell out and move to California. After several re-visits to finally clean up all their affairs, they sold the greenhouse to investors who have continued the operation, but who say it will just be a matter of time before the property is developed.
George Newberry cutting flowers in his Ulster Street range.
Homer L. Pearson perhaps brought more notoriety to the Colorado carnation than any other single person. Although he built a reputation as a grower, he became distinguished as a politician.

Homer Pearson was born New Years Eve at the turn of the century, on December 31, 1900, and died June 9, 1985. His parents came from Sweden to settle in this area to grow garden crops, including strawberries, raspberries, fruits and vegetables, in the vicinity of West 44th and Upham. Following his marriage to Caroline Auger June 7, 1922, Homer bought 15 acres of land in the area, built a house and a barn in 1923, and started growing on his own. His new wife, from a long-standing family stock in Colorado, was the daughter of Nettie Auger, whose parents were Abram and Mary Slater, longtime pioneers in Wheat Ridge. They arrived here in 1861, settling near what is now Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Homer's career in carnations began in the winter of 1929-30. He built four houses through a contract with Jackson Brothers, who constructed most of the greenhouses at that time. All four were 32 feet by 150 feet, and glass covered. He began marketing carnations in the Fall of 1930, the start of two of the toughest years flower growers had ever experienced. Coal cost $1.75 per ton at the Erie mine, and as mentioned earlier in this story of development, a number of meetings were held to see what the growers collectively could do about the problem. Many have reported the high
energy costs of the time probably were responsible for the beginning of the Association.

Business got better in 1933 and lasted until 1940. Homer took in his brother, Joe Pearson, Jr., as a partner, and they added more square footage about every two years.

Homer was politically-minded. With his brother, Joe, in the business and his young son, Wayne coming up, he had time to think more seriously about politics. He ran for State Representative from Jefferson County in 1934, being defeated by less than 200 votes. He served a stint as Deputy County Treasurer in 1935, and when the elections came around in 1936, he again ran for the General Assembly. This time he won, joining a group of only 15 Republicans in the House of Representatives, at that time. When Homer firmly decided to run again in 1936, it was because of his commitment to Leo Hollberg and Ralph Hill, who served on a committee with him to contact Colorado State University regarding employing a full-time extension person for floriculture.

Through determination, Homer Pearson was elected to the legislature from the Wheat Ridge District that Fall. He was re-elected in 1938, and again in 1940, '42, and '44. Homer had assumed the position of leadership in the House, and beginning his third term, his influence was recognized when his colleagues elected him to the distinguished position of Speaker of the House. This, he held for three terms, and in 1946, the voters of Colorado elected him Lieutenant Governor, and he served as an elected Republican under Democratic Governor W. Lee Knous, for a two-year term.

This was the first time a Republican lieutenant governor had been elected to serve with a democratic governor, but cooperation prevailed,
because Homer had been an excellent Speaker of the House. The Colorado State Constitution allowed the two top leaders to be of opposite political parties, until problems arose during one governor's absence from the State, and the lieutenant governor of the opposite party made appointments not popular with the governor. In 1968, a referred Constitutional Amendment was placed on the ballot which changed Article IV, Section 3 of the State Constitution, whereby they must be of the same political party.

Following Homer's distinguished career as a Republican political leader in Colorado, he was appointed in 1962, by Governor Steve McNichols to the State Board of Agriculture, the governing board of Colorado State University, and served until 1968. His decision as a young man to serve the State as a representative, and as lieutenant governor, was a wise one for him, and very beneficial for the floral industry in the State. He made many contributions.

Wayne Pearson, Homer's son, worked as a young man in the greenhouse, grew up in Wheat Ridge, attended schools there, and after attending Colorado College for two years, joined the Marine Corps, in 1943. He served for three years, and following his discharge in 1946, he enrolled at Colorado State University, and graduated with a degree in floriculture, in 1948. While at CSU, he met and married Lodema Abbott. Lodema was teaching in the Ft. Collins school system, and had been raised in Akron, Colorado. Following Wayne's graduation, they moved to Wheat Ridge, and raised three children: Randolph, Kimberly, and Chris.

By this time, Wayne and Joe Pearson were full partners with Homer in the greenhouse, and in 1962, Homer sold all his interest in the greenhouse to
Wayne Pearson, inspecting a field crop adjacent to his newly-built greenhouses on Isabelle Rd. near Lafayette.
them. Wayne and his Uncle Joe operated the Upham Street location together from 1946 to 1970. In 1968, they purchased 10 acres of land off Isabelle Road, in Lafayette, and a year later, built an Ikies-Braun greenhouse of 27,000 sq. ft. The intention was to have Joe run the home place in Wheat Ridge, and Wayne would operate the new range in Lafayette.

Joe Pearson was born in 1909, and had spent most of his adult life in the greenhouse business. He died August 3, 1970, at 61 years. For 40 years, he had been an active member and board member of the Wheat Ridge Volunteer Fire Dept. He belonged to the Wheat Ridge Service Club, and many other community service organizations. He was survived by his wife, Vera, a daughter, Judy, and three grandchildren. Following Joe's death, Wayne sold the property in Wheat Ridge in June, 1979, and moved to the Lafayette greenhouse.

Pearson's greenhouses shipped to Davis Bros. from the beginning of their operation, until 1974, when they changed to Rocky Mountain Wholesale Florists. The Pearsons were leaders in Colorado. They made numerous contributions through leadership positions and volunteer help in the Association. Homer served as president in 1936, and was active over a span of three decades. In 1963, the Colorado Flower Growers Assn. honored him with the Community Service Award.

Wayne also served on the CFGA Board, and as president in 1955. He continued in his father's footsteps as a grower, a leader in the industry, and the community.

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Rocco Rosa came to this country in 1886, from Potenza, Italy to seek his fame and fortune, like so many others in those years. He traveled alone, but it did not take him long to send for his wife, Lucia DeBell, which he did immediately. They settled in Colorado near other relatives, and raised five children: Josephine, James, Antonette, Anny and John. All the family grew up and stayed in the same vicinity all their lives. Antonette, or Netti as she was called, gained notoriety when she opened a well-known "watering hole" in 1933, called NETTI'S, at 15th & Court Place, near May D & F, now in the downtown area. Netti's was known by many, and it survived in the same location for 27 years, closing in 1965, when the downtown area began to develop.

We will concern ourselves first with James, the first son of the family. James was born in 1890, and married Asunta Minella, in 1914. Later the youngest son, John, married Clara Minella. So two Rosa brothers married two Minella sisters.

Asunta, or Suzy, was born in 1895, a few months after her parents, the Minellas, had arrived here from Italy. They settled near York St. and 66th Avenue. James Rosa grew up in the growing business, and worked with his father, and uncles, truck farming in the Welby area. He and Suzy had three children: Anthony, the oldest, Lucille and John, Jr. In 1928, James suddenly died at age 38, leaving Suzy to continue the work, and raise the children. She turned to the younger son, John, to

Suzy and James had purchased land on York St., and owned the property which is now the site of the Cherokee Plant of Public Service Company. They sold the property to that company, and included in the deal, was the D.S. Grimes Greenhouse at 32nd Avenue and Federal Blvd. Called the Highland Park Greenhouse, it included a retail shop and 25,000 sq. ft. of growing area. The range was divided into many sections, because the owners grew mostly for their own use, and basically grew what they needed for the retail shop. After John Rosa took it over, he converted it slowly, over a two-year period, into all carnations, because carnation growers in 1955 were making good money from one crop.

In 1960, the family built another greenhouse at 5200 E. 100th Avenue. Suzy and her son, John, and his children, operated both until her son's death at 45 years. This was in 1966, and each of her grandsons, John and Ron, took over a greenhouse. Ron operated Highland Park until it was sold and torn down, in 1975. John took over the 100th Avenue location. He had married Marsha Matchke in 1965, and because that greenhouse was built on 25 acres, there was plenty of room to expand. In 1973, John added another 16,000 sq. ft.

Back again to James, Suzy, and their three children. Anthony, the oldest, married Mary Ann Elliott, the second daughter of Joe Alioto (Elliott), Sonny Elliott's dad. They also farmed in the area, and in 1952, started their greenhouse called Rosa Greenhouse, at 2025 E. 64th Avenue. Mary Ann and Anthony had four children: Jimmy,
Rosalie, Clara Sue, and Anthony. Mary Ann's husband, Anthony, also died at a young 45, and Mary Ann later married Mariano (Mike) Balistreri. They continued to operate the greenhouse at the original location on 64th Avenue. Jimmy Rosa grew up in the greenhouse business, and in 1961, married Carol Cole. After working with his mother for a few years, he built his own place on 66th Avenue in 1966, adjacent to the original location. Jim and Carol closed their greenhouse in the Fall of 1983. Jim then went to work for the Adams County Assessor's Office, and worked there until his death in June, 1985, at the age of 48.

The entire Rosa family grew up in the northeast sector of the city, fairly close to each other. The original family home is located on the corner of York St. and 66th Avenue, and next door in almost every direction, is another Rosa family home. They evolved with the flower industry in Colorado, shipping all their flowers to Denver Wholesale Florists Co. since the day they cut their first crop. They have always been active supporters of the Association, and the industry. John, Jr. served on the Growers Committee of DWF, the Research & Education Committee of the Association, and as chairman of both committees. He was also a director of CGA. There is no question that the name of Rosa fits in quite well with the flower growers of the State.

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The Spano family has been synonymous with agricultural growing in the State for most of this century. Like many others in the truck gardening centers, such as Clear Creek Valley in Arvada, growers turned to greenhouses rather than field crops.

This was the case of John Spano, born in Palermo, Sicily, in 1896. At nine years old, he first came to the United States, and to Colorado. He wanted to return to Italy, and finally did prior to World War I. In 1917, he was drafted, and served in the Italian Army, but when the war ended, he again came to this country. This was in 1920. In 1923, he married Josephine Pachello, a girl from the Welby area, and they had five children: Salvatore (Tedo), Mike, Anita, Betty and Jack. Tedo was the only one to stay in his father's growing business at Marshall St. and W. 50th Avenue, a 15-acre property, which the family worked along with an uncle, Salvatore Spano. Together, they leased another 20 acres, growing mostly pascal celery, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and other field crops. Tedo married Fern Osborne in 1956, and they had one son, Jimmy. Tedo adopted Fern's children, Bill and Sherry.

Uncle Salvatore T. Spano married Jenny, and they raised two children, Anthony (Neno), and Joe. Neno worked in the greenhouse, attended the University of Colorado, then went back to the greenhouse. Joe got his veterinary medicine degree from Colorado State University, and after
practicing in Denver a few years, took a position as a teaching professor at Auburn University in Alabama. Neno married Linda Belding, sister of Birdie Balistreri, in 1976. They have three children, and Neno is owner-operator of S.T. Spano Greenhouses.

The first greenhouses built by Tedo's family were constructed in 1949. They built 5,000 sq. ft., and every two to three years, they expanded. At first, the crops were bedding plants, potted plants and roses. Later, they converted the entire range to carnations. By 1980, it had reached a peak of 110,000 sq. ft. with only 5,000 sq. ft. in the Garden Center. They began selling their excess plants for crop production out of cold frames, such as a dozen tomatoes, for 25 cents. This business grew, and it was perhaps the beginning of the garden center business in the metropolitan area. They leased space at Wilmore's Nursery on So. Colorado Blvd. and Exposition, and Hal Good's Nursery on Havana and Alameda. These were successful operations both as nurseries, and as newly established garden centers.

The Spanos worked with Mrs. Ed. Honnen in setting up the first showing of the garden display at Cherry Creek Shopping Center, under tents. This was the forerunner of the Garden and Home Show held every year in the Convention Center, and out of this evolved the purchase of the home at 8th and York, belonging to the Hartner Estate. It is now developed into the Denver Botanical Gardens. The Spanos, May D & F, and Denver Dry, established seasonal outlets at shopping centers for bedding plants.

The Marshall St. Greenhouses operated by Tedo Spano on his own, after his father passed away in March, 1973, has been one of the most successful
centers in the metro area. Things changed considerably in 1980, when the highway department began to build another by-pass off Wadsworth and I-70. This took part of the Spano property, and considerably limited parking facilities and access to the area. Tedo and Neno sold to the department and the south end of the properties on both sides of Marshall St. at about 50th Avenue.

Tedo's son, Jimmy, went into the retail business under the name Fresh Petals, in 1977. The retail shop took a corner of the greenhouse on Marshall St., however, the size of the carnation range was reduced to 70,000 sq. ft.

Always an active supporter of the Association and the cooperative efforts of growers, Tedo Spano always gave assistance and guidance to anyone wanting help. He served on the Board of the Colorado Flower Growers Assn., and as vice president of that group. Elected to the Board of Denver Wholesale Florists in 1974, he has served on that Board continuously since then.

The Spano name is known throughout this area. They made a serious contribution to the development of the industry, and deserve recognition for it.

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Frank S. Tagawa, born in Sacramento, California in 1912, and his wife, Hazel, born near there in 1915, were married in 1937, and started their family when Ken was born in 1938, in the Yuba City area where they farmed. Two years later, Albert arrived, then Dave two years after that. These California-born, Japanese-Americans were falsely considered a threat to the national security, so they were sent to Amachi Relocation Center near Lamar, Colorado. They stayed there a year following their arrival, in 1942.

They had been told that if they did not have some place to go, they could stay there "for the rest of their lives." Frank had a cousin in Granby, Colorado, and decided he would move there immediately, which they did. They farmed on the Horn Ranch, growing lettuce, and some other crops. While in Granby, son, George, was born. They stayed only one year, for Frank believed more opportunity existed where the growing season was longer. Moving to the Welby area, they share-cropped on the Larson farm, north of the Washington School, in Welby. During the three years there, they grew carrots, onions and peppers.

Next move was to the Cominello property to share-crop about the same vegetables for three more years. During this time, son, Jim was born in 1948. In the early 1950s, Carolyn, the first girl in the family came along, and during the same period the family moved to the Amato Farms, again share-cropping, until 1957. That year they changed
to the Brancucci Farm at 58th & Franklin, in the packing plant area. After two years there, and saving all the money they could to put both Ken and Dave through the University of Colorado, they moved back to the Amato Farm.

The Tagawas were an industrious family. They worked hard, and saved all they could. Some days they counted up their cash from the trips Ken and Dave made to the Denargo Market, and it often amounted to less than a dollar. They kept at it, worked harder, saved more, and in 1968, Frank decided they would buy a piece of property east of Brighton. They had put away more than $50,000 by this time, and in 1968, they bought the 120 acres where the present greenhouses are located. Ken had graduated from CU in electrical engineering, and had been commissioned a Navy officer. Dave also attended CU, Albert had spent six years in the Air Force, and George had served a year in Viet Nam. All the boys were men now, and ready to get into the family business. However, Jim, who attended the University of Northern Colorado, went on to receive a degree in physical education from Colorado State University. He taught school in the Northglenn School District. Carolyn graduated from CU, and later taught in the Brighton School System. The Tagawas were deeply saddened in April, 1984, when Carolyn passed away after a month of illness, at the age of only 32.

Immediately after moving into their own place, they started building wood frame greenhouses to grow seedlings for peppers, celery and other crops for the farming operation. In 1969, they followed with two carnation houses, and got more into budding plants. They put bedding plants in the houses as they finished them in early Spring, cleaned out the plants, then grew carnations in
June and July, to crop for Christmas and the holidays. They were on a building program, and couldn't figure out how to stop it.

Their first IBG structure in the main carnation range, was built in 1970, followed by the first rose range, in 1978. Expansion continued, and in 1980, they bought the Parker Road greenhouses from Rex Hatch and Bud Hollberg. Jim then decided he wanted to be a part of the family business, and was sent to operate the rose range recently purchased at Parker. As the neighborhood changed in that area, Tagawa Greenhouses, Inc. opened their first garden center on Parker Road, in the front part of the rose range. It expanded greatly, and at present is a major garden center for that locale.

The Tagawa boys learned many marketing lessons when they were young, going to the Denargo Market at four in the morning. When they started growing carnations, they were No. 1 at Denver Wholesale Florists the first year they shipped there. They built greenhouses by cooperation. Ken had the engineering knowledge, the others specialized in other segments of putting up structures. By following their father's example of working hard, saving and expanding, they have built one of the finest multiple crop ranges in Colorado. It would not be fair to say they did all of this themselves. They had the help of their families and their wives, all of whom have been involved in the business at one time, or another. Much credit goes to June, Ken's wife, Albert's wife, Eiko, Dave's wife, Karen, and Gail, George's wife.

In 1984, as a gift to their mother and father, the boys arranged a trip for Frank and Hazel. Frank Tagawa's father had come to this country as a young man to make his fortune, and
return to his homeland, Japan, as many young men did in the early part of this century. Although Frank was born in the United States, he returned with his father and mother, and was educated in Japan, so he always believed he had many roots there. His father always kept a rice-wine still in operation on any farm he lived on here.

In 1974, he still owned property in Japan, in his name, and that year turned it over to a step-brother, Tatsuhiko Tagawa, so Tatsuhiko could carry on the family heritage as being owner of the property. Ten years later, in 1984, the Tagawa boys honored their mother and father by sending them to Japan for a month's visit with family and friends.

The Tagawa family has been only a short part of the total history of the flower industry in the State, but in that short span, they have been involved, and surely left the TGI brand. Ken is vice president of DWF, and active on a number of national floral committees. Dave was president of the Bedding & Pot Plant Association, serving as vice president, and president of the Colorado Greenhouse Assn. The Tagawas have not only been leaders and participants in almost any project you can mention, but are simply the kind of people everyone respects in this business. Colorado is indeed fortunate they decided to make their home in the State.

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When Ben Veldkamp was born in Mook, Holland, in 1930, the world could take notice there was going to be some changes.

Ben was the second child of Albert and Albertha Veldkamp. Because his uncle owned a nursery in Holland, and his father was the head gardener of a large estate in Southern Holland, he was exposed to the horticulture industry early in life. Ben had an aunt and uncle in Minnesota, and at age 20, he decided he would come to America to make his mark in life. He worked on his uncle's farm in Hollandale, Minn., and then moved to the accounting department of the Produce Marketing Company who handled his uncle's cabbage, onions and potatoes. He had majored in accounting and languages, while getting primary and secondary education in Antwerp, Belgium. Although not yet a citizen, he was drafted during the Korean War. He served in the Corps of Engineers, and was naturalized in 1954. Also, in 1954, he met Cora Boggess, a Canadian citizen who was a medical technician, and they were married in late 1954.

The Veldkamps selected Denver as a nice place to settle, and Ben enrolled in Cliff Mann's Floral School. He worked in several local places, opening his first floral shop in 1960 in the 9500 block of West Colfax. Eight months later, he moved the shop to the Westland Shopping Center, and in 1964, opened the first branch shop at Lakeside Shopping Center.

Active in community and industry affairs, he
was chairman of the Colorado FTD District in 1963, and in 1967, became general chairman of the FTD Convention, held in Denver. After serving on a number of FTD committees, it was apparent to others he was a leader in the floral industry. In 1975, they elected him vice president of the largest wire service in the world, and during the convention in Denver, in 1976, Ben reached the top as president of FTD. He later served as a director of Interflora, a 65,000 member international association, and in 1981, was honored by serving as president of that organization. He gave his acceptance speech in German in Hamburg, Germany, proving that his education in languages paid off. Interflora changed dramatically under Ben's regime, because of his knowledge of the business, and his familiarity with the European market.

When he was devoting his energies to industry affairs, many things were happening at Veldkamp's in Colorado. In 1972, he bought his first greenhouse at 71st & Hoyt. He grew multiple crops there, and in 1975, purchased the Roger Weakland range at 17201 W. 64th, in Golden. This operation was expanded in 1976, and again in 1980. In 1983, Ben sold the 71st St. greenhouse to Gary Cleveland. The place now known as Veldkamp's greenhouse on West 64th, also grows multiple crops, and houses the Veldkamp Wholesale operation, material for the Landscaping Division and the Plantscaping Division. It is a general headquarters for the growing division. The offices at 9485 West Colfax are headquarters for the integrated company of several divisions, including the retail division which now totals 16 shops in the Denver metropolitan area.

Ben Veldkamp did not serve in elective industry offices just as a figurehead, he initiated changes. For example, he was president of FTD when
the Mercury System was put into effect. This is a system which has 10,000 consoles in retail shops, and speeds the time of wire orders. It is the largest privately owned commercial communications system outside of AT&T. Ben has numerous other credits. He served a term on the Lakewood City Council; he was State Republican Finance Chairman; he served on SAF's AFMC Committee; and is Chairman of the Board of Jefferson Bank & Trust.

Ben and Cora have two children: Ben Veldkamp, III, born in 1956, and Debbie, in 1958. Ben, III, is now president of Veldkamp's, and Debbie is assistant to the president. Ben, Jr. has no intentions of retiring, because he has many things to accomplish. He is definitely a part of the floral industry in the State, and his contributions are worthy and noted.

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The Weakland and Lawlor families of senior growers are mentioned together because of their relationships, partnerships and family ties.

Davis Brothers employed Gil Weakland, in 1929. He worked with John Lyttle, Homer Hill, and others who eventually went on their own to buy or build greenhouses. His sister, Eleanor Weakland, married Kenneth Lawlor, who had also worked in a number of greenhouses in the area. It was logical to form a partnership so Gill Weakland, John Lyttle and Ken Lawlor, formed that partnership in 1945, and bought the Konecny place at 29th & Lowell Blvd. Konecny's then built another greenhouse on North Federal, which was closed when purchased by the State Highway Department for access, in 1972.

In 1948, these same three partners bought the Bill Western Greenhouse at 10th & Depew, later called the Roger & Harry Farmer Greenhouse. About 18 months later, Ken Lawlor and Gil Weakland sold out their interest in the 10th & Depew greenhouse to John Lyttle; however, they still retained their interest in the 29th & Lowell location.

Kenneth Lawlor, his brother, Nick, and Gil Weakland, in 1951, bought the Franc Greenhouse (Godfrey Franc's father), at 3rd & Harrison. The greenhouse operated under this partnership for two years. Gil, realizing his two growing sons, Roger and Don, would probably be interested in staying in the business, sold his share of the 29th & Lowell operation to Ken and Nick Lawlor, buying out their interest in the 3rd & Lowell location. In 1957, he
sold this to his two sons. Gil Weakland had worked in the industry for nearly 30 years, starting with the Davis Bros., in 1929. He had made his mark in the floral business, and decided it was time to let the younger generation take over. He died March 27, 1979.

The Weakland boys, as partners, bought the Clark Brummage greenhouse at 3000 So. Emerson St., in 1960. After a few years, they made a trade-out -- Don becoming the sole owner of Emerson Street, and Roger becoming sole owner of 3rd & Harrison. Roger decided to expand by leasing, and January 1, 1964, leased the Mahler place on 29th & Perry St. He operated here until July, 1973. He leased the Harry Forrest place at 7th & Vrain, in 1965, and operated it until June, 1974. During this time, he purchased land and built a new greenhouse at 64th & Easley Road, in Golden. He planted the new place with carnations, and ran it until 1975, when he sold to Ben Veldkamp of Veldkamp's Flowers.

Don also expanded, building a greenhouse at Firestone, Colorado. He operated this place from 1970, until 1972, when he sold it to Joe Jones. Jones had worked for Don at the Emerson Street Greenhouse, and had moved on to buy the old Crowley Bros. greenhouse at 26th & Grant. Joe later turned this place back to Crowley Bros., and it was then sold and torn down for apartment complexes, in 1974. Joe then concentrated all his efforts on the range at Firestone.

In Longmont, Don started a garden shop called the Flower Bin, in 1971, and operated both the Emerson Street location and the Longmont Garden Center for several years, until his family closed Emerson Street, in 1979. He then aimed all his efforts on the garden center, taking in his son, Mike, to continue in the business.
The Lawlor Brothers also built another greenhouse after the closing of 29th & Lowell, in 1971. This was in the North Washington Street area, at 2060 E. 77th Avenue. Kenneth's son, Gordon, came into the business, and the two brothers, and Gordon, operated it until Kenneth's death July 12, 1976. Nick and his nephew, Gordon, then continued the greenhouse as a partnership.
The Weiland family originally came from Luxemburg, Germany before they came to the United States. Henry Weiland was born in 1884, in Evanston, Illinois, where his father had been in the commercial flower growing business. Henry was one of seven children, all of whom ended up in the industry in one way, or another. Henry came to Denver around the turn of the century, settling in the Wheat Ridge vicinity. He bought 40 acres, and farmed vegetable crops, and some floral crops near 33rd, West of Sheridan Blvd.

In 1914, Henry built his first greenhouse. He and his wife, Mary, raised three boys: Ray, born June 23, 1907, Harold, Herbert, and two daughters, Rose and Evelyn. Ray was the only one of this generation to remain in the floral business. He worked in the greenhouses, and helped farm from the time he was a small boy. He graduated from Wheat Ridge High School, attended Barnes Business School, where he served as student body president for one and a half years. He married Marguriete in 1930, and they had three children: Jay, Patsy, and Marty, all of whom worked in the greenhouse in their youth and adult life. Both Jay and Marty became officers in the Wheat Ridge Fire Department, while still spending some time helping their father run the greenhouse.

Enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1942, Ray served until the end of World War II. Upon returning, he expanded the greenhouse operation, and became serious about growing floral crops. Up
Ray Weiland was top individual winner at the ACS Show in Kansas City, in 1955.
to this time, they had considered themselves "peddlers". The growers did not like to be called peddlers -- they preferred "wholesalers on wheels" -- serving about 13 major stores in town, daily supplying them with flowers they needed. Upon Ray's return from the service, he and his father associated themselves with Denver Wholesale Florists Co., and remained there from then on.

Ray started going to the Flower Growers Association meetings, in 1932, right after the organization was formed. His father encouraged him, because of his personal interest, and Henry was elected the second president of the Association, in 1931. Ray followed those footsteps. They elected him president of the Association in 1962-63, 30 years later.

The Weilands always strived for something better, whether in vegetables, or flowers. Henry Weiland was known on the vegetable market as the "Cauliflower King" in this area, for the fine quality he grew, and took to market. They also developed a number of new varieties in sports from carnation crops, and Ray for many years, has tested the miniature varieties for Pomroy Thomson, who initiated his varieties in Connecticut and New York, and wanted them tested in a different climate. Several of the most popular names in miniatures came from Weiland's greenhouses, including White Feathers, Silvery Pink, Twinkle and Lemon Drop.

Henry Weiland lived to be 82. He died just a few minutes after the death of President John Kennedy, November 22, 1963. His wife, Mary, passed away June 14, 1985. She was just days short of being 101 years old.

As the carnation market became more and more
difficult, the boys sought other positions, and Ray eventually closed the greenhouses, in 1984.

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The Yantorno family, known to some as the Centers, are comparatively new to the carnation and floral business, but very old in the growing business, in Colorado. The great grandfather of the present greenhouse operators, Frank and Paul, was named Pete, and he came to the United States from Calabria, Italy, around 1880. Like many immigrants in those years, he came West to build the railroad with a lot of other men, who didn't speak English, but wanted to work.

Somehow, Pete acquired the name of Center. His grandson, Pete, said it was probably because none of the men on the railroad could say Yantorno, or maybe because he was in the center of things. They said, "We'll call you Pete Center." For the same reason, a friend of his came to this country with the name of Tony Muro -- meaning wall, in Italian -- so he took the name Tony Wall. When Pete had been here ten years, he sent for Pasquelena Nota. He wanted to marry her, so she came to America, and Colorado.

One of Pete's children, August Yantorno, was born here in a house just west of the present location of Center Greenhouses, at 1550 E. 73rd Avenue. August's folks had bought this property in 1889, to use it for truck farming. They grew celery, cabbage, lettuce, and most all crops that were good sellers in those days. They marketed in the Produce Sheds on 15th Street, next to the 15th St. Viaduct. It was said that 10 to 30 loads a day, were moved out of those sheds to be sold in
the East, and points between.

August (1894-1964) and Rose Pedotto (born in 1902), raised a family of five children: Martha, Pete, Frank, Carl and Margaret. The three boys stayed in the same location, and started farming on their own, as they grew up. Eventually, they owned about 60 acres in this location. All built houses nearby, and farmed the property until 1951, when they decided to convert to greenhouses, as others were doing. After the war years, many vegetable growers in this area could see the market drying up because of faster transportation from the West Coast, and a complete change of marketing produce. They built 6,000 sq. ft. every two years or so, until the greenhouse became 80,000 sq. ft. In 1950, Frank married Catherine Russo when he was 27, and the same year Carl, 25, married Faustino Matolla. Frank had two children, Frank, Jr., born in 1951, and Beverly. Carl had one son, Paul, born in 1955, and two girls, Carol and Patty. Carl passed away October 15, 1984, from a heart attack. He had experienced heart problems for several years.

By 1960, the greenhouses were completed, and the Yartornos were delivering their entire production to Park-Elitch Company. When P-E discontinued in 1967, they went to Davis Brothers, and stayed there until 1975, when Davis discontinued receiving flowers. They then transferred to Rocky Mountain Wholesale, delivering quality carnations until Frank, Jr. and Paul took over the greenhouse operation, and converted the entire range to bedding plants, and a garden center, in 1981-82. By the Spring of 1982, the complete West range was made into a modern garden center, with ample room in the other houses to grow both for wholesale and retail.
The whole family remained in the area. Pete, the oldest son, never married, and lives in the family home built in 1928, by August and Rose. Carl, Frank and their sons, Paul and Frank, Jr., also constructed homes in the immediate area. The Center Greenhouses, named for the Italian immigrant -- who had by someone's standards, an unpronounceable name -- always grew a quality crop. They changed shippers only when the wholesale house discontinued business. The Centers were highly respected by other growers as being cooperative, successful, and always gentlemen. They contributed a great deal to the growing business, especially flowers in the State.

August's wife, Rose Pedotto, and her family are also a part of industry history. Although they lived here many years, they did not get into the greenhouse business until much later.

Rose Pedotto was the daughter of Giacomo Pedota (1870-1947), and Maria Rose Guisti (later changed to Gust) (1877-1952). Giacomo arrived here in 1901, and Maria came in 1902. They had married in Italy, and the first son, Dominick, was ten months old, when his folks came to the United States, and to Colorado. The second child was Rose, followed by Carmella, Margaret, Ruth, Joe, Mildred, Nick and Ann. Of these nine children, Rose, Joe, Nick and Ann, stayed in the greenhouse business. The father farmed on about five acres of what is now Rocky Mountain Lake, the northwest corner, of which is now the location of Howard Johnson's on 48th & Federal. The Queen of Heaven Orphanage was directly across the street. A water canal ran between the two properties, and Mother Cabrini often watched the Pedotta children, to be sure they did not get into trouble with the canal. Maria Rose Guisti lived long enough to see Mother
Cabrini cannonized as a Saint. In the later years, the family took her often to see the statue built in honor of Mother Cabrini.

It is worth noting here, there are Pedotto families mentioned, and later Pedota families. These folks are related, but spell their names differently.

Pedota was the original spelling in Bari, Italy, where these people came from. It was reportedly changed by a Catholic Sister to Pedotta, to Americanize the name, but some family members, such as Louis Pedota (who will be mentioned later), kept the original spelling. The Pedotto family then moved to the vicinity of North Washington and 73rd Avenue, where they also engaged in farming. Nick and Joe built the greenhouse located at 1301 E. 73rd Avenue, on Nick's place in 1968, then Joe built his own place a couple of years later.

The youngest daughter, Ann, married into another farming family in the Welby area -- Frank Teti. Frank's father, Dominick Teti, was born in Toricella, Italy, in 1884. Dominick first came to the States in 1901, when he was 17. He then returned to Italy, served in the military, and returned two years later. His mother, Louise Dipaolo, born in 1891, came here when she was 22. This marriage was blessed with nine children: Frank, the oldest born in 1914, then Joe, Jim, Tony, Nick, Mary Louise, Birdie and Josephine. Frank was the only one to go into the greenhouse business. Birdie gained recognition by the Kaiser Corporation, and when Edgar Kaiser purchased the Denver Broncos, Birdie became the receptionist and hostess for the corporation box seats at Bronco games.

Frank Teti and Ann Pedotto had two children, Jolene, 1941, and Frank, Jr., 1947. Young Frank
married Kay Lambertson in 1968. Kay was raised in a farming family. Her father, Kristian Lambertson, and his father before him, farmed a large area in the vicinity of 100th Avenue and North Washington and Eastlake. They grew wheat and other farm crops, and were in the cattle business for a number of years. Frank and Kay have one son, Jason, born in 1971. Jason, no doubt, will follow the family tradition of both families, and be involved in the agriculture picture in the years to come.

Frank, Jr. has continued the greenhouses his father started in 1966, with 3,600 sq. ft. at 5500 E. 88th Avenue, in Henderson, and expanded it to 50,000 sq. ft. He is young, but will have left his mark on this industry when he is ready to go fishing every day. He has been extremely active in Association work, serving as a Director of the American Carnation Society for a number of years, and on the Board, and an officer when it dissolved, in 1981. Elected for several years as president of Carnation Cuttings, Inc., the propagating company owned by several local growers, in Lafayette, he served on a number of committees, and on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Greenhouse Association. Frank is probably best known for his efforts on the Growers Committee of Denver Wholesale Florists, and his reputation as the No. 1 grower in DWF.

This means, in common terms, he produces more flowers with a higher percentage of top grades than any other grower, and in terms of recognition, this means more money per square foot, than any other grower. When you consider there is presently 3.5 million square feet in Colorado, and since Frank has been doing this for a number of years, it also means he very possibly was at the top when there were 7 million square feet. This is a very
recognizable feat among growers. Frank Teti is a quality grower, and perhaps this is one of the reasons for his quick success in the wholesaling business with his partner, Gary Green.

A little history of the Pedota family would perhaps be in order. It will not follow in yearly order with the Pedotto and Teti families, but ties in by marriage and heritage.

Louis Pedota was born January 3, 1905, in Bitritto, Italy. When he was 16 years old, he embarked on a new life in the United States. He was the youngest of three children: Dominic the eldest, followed by Rose, and then Louis. Dominic had come to this country a number of years before. In 1921, when Louis arrived, Dominic worked on the railroad near Salt Lake City, so Louis headed for Utah. He did not stay there long, and in the summer of that year, he came to the Denver area to work in the fields for several years. In 1930, he married Florence Spano. They settled in the Wheat Ridge Valley, as it was called then, and is now the 48th & Garrison Street area. They lived in a small house on Juchem Lane, now Garrison, with the mailing address Box 91, Rt. 1, Arvada. Immediately following their marriage, however, they resided for a few months with an aunt in Welby, where Florence Spano had been born, then they moved back to the valley.

Louis and Florence had two children: Joe, 1932, and John Samuel (Jack), 1936. Both boys grew up working the farm, and later in the greenhouse started in 1956. The 40 x 20 greenhouse covered with fiberglass, was the first fiberglass house West of the Mississippi River. Eventually, additional greenhouses were built with the present 50,000 sq. ft. done in 1969.

Florence came from a family greatly involved
in the agriculture and greenhouse business. She was the second daughter of Joseph and Anna Calabrese Spano. Her older sister, Mary Ann, married James Amato of the Produce Company Amatos. Her next younger sister, Jennie, married Salvatore Spano, also in the business at 52nd & Marshall, in Arvada. She had a brother named Joseph (who went by several nicknames -- Bud, Sam, Jack and Joe), and four younger sisters: Rose, Betty, Polly and Clara, and also a younger brother, John August, or "Mick". Mick distinguished himself by being elected to several terms of the Colorado General Assembly as a State Representative from the Arvada area.

Louis Pedota became a quality carnation grower once he started in the greenhouse business. He shipped for almost 20 years to Davis Bros. until 1973, then to Denver Wholesale Florists until 1979, when he started taking his production to Amato Wholesale Florists Company. Son, Joe, did not stay in the business, but the younger son, Jack, became involved. He served on the Board of Directors of the American Carnation Society, and on numerous committees of the Colorado Flower Growers Association. Five years after he married Pasquelena Spano, he built their home adjacent to the greenhouse, in 1965. They had two children: Debra, in 1962, and Jackie, in 1963.

The Pedota family lived in the Wheat Ridge valley for 48 years, and although they have only been in the carnation business for a quarter of a century, they have been an extremely important part of the agriculture and greenhouse industry, in the State.

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Yoshihara is a well-known name in the Colorado floral industry. Yasutaro Yoshihara (1906-1979), with his wife Kumiko and five children, came from the Los Angeles area of California in the early 1940s, to the relocation camp at Granada, Colorado. He served as a chef at the camp until after the war. The children were: Gene, Joyce, Jim, Ann and Don. The family farmed, as they had on the West Coast, around the Brighton and Longmont areas. Yoshihara was known as the celery king in Southern California, continuing in the vegetable growing business in this State. He bought some run-down greenhouses in Lafayette to grow seedlings for Spring planting. This location turned out to be one of the first garden center floral shops in the State.

It naturally came to the oldest son, Gene, born in 1935, to continue in the field. While attending CSU in 1959, Gene met and married a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, named Evelyn Kodama. She had come to school here from her native Kauai, Hawaii. Gene and Evelyn have a family of two girls and one boy. Gene's brother, Jim, is also in the business with a floral shop in Boulder.

Lafayette Greenhouses were expanded, and the garden center grew, but not at such fantastic proportions as it did after rebuilding the entire range in 1967, and then completely rebuilding the shop and garden center, in 1977. Gene grows a number of crops, grows them well, and he and Evelyn
have visitors from every place in the world to see one of the most beautiful shops in the country.

Gene has become a leading citizen in his own community, and the entire floral community. He has distinguished himself by serving as Vice President of the American Carnation Society, service on the SAF Growers Council, the AFMC Committee and numerous other boards and commissions. He was on the United Floral Industry Board for 12 years, representing growers, and as a Director of the First National Bank in Lafayette, for the past 10 years. After being elected to the DWF Board in 1978, and for his many contributions, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Colorado Greenhouse Association, in 1982.

The Yoshihara family has been invaluable to the industry, and is recognized as a vital part of its history.

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1936 Homer Pearson
1937 Robert Voegler
1938 Herman Oliner
1939 John Bement
1940 Len Weirich
1941 L. R. Bud Kintzele
1942 Harold Crowley
1943 Axel Alenius
1944 Ray Crowley
1945 Charles Graul, Jr.
1946 Homer Hill
1947 Walter Kerl
1948 Charles Cartwright
1949 Wallace Kerl
1950 Ralph Hill, Jr.
1951 Robert Alenius
1952 Wayne Pearson
1953 David Cluster
1954 John Hollberg
1955 William Gunesch
1956 John Davis
1957 George W. Maler
1958 George Brekert
1959 R. W. Braun
1960 H. E. Peterson
1961 Dick Hannigan
1962 Vince Quinn
1963 Raymond M. Weiland
1964 George R. Newberry
1965 Arthur Wise
1966 R. G. Braun
1967 Wallace R. Hollberg
1968 Robert Briggs
1969 Robert Briggs
1970 Charles T. Haley
1971 Charles T. Haley
1972 Ray Kitayama
1973 Marion "Sonny" Elliott
1974 Ronald T. Davis
1975 John A. Balistreri
1976 John A. Balistreri
1977 Don P. Rody
1978 Don P. Rody
1979 John Shelton
1980 John Shelton
1981 Al Schmidt
1982 Al Schmidt
1983 Tim Haley
1984 Tim Haley
1985 Dave Tagawa
OTHER FAMILIES

This concludes the section on some of the families associated with the greenhouse business in Colorado. Only a few are covered in detail, not necessarily because of their prominence in the industry, but because more information was available from relatives still in the business, or associated with it in one way or another. The membership lists, lists of directors at original meetings, and lists of those attending the meetings are significant of their interest, attention and devotion to the growth of this business. There are, perhaps, dozens of names of families involved which we have not listed in detail. Some of these include the following:

CHARLES CARTWRIGHT, who operated a greenhouse next to Fairmont Cemetery for 46 years, passing away in 1970.

OSCAR STEDEL, who owned the Iliff Avenue Greenhouse for more than 50 years. He was 93 when he passed away.

JOHN W. BEMENT, President of the Association in 1939, and his son, Jack K. Bement, who were in business in Southwest Denver for over 50 years.

ALEX ALENIUS from Sweden, an Association president in 1943, and his son, Robert Alenius, and Bob's son, Jim, who followed his father and grandfather through 50 years in the industry.
FRED JACKSON, who either built or worked on nearly every greenhouse in Denver, at one time or another, for nearly 40 years.

MONTEE WHITTINGTON, coming to Denver in the early 1920s, and spending most of his life in the work.

AGNES AND JOE PIGMAN, who worked long and hard in a number of greenhouses.

ROSSO LABRIOLA, who ran the City of Denver greenhouses, then built his own place on West 38th Avenue, in the 1920s.

CHARLES TRACEY, spending 43 years in the business, followed by his son, Charles Tracey, Jr.

WALTER LUTHI, and his brother, Max, who started before the turn of the century.

PAUL E. LEONARD, who died in 1964, was a true innovator in the industry, and was followed by his son, Bill Leonard. Bill was the original owner of what is now the Tagawa Rose Range, in Parker, that had once burned down. Both these men were active in a number of greenhouses in the south end of the city.

LEONARD WEIRICH, another Association president, in 1940.

DEWEY M. CORFMAN, who spent most his life around the greenhouses at Crown Hill Cemetery, either with nursery stock, or flowers.
E. CARL TOOTHAKER, who spent more than 40 years in greenhouses.

BILL PENN, Franktown Floral. Bill was third generation of a floral family in Maryland, which sold out in 1944. After military service, Bill came here and started his rose growing range near Franktown, in 1968.

BATES GREENHOUSE. Lionel Earl Bates and Ruth Benson lived on West 38th Avenue, where Ruth's Flowers is located, since 1926. Her family started growing outside flowers and building greenhouses in 1932, opening a retail store in 1944. She married Earl Bates, and he expanded the greenhouses while Ruth had a nice retail business. They closed both operations December 1, 1982, because of high costs, and health reasons.

NOVACEK GREENHOUSE. Joe Novacek, with sons, Gary and Jerol, constructed their greenhouses from material they bought from Homer Hill, in 1949. They expanded every two to three years until 1966, when it reached total footage of 38,500. Joe came to Colorado from Nebraska. He farmed in the San Luis Valley for a few years, then came to Denver to seek employment. After working a number of years, he began building the greenhouse at 32nd and Youngfield. At the age of 70, he passed away August 29, 1982. His son, Jerol, continued operating the greenhouse on Youngfield Street.

PATTERSON FLORAL COMPANY. Owned by Carl and Shirley Patterson. Carl graduated from Ohio State in 1947, in horticulture, and worked in greenhouses in New York and Ohio for eleven years. Coming to Colorado, he worked for Frank Kirschner, Maler
Greenhouses, and Fred Shaffer before leasing the Glendale Greenhouses from Glen Boulton. He ran this greenhouse for nine years, and started building his own place on Parker Road, in 1968. His son, Ken, worked with him, attended Colorado State University, then went back to assist his father. In 1980, Ken started building his own range adjacent to Carl's, and in August, 1981, got the first production from his 20,000 sq. ft. range, which had been purchased from Gordon Koon when Gordon tore down the place on Sheridan and Hampden for salvage. Ken has been active in industry affairs, serving on a number of CFGA committees, and when the new association was formed in 1979, Ken was elected to the Board of Directors.

SAM E. SCHUMANN. Can be considered an oldtimer in the greenhouse business in the area. The family has had greenhouses since 1910 in three separate locations. The grandfather, Fred C. Schumann, built the original range of 6,000 sq. ft. in 1910, then expanded it, in 1915, by 7,500 sq. ft., in 1924, and in 1926, by 12,000 sq. ft. This greenhouse was between Ames and Benton on West 38th Avenue, and sold to Safeway for a shopping center, in 1953. In 1954, Schumanns opened at 32nd & Youngfield. Originally, they grew miscellaneous crops, and sold direct out of this place to stores in the area, then later consigned their product to Davis Bros. The Highway Department, in 1966, bought this greenhouse for the construction of the interchange on I-70, at Youngfield. Following this sale, Sam and his son, Robert, moved out to Quaker St. in Golden, and built the present range operated as a partnership.
ED GOLDSBERRY. Was active in the Association on the promotion committee, and ran the range on East Idaho Place, which was originally built by Norbert Strobel, and later owned by Fred Weeks. This range was to grow vegetables, and later converted to grow flowers. Ed was a Kansas State University horticulture graduate, and following his military career, moved to this area and contributed much to the industry.

GARRAMONE FAMILY. Owned Mile Hi Greenhouses on West 21st Avenue in North Denver. This range was built by Adolph and Rose Konecny, and later sold to the Garramones, then to C.F. Labriola. Louis Garramone passed away in June, 1953, and after several share changes, Louis F. Garramone incorporated, and changed the name from Skyline Greenhouses to Mile Hi Greenhouses, Inc. Louis' daughter, Margaret, was another generation coming up in the business. Margaret married David Krapes, and when Mile Hi closed, Dave and Margaret moved to West 54th Avenue in Golden, and built a range. It was sold to Bruce Daniel, who owned Stevens & Son, in 1984.

FRANK DARDANO. He was the owner of Dardano's Flowerland, Inc. on West Evans, buying the range originally from Jackson in the early 1960s, and expanding it into one of the largest garden centers in the West, at that time.

RAY GULLY. Another Kansas State horticulture student who came to Colorado. He built his first greenhouse in 1956, expanded it in 1957, and kept growing until 1964. Ray shipped to DWF, and finally became so boxed in on Mississippi and Monaco, that he also sold out to developers. Ray
was an active supporter of the carnation industry, and regularly attended all ACS conventions, CFGA meetings, and social affairs.

OTIS AND VIRGINIA FULLERTON. They spent many years in the industry. Otis graduated from CSU in horticulture, in 1950. He worked for Henry Wislander and D.S. Grimes, then purchased the Englewood greenhouses from the Crowley Bros. in March, 1955. He later sold that range, and built in a new unpopulated area between Sheridan and Wadsworth on West Bowles Avenue. His son, Ronald, was part of the business until Otis closed the operation, and sold off the greenhouses, in 1981. The houses were moved to the West Slope at Ridgeway, Colorado, and opened under the name of Indian Springs Greenhouses.

LYMAN FULLERTON. Otis' brother and owner of Lyman C's Greenhouse. He also spent a number of years in the business. He bought the Bob Woods greenhouse, and operated it at 8660 E. Evans until 1978, when he and his wife moved to San Diego, California.

BERNARD W. BUSCH. He came from the Busch greenhouse family in the Minneapolis area. He built in Welby at 1661 E. 77th Avenue, in 1960, and kept expanding through the 1970s. He originally sold his carnations through Park Elitch Company, and later became a stockholder in DWF, and shipped there. Eventually, he got out of the carnation business, and went into geranium cuttings and other crops.
ROXIE PIETRAFESO. "Roxie" had a greenhouse built by Olsley Construction, in 1960. He expanded over the next several years to 28,000 sq. ft. He shipped to Callaham's, then Davis Bros., and finally DWF. The range is still in operation at 5895 West 56th Avenue, in Arvada.

JAMES AND THOMAS MEE. They were some of the growers who moved out on South Parker Road, in 1958. They expanded in 1965 and 1967. Tom got out of the business, because he worked full-time for Meadow Gold Dairies. They shipped to Park-Elitch, to Denver Wholesale, and then to Amato Wholesale. These were not quick changes, but a number of years at each location. The Mees had a lot of relatives in the business. They were related by marriage to Bill Leonard, and Jim and Tom's sister, Jerry, married Ole Jorgensen, who owned Valley Greenhouses at 2900 S. Boston St., in Southeast Denver. Ole was extremely active in industry affairs. He served on the Board of CFGA, and was involved in the work of DWF for a number of years. He sold out and closed his greenhouse, in 1979.

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In finalizing this section of some of the names involved in this important element of the industry, it must be repeated again that there are many others who deserve mentioning. However, the 1972 questionnaire was mailed to all growers on the membership roster of 1971, to receive background and family involvement in the industry. No reply was received from those not named in this record.

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THE UNITED STATES CARNATION HISTORY

A SYNOPSIS

This paper was presented by Dick Kingman in 1983, at the Second International Symposium on Carnation Culture at San Diego, California. The meeting was attended by an international audience of growers and propagators, and this presentation was given as a synopsis of a history of the carnation growing industry in the United States.

William Shakespeare wrote in a Winter's Tale, "The fairest flowers o' the season are the carnations." This was in 1601, and we know before this date they were called CARNARDINE, the CORONATION, the CLOVE GILLYFLOWER, and by many other names. In England, it became the DIVINE FLOWER because of its beauty and attractive fragrance.

Mr. Charles Willis Ward of Queens, New York wrote a book titled The America Carnation -- How to grow it in 1903. He dedicated the book to THAT WORTHY BODY OF ENTHUSIASTS WHOSE LOVE OF AND DEVOTION TO THE DIVINE FLOWER HAVE ENABLED THEM TO ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH IN SO SHORT A PERIOD OF TIME. If Mr. Ward thought so much had been accomplished by 1903 -- he should see us now.

I shall attempt to give you an "area" report on the carnation in the United States which will cover production from Flatbush to Encinitas. It will cover the basic progress and history of carnation production along with the trends, the
main problems of the growers in different geographical areas and the solutions to these problems as they have arisen over the past couple of centuries.

The carnation was introduced in this country in the early 1800's. It undoubtedly came from England since most of the immigrants during those years came from the British Isles. The natural place to start production was in New York and the eastern seaboard states. There were many "hot houses" in the New England states, and the DIVINE FLOWER became a natural to this type environment. For most of the first part of the 19th century as population areas spread westward, so did flower production, and along with it the carnation.

On Long Island, New York, there were numerous greenhouses, in fact, enough that the growers in the area met regularly and decided there should be an organization to represent them. This organization was similar to the National Carnation and Picotee Society of England, which was established in 1850. This group of growers, probably with the help of growers from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, formed the American Carnation Society in 1892. This new trade association which represented only the carnation, survived for 89 years. Official dissolution papers were filed in 1981, and the American Carnation Society was put to its final resting place in Denver.

As greenhouse operators prospered the production areas spread. Chester County Pennsylvania became known as the "Carnation Belt" and for the next half century, production areas began wherever population centers expanded, i.e.,
the Ohio Valley, the Chicago and Joliet areas of Illinois, and the Missouri Valley.

Pennsylvania reached its peak from 1940 to 1970. There was approximately 600,000 square feet distributed amongst 60 growers. Most of the greenhouses were of glass construction, and the marketing efforts followed that of the eastern coastal states. Growers shipped 20% direct to retailers, sold about 60% on consignment and the balance was sold to wholesalers. They prospered until the early 1970's when energy costs began to rise and they began to feel the effects of imports from South American. By 1970, 23 million standard carnations were shipped into the U.S. from Colombia. Most of the original shipments came into the Miami port and, of course, found an easy route to the heavily populated areas in the northeastern part of the U.S., which had been lucrative markets for the eastern U.S. growers. The flowers from South America were in many instances sold cheaper delivered into the Boston and Philadelphia market then the growers could grow them in the immediate area. This was the beginning of the end for many carnation growers in the Bay State area and Eastern States.

By this time, however, there were other competitive problems for the eastern growers. Colorado had developed a solid carnation industry even prior to World War II, and after the war the carnation industry really expanded. Colorado originally got into the greenhouse business around the turn of the century. It did not take an immigrant with a knowledge of growing long to figure out that with 300 clear sunny days you could grow almost anything, and especially if the
temperature of the greenhouse was properly controlled.

Following the war many of the truck gardeners in the Denver area converted to fresh flower crops. The carnation was an excellent grower in this area and since it was such a good shipper, it became the most popular greenhouse flower. Colorado had the distinction of being a leader in many areas. These accomplishments will be mentioned only briefly, but innovation does pay off and because of it the Colorado industry has flourished.

Perhaps the most unique facet of the industry in Colorado is its method of marketing. It is the only growing area in the country to market through local wholesalers with pool shipping. This began in the early years of development of the industry, and follows through to the present time. Growers in Colorado are not forced nor intimidated into shipping by consignment to a local wholesaler, but they find it to their advantage. All flowers coming into the houses are pooled before selling or shipping. Over a period of fifty years new houses have opened and old ones have closed, but the method of marketing mass cuts continues as it was begun in the early 1920's.

As mentioned before, many innovations and discoveries were made in Colorado. They were first with air conditioning and a centralized grading operation. They developed through research work at Colorado State University new and better methods of growing, getting more flowers per square foot, and new and better methods of conserving on fuel and energy costs.
Colorado reached its peak in 1975 with over 7 million square feet of carnations. They too, began to feel the pinch of imports plus high heating and air conditioning costs. South America imports in 1975 reached 162 million blooms. The markets which were once solid users of Colorado carnations were now almost totally lost to import carnation buyers. This was the last of the expansion years in Colorado. From 1975 our production has dropped an estimated half a million square feet per year for the past 7 years. Much of this has been conversion to other crops and a tremendous appreciation in land values for business development. It is just not good economic sense to grow carnations with a return of 12 cents per bloom on property that will bring $3 to $5 per square foot for other development.

Of course, while all this was happening in Colorado, things were also happening in California. They were not cutting back production, but were building. In the Salinas Valley some 400,000 square foot ranges were put up within a few months, when the owner-developer had absolutely no idea of where he would see the production. This was not an unusual example, but -- standard practice. Northern California carnation production grew by leaps and bounds in the 60's and 70's. In many instances, construction of the original plants were not that expensive, but later were converted to completely climatic controlled environments. Those who built operations based on a solid growth plan with an organized marketing plan were able to survive, those who were there to capitalize on the quick dollar just could not survive.
Northern California began large expansions in the early 60's and reached a peak of 48 million square feet in 1975. It is estimated at present that greenhouses cover a carnation production area of 22 million square feet in the Salinas and Watsonville Valleys.

We must not forget the Southern California area. While the rest of the country was worrying about imports and high fuel costs the San Diego area was also building a new type greenhouse, the SAWTOOTH for around 10 cents per square foot. Right after World War II the growth started in earnest and perhaps reached a peak of 55 million square feet in the late 60's. The decline began in the early 70's and at present there are about 40 million square feet. The construction costs here were in the range of 50 cents per square foot compared to the costs in the Denver area of $10.00 per square foot. When you consider long term energy bills, the construction costs and the availability of labor, it does not take long to figure out that if any area in the U.S. has a future in the carnation business, Southern California is one of the most logical ones.

To summarize, we should perhaps look at some solutions. Energy, of course, is primary in everyone's mind. Everything possible must be done to conserve energy as we know prices will increase month after month. We must investigate every new proposal, every new curtail and utilize all of our Yankee ingenuity to get by.

The second most important step we can take is to start promoting our product. Colorado is the only trade association which has ever advertised
carnations. They promoted them with a seal, they spent over $3 million in promotion and direct advertising over a 15 year period. They were advertising for all carnations, including California, who was selling almost 3 times as many as Colorado produced. Efforts were made to initiate Marketing Orders, either state or federal, but nothing could be done because of a distinct lack of cooperation between either Northern California, Southern California and Colorado.

Filings were made with the International Trade Commission to put a curb or a slow down on imports. All requests to the government were denied for countervailing duty, anti-dumping provisions and all other proposals. We are in a free trade -- open market -- one world situation and this is probably not going to change. If the American grower is going to survive, he is going to have to do it on his own, without help from his government.

In 1981 there were approximately 875 million carnations consumed in the U.S. Colorado produced 8%, California produced 32% and imports from all sources produced 60%. Imports totaled 531 million which was 143 million more than in 1980, an increase of 27% in one year.

This briefly tells the story of the American carnation industry, what has happened to it, and it's anyone's guess as to what will happen in the next 10 or 100 years.