

Denver 76': The Winter Olympics and the Politics of Growth

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Abstract

On May 12, 1970, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded Denver, Colorado, the 1976 winter Olympic games. About two and half years later, on November 7, 1972, Colorado citizens voted to make it a violation of Colorado's constitution for state funds to be allocated toward the event. As a result, Denver's Olympic planners were forced to rescind their offer to host the games. This project reveals that Colorado's decision to banish the Olympics was the product of a transformation in how Coloradans viewed economic growth, combined with broadened understandings of the political power of citizenship. A pro-growth and pro-development mindset motivated Denver's political and business leaders to initiate their bid and facilitated their confidence that a large majority of Colorado's populace supported the endeavor. By the beginning of the 1970s, however, the idea that growth and development were unequivocal social goods had been quieted by a diverse set of issues connected to expectations regarding individual rights. Within Colorado, anxiety over the infringement of open spaces near people's homes, objections to undue spending of taxpayer dollars, and anger that citizens had been shut out of decision-making procedures inspired various citizens to challenge the wisdom and morality of hosting the Olympics.

Executive Summary

On May 12, 1970, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) awarded Denver, Colorado, the 1976 winter Olympic games. About two and half years later, on November 7, 1972, Colorado citizens voted to make it a violation of Colorado's

constitution for state funds to be allocated toward the event.¹ As a result, Colorado's Olympic organizers had to withdraw their invitation to "the youth of the world," as Olympic hosts declare every four years. Alongside Tokyo, Japan, which rescinded the 1940 games (after Japan invaded China during World War II), Denver became (and remains) the only other city to obtain and then relinquish the Olympics. Denver is only city to do so through a popular vote.²

Colorado's decision to banish the Olympics was the product of a transformation in how Colorado citizens viewed economic growth, combined with broadened understandings of the political power of citizenship. A pro-growth and pro-development mindset present in early 1960s motivated the state's political and business leaders to initiate an all-out bid for the games. The prevalence of this pro-growth outlook facilitated the bidders' certainty that they had support from the majority of Colorado's populace. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the 1970s, a diverse set of issues connected to expectations for individual rights challenged the assumption that growth and development were unequivocal social goods. Anxieties over the infringement of open spaces near people's homes, objections to undue spending of taxpayer dollars, and, equally as vital, anger that citizens had been shut out of decision-making procedures inspired Colorado constituents to challenge the wisdom and morality of hosting the Olympics.

The people who bid for the games wanted to use the Olympics to spur Colorado's economy and promote fast development. Ironically, by bringing the

¹ By the time of the vote, anti-Olympic advocates in Colorado had already influenced Washington D.C. legislators. The United States Senate pledged \$15.5 million for new Olympic facilities, but decided to make the commitment dependent on accompanying state support. When Colorado voters rendered state funding illegal, state and federal dollars both became inaccessible. Congressional Record – Senate, S 15021, 15 September 1972, Box 1 Folder 21, DOC DPL.

² "Colorado: No Olympics," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 November 1972, p. C1.

games to the Centennial State, Colorado's Olympic planners created a venue where an overt clash over the meaning and merits of economic expansion could take place. Although the controversy over the Denver Olympics became a political battle in and of itself, it also represented a forum through which citizens gathered to debate and decide how they should structure and organize their community going forward. In supporting or objecting to the Denver Olympics, Coloradans contested more than a single sporting event.

In a way, this inquiry begins as a "top down" history, a twentieth-century story about the decision making of white men in positions of power. Probably the most persona throughout is thrice-elected Colorado Governor John A. Love. The acquisition of the Denver Olympics indicated the dominance of the pro-growth thinking that brought Love to office. In contrast, the defeat of the games revealed the waning popularity of Love's pro-growth agenda. The reasons for which Love, the Denver Organizing Committee (DOC), and their supporters won the 1976 winter Olympic games (and then tried to retain them) helps explain why Colorado citizens chose to reject the event.

This project therefore begins with the motivations of Colorado's Olympic bidders. Positive views of the Olympic games in the United States and a pro-growth ethos in the American West after World War II made hosting the winter Olympics appear attractive to Colorado's chief decision-makers. In the 1960s, Governor Love connected Denver's bid for the games directly to his pro-growth program. Moreover, the focus on growth within the post-war era led Love and the DOC to believe that the bulk of Colorado's citizens backed (or at least would consent to) their Olympic efforts. Certainly, the nature of the DOC's bid was indicative of their high level of assurance in this regard. It is clear that the DOC's bid to the IOC was fraudulent, deceitful, and

corrupt. The DOC's major concern was getting an official designation to host the games. After that, the Olympic hopefuls presumed all other obstacles – including their own dishonesty – would be easy to overcome.

Of course, the Denver Organizing Committee and Governor Love would not have had to surrender the 1976 winter games if it were not for multiple grassroots activists. Denver's Olympic objectors held a variety of positions. Some wanted merely to keep the Olympics out of certain parts of their state. Others were convinced that the games should be removed from Colorado entirely. As far as research for this project could identify, no one in Colorado was against the Olympic movement generally. It was the Olympics coming specifically to Colorado, in one form or fashion, which upset Colorado's anti-Olympic activists. (For the purpose of this report, all views held in opposition to the specific plans of the DOC – rather than the Olympics in general – will be considered “anti-Olympic” views).

The first organized attempt to disrupt the plans of the DOC came from within the foothills of Jefferson County, Colorado, just west of Denver. Jefferson County's opposition emerged before the IOC even awarded the Olympics to the Centennial State. Jefferson County's anti-Olympic advocates fought on behalf of a distinct, narrow, and self-interested brand of environmentalism. Jefferson County residents aimed to prevent the commercialization and growth of their towns. They did so by arguing that they had a right to the aesthetic experiences provided by undeveloped lands located near their homes. Jefferson County protesters aimed not just to preserve flora and fauna or protect ecological processes. They wanted to maintain an idealized middle- to upper-class social status.

Once Denver obtain the games, additional forces added fuel to anti-Olympic fires. Hispanic and black Denverites quickly seized the Olympics to highlight how

Colorado authorities had consistently excluded them from political decisions affecting their well-being. Meanwhile, a pair of liberal Colorado policymakers began to raise doubts about the DOC's cost estimates. In doing so, they openly questioned Governor Love's pro-growth strategies. Hispanic and black Coloradans argued for a right to be included within the DOC's Olympic planning, while liberal politicians advocated for the right of citizens to determine how state officials spent their taxes. Under the light of this mounting contestation, the DOC tried but failed to control the image of the Denver Olympics within Colorado's public sphere. The tide had started to turn against them.

At this point, a small group of young but experienced political operatives entered the fray, teaming up with Colorado's anti-Olympic politicians to get Amendment Number Eight on Colorado ballots. Through the Denver Olympics, these activists hoped to show a cross section of Coloradans the power and potential of direct democratic action. They wanted to slow growth, prevent environmental destruction, return power to individual citizens, and prevent reckless spending. Yet, more boldly, they hoped to use the Olympics to expand civic participation in the name of liberal causes write large.

As 1972 began, Colorado's Olympic organizers struggled. They search for ways to both appease the IOC and at the same time discredit Colorado's mushrooming anti-Olympic uproar. Olympic supporters had finally realized that they could lose the winter games. In response, they pivoted. Instead of contending that the event would grow Colorado's economy, they argued that Coloradans had a responsibility to promote Olympic ideals, such as mutual respect and international goodwill. This strategy suggests that Coloradans had indeed altered the politics of

growth. The prospect of growth and development did not carry the political capital that it used to.

Still, Governor Love, the DOC, and others continued to show a lack of awareness or care when it came to the concerns of Colorado's citizens. The DOC and its supporters made many tactical errors, continually undergirded by their failure to see or respond to the fact that the rights of Colorado citizens overrode desires for regional growth as well as state pride, national prestige, and even improved international relations. For many Coloradans, protecting open spaces around their homes, determining how state money is spent, and providing meaningful input in policymaking became the priority. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Coloradans brought this mindset to bear through the 1976 winter Olympic games, yielding reverberations throughout the Centennial State and the Olympic Movement.

Subject and Objectives

This project represented an inquiry into the controversies surrounding 1976 Denver winter Olympic games – an event that changed the course of Colorado and Olympic history, even though it never took place. The project answers the following questions. How and why did Coloradans win and then discard the Olympics? Why did Colorado boosters set out to host the games in the first place? How were they able to do so successfully? Why did a majority of Colorado voters then become united against Denver's Olympic plans? What can this event teach us about the history of Colorado and the Olympic Movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s? What, additionally, might it reveal about the place of sport in general and the Olympics in particular within American society during that era?

Methodology and Sources

This project employs a critical textual analysis to interpret past events. It is grounded in an primary sources, including regional and national magazines, regional and national newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, and, especially, archived materials – including meeting minutes, personal letters, personal notes, inter-organizational bulletins, memos, and reports, and interviews. The following sources proved vital to the results and conclusions of this report. (Many of these sources – but not all – were observed with support of the PhD Students Research Grant)

Archival Collections

Colorado State Archives and Records, Denver, Colorado

John Love Files (JLF CSAR)

Denver Public Library, Denver Colorado

Citizens for Colorado's Future (CCF DPL)

Denver Chamber of Commerce (DCC DPL)

Denver Organizing Committee for the 1976 Winter Olympics Records (DOC DPL)

John Parr Papers (JPP DPL)

John Love Papers (JLP DPL)

Olympic Clippings (Olympic Clippings DPL)

Rodolfo Gonzales Collection (RGC DPL)

[Ski Country U.S.A] Records (SCUSA DPL)

William McNichols Papers (WMP DPL)

Jefferson County Archives, Golden Colorado

Mountain Area Protection Council Records (MACP JCA)

Stephen H. Hart Library, History Colorado Center, Denver, Colorado

Denver Olympic Organizing Committee Collection (DOOC SHHL)

Protect Our Mountain Environment (POME SHHL).

International Olympic Committee Archives, Olympic Studies Center, Lausanne, Switzerland

1976 Olympic Winter Games of Denver (not celebrated) (Games of Denver IOCA)

Avery Brundage Collection (ABC IOCA)

Candidatures of Cities (CC IOCA)

International Olympic Committee Executive Board (EB IOCA)

International Olympic Committee Sessions (Sessions IOCA)

President Brundage (PB IOCA).

President Killanin (PK IOCA)

Bid Books

Colorado Springs-Aspen Invitation Winter Olympic Games, 28 November 1954.

Denver, Colorado, USA, 1976, XII Olympic Winter Games (1967).

Denver Organizing Committee, Book One, Denver: The City, Denver: United States candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, 1976 (1970).

Denver Organizing Committee, Book Two, Denver: Technical Information, Denver: United States candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, 1976 (May 1970).

Legal Documents

Colorado General Assembly, H.J. Res. 1032. 46th General Assembly, 1st Session, 1967.

Colorado General Assembly, S.B. 179, 46th General Assembly, 1st Session, 1967.

Colorado General Assembly, H. B. 1156, 48th General Assembly 1st Session, 1971.

Colorado General Assembly, Senate Joint Resolution No. 9, 27 48 General Assembly 1st Session, January 1971.

Oral Histories and Interviews

Brown, Sam W. "Vietnam: A Television History; Interview with Sam Brown, 1982." 08/11/1982. Video recording at WGBH Media Library & Archives. http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_A55BE9295E024182AD926622157A9791

Brown, Sam W. Telephone interview with author. 11 April 2016. Notes and recording in author's possession.

Filley, Dwight. Telephone interview with author. 21 May 2016. Notes and \ recording in author's possession.

Hansen, Rodger. Interview with David McComb. American National Bank Building, Denver, Colorado. 5 March 1975 and 31 March 1975. Transcript at Oral History Reports, Stephen H. Hart Library, Denver, Colorado

Gelt, Howard. Telephone interview with author. 21 May 2016. Notes and recording in author's possession.

Lamm, Richard. Telephone interview with author. 9 May 2016. Notes and recording author's in author's possession.

Love, John A. Interview with David McComb. Ideal Basic Industries, Denver, Colorado. 20 March 1974. Transcript at Oral History Reports, Stephen H. Hart Library, Denver, Colorado

Lundstrom, Meg. Telephone interview with author. 30 March 2016 and 19 May 2016. Notes and recording in author's possession.

Nussbaum, Tom. Telephone interview with author. 6 April 2016. Notes and recording in author's possession.

O'Reilly, Richard. Interview with author. Author's home, Pasadena, California. 1 June 2016. Notes and recording in author's possession.

Tutt, William Thayer. Interviewed by David McComb. Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado. 12 June 1975. Transcript at Oral History Reports, Stephen H. Hart Library, Denver, Colorado.

Vanderhoof, John. Interview with David McComb. Denver Chamber of Commerce Building, Denver, Colorado. 19 June 1975. Transcript at Oral History Reports, Stephen H. Hart Library, Denver, Colorado.

Newspapers and Magazines

Aspen Today

Aspen Times

Capital Ledger (Denver, Colorado)

Cervi's Journal (Denver, Colorado)

Chicago Tribune

Colorado Magazine

C.S. Free Press

Dear Earth (Denver, Colorado)

Denver Post

Gazette Telegraph (Colorado Springs, Colorado)

New York Times

Rocky Mountain News

Colorado: Rocky Mountain West

Saturday Evening Post

The Sentinel (Lakewood, Colorado)

Skiing

Sports Illustrated

Straight Creek Journal (Boulder, Colorado)

Washington Monthly

Vail Trail

Television Broadcasts

KMTA-TV (Television station: Denver, Colo.)

Websites

bbc.com
boston.com
businessinsider.com
census.gov
coloradosports.org
deadspin.com
denverpost.com
dw.com
legacy.com
norwegianamerican.com
postindependent.com
nytimes.com
skihall.com
washingtonpost.com
westword.com

Results and Conclusion

Origins of the Bid: Pro-Growth and Pro-Olympic Policies in Colorado

In the late 1960s, during his second term in office, Colorado Governor John A. Love was surprised to learn that some of his constituents opposed his long-held pro-growth agenda. Economic diversity and growth were things he had pushed successfully for years. In truth, promising growth had gotten him elected in the first place. "I was shocked to see groups emerging that opposed my goals," Love admitted.³ In the American West, during the early 1960s, when Love took office, spurring economic growth stood as the first priority of politicians and business leaders. New Deal initiatives and then World War II had motivated park and recreation developers, defense manufactures, and federal bureaucracies to move to the region. When the war concluded, Western power brokers feared that if they failed to diversify local enterprises, new development would stall and the political

³ Love quoted in Donald L. Walker, "John A. Love: The Story of Colorado's Thirty-Sixth Governor," *Historical Studies Journal* 17 (spring 2000): 1-59, quotation from 41.

autonomy and strength they achieved during the war years would dissipate.⁴ From the perspective of Colorado policymakers, finding ways to continue to prompt growth had been and would continue to be of the utmost importance.

Meanwhile, for Western areas looking to define themselves as centers of economic activity, the Olympic games historically and culturally represented a viable promotional device. Within popular media portrayals, the 1904 St. Louis Summer Olympics, the 1932 Los Angeles Summer Olympics, the 1932 Lake Placid Winter Olympics, and the 1960 Squaw Valley Winter Olympics were all unequivocal successes, effectively drawing attention to and branding each host city and town. Commentators and Olympic organizers thus depicted the Olympics as a spectacle that could place cities like Denver, Colorado, on a road of economic and social ascendancy, as well as turn lesser known winter resorts like Vail, Steamboat Springs, or Aspen into international tourist attractions. Moreover, Colorado businesses had used winter sports contests and carnivals to attract tourist and recreation dollars for decades. Many therefore believed Olympic sport would bring people and profits to the Rocky Mountain West. For many Coloradans, the games represented a signpost of social progress.⁵

Colorado business people had lobbied to host the event since the 1950s. As the Denver Organizing Committee's legal advisor Richard Davis recounted, not long after the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics concluded in California, Colorado Springs

⁴ Gerald N. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁵ For an example of a cities that used the Olympics in a similar way around the same time as the Denver bid, see Kevin Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 2008); Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern German* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); one could make the same argument about winter resorts in Europe such as Grenoble, Innsbruck, Cortina, etc.

hotel owner William Thayer Tutt renewed his long held interest in hosting the winter Olympics in the Centennial State. However, after bidding on behalf of Denver and Colorado Springs for the 1960s games and falling short, it had become clear to Tutt that a successful bid would require more money than he and other private interests were willing to put forward. Following the path Squaw Valley took to secure the games, a Colorado Olympics would need state and perhaps federal backing.⁶

Hence, in 1963, Tutt reached out to newly elected Colorado Governor John A. Love for help. Love was easy to contact. Colorado's new governor had lived two blocks away from the Tutt's upscale Broadmoor hotel, joined the Broadmoor Community Church and Golf Club, and accepted a position as the Broadmoor's legal counsel. Before being elected Colorado's governor, Love worked from an office located inside Tutt's resort.⁷

Love had faced off against Democratic Party incumbent Stephen McNichols for the governorship. Following the footsteps of his political predecessors, he predicted that by reducing taxes he could attract more corporations to Colorado, thereby ensuring the state's needed industrial diversification.⁸ Though the candidates had their differences, neither disputed the merits of economic development. Nor did either gubernatorial hopeful doubt the value of promoting out-of-state tourism to bolster Colorado's financial health. In 1962, as part of their

⁶ Tim Ashwell, "Squaw Valley," in *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement*, ed. John E. Findling et al. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 337-343; Laura Lee Katz Olson, *Power, Public Policy and the Environment: The Defeat of the 1976 Winter Olympics*, (PhD Diss., University of Colorado, 1974), 90.

⁷ Walker, "John A. Love," 1-59 quotation from 4; William Thayer Tutt, Interviewed by David McComb, Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado, 12 June 1975, 20, Transcript Oral History Reports, Stephen H. Hart Library, Denver, Colorado, OHR SHHL, p. 20.

⁸ "Young Republicans Strengthened by Political Novice Love's Win," newspaper clipping, circa September 1962, Box 1 Folder 8, John Love Papers, Denver Public Library, Denver Colorado JLP DPL.

political platform, Colorado Republicans urged money be spent on “the most effective methods of attracting out of state visitors.” State Democrats likewise acknowledged that Colorado “has natural wonders and [a] geographic location ideal for tourists.” The Democrats thus pledged to “continue to develop facilities and programs to foster this great industry.”⁹ Both parties envisioned using tourism as a means to broaden Colorado’s marketplace and lure out-of-state spending.

Love defeated Governor Stephen McNichol by convincing voters he was their best bet for growth and diversification. Love assured constituents, if the state could be allowed to lessen the “income and inventory taxes that choke the business man to death, big and small . . . We can put Colorado back on the industrial map.” As Love avowed, “we can measure our progress in industries.”¹⁰ Colorado, he declared, was “a sleeping giant tied down by a skein of McNichols.” By virtue of Love’s leadership the state would witness, in Love’s own words, a “decade of development,” that would “allow Colorado to take its place in the industrial sun.”¹¹

Shortly after Love took office he gathered a team of fellow politicians and financial titans, including William Thayer Tutt, as well as various ski industry moguls. Together they began the process of designing Denver’s bid for the 1976 winter Olympic games. When they did so, Love and his team held a certain cultural perspective and political agenda fresh in their minds. Before World War II, New Deal initiatives and corporate sponsorships buoyed winter sport competitions and festivals, which bolstered Colorado’s reputation as a seasonal getaway. Federal investments during the war and corporate relocation afterward helped the American West gain

⁹ “GOP Plank Favors Reducing Taxes So State Is on ‘Pay-As-You-Go’ Basis,” *Denver Post*, 7 October 1962, p. 6D; “Dems Take Pride in State Regime,” *Denver Post*, 7 October 1962, p. 6D.

¹⁰ John Love, Speech, circa 1962, Box 1 Folder 16, JLP DPL.

¹¹ News Release, “Let’s Elect John Love,” 25 October 1962, Box 1 Folder 12, JLP DPL.

economic power and greater independence from the East. At the same time, according to popular narratives, the Olympics represented the most prestigious international sporting event in the world, appearing to be a sound promotional mechanism. If Colorado could host the Olympics, long-term improvements for the state's infrastructure, tourism industry, and overall economy seemed an inevitable result. Love ran for office promising as much and within a year of his election he announced his intention to bring the Olympics to his state.¹²

Selling Colorado to the United States: Using the Olympics as Promotional Device

On June 27, 1963, during a visit to the ski town of Steamboat Springs, newly elected Governor John A. Love announced his intention to bring the winter Olympic games to Colorado.¹³ Love became the leader of a select group of high powered and closely connected politicians, business executives, and ski industry advocates. Love and his allies envisioned the Olympics as an advertising vehicle that could assist them in their effort to draw attention and money from the rest of their nation. Within the context of the post-war American West, this influential contingent viewed the Olympics as an opportunity that fit squarely within their larger pro-growth agenda. Indeed, to Colorado's Olympic bidders, the year of 1976 represented a propitious moment for their aspirations. At the bicentennial of the United States and the centennial of Colorado, the Olympic flame could add to Colorado's churning economic boon. This was a result that the bidders believed easily warranted the support of the federal government, state administrators, and their fellow Colorado citizens.

¹² "Love Will Seek Winter Games," *Denver Post*, 27 June 1963, p. 34.

¹³ Ibid.

Furthermore, to promote growth, Love's administration devised a larger plan aimed at convincing corporations from throughout the United States to expand into Colorado. As Love later recounted, under pressure to continue Colorado's post World War II economic upsurge, he began traveling throughout the country "trying to find any possible economic opportunity."¹⁴ Following the lead of his post-war forebears, Love worked to forge "growth networks," aligning with bankers, corporate executives, real estate interests, and labor leaders.¹⁵ His plans for the Olympics would fit squarely into this pro-growth strategy.

In May 1964, Love traveled on his first well-publicized trip meant to recruit out-of-state investors. Love, both Republican U.S. senators, and forty Colorado businesspeople journeyed to New York City on what they called a "Sell Colorado mission." In Love's words, the "missionary group" aimed to inform New York industrialists and corporate benefactors about "one of the greatest pieces of real estate on the surface of the globe."¹⁶ According to the Colorado crusaders, their state was ripe for commercial and industrial development. Love and company soon surpassed the effort mounted in New York. On a similar "Sell Colorado" trips to San Francisco and Chicago, Love traveled with up sixty-five Colorado executives at his side, aiming to "sell" their state.¹⁷

¹⁴ Walker, "John A. Love," 31.

¹⁵ Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 541-543.

¹⁶ "Love Troup Guests of New York Bank," *Denver Post*, 14 May 1964, p. 16; "Love Paints Glowing Picture of Colorado," *Rocky Mountain News*, 15 May 1964, p. 8.

¹⁷ "Governor Heads 'Sell Colorado' Cost Trip," *Denver Post*, 17 November 1964, clipping, Box 5 Folder 12 JLP DPL; "Gov. Love Tells Bay Area of Colorado's Advantages," *Rocky Mountain News*, circa November 1964, clipping, Box 5 Folder 12, JLP DPL; Dick Johnson, "Colo. Trade Leaders Court Chicagoans," *Denver Post*, 1 November 1965, p. 29; Dick Johnson, "LA Labor Costs Spur Bid," *Denver Post*, 25 May 1966, clipping, Box 5 Folder 29, JLP DPL.

During the same time, Love began to organize Colorado's bid for the Olympics. At the end of 1964, the governor appointed the Colorado Olympic Commission (COC).¹⁸ In appointing COC members, Love aligned his Olympic hopes with his "Sell Colorado" campaign. The group's six original members were Willaim Thayer Tutt, Peter Siebert (Vail Ski Resort owner), Merrill Hasting (a skiing magazine publisher), Donald Fowler (airline executive and skiing promoter), Richard Olson (president of Outdoor Industries Incorporated), and Joseph Coors (owner of the Coors Porcelain and Brewing Companies).¹⁹ When Love led a third sell Colorado mission to Chicago in 1965, every one of the original COC members except for Tutt traveled along as "ambassadors."²⁰

Love later enlisted the president of the Colorado National Bank, Melvin Roberts, to run the COC's budget and finance committee and Carl DeTemple, the president of the Denver City Council and an executive for the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry, to head the COC's site selection committee.²¹ Both Roberts and DeTemple traveled on the Chicago mission. So too did Donald Magarrell and Donald F. McMahon. Magarrell served as an executive at the Colorado National Bank and headed Love's "Sell Colorado" Committee. In 1966, he became a vice president of the COC at Melvin Roberts' request.²² McMahon was the

¹⁸ Denver Olympic Organizing Committee, Final Report, 29 December 1972, Box 1 Folder 3, DOOC SHHL.

¹⁹ Ibid; "Highlights of Denver's Efforts to Achieve the 1976 Olympic Winter Games," Box 1 Folder 5, DOC DPL.

²⁰ Governor John A. Love's Itinerary for Chicago "Sell Colorado Mission," 1-4 November 1965, Folder Sell Colorado Trip Los Angeles Box 66998, JLF CSAR.

²¹ Colorado Olympic Commission to the Office of the Mayor, Letter, 30 September 1966, Folder 22 Box 99, WMP DPL.

²² "Sell Colorado," C.S. *Free Press*, 16 April 1966, clipping, Box 5 Folder 29, JLP DPL; DOOC, Final Report, DOOC SHHL.

Director of Area Development for the Colorado Interstate Gas Company and also acted as Love's Director of Economic Development. In 1967, he became the COC's Executive Director.²³

There were strong relationships between the "Sell Colorado" missions and the group working to host the 1976 Olympics. Indeed, in 1971, on a television broadcast devoted to the Denver Olympics controversy then sweeping across Colorado, Donald Magarrell was asked if the "Sell Colorado" campaign and the bid for the Olympics were related. After conceding that the "Olympics would bring tourists more than anything else," Magarrell answered simply: "I think so."²⁴ The same people, harboring the same goals of development and growth, engineered both the "Sell Colorado" campaign and the bid for the 1976 winter games.²⁵

To strengthen the confidence these Olympic hopefuls, a cross-section of politicians voiced their approval for holding the Olympics in the Centennial State. The mayors of Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado's General Assembly, both U.S. Senators, five U.S. Congressmen, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, and then President Richard Nixon all pledged their support.²⁶ The Colorado business

²³ For McMahon's role as one of the planners for Colorado Missions see "Gov. Love Tells Bay Area of Colorado's Advantages," *Rocky Mountain News*, circa November 1964, clipping, Box 5 Folder 12, JLP DPL; "McMahon to Head Olympic Bid Drive," *Rocky Mountain News*, 17 March 1967, p. 112; Final Report. All of the above mentioned Olympic organizers except for Tutt and Seibert also traveled on Love's 1966 sell Colorado mission to Los Angeles, see "Governor John A. Love's Itinerary for Los Angeles 'Sell Colorado Mission,'" 23-25 May 1966, Box 66998 Folder Sell Colorado Trip Los Angeles, JLF CSAR.

²⁴ KTMA-TV (Television station: Denver, Colo.), Environmental Hotline, 1971, aired 15 March 1971, Denver Public Library, Denver Colorado.

²⁵ Other Colorado business people that served as Colorado Ambassadors and later on the COC later or the DOC include: Richard Davis, William F. Robinson, and William Kostka Jr. These individuals will be discussed in more detail below.

²⁶ Tom Currigan to John A. Love, Letter 7 June 1965, Box 99 Folder 23, WMP DPL; Harry W. Hoth to John A. Love, Letter, 26 May 1965, Box 6 Folder 1976 Olympics, POME SHHL; Gordon Allott to Thomas G. Currigan, Letter, 11 April 1967, Box 1 Folder 1, DOC DPL; Peter H. Dominick to Thomas G. Currigan, Letter, 24 April 1967, Box 1 Folder 1, DOC DPL; Wayne N. Aspinall to Thomas G. Currigan, Letter, 11 April 1967, Box 1 Folder 1, DOC DPL; Donald G. Brotzman to Thomas G. Currigan, Letter, 9 May 1967, Box 1 Folder 1, DOC DPL; Frank E. Evans to Thomas G. Currigan,

community lent assistance to the Denver's bid as well. Between 1968 and 1970, the DOC reported receiving over \$200,000 in private contributions. When collecting funds to support their bid to the IOC, about half the DOC's \$336,000 income came by this route.²⁷ The Denver Olympic organizers also received various additional in-kind donations. In December 1967, for example, when Governor Love, Denver Mayor Thomas Currigan, and Merrill Hastings traveled to New York City to present their Olympic proposal to the United States Olympic Committee, they traveled for free on the Gates Rubber Company's private jet.²⁸ As in previous eras, Colorado's print media also continued to express upbeat views about the Olympics.²⁹

Letter, 19 April 1967, Folder 22 Box 99, WMP DPL; Byron Rodgers to Thomas G. Currigan, Letter, 10 April 1967, Box 1 Folder 1, DOC DPL; Colorado General Assembly, H.J. Res. 1032. 46th General Assembly, 1st Session, 1967. Though this resolution has been misplaced at the Colorado State Archives and Records, a copy can be found at Box 99 Folder 26, WMP DPL; Colorado General Assembly, S.B. 179. 46th General Assembly, 1st Session, 1967, CSAR; Hubert H. Humphrey to Thomas Currigan, Letter, 16 September 1968, Folder 1 Box 100, WMP DPL; Richard Nixon to W.H. McNichols, Letter 4 August 1968, Folder 1 Box 101, WMP DPL.

²⁷ Olson, *Power, Public Policy and the Environment*, p. 210-213; Olson shows that many such contributors had direct links to the COC or DOC.

²⁸ Donald F. McMahon to USOC Presentation Team, Letter, Re: Flight Schedule, 8 December 1967, Folder 22 Box 99, WMP DPL. Recent DOC member and USOC official Willard Greim\ also traveled on this flight. Richard Olson and Clifford Buck were included on the return flight. The Public Service Company and Gates Rubber together provided helicopters to carry members of the International Skiing Federation to potential venues during visits, see "Olympics in Colorado?" *Denver Post*, 30 October 1968, p. 92; The Jeep Corporation donate a Jeep for COC to use starting in 1966, see Richard M. Davis, Denver Olympic Committee Meeting Minutes, 1 March 1968, Folder 3 Box 100, WMP DPL. When International Sport Federation inspectors visited potential event location in October 1968, Hertz and Kumpf Lincon-Mercery Company provided two vehicles each, and Davis Brothers incorporated donated liquor for a reception, see George F. Robinson to John C. Davis, Letter, 1 November 1968, Folder 4 Box 100, WMP DPL; George F. Robinson to Florian Barth, Letter, 1 November 1968, Folder 4 Box 100, WMP DPL; George F. Robinson to Jim Schorsch, Letter, 1 November 1968, Folder 4 Box 100, WMP DPL. IBM provided the DOC goods and services, see Donald F. McMahon to R. J. Whalen, Letter, 5 February 1969, Folder 8 Box 100, WMP DPL. In April 1970, Trans World Airlines flew a group of "European sportswriters" to Denver from Jackson, Wyoming, where the World Championship of Skiing just took place. As DOC meeting minutes put it, [g]ood European press immediately preceding Amsterdam could assist Denver in winning the support of uncommitted IOC members," see Richard Davis, Denver Organizing Committee Meeting Minutes, 12 March 1970, Folder Box, WMP DPL.

²⁹ Cal Queal, "Winter Olympics 1976," *Denver Post*, 6 February 1964, p. 62; "Winter Olympics for Colorado," *Rocky Mountain News*, 16 December 1966, clipping, Folder 25 Box 99, WMP DPL. Jim Graham, "Olympic Pomp 'Seen in Colo.," *Denver Post*, 7 February 1968, p. 74; John Morehead, "Olympic Pitch Set by Denver," *Denver Post*, 11 January 1968, p. 28.

While the media replayed positive accounts of Denver's Olympic prospects, politicians and businesspeople offered their aid, all validating the motives of Love and his "Sell Colorado Supports." Thus the Olympic boosters became comfortable enough to assume (or at least express the assumption) that they had broad support among the Colorado populace. As Governor Love told USOC member Amos R. Little Jr. in 1965: "Our citizens stand ready to do everything possible to see that our proud state is well prepared to represent the United States in an outstanding fashion should they be selected" to host the Olympics.³⁰ In what proved a tremendous irony, while observing the 1968 winter Olympics in Grenoble, Mayor Currigan even assured the international press that "I don't look to any serious opposition whatsoever from the citizens of Denver and Colorado." Currigan added that the people of Colorado "are determined to spend whatever would be necessary to make a very successful Winter Olympics."³¹

As Currigan's quotation implies, Colorado organizers had at least some inkling that the games would be quite expensive. "We'd need a lot of money," warned the President of the Aspen Ski Corporation, "both from the state and federal government."³² In 1967, a study commissioned by the COC similarly concluded that "Colorado would need substantial Federal financial support in order to stage the 1976 Winter Olympic Games," as well as funding from state, local, and private sources. Olympic planners knew full well that federal and state dollars were a prerequisite.³³

³⁰ John A. Love to Amos R. Little Jr., Letter, circa 1965, Box 6, Folder 1976, POME SHHL.

³¹ Currigan quoted in "Currigan Optimistic Over '76 Games," *Denver Post*, 8 February 1968, p. 61.

³² Brown quoted in Queal, "Winter Olympics 1976," p. 62.

³³ Theodore D. Browne, Preliminary Estimate of Costs, Revenues, and Economic Impact Associated with Staging the 1976 Winter Olympic Games in Colorado, 4 January 1967, vi, Box 1 Folder 2, DOC DPL. The DRI report specified that the DOC would need local, state, federal, and private funding.

Yet the Olympic planners were not perturbed. In fact, the same COC commissioned study confidently – though vaguely – attested that the “dollars needed to balance the total budget are expected.”³⁴ Colorado’s bidders anticipated that they would receive the funding they needed. In 1968, after returning from Grenoble, where an estimated \$224 million had been spent on the games, Governor Love guaranteed to his constituents: “Of course, Colorado can expect some federal money to help finance the Olympics.”³⁵

The extent of the apparent support already received, the general approval of and focus on growth after World War II, the history of federal investment in the American West, and popular views of the Olympics within American culture combined to enable Denver’s Olympic organizers to settle into a sense of certainty that they would somehow obtain the required finances. They were sure if they could just get the International Olympic Committee to send the Olympics their way, everything else would work itself out. Gaining public support to host the Olympics within the United States and in Colorado was not foreseen as a genuine obstacle. The real challenge in the eyes of Colorado’s political and business leaders was convincing the IOC that Denver was indeed the best venue for advancing the Olympic movement.

Selling Denver to the International Olympic Committee: Confidence, Deceit and Deception

Confident that they had support throughout Colorado’s corridors of power and influence, Denver’s Olympic bidders set their sights on winning over the people who actually decided where the Olympics should be held – the members of International

³⁴ Ibid. There will be a more analysis of the DRI study in the following chapter.

³⁵ Love quoted in Don Lyle, “Love Back from Grenoble; Hopes High,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 9 February 1968, clipping, Folder 25 Box 99, WMP DPL.

Olympic Committee. In this effort, Denver's Organizers devised a proposal where the proximity of events, the costs of building new facilities, and the potential for after-use represented exactly what IOC members wanted to hear. It was also plan that the Denver bidders knew to be untenable in practice. To become Olympic hosts, in various publications and its formal proposals to host the games, the Denver Organizing Committee lied and deceived.

Colorado's bidders did not originally intended for Denver be the sole host of games. They planned for events to be held throughout the entire state. They slated ski jumping (and probably Nordic events) for Steamboat Springs, 155 miles from Denver. They considered Crested Butte for Alpine races, 200 miles from Colorado Springs. Their initial proposal included both Denver and Colorado Springs as dual "home bases" for athletes, coaches, and Olympic officials. Planners speculated sites such as Aspen, Winter Park, and Vail could be used as well.³⁶ It was the consensus amongst Colorado's Olympic backers that such a format represented Colorado's best chance to win the right to host the Olympics.³⁷

In the eyes of the IOC, however, the "spread-out concept" was a weakness. As Colorado's bidders learned, the leaders of the Olympic Movement wanted to see events, at a maximum, one hour apart.³⁸ Thus, in 1966, Colorado's Olympic planners determined that the Denver should be the host city and formed the Denver

³⁶ "Ski Colorado: Bid for the Winter Olympics," Circa 1965, Folder 23 Box 99, WMP DPL. While this document is not dated, it includes letters from Thomas Currigan (and others) to John Love, all written between May and June 1965. Additionally, at a later 1965 COC meeting, the commission discussed finding locations for a separate "Alpine Village, and necessary ski base camps in the mountains," indicating their intentions to hold skiing events at diverse locations some distance from Denver, see Richard Olson, Colorado Olympic Commission Meeting Minutes, 12 November 1965, DCC DPL.

³⁷ Queal, "Winter Olympics 1976," p. 62; Steve Knowlton, Colorado Ski Country USA Newsletter, 1 November 1964, Box 1 Folder 2, SCUSA DPL.

³⁸ Site Selection Committee, Memo, circa 1966, Folder 22 Box 99, WMP DPL.

Olympic Organizing Committee. Internal documents show that the previously formed Colorado Olympic Commission and the DOC were basically two divisions of the same organization, tasked with overlapping responsibilities. The same people who made up the COC became the leading members of the DOC. Money and other resources quickly got sent from one organization to the other. The DOC was created only because IOC rules stipulated that a city and not a state must host the games.³⁹

The DOC's main reason for having the whole state of Colorado as the host was that there was no central location that would be able hold all the winter Olympic events. Nevertheless, to appease the IOC, the newly formed DOC planned events near Denver. They first decided to host Nordic Events in the foothills town of Evergreen, about fifteen miles from the city. Unfortunately, Evergreen had a very poor chance of having enough snow for the contests. As DOC commission studied discovered, the average temperature in Evergreen during the time in which the Olympics were to take place was 47.7 degrees Fahrenheit. There only a 4% chance of having more than 10 inches of snow on the ground, the proper amount for cross country races.⁴⁰ The DOC was well aware of this. In a "confidential" report produced a year before their official bid to the IOC, DOC officials called "Evergreen's weather"

³⁹ "COLORADO OLYMPIC COMMISSION / DENVER OLYMPIC COMMITTEE: Definition and Allocation of Responsibilities and Duties," circa May-June 1968, Folder 1 Box 100, WMP DPL.

⁴⁰ Lewis O. Grant to James B. Cotter, Letter, 21 April 1970, Box 2 Folder 27, DOC DPL. Even after a usually large snowfall, Grant added, a sudden bout of mild weather would "quickly remove all snow cover over essentially the entire Evergreen area." The DOC decided to invest in meteorology studies in August of 1969 to "(1) to substantiate the DOC's presentation material, and (2) to counteract any adverse publicity that might be directed at the DOC," see Richard M Davis, Denver Organizing Committee Meeting Minutes, 15 August 1969, Folder 8 Box 100, WMP DPL.

a “weakness”, which was “not known and not to be discussed.”⁴¹ In their bid books, they promised ideal conditions.⁴²

The status of Alpine contests was not any better. After being warned that they could not win the games from the IOC if events were too far away, the DOC moved the downhill and slalom events as close to Denver as possible. The new locations were the Loveland Basin Ski Resort and an undeveloped mountain called Mount Sniktua. Both sites were about forty-five minutes driving from Denver.⁴³ Mount Sniktua prove particularly troublesome. According the DOC, Sniktua provided “more than the required minimum vertical drop plus the terrain features necessary for outstanding downhill competitive events.” As the DOC claimed, “this downhill will be one of the finest modern courses” and “because of its excellent location, Mt. Sniktua can be developed into a major recreational skiing area by developing necessary trails for the beginner and intermediate skier.”⁴⁴ In their official bid books, the DOC claimed Loveland Basin and Sniktua “have always had abundant snow fall . . .

⁴¹ J.B. Cotter to R.M Davis, T. Hildt Jr., R.J. Pringle, G.D. Hubbard, D.V. Dunklee, R.S. McCollum, R.D. Barnard, C.H. Buck, N.H. Allen, T.G. Currigan, R.H. Olson, Letter, Re: Competitive Comparisons, 13 May 1969, Folder 8 Box 100, WMP DPL; Lewis O. Grant to James B. Cotter, Letter, 21 April 1970, Box 2 Folder 27, DOC DPL.

⁴² Denver, Colorado, USA, 1976, XII Olympic Winter Games (1967), DPL; After winning the games, the DOC considered using machine made snow covered with tarps to created shade, while holding all the cross country races before 10 a.m. when the “snow” would begin to melt. Nonetheless, most of Colorado’s bidders probably knew that if they won the 1976 games, they would have to relocate the Nordic events, see Richard O’Reilly, “The Olympics and Colorado: Snags Arise in Olympic Site Selection, 3rd of a series” *Rocky Mountain News*, 6 April 1971 p. 8, 22.

⁴³ “Long Road ’76,” *Colorado Magazine*, November-December 1970, 11-16, 102-107; Richard O’Reilly, “The Olympics and Colorado, 1st of a series: Olympics—good or bad in Colorado?” *Rocky Mountain News*, April 4 1971, p. 1, 5, 8; In the “Long Road to ’76” McLane is quoted as telling the DOC: “I don’t think you’ll win the nod in New York next month if you don’t switch the downhill races from Vail to some place closer to Denver. The distance is just too great, and that national committee knows that in the final analysis the international body won’t accept such a remote competition site . . . Take my advice and change the plan.”

⁴⁴ Denver U.S. Candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, Proposed Nordic and Alpine Sites: Prepared for International Ski Federation Congress 1969, presented 18-25 1969 May, Box 3 Folder 33, POME SHHL.

matchless for alpine events.”⁴⁵

In truth, due to strong winds and an extremely steep grade, everything the DOC claimed about Sniktua proved to be a lie. The same list that had mentioned Evergreen’s problematic weather, also noted that the “[w]ind on the upper sections of Mt. Sniktua” was another “weakness” of their proposal. This tidbit too was classified as “not known and not to be discussed.”⁴⁶ A DOC commissioned study would later determine that because of windy conditions, an “overabundance of steep grades,” and a “complete lack of terrain with grades that are suitable for the pure intermediate ability [skier] . . . the development of Mt. Sniktua for skiing, either commercially or competitively, [should] be abandoned.”⁴⁷ Around the same time, *Rocky Mountain News* investigative reporter Richard O’Reilly uncovered that the snow shown on Mount Sniktua in the DOC’s official bid books sent to the IOC had been airbrushed on.⁴⁸

The location of the Olympic Village represents another example of DOC misrepresentation. The DOC’s May 1970 proposal to the IOC read that the “University of Denver has guaranteed its modern student residence halls for the

⁴⁵ Book One, Denver: The City, Denver: United States candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, 1976 (May 1970), 17, Bid Books, IOCA.

⁴⁶ J.B. Cotter to R.M Davis, T. Hildt Jr., R.J. Pringle, G.D. Hubbard, D.V. Dunklee, R.S. McCollum, R.D. Barnard, C.H. Buck, N.H. Allen, T.G. Currigan, R.H. Olson, Letter, Re: Competitive Comparisons, 13 May 1969, Folder 8 Box 100, WMP DPL. The DOC also listed the “[w]omen’s giant slalom at Loveland Basin” as a “weakness.”

⁴⁷ Joseph Cushing, Jr. to Theodore Farwell, letter, 11 June 1971, Box 2 Folder 37, DOC DPL; Sno-Engineering Inc., “Preliminary Site Evaluation: Mount Sniktua,” Spring 1971, Box 2 Folder 37, DOC DPL.

⁴⁸ Richard O’Reilly, interview with author, Pasadena, California, 1 June 2016, notes and recording in the author’s possession; Also O’Reilly, “The Olympics and Colorado, 1st of a series: Olympics Good or Bad in Colorado?”

Olympic Village”⁴⁹ The problem was that no such guarantee was ever made.⁵⁰ In 1967, University of Denver Board of Trustees on agreed to let their dorms be “included in a proposal to be submitted to the International Olympic Committee.” However, they only pledge the “possible use” of their housing facilities. As the school’s chancellor Maurice Mitchell explained to Donald Magarrell, the “Board was told [in 1967] that it would not be held to this commitment.”⁵¹

Of all the DOC’s untruths, perhaps the most politically significant concerned how much the Olympics would cost and how much Colorado would benefit. Leading up to their bid to the IOC, the DOC never obtain a solid estimate about what the games would cost. In early 1966, they commissioned the Denver Research Institute (DRI), associated with the University of Denver, to ascertain an “estimate of the costs and revenues of staging the 1976 Winter Games in Colorado.” Notheless, as the report’s lead author, business consultant Theodore D. Browne, confessed, “[c]onsiderable personal judgment was required . . . because of the early timing of the study.” As Browne made clear, the “estimates in the report must be considered quite rough, ‘ball park,’ in nature . . . [since] sites for various Olympic events are not yet selected.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Book Two, Denver: Technical Information, Denver: United States candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, 1976 (May 1970), 8, Bid Books, IOCA.

⁵⁰ Richard M. Davis, Denver Olympic Committee Meeting Minutes, 17 April 1968, Folder 3 Box 100, WMP DPL.

⁵¹ Maurice Mitchell to Don Magarrell, Letter, 12 March 1971, Box 2 Folder 13, DOC DPL.

⁵² Theodore D. Browne, Preliminary Estimate of Costs, Revenues, and Economic Impact Associated with Staging the 1976 Winter Olympic Games in Colorado, 4 January 1967, iii, Box 1 Folder 2, DOC DPL. The study’s method was described as such: “Three Primary information sources were utilized . . . [1] review of final reports from prior Winter Olympic Games and from proposals to stage the 1968 and 1972 Games . . . [especially] the experience of Squaw Valley, California (1960), Innsbruck, Austria (1964), and Grenoble, France (1968) . . . [2] [c]orrespondence [that] helped to clarify the construction costs of various facilities . . . [and] [3] personal interviews . . . with knowledgeable people in California, Colorado, Nevada, and New York” (iii).

Over the next few year, based on data for the DRI, the DOC project a total cost of around \$10 to 20 million. The number was \$14 at the time of their official IOC bid. Meanwhile, Denver organizers went beyond anything provided in the DRI's analysis when they asserted that "[e]stimates indicated that monetary benefits to Denver from the 1976 Games could total \$150 to \$200 million."⁵³ These was a gross exaggeration, given that DOC's own finding showed the sport facilities they would need to build, such as a ski jump, luge, bobsled course, and speed skating rink, had a slim chance of being economically viable after the Olympics.⁵⁴ They DOC also claimed that 80% of they needed sport facilities were already built. But based on the proposal submitted to the IOC, Nordic skiing, the biathlon, alpine skiing, ski jumping, bobsled, luge, and speed skating facilities all still needed to be constructed. The figure of 80% was another obvious distortion.⁵⁵ Current DOC President Richard Pringle even told the IOC that "[e]xperts have advised that we could stage the Olympic Games in 12 to 18 months if need be."⁵⁶ With 1976 still six years away, the bluff was a reliable one.

⁵³ "Information for Immediate Release," 18 September 1968, Box 1 Folder 36, DOC DPL.

⁵⁴ Tommy Patterson, Mountain Area Planning Council Conversation w/Gov. Love, 23 April 1970, Folder 24 Box 1, MAPC JCA; Charles T. Gibson to Marvin Crawford, Letter, 3 January 1972, Box 2 Folder 16, DOC DPL; J.B. Cotter to T. Hildt, Jr., D.F. Magarrell, F.G. Robinson, R.J. Pringle, G.F. Grosword, A. Zirkel, P.J. Gallavan, K. Dybevik, W. Kostka, Jr., Letter, Re: Speed Skating/Hockey Complex Proposal Ahrendt Engineering Co., 8 May 1969, Box 2 Folder 12, DOC DPL; Ahrendt Engineering's analysis is located with the Cotter letter in Box 2 Folder 12, DOC DPL. However, its cover page is labeled "Denver Olympic Village for the Denver Organizing Committee for the 1976 Winter Olympics, Inc."

⁵⁵ Denver Organizing Committee, Book Two, Denver: Denver: Technical Information: United States candidate for the XII Winter Olympic Games, 1976 (May 1970), Bid Books, IOCA. For alpine evets see 18-43; for ski jumping see 50-55; for cross country skiing see 56-63, for the biathlon see 63-68; for speed skating see 86-89; for bobsled and luge see 90-103. The DRI had not known where events would be and so could not have come up with the 80% number. But given the DOC penchant for shaping information, one wonders if, somehow, the group misused the 80% provided by DRI for facilities with after-use potential.

⁵⁶ Denver Committee of Candidature, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Script, Presented on 10 May 1970, Folder 11 Box 100, WMP DPL.

From May 7 to 16 of 1970, the IOC met in Amsterdam, Netherlands to select the site for the 1976 winter Olympics. By a vote of thirty-nine to thirty on the IOC's third ballot, the IOC selected Denver over Sion, Switzerland. It must have been gratifying for the DOC.⁵⁷ The Colorado bidders confidently sold the most powerful international sports organization in the world a Rolls-Royce with nothing under the hood. They would obviously have to make some technical changes but, they assumed, Colorado's image would soon reap momentous public relations rewards.

As Denver's former mayor, Tom Currigan, claimed, the DOC had been "interested in just seventy-three people in the whole world" – the seventy-three members of the IOC. In comparison, Denver's band of Olympic hopefuls paid minimal attention to citizens living in Colorado or Denver. The IOC "could vote," Currigan explained, "Denverites couldn't."⁵⁸ In the eye of the DOC, overlooking Coloradans was not a risky thing to do. They believed Colorado's citizens would surely consent to becoming Olympic hosts. Colorado's powerbrokers exploited guileful and dishonest strategies to surmount any obstacle that stood in their way. What the DOC did not foresee and continually failed to realize was that during the seven years that they bid for the Olympics, many Coloradans changed their perspectives regarding the growth and development that the Olympics were meant to foster. The DOC sold Denver to the IOC in a remarkable fashion, but they had yet to sell the Olympics to Colorado. Compared to seducing the IOC, that tasked proved much more difficult.

⁵⁷ 69th International Olympic Committee Session, 12-16 May 1970, Sessions IOCA; "Denver Triumph a 7-Year Effort." *New York Times*, 13 May 1970, p. 53. Along with Sion, Switzerland, Tampere, Finland, and Vancouver, Canada bid against Denver for the 1976 Winter Olympics.

⁵⁸ Thomas Currigan quoted in Denver Olympic Organizing Committee, Final Report, DOOC SHHL.

Jefferson County's Environmentalist Revolt: The Aesthetic Rights of Middle-class Citizenship

The first concerted effort to disrupt the plans of Denver's Olympic organizers came from Colorado residents living in the foothills of Jefferson County, just west of Denver. Upon learning about the plans for the Nordic events, Jefferson County inhabitants began to express fears that the Olympics would spur excessive development and exploitation, bringing an influx of new residents, tourists, and commercialization that would do irreparable environmental damage to the region and their desired "way of life."⁵⁹ The DOC and its supporters wanted to use the Olympics to "Sell Colorado." Yet, as one Olympic opponent from Jefferson County described to the DOC in June of 1972: "Colorado has been oversold."⁶⁰

The Jefferson County coalition that challenged the DOC's agenda did so through a particular brand of environmental advocacy connected to notions of aesthetic value and individual rights. For Colorado's budding foothill environmentalists, these concerns proved to be largely restricted to their immediate surroundings within Jefferson County. Their goal was not to prevent the Olympics from coming to Colorado altogether. Jefferson County inhabitants only wished to protect the aesthetic experiences that the areas directly near their homes provided.⁶¹

Most Jefferson County inhabitants were well-off white middle-class suburbanites. They wanted to preserve clean air and water, prevent erosion, protect

⁵⁹ See for example Resolution, 8 January 1971, Box 4 Folder 40, Box 4 Folder 30, POME SHHL; Letter to the International Olympic Committee, 26 April 1971, Box 4 Folder 48 POME SHHL; Vance R. Dittman to Avery Brundage, Letter, 6 November 1971, Box 1 Folder 16, POME SHHL.

⁶⁰ Stoepplewreth quoted in Douglas Bradley, "Olympic Foes Voice Concerns," 29 June 1972, clipping, Folder 4 Box 6, MAPC JCA.

⁶¹ See for example, Vance R. Dittman to John A. Love, Thomas G. Currigan, Richard Torrissi, George Robinson, Don McMahon, Merrill G. Hasting, Jr., Gerald Groszold, Letter, 1 June 1968, Box 2 Folder 23, POME SHHL; Vance R. Dittman to Richard M. Torrissi, Letter, 24 August 1968, Box 6 Folder 60, POME SHHL.

trees and wildlife, and maintain the ecosystems in which they lived. At the same time, however, these physical features became desirable, in part because of the social status that they conferred.⁶² As environmental historian Andrew Hurley argues, “middle-class environmentalism . . . emerged out of the effort to protect those physical features of residential life . . . that had become central components of [white] middle-class identity.” Thus, Hurley claims, “middle-class activists saw environmental protection as a means of sustaining the suburban ideal.”⁶³ Likewise, Jefferson County’s suburban dwellers aimed to prevent growth in order to preserve aesthetically pleasing surroundings that solidified a certain, class-centered, social standing.

This became especially evident in two examples from the Denver Olympics debated. For one, there were times when Jefferson County environmentalist appeared to abandon “environments” arguments completely. As historian James Longhurst argues, a “recurring emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” often made “the new modern environmental movement” of the late 1960s and early 1970s seem “not as environmental as one might expect.”⁶⁴ Indeed, in November 1970, Jefferson County environmentalist leader Vance Dittman professed

⁶² Loren Bartiz, *The Good Life: The Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class* (New York, N.Y.: Harpers & Row, 1990).

⁶³ Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Race, Class, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indian, 1945-1980*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1995), 46-76, quotations from 47, 75; Hurley analysis is centered on the suburban town of Miller, outside of Gary, Indiana. Also see Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*. Rome shows how neither the reckless consumption of resources nor the risk of waste polluted water effectively motivated suburbanites to environmentalist action. Instead, the loss of the aesthetically valued open spaces in the countryside inspired people to protect their surroundings. Rome also notes that property rights were often referenced to fight against environmental reforms, see 230-236 and especially 242-247. Interestingly, the case of environmentalist who opposed the Denver Olympics, individual property rights laid important ideological groundwork helpful to environmental advocates. This will be discussed in more detail below.

⁶⁴ Longhurst, *Citizen Environmentalists*, x.

to Governor Love that “[a]ny question of the physical suitability of these [Olympic] sites is entirely irrelevant. The real issue,” Dittman explained, was that “we, as citizens of Colorado . . . appeal to you as Governor . . . to exercise your enormous influence.” In a similar vein, when Dittman wrote to IOC member Rodolphe J. Leising to learn about the process for choosing Olympics venues, he made sure to clarify that the “reason for the question is that the citizens of these communities, in substantial numbers, are opposed to these events at these sites, regardless of their technical suitability.”⁶⁵

Even if the physical layout of Jefferson County did not present any significant “technical” challenges, Dittman asserted, the preferences of local residents should be enough of a reason to move the Nordic events elsewhere. When it was deemed helpful to their cause, Olympic opponents such as Dittman turned to “technical” matters, such as soil erosion, water sanitation, or the harmful effects of downed trees. Still, in other instances, such factors took a back seat. Technical studies to ascertain the Front Range’s environmental suitability were “irrelevant,” Dittman told USOC President Clifford Buck, “since we do not want the events here no matter how feasible it may be to stage them.”⁶⁶ An essential right to determine what should be and what should not be allowed within one’s own community was all Dittman and others felt it needed to make their case.

With this mind, Jefferson County environmentalists presented an argument that often reached beyond traditional legal boundaries. This came to light most clearly in POME’s response to a report submitted to the United States Congress (which was debating whether or not to help fund the DOC) by the U.S. Bureau of

⁶⁵ Vance R. Dittman to Rodolphe J. Leising, Letter, 23 November 1970 Box 2 Folder 17, POME SHHL.

⁶⁶ Vance R. Dittman Jr. to Clifford H. Buck, Letter, 8 December 1970, Box 4 Folder 40, POME SHHL.

Outdoor Recreation (then a part of the Department of the Interior). The authors of the report found that the Olympic games would not, in the long run, substantially increase the rate of growth and environmental damage in Jefferson County.⁶⁷

As the report explained, though growth and development would deplete and pollute water supplies, harm air quality, reduce the range of wildlife, and alter natural settings, “[i]t is emphasized . . . that Olympic impacts as they relate to growth and development are only a small part and parcel of the larger pattern.” The report speculated that with judicious planning “land use decisions as they relate to the Olympics and afterwards could [even] be environmentally beneficial in the long range.”⁶⁸ In other words, the changes POME claimed the Olympics would facilitate were probably inevitable with or without the 1976 winter Olympic games. Meanwhile, properly initiated, Olympic developments could potentially help minimize pending ecological damage.

In a reply also submitted to Congress, Jefferson Country advocates claimed that the Bureau of Outdoor recreation report possessed “important inaccuracies and omissions.” Yet, they did not question many of Bureau’s main assertions. Rather, the environmentalists countered that drawing comparisons to changes due to population growth revealed a misunderstanding of the larger issue. What mattered, POME claimed, was that along with “water rights” and “rights from freedom from trespass” the DOC “proposes to deprive adjoining landowners of their property rights to the [a]esthetic values of their land.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, Environmental State DES 72 65: Proposed 1976 Denver Olympic Games, 8 June 1972., especially 22.

⁶⁸ Ibid., quotations from 27, 8, and 48. For more on benefits of sound planning see 36-37. For the effects on water, air, and wildlife in Jefferson see 28-32.

⁶⁹ Officers of Protect Our Mountain Environment, Comments of ‘Protect our Mountain Environment’ Regarding Draft Environmental Statement DES 72, June 11, 1972, Box 1 Folder 6, POME SHHL.

Colorado environmentalist Roger Hansen substantiated this position when he submitted his own take on the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's report. Recalling the Denver Olympics controversy in 1975, Hansen admitted that he believed "the Olympics could have been good for the environment."⁷⁰ However, in 1972, he also agreed that the Bureau's analysis was flawed because "possible impacts of an Olympics on aesthetic values and scenic resources are recognized but considerably underplayed." This was a significant "deficiency," Hansen reasoned, "[b]ecause public concern is focused more on 'environmental amenities' than on sewer and water systems, fire protection, transportation, financing, or the status of local planning commissions." Hansen continued, "Olympic opponents are primarily concerned about protecting the beauty of Colorado. Therefore, possible aesthetic insults—from land sales schemes, tacky-tacky developments, roadside tourist strips, proliferation of billboards, highway and road improvements, etc. – must be examined in [more] detail."⁷¹

After reading Hansen's critique, Vance Dittman wrote to him in gratitude for "dealing with the inadequacy of examination and analysis of citizen concerns."⁷² Jefferson County inhabitants employed a specific kind of environmental advocacy, contingent on their rights as citizens and property owners, which they believed entailed access to the beauty around them. Professional environmentalists such as

⁷⁰ Roger Hansen Interview, Oral History Projects, 5 March 1975 and 11 March 1975, Oral History Reports Stephen H. Hart Library.

⁷¹ Roger P. Hansen (Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Center on Environment), Review and Critique: Draft Environmental Statement of Proposed 1976 Denver Winter Olympic Games of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, 26 September 1972, Box 1 Folder 6, POME SHHL. For another critique about inadequate attention given to water quality and also waste disposal see John A. Green (Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator) to Harold R. Green, Letter, 26 September 1972, copy in the authors possession.

⁷² Vance R. Dittman to Roger P. Hansen, Letter, 2 October 1972, Box 1 Folder 6, POME SHHL.

Hansen then legitimized this political position. It was with this philosophy in mind the Dittman and others wrote thousands of letters to Colorado, DOC, and IOC officials, constantly objecting to the DOC's plans for their area.⁷³

To prevent Colorado's pro-growth ethos from spilling into Jefferson County, local environmentalists employed "aesthetic rights," fashioning a stance that enabled – in addition to the preservation flora and fauna – the protection of an idealized social status. Due to the DOC's plans for the 1976 Denver winter Olympic games, this self-interested and class-inflected environmentalist thinking gained significant attention in Jefferson County, the state of Colorado, and even nationwide.⁷⁴ Though Jefferson County's middle-class rights-based environmentalism does not deserve sole or even primary credit for Colorado's decision to banish the 1976 winter games, it would play an important role in fueling the broader movement that did.

Minority Advocates and Politicians: Anti-Olympic Sentiments Spread

Prior to the DOC's successful bid for the Olympics, only a few Coloradans voiced objections to potential Olympic costs or the notion that the games would divert resources from more important public needs. However, beginning in late 1970, two vociferous factions raised these related concerns. Fearful that city funds would be wasted on mere entertainment, historically marginalized Hispanic and black Denverites demanded inclusion in the DOC's decision-making processes. Meanwhile, two liberal Colorado politicians began to question the overall economic viability of the games. Their discovery of the DOC's dubious cost estimates,

⁷³ Vance R. Dittman Jr. to Clifford H. Buck, Letter, 8 December 1970, Box 4 Folder 4, POME SHHL; MAPC, Newsletter, circa 1970, Folder 14 Box 1, MAPC.

⁷⁴ *Newsweek*, *Sports Illustrated*, and Walter Cronkite's *Face the Nation* each covered POME and interviewed Vance Dittman.

combined with protests from within Jefferson County, led the legislators to demand that the Olympics be removed completely from the Centennial State.

The DOC would eventually move all but the bobsled and luge from Jefferson County. They also responded to minority concerns by bringing half a dozen Hispanic and black Coloradoans into the DOC. Still, the DOC did not take seriously the idea that the majority of their fellow citizens might wish to banish the Olympics. More than anything else, the DOC responded to objections to their Olympic plans by attempting to control portrayals of the 1976 Denver games in the media. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1971, when an investigative journalist from the *Rocky Mountain News* revealed the problematic nature of the DOC's original Olympic proposal, it became apparent that the DOC underestimated Colorado's Olympic dissent and overestimated its ability to manage public discourse.

Immediately after the DOC won their Olympic bid, minority activists sought to politicize Denver's acquisition of the winter games. In May 1970, two days after returning from Amsterdam, Denver Mayor William McNichols faced picketers outside his office. Demonstrators wanted to know how Denver could spend money to host the Olympics while a "housing crisis" threatened the city.⁷⁵ Soon a group black and Hispanic activist join forced to form an organization called Citizens Interested in an Equitable Olympics (CIEO). CIEO press for "black and brown participation" in the planning of the 1976 winter games.⁷⁶

Systematic discrimination in Colorado and recent forced relocations of a Hispanic residents in Denver had left these Denverites doubtful that the DOC would

⁷⁵ George Lane, "Housing Dissenters Turn Ire on HUD, Olympics," *Denver Post*, 30 May 1970, p. 28.

⁷⁶ George Lane, "Minority Olympic Role Request Will Be Aired," *Denver Post*, 11 November 1970, Clipping, Olympic Clippings DPL.

act in their best interests.⁷⁷ Although DOC responded to such apprehension by naming three Hispanic and three black members to their Board of Directors, they did not invite any minority citizens to their all-white and all-male Executive Council. The DOC also made the selections without consulting CIEO, who had demanded input.⁷⁸ As DOC legal advisor Richard Davis admitted, when selecting new Hispanic and black members, “the DOC did not want any obstructionists.”⁷⁹

CIEO quieted its anti-Olympic advocacy around the start of 1971, likely a result of its lack of success, the prominence of other anti-Olympic organizers, and a need to attend to other issues of social injustice. Yet, many of Denver’s minority citizens continued to voice distrust of the DOC and other political authorities, especially regarding new housing constructions planned in their communities, meant to house the press during the 1976 games.⁸⁰ As CIEO’s “chief negotiator” had asserted to Denver’s Mayor, by ignoring black and Hispanic concerns about Olympic planning, “you have turned what was a crevice into a gap between your administration and the minority community.”⁸¹ Hispanic and black Denverites thus

⁷⁷ Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado A History of the Centennial State* 4th edition, (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado Press, 2005), 255-360; Richard White, *“It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: A History of the American West* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 507; For a detailed account of discriminatory practice in Denver see Frank Plaut, “Minority Group – Governmental Agency Relations: Investigation and Recommendations,” The State of Colorado, 1967, Box 4 Folder 20, JLP DPL. For a detailed interdisciplinary study on the social and economic status of Mexican Americans in the United States in the 1960s, see Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore, Ralph C. and Guzman, *The Mexican American People: the nation’s second largest minority* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1970); Magdalena Gallegos, “The Forgotten Community: Hispanic Auraria in the Twentieth Century,” *Colorado Heritage* 2 (1985): 5-20, see especially p. 20.

⁷⁸ Lane, “Minority Olympic Role Request Will Be Aired,” Olympic Clippings, DPL. George Lane, “McNichols Adds 16 to Olympic Board,” *Denver Post*, 6 December 1970, p. 3; Mayor William H. McNichols, Press Release, 6 December 1970, Folder 6 Box 1976 Olympics, POME SHHL.

⁷⁹ Olson, *Power, Public Policy and the Environment*, 137-142, Davis quotation from p. 141.

⁸⁰ Norm Brown to Don Magarrell, Letter, Re: Legislative Committee meeting March 5, 1971 (Open Meeting) at the Capital, 2:00-4:30 p.m., Folder 12 Box 1, DOC DPL; Fred Brown, “Ski Officials to Inspect Alternate Colo. Olympic Sites,” *Denver Post*, 6 March 1971, p. 1, 3; Lane “West Side Residents Rap New Olympic Housing Plan.”

⁸¹ “Chronology,” circa December 1970, Folder 13 Box 100, WMP DPL.

seized the games as a chance to highlight a concrete example of a broader problem – systematic ethnic and racial inequality. In doing so, these Coloradans provided added anti-Olympic ammunition, of which future Olympic opponents would gladly make use.⁸²

While CIEO highlighted a lack of minority representation in the DOC, two Colorado politicians presented another criticism of Denver's Olympic planners. As freshman Colorado representatives serving on the state's audit committee, Richard Lamm and Robert Jacks became aware of the DOC inexact and clearly low-balled costs estimates. After the Denver's bid proved a success, they worked together to halt state spending on the event. Thanks to their advocacy, information about the DOC's questionable estimates and the potential of taxpayers to have to cover Olympic shortfalls reach the state's Joint Budget Committee and then the popular press.⁸³

With uncertainty regarding the DOC's projections under the spotlight, Lamm and Jackson spoke out against the entire Olympic project. As Jackson reasoned, "I can't see putting money into a sport [such as the Olympics] . . . when there are higher priorities such as education, environmental protection, and benefits to the elderly." Jackson further exclaimed, "if we're going to change our minds, this is the time to do it . . . We ought to say to the nation and the world: We're sorry – we're concerned

⁸² Others also continued to use the Olympics as a way to advocate for greater minority recognition and input. For example, in April 1972, Colorado Senator George Brown – the only black Colorado senator at the time – tried to introduce an amendment to a spending bill that would have required the DOC to hire more minority citizens, see Richard Tucker, "Senate Hikes State Outlays to \$2 Million," *Rocky Mountain News*, 15 April 1972, p. 5,

⁸³ Richard Lamm, telephone interview with author, 9 May 2016, notes and recording in author's possession. Fred Brown, "Colorado Olympic Plan Termed Too General," *Denver Post*, 4 January 1971, clipping, Folder 66 Box 6, POME SHHL.

about the environment. We made a mistake. Take the games elsewhere.”⁸⁴ A few days later Lamm stated his support of Jackson, repeating that the Denver Olympics were not worth the cost to Colorado taxpayers.⁸⁵ From the start of their anti-Olympic campaign, Lamm and Jackson zeroed in on costs and environmental damage.⁸⁶ Jefferson County environmentalism complemented Lamm’s and Jackson’s main point. Committing state money to the Olympics was an ill-advised public policy.

Indeed, through the Olympics, Lamm and Jackson began to challenge Governor Love’s and the DOC’s broader pro-growth policies. In the early 1960s, Governor Love’s “Sell Colorado” campaign was uncontroversial. Yet, by the early 1970s, as the debate over the Olympics intensified, Lamm and Jackson called it into question. “Why sell Colorado? Is this vital for us to do?” Jackson would rhetorically ask.⁸⁷ Lamm, meanwhile, openly proclaimed that the Olympics were just “a bloated and unwise addition to Governor Love’s ‘sell Colorado’ program.”⁸⁸ As Lamm professed in September 1972, “over the past few years there has been tremendous change in public attitude . . . [and the Olympics] is simply the last gasp of the sell Colorado program . . . We don’t need growth.”⁸⁹ With the assistance of Jefferson County environmentalism, Lamm’s and Jackson’s campaign to prevent excessive

⁸⁴ “Bill Planned to Bar Funds for Olympics,” *Denver Post*, 10 January 1971, clipping, Folder 65 Box 6, POME SHHL.

⁸⁵ “Many Pay, Few Gain: Legislators Challenge Olympics for Colorado,” *Denver Post*, 15 January 1971, clipping, Folder 67 Box 6, POME SHHL. Cal Queal, “Yes, They Want no Olympics,” *Denver Post*, 7 February 1971, p. 7.

⁸⁶ Notably, Lamm and Jackson did not bring up minority concerns. In an interview with Lamm, he expressed no recollection of CIEO.

⁸⁷ Jackson quoted in Richard O’Reilly, “The Olympics and Colorado: Benefits of Olympics are Disputed, 6th of a series” *Rocky Mountain News*, 9 April 1971, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Richard Lamm, “Open Forum: Games’ Removal from State,” *Denver Post*, 1 March 1972, clipping, Folder 34 or 39 Box 3, POME SHHL.

⁸⁹ Lamm quoted in “Winter of ’76 Colorado Olympic Picture,” *Denver Post*, 25 September 1972, p. 1, 3, 7.

spending on the 1976 Denver winter Olympic games evolved into a full-fledged indictment of Governor Love's most successful idea.

By January of 1971, as one DOC member put it, Denver's Olympic planners felt "constantly under attack" from "Evergreen, minorities . . . [and] the Joint Budget Committee."⁹⁰ In response, rather than trying to initiate dialogues or reach compromises, the DOC attempted to shape the image of the Denver Olympics and control the diffusion of information. They formed a Planning Commission meant to advise them on environmental matter, but which held no real influence.⁹¹ They refused to allow the press or public into their meetings, while working with Colorado newspapers to shape a optimistic image of the Denver games.⁹²

Nonetheless, in April the *Rocky Mountain News* published a six part series by journalist Richard O'Reilly, covering various obstacles and unknowns which the DOC and Coloradans still had to face to host the Olympics – including moving events to proper locations, preventing environmental damage, and obtaining requisite funding.⁹³ O'Reilly's disclosures created even more distrust between the DOC and

⁹⁰ Technical Division to the DOC Executive Committee, Report No. 1, 14 January 1971, Box 2 Folder 2, DOC DPL.

⁹¹ Beatrice E. Willard to Robert Pringle, Letter, 18 February 1972, Box 1 Folder 29, DOC DPL. Michael W. Childers, *Colorado Power Keg: Ski Resorts and the Environmental Movement* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2012), 90.

⁹² Richard M. Davis to the Executive Council, Memorandum, Subject: Public Attendance at Meetings, 9 February 1971, Box 1 Folder 28, DOC DPL; Richard M. Davis, Denver Organizing Committee Board of Director's Meeting Minutes, 18 February 18, 1971, Box 1 Folder 19, DOC DPL; Neil H. Allen to Denver Organizing Committee, Letter, 17 February 1971, Box 1 Folder 41 DOC DPL; Norm Brown to Don Magarrell, Memorandum, Re: Media Executive Advisory Committee Meeting on March 8th 1971 at the DOC offices between members of the DOC staff and Mr. Charles Buxton, Bill Hornby mad John Rogers of Denver Post; Mike Howard of the Rocky Mountain News; Don Faust, General Manager, KOA-TV Hugh Terry and Sheldon Peterson, KLZ Al Flanagan, president of Mullins Broadcasting (KBTV)," 11 March 1971, Box 1 Folder 39, DOC DPL.

⁹³ Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado, First of a series: Olympics—Good or Bad in Colorado?," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 4 1971, p. 1, 5, 8; Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado: 60 Winter Olympics Cost Skyrocketed, 2nd of a series" *Rocky Mountain News*, 5 April 1971 p. 8, 16; Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado: Snags Arise in Olympic Site Selection, 3rd of a

Colorado citizens while vindicating much of the criticism stemming from Colorado's earliest Olympic objectors. As Richard Lamm described, O'Reilly's series gave Olympic opponents "quite a shot in the arm."⁹⁴ Another leader in Colorado's anti-Olympic cause put it more concretely: "I don't know that we could have done what we did without his [O'Reilly's] series. His series cast such a bright light on the whole DOC operation . . . That was the basis of all of our literature initially."⁹⁵

By the end 1971, Jefferson County environmentalists, Denver minority advocates, fiscally judicious Colorado legislators, and the DOC's own problematic Olympic proposal provided seeds for broader anti-Olympic dissent. Yet, politically, most Coloradans still had not received a chance to speak on the issue for themselves. Lamm pressed the case forward, writing Jefferson County's Vance Dittman in November 1971: "Maybe there is still a chance to get a question on a ballot."⁹⁶ With Lamm and Jackson's assistance, a handful of young political operatives would soon take charge of attempting to make that opportunity a reality.

Citizens for Colorado's Future: Using the Olympics to Bring Direct Democracy to Middle-America

At the end of 1971, Olympic opponents still faced an uphill climb. After Richard O'Reilly published his six-part series in the *Rocky Mountain News*, anti-Olympic advocates received added firepower. Yet, nothing environmentalists said or

series" *Rocky Mountain News*, 6 April 1971 p. 8, 22: Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado: Olympic Alpine Conflict Brewing, 4th of a series" *Rocky Mountain News*, 7 April 1971 p. 6, 8, 18; Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado: Olympic Cost Estimates Vary Widely, 5th of a series" *Rocky Mountain News*, 8 April 1971 p. 8, 18. Richard O'Reilly, "The Olympics and Colorado: Benefits of Olympics are Disputed, 6th of a series" *Rocky Mountain News*, 9 April 1971, p. 8.

⁹⁴ Richard Lamm.

⁹⁵ Meg Lundstrom, telephone interview with author, 19 May 2016, notes and recording in the author's possession.

⁹⁶ Richard Lamm to Vance Dittman, Letter, 18 November [1971], Folder 18 Box 2, POME SHHL.

did convince the DOC to remove the bobsled, luge, or ski jump from the foothills west of Denver. Nor could fiscally judicious and environmentally conscious Colorado politicians, such as Richard Lamm and Robert Jackson, convince their fellow policymakers to halt state funding or allow a popular vote on the issue.

In this setting, at the behest of Richard Lamm, a small cohort of organizers formed another anti-Olympic group called Citizens for Colorado's Future (CCF). CCF led the charge to place a referendum on Colorado ballots that would bar public funds from going to the winter Olympics. The members of CCF were young, liberal-minded, and politically engaged. The group's members had cut their teeth protesting involvement in the Vietnam War, advocating for Native American rights, and fighting at the forefront an emerging environmental movement.

However, they did not fit the mold of late 1960s New Left radicals. The majority of the group's members came from the mid-west (Iowa and Indiana). Rather than uncompromising idealists, they were careful pragmatists, sensitive to moderate points of view.⁹⁷ Although increased taxes became important to their stance, they were also far from New Right conservatives, aiming to stop public resources from going to government-run programs.⁹⁸ Colorado's newest Olympic opponents represented a waning breed – well educated and in some cases extremely seasoned political operatives, working within traditional pathways on behalf of liberal causes.⁹⁹

As such, the members of CCF picked their battles tactically and presented themselves as clean cut professionals. They focused on issues where they believed

⁹⁷ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 172-186; James Miller *"Democracy is in the Streets": From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster 1987).

⁹⁸ Lisa McGurr, *Suburban Warriors: the origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001)

⁹⁹ Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 177-178.

they could win, searching for ways to bring moderate leaning Americans to their side. Ultimately, they wanted to expand civic participation in the name of liberal causes. In their eyes, the Denver Olympics stood as a prominent social issue, already fraught with citizen dissent, and forced upon Colorado by its political establishment. The games were an attractive surrogate through which CCF could infuse its broader agenda.¹⁰⁰

CCF leader Sam Brown described this most explicitly. The “games were tactical,” Brown recalled; “What I was hoping to do was to break the stranglehold that an old elite (that crossed party boundaries) had over Colorado politics.” Backed by Colorado’s governor, Denver’s mayor, senators, and wealthy businessmen, in Brown’s view, the DOC “was the embodiment of the Denver establishment.” Thus opposition to the Denver Olympics represented “a terrific opportunity to try to build an alternative.” While he agreed with the “substantive” issues motivating anti-Olympic positions, as Brown described it, “strategically, my interest was in building a broad populist, if you will, democratic future.”¹⁰¹

CCF members made the Olympics their proxy and employed an argument that theoretically unified Colorado’s diverse Olympic objectors. Along with environmental damage, social exclusion, and undue costs, CCF claimed that Denver’s Olympic planners and their supporters were in actuality wealthy and manipulative “power

¹⁰⁰ Richard Lamm, telephone interview with author; 9 May 2016, notes and recording in the author’s possession; Meg Lundstrom, telephone interview with author, 30 March 2016, notes and recording in the author’s possession; Tom Nussbaum, telephone interview with author, 6 April 2016, notes and recording in the author’s possession; Dwight Filley, telephone interview with author, 21 May 2016, notes and recording in the author’s possession. Norman Udevitz, “Small but Artful Activist Wielding Rare Power,” *Denver Post*, 11 October 1972, p. 32-33. Sam W. Brown Jr., “The Politics of Peace,” *Washington Monthly*, August 1970, 24-46, quotations from 42.

¹⁰¹ Sam Brown, telephone interview with author, 11 April 2016, notes and recording in author’s possession.

elites,” not only lying but doing so at the expense of everyday citizens. The harmful growth that would result from the Olympics, CCF members asserted, was going to be the product of decisions made by greedy, self-interested, and misguided authority figures. On this view, democracy had been subverted and everyone had been taken advantage of, except for a select and powerful few.

On January 2, 1972, CCF officially went on the offensive. The group published a full page advertisement in the *Denver Post*, with a headline that read: “Sell Colorado? Olympics ’76? AT WHAT COST TO COLORADO?” Questions with answers implicating the corruption and greed of Denver’s Olympic enterprise followed. The first question asked: “Who Pays?” To which the CCF answered: “YOU do.” Why would the DOC do this? “For what?” “For whom?” and “Who profits?” the CCF ad rhetorically asked. The “what,” CCF proclaimed, was “a 10-day spectacular of winter sports in artificial snow in highly-engineered technologically contrived structures and situations.” In other words, the Denver winter Olympic games represented a spectacle of little use to most people. To the question of “who” all this was for, CCF responded: the IOC and DOC. As CCF described it, the IOC was “a self-appointed, self-perpetuating board of men who rule the Olympics,” while the DOC was “a self-appointed coterie of political and business figures who privately made public decisions of broad and lasting effect on Colorado.”¹⁰²

In CCF’s portrayal, this “coterie” ignored and even undermined citizen input. When the CCF also asked “How?” – how could such a misguided event be thrust upon Colorado’s citizens? – the answer CCF provided was that the people of the Centennial State were the victims of a systematic usurpation of democracy. “NO

¹⁰² Advertisement, “Sell Colorado? Olympics ’76? AT WHAT COST TO COLORADO?” *Denver Post*, 2 January 1972, p. 41.

state referendum has ever been held on either the Olympics or the Sell Colorado program of years standing,” CCF professed. CCF accused the DOC and its backers of hiding costs, acting on behalf of their own interests, intentionally disregarding the wants and needs of citizens, and thereby perpetuating Governor Love’s outdated political agenda. As Sam Brown averred in a separate January 1972 essay, published in the *New Republic*, titled “Snow Job in Colorado”: “the Winter Olympics is a sport of the rich paid for by the poor in order to promote real estate and tourism.”¹⁰³

When CCF sent representatives to the Sapporo Olympics, who met with members of the IOC after barging uninvited into one of their executive meetings, the Olympic protester gained further publicity for their cause. CCF then initiate a petition drive to get an amendment on Colorado ballots that would ban state dollars from going toward the winter Olympics. Obtaining the signatures to get the anti-Olympic referendum on the ballot became a full-time job for the group’s members. They created networks across the state. They needed 51,000 signature supporting a vote on the initiative and within a month they had passed out enough petition forms to volunteers to obtain six times the signatures they hoped for.

They raised money through fund-raising letters sent to known supporters and used the revenue to buy a mimeograph machine to print fliers. They spent hours standing in front of grocery stores, shopping centers, churches, movie theatres, and sports events to get citizen autographs. They spoke to sympathetic or potentially sympathetic citizen groups. Though they made sure to maintain their moderate tone and pragmatic approach to appeal to “Middle America,” they tried a few gimmicks to create buzz, such as a bicycle rally where cyclists took off from Cheeseman Park in

¹⁰³ Sam W. Brown Jr., “Snow Job in Colorado,” *New Republic*, 19 January 1972, p. 15-19. quotations from 18.

Denver, carrying stacks of anti-Olympic petitions to different parts of Colorado. In five days, the bike riders reported distributing petitions in 130 “small towns.”¹⁰⁴

There was a lot of work to do, but momentum was in CCF’s favor. Protests from within Jefferson County and Denver’s minority communities, Richard Lamm’s and Robert Jackson’s denunciations of Olympic spending and Love’s “Sell Colorado” agenda, Richard O’Reilly’s six-part series in the *Rocky Mountain News*, the DOC’s obvious mismanagement, and the recent CCF trip to Sapporo all made the potential problems associated with hosting the Olympics visible throughout Colorado. As one CCF member remembered, after Sapporo, “it was just a matter of keeping the issue going and . . . getting the petitions out.”¹⁰⁵ By June 30, 1972, CCF had over 77,000 signatures, 26,000 more than they actually needed. At the time, it was most signatures ever gained for a Colorado ballot initiative.¹⁰⁶

Technically, the purpose of the referendum was to make it illegal for state funds to be spent on the Denver Olympics. However, CCF understood the initiative as a way to give Colorado citizens leverage so that they could weigh in on whether or not Colorado should host the Olympics at all.¹⁰⁷ Now Coloradans had their chance to do so and CCF had the opportunity to show that direct democratic action could indeed transform Colorado.

¹⁰⁴ For soliciting signatures see Dwight Filley and Sam Brown. For speaking with various groups see Tom Nussbaum and Howard Gelt. For the bicycle rally see Meg Lundstrom and “Taking Olympic-Funder Petition on Tour,” *Denver Post*, 28 May 1972, p. 45; for all of the above see, Dwight Filley, Meg Lundstrom, and John Parr to Friend, Letter, 10 May 1972, Folder 28 Box 2, MAPC JCA.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Dwight Filley, Meg Lundstrom, and John Parr, Citizens for Colorado News Letter, 25 June 1972, Box 5 Folder 50, POME SHHL.

¹⁰⁷ Dwight Filley, Richard Lamm, Sam Brown.

The International Olympic Committees' Perspective: Protecting the Olympic Movement

When the International Olympic Committee awarded the 1976 winter games to Denver, a number of unstated complications existed. DOC would need to garner support from within Colorado and from the United States federal government. However, Denver's Olympic planners were most worried with what the IOC would do when asked for authorization to move Nordic and alpine events. When that time came, the DOC hoped that IOC leaders would be flexible. Although the IOC came very close to removing the winter games from Denver, it never did.

The IOC named Denver an Olympic host in May 1970. They did not expect the DOC to report back until the upcoming 1972 Sapporo winter Olympics.¹⁰⁸ By the time that the Sapporo games began, IOC leaders knew that Denver organizers lied to them about numerous components of their bid. Yet, neither the drawbacks to the DOC's revised proposal nor the DOC's dishonesty were the IOC's main concern. In deciding whether or not to pull the Olympics out of Denver, the IOC's primary objective remained preserving a positive image for itself and its movement. In the eyes of IOC leaders, this meant staying out of the Denver controversy as much as possible.¹⁰⁹

IOC President Avery Brundage had known about the protests stemming from Jefferson County before Denver won the 1976 winter games. In January 1970,

¹⁰⁸ Monique Berlioux to Robert Pringle, Letter, 18 May 1970, 1970.01.01-1972.12.31, Correspondences of the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOCA. The DOC did give an earlier status update at the IOC's Luxembourg meeting in September 1971, where they announced they were re-evaluating sites because of environmental concerns. Brundage raised questions about opponents trying to block the games at this meeting. However, neither issue became a major concern within IOC quarters until the Sapporo Olympics, see 71st Session of the International Olympic Committee, Luxembourg 1971, Sessions IOCA.

¹⁰⁹ Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1984).

Denver's mayor, Thomas Currigan, traveled to Brundage's home in Chicago to hand-deliver the DOC's bid books. At that meeting, the IOC President had something for Currigan in return, a letter he had received from two Evergreen, Colorado, residents. Among various environmentalist complaints, the missive highlighted Evergreen's lack of snow. As Currigan recalled, Brundage's suggestion to the DOC was simply that "we clean up our own back yard."¹¹⁰

Brundage was also well aware that the Olympics often failed to acquire public support within host cities. During the 1960s, the size and the cost of hosting and broadcasting the Olympics grew dramatically.¹¹¹ As Brundage acknowledged in an April 1970 letter to the IOC's Director of Administration and Information Madame Monique Berlioux: "Between the arrangements for television and the increasingly extravagant demands of the International Federations and National Olympic Committees, all of which augments the costs of the organizers, we will soon be lucky if we have any invitations [to host the Olympics] at all."¹¹² Brundage basically predicted Denver's opposition. As he attested in a speech delivered in Amsterdam during the IOC's May 1970 session, the "Olympic Games today are a very costly enterprise and no community is going to accept such a burden unless it can be proud of the results."¹¹³ The expanding size and scale of the Olympic spectacle caused anxiety for the IOC President and Denver Olympic protesters alike.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Currigan, Report by Phone, 11 February 1970, Folder 11 Box 100, WMP DPL; Ben Eastman Jr. and Martha Eastman to International Olympic Committee, Letter, 30 December 1969, Folder 11 Box 100, WMP DPL.

¹¹¹ Robert Barney, Stephen Wenn, and Scott G. Martin, *Selling the Five Rings: The International Olympic Committee and the Rise of Olympic Commercialism* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2002).

¹¹² Avery Brundage to Monique Berlioux, Letter, 18 April 1970, 1970.01.01-1970.06.30, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, President Brundage IOCA.

¹¹³ Avery Brundage, "Olympic Games in Danger," Speech, 10 May 1970, 1940.01.01-1972.12.31, Speeches given by Avery Brundage, President Brundage IOCA. According to Brundage Bern, Switzerland and Lahti, Finland also began the process of bidding for the 1976 Winter Olympics but

Brundage indeed proved perceptive. "The protests coming from Colorado and from Montreal," Brundage later told Berlioux, "seem to indicate that if plebiscites were held in other communities the results would be similar to those in the city of Zurich." Zurich had also considered bidding for the 1976 winter Olympics, but, as the IOC President pointed out, "77% of the [Zurich] population refused to have anything to do with the Olympic Games."¹¹⁴ Three years before Colorado's citizens did so, over three-fourths of Zurich citizens voted against contributing public funds to the Olympics, thereby forcing city administrators to cease their efforts to become Olympic hosts. Once it became clear that CCF's referendum would be on Colorado ballots, Brundage knew history might repeat itself. As he wrote to new USOC president and DOC member Clifford Buck in May 1972, "I am not sure you realize the strength of the forces against you."¹¹⁵

Given his awareness of the DOC's dishonesty and the power of Colorado's Olympic opponents, it is difficult to say what Brundage was thinking with regard to the 1976 winter Olympics. Later on, when other IOC members were willing to remove the event from Denver, Brundage urged them not to do it.¹¹⁶ He may have viewed less than ideal event locations and local opposition to the games as necessary hazards for keeping the Olympic movement afoot. Conversely, due to the dominance

then took themselves out of the running. Brundage blamed the "excesses" of costs and commercialization of the 1968 Grenoble winter games. Brundage was especially concerned with the professionalization of Alpine skiing. "This poisonous cancer must be eliminated without further delay; alpine skiing does not belong in the Olympics Games!" he avowed in his speech.

¹¹⁴ Avery Brundage to Monique Berlioux, Letter, 18 April 1970, 1970.01.01-1970.06.30, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, President Brundage, IOCA.

¹¹⁵ Avery Brundage to Clifford Buck, Letter, 17 May 1972, Box 2 Folder 66, DOC DPL. In this letter Brundage cited the example of Zurich, Switzerland as well as Banff, Canada, reminding Buck that citizens had prevented Olympic bids from going forth before. In Banff, as Brundage also pointed out, "the conservationists defeated the bid."

¹¹⁶ This will be discussed in more detail below.

of a small group of Scandinavian and European countries as well as rampant professionalism and commercialism in winter sports (especially hockey and alpine skiing), Brundage believed that the best thing for the Olympic movement in the long-run was to get rid of the winter Olympics altogether. In particular, after the 1968 Grenoble Olympics, Brundage pressed to have the IOC's winter festival buried.¹¹⁷ It is possible that Brundage let Denver back itself into an untenable corner because he wanted the winter games to fail.

Either way, the best interest of the Olympic movement remained Brundage's and other IOC member's main concern. Five months after selecting Denver to be an Olympic host, in October 1970, the IOC's headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, received a letter from Jefferson County, written by an environmentalist group, detailing local objections and the problems related to Jefferson County's mild weather. It was one of many such letters soon to follow. Rodolphe J. Leising of the IOC responded, explaining to the Coloradans that "the Games have already been granted to Denver, this is a subject for them."¹¹⁸ When Leising forwarded the letter to the DOC, the Denver organizers assured him that they had "a complete program designed to satisfactorily recognize the problem."¹¹⁹ As a result, Leising doubled down on the IOC's stance. Your "demands should be referred to the Denver

¹¹⁷ For Brundage's views on the winter Olympics see, Avery Brundage to Jan Staubo, Letter, 6 July 1968, 07.01.1968-.09.31.1969, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, President Brundage IOCA; Avery Brundage to Bjorn Kjellstrom, Letter, 6 July 1968, 07.01.1968-.09.31.1969, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, President Brundage IOCA. Also see Brundage's speech, "Olympic Games in Danger," from note 7.

¹¹⁸ Rodolphe J. Leising to Vance Dittman, Letter, 28 October 1970, Letter, 1970.03.01-1971.10.31, Letters of Protest against holding the 1970 Olympic Winter Games, Games of Denver IOCA.

¹¹⁹ Rodolphe J. Leising to William Kostka, Jr, Letter, 28 October 1970, Letter, 1970.03.01-1971.10.31, Correspondences of the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOC Archive; Donald F. Magarrell to Rodolphe J. Leising, Letter, 3 November 1970, 1970.01.01-1972.12.31, Correspondences of the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOCA.

Organizing Committee and to officials of the towns” protesting, Leising told Jefferson County residents. “In any case,” Leising reiterated, “the IOC cannot interfere in the private matters of the towns involved.”¹²⁰

The IOC tried to maintain this posture throughout the Denver Olympics debate. Still, letters from Jefferson County poured into Lausanne as well as the mailboxes of individual IOC members.¹²¹ The letters almost always mentioned how the DOC “misrepresented” the winter conditions of proposed event locations.¹²² As IOC Vice President Lord Michael Killanin confided to Monique Berlioux, IOC members “may well have voted” for Denver based on the “proximity of sites which were never viable.”¹²³

In November 1971, IOC Technical Director Artur Takac visited Denver to assess the situation. Afterward he wrote to Brundage. “It is my duty,” Takac explained, “to underline that the previously proposed skiing area in Evergreen and the east side of the Rocky Mountains are difficult to accept because of snow conditions.” Brundage instructed Takac to not approve any changes the DOC had in mind. “Always remember that this is the duty of our technical advisers,” Brundage

¹²⁰ Rodolphe J. Leising to Vance Dittman, Letter, 3 December 1970, Reel 110 Folder XII Olympic Winter Games 1976 Denver, Colo. Protests (1969-1971), ABC IOCA.

¹²¹ Interestingly, Brundage was the one who gave POME the addresses of IOC members, see Avery Brundage to Vance R. Dittman, Letter, 1 November 1971, Box 2 Folder 16, POME SHHL.

¹²² Avery Brundage to Vance R. Dittman, Letter, 1 November 1971, Box 2 Folder 16, POME SHHL). For protest letters (mostly from Evergreen and Indian Hills) see Reel 110 Folder XII Olympic Winter Games 1976 Denver, Colo. Protests (1969-1971), ABC, IOCA; also see the 1971.10.01-1971.10.30, Letters of Protest against holding the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOCA; also see the 1971.11.01-1971.12.31, Letters of Protest against holding the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOCA.

¹²³ Lord Killanin to Monique Berlioux, Letter, circa November 1971, 1970.01.01-1972.12.31, Correspondences of the Organizing Committee of the 1976 Olympic Winter Games in Denver (not celebrated), Games of Denver IOCA.

advised, “and, therefore, if there is anything wrong, it is their fault – not ours.”¹²⁴

Brundage appeared to pass the buck.

Prior to the start of the 1972 Sapporo winter games, the DOC did revise their Olympic plans. They had moved cross-country skiing to Steamboat Spring and decided to send the alpine events to a soon to be developed ski resort near Vail, called Beaver Creek. They would present their new design when the members of the IOC gathered in Japan.

Yet, before that meeting, the IOC’s Executive Board called DOC President Robert Pringle in his Tokyo, Japan, hotel room and demanded see him. The IOC’s Executive Board had heard from CCF two days prior and, in between other business, they discussed the Denver Olympics. According to the Executive Board’s minutes, all of the Executive Board’s members agreed that any “action which brought about” so much opposition to hosting the Olympics had a “derogatory effect on the IOC.”¹²⁵

At the spur-of-the-moment meeting, DOC members responded to a series of IOC questions. Lord Michael Killanin especially expressed irritation at the DOC’s revised plan, remarking that the DOC’s “programme had been almost entirely changed to the point of being unrecognizable.” According to the IOC’s minutes, Killanin then suggested the IOC reconsider Denver’s bid and, in fact, the IOC Executive Board asked the DOC to withdraw their application. But the DOC members refused. After the DOC delegation left, Killanin and Andrianov both supported removing the games from Denver anyway. Brundage, however, held the position that “[i]t would be better if the Denver Organising Committee withdrew

¹²⁴ Avery Brundage to Author Takac, Letter, 17 December 1971, 1971.08.01-1971.12.31, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, President Brundage IOCA.

¹²⁵ International Olympic Committee Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 28-30 January 1972, EB IOCA.

themselves.”¹²⁶ One way or another, the IOC’s leadership preferred seeing the 1976 Winter Olympics held elsewhere.

That evening Brundage summoned Pringle and one other DOC member to his hotel room. Pringle brought Governor Love, who had just arrived in Japan. As Pringle recounted a day later, “[w]e were told the following: The executive committee of the IOC, by unanimous vote, had decided to resolve that the honor of hosting the 1976 Winter Olympics be withdrawn from Denver.” Pringle and Love took this to mean that the Executive Board’s decision was final. The board would share their stance with the rest of the IOC the next day and then officially remove the Olympics from Colorado. Pringle and Love left Brundage’s room believing they lost the winter games.¹²⁷

The DOC still had their official presentation to the rest of the IOC scheduled the next day. Overnight the DOC officials prepared a last ditch effort to change the IOC’s mind. They contacted Colorado legislators in Washington, D.C., to ask for assistance. Senators Gordon Allott and Peter Dominick along with Congressional Representatives Donald Brozman and James D. McKeivitt quickly ushered resolutions through Congress that declared support for the DOC and the 1976 Denver Olympics.¹²⁸ Interior Secretary Rogers Morton also wired a message directly to Brundage, pledging support from the Nixon administration. As Morton informed

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Pringle quoted in Richard O’Reilly, “Decision Climaxes Hectic Day in Sapporo: Denver Will Keep the Games, Olympic Committee Rules,” p. 1, 6; Charlie Meyers, “IOC Reaffirms Denver as ’76 Winter Games Host,” *Denver Post*, 2 February 1972, p. 1, 2.

¹²⁸ “Congress Passes Olympics Support,” *Denver Post*, 1 February 1972, clipping, Folder 52 Box 1, DOC DPL. The resolution was vague. It read: “The Senate (or House) affirms its support for the continued designation of Denver as host for the Twelfth Winter Olympic Games to be held in 1976,” see Richard O’Reilly, “Denver’s Chance for U.S. Funds for Games Sites Seen as Good,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 6 February 1972, clipping, Folder 68 Box 6, POME SHHL.

the IOC president, the “administration is currently preparing legislation for submission to Congress to provide financial assistance.”¹²⁹ The IOC’s leaders may have wanted to move on but Colorado’s most powerful figures remained devoted to hosting the Olympics.

On the morning of February 1, 1972, Colorado Governor John Love, Denver Mayor William McNichols, and DOC President Robert Pringle took turns addressing the seventy-second session of the International Olympic Committee. Questions from IOC members followed the presentation. They began by focusing on the distances between Denver and the skiing contests. However, the discussion soon turned into a conversation between two individuals from the IOC. This dialogue between International Ski Federation President Marc Holder and Lord Killanin revealed another underlying issue regarding the Denver Olympics. After being misled in Amsterdam, did the IOC have obligation to adhere to the decision it made a year-and-a-half ago?

The discussion began when Holder offered a comment on the DOC’s behalf. “I can confirm,” Holder observed, “these [new] sites will be the best choice we can make.” As the President of the International Skiing Federation, Holder had authorized the original and seemingly infeasible Evergreen and Mount Sniktua locations. In response to Holder, Killanin announced, “I would like to ask Mr. Holder a question.” Turning his attention to his fellow IOC member, Killanin mused, “the only thing that worries me has nothing to do with . . . the things Denver can do.” Instead at issue was the fact that “[w]e were told by the FIS, at the time of Amsterdam, that

¹²⁹ Rodgers C.B. Morton to Avery Brundage, Wire, 31 January 1972, Folder Winter Games-1976, Denver, Colo.-Organizing Comm. (1970-1971), Reel 110, ABC IOCA.

the sites selected were suitable” and now it appears they “are not suitable or there was no snow.” Killanin implied neither the DOC nor Holder should be trusted.¹³⁰

Holder defended himself and the DOC, claiming that the original sites were acceptable. “Even if there is no snow in Evergreen,” he asserted, the DOC could have “snow brought into the area.” When Killanin heard this, he posed Holder a more direct query. “Was it made clear at the time of the bid,” Killanin asked, “that snow might have to be brought in?” Holder retorted matter-of-factly, “[w]e know the name of the area is Evergreen.” Killanin became sardonic. “If you can import snow,” the Irishman exclaimed, “I shall go back to the national Olympic committee of Ireland and make an application for the Winter Games.”¹³¹

At this point, Governor Love proved an astute observer and interjected. “Lord Killanin,” Love declared, “the point of your question seems to me to not only go to the technical proficiency, but to the good faith in the presentation that was originally made . . . I can assure you it was made in good faith.” Love’s proclamation was far from true, but the issue was left at that. According to the IOC’s meeting minutes, after Love’s assertion, IOC members returned to questioning the DOC about travel times, costs, and finally Colorado’s Olympic opponents.¹³²

After the DOC members left the February 1 meeting with the International Olympic Committee, the IOC members discussed what to do about Denver’s problems. Although Brundage read out loud an admission from Colorado’s Lieutenant Governor, John Vanderhoof, that the DOC “probably lied,” the DOC’s

¹³⁰ Denver Organizing Committee for the Denver Organizing Committee of the XII Olympic Winter Games, Report to the 72nd Session of the International Olympic Committee, 1 February 1972, Games of Denver IOCA. As discussed in chapter three, there are reasons to think Holder was biased toward (and perhaps bribed by) the DOC.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

deceit was offset by other factors. Brundage himself put weight behind keeping the games in Denver. Citing changes to event proposals made for previous games, he determined that for the sake of consistency and fairness it made sense to let the DOC alter their layout. Five minutes after the DOC left, they were welcomed back to the IOC gathering and told the 1976 winter Olympic games remained theirs.¹³³

The IOC did not want to engage with Colorado's Olympic opponents. They also did not want to appear to be treating an organizing committee unreasonably. Nevertheless, protests from within Colorado did not subside after Sapporo. And IOC officials continued to make it clear that they based their decision-making on what they believed was best for the image of the Olympic movement. As Brundage grumbled to Berlioux in March 1972, "we're getting just as many complaints as before Sapporo. The situation is today just as bad if not worse."¹³⁴ As Brundage voiced to Killanin the following month, Denver situation is not good and the Olympic Movement is suffering."¹³⁵ Killanin agreed and suggested that the IOC could still force the DOC to stick to its original plan, but without holding any skiing events if need be.¹³⁶

Given the prominence of skiing, such a move would have exerted pressure on the DOC to remove themselves as hosts. Since the IOC meant to avoid becoming engaged in political affairs, they probably saw this as the best possible course of action. When rehashing an exchange with Clifford Buck, Killanin admitted to

¹³³ 72nd Session of the International Olympic Committee Minutes, Sapporo 1972, Sessions IOCA.

¹³⁴ Avery Brundage to Monique Berlioux, Letter, 17 December 1971, 1972.01.01-1972.3.31, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, PB IOCA.

¹³⁵ Avery Brundage to Lord Michael Killanin, Letter, 17 April 1972, 1972.04.01-1972.5.30, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, PB IOC.

¹³⁶ Lord Michael Killanin to Avery Brundage, Letter, 9 April 1972, 1972.04.01-1972.8.31, Correspondence Michael Killanin, President Killanin, International Olympic Committee Archives PK IOCA.

Brundage, "I should have suggested to him that Denver should themselves ask to be excused from holding the Games . . . each day that passes, both for technical and political reasons, this I feel they should do." "I don't think our friends from Denver realise," Killanin continued, "what damage they are doing to the Olympic Movement."¹³⁷

Brundage stressed as much to Carl DeTemple, who replaced Robert Pringle as the DOC's President shortly after the Sapporo games.¹³⁸ "I must tell you that all the Olympic people are very disturbed because," he carped, "they are deluged with letters and articles of opposition. The general publicity, I think you will agree, is not to the benefit of the Olympic Movement."¹³⁹ The IOC's leaders were rich and powerful men. Yet, they were willing to yield control over their beloved international celebration to people who had obviously manipulated them. They did so because they were convinced that it was in the best interest of the Olympic movement's long-term viability. However, as time passed, they seemed to begin to relinquish this logic. When Coloradans effectively barred the 1976 winter games from Colorado in November 1972, Brundage, Killanin, and others were probably more relieved than disappointed. They avoided the backlash of forcing the games onto a furious populace and they no longer had to respond to a blatantly political controversy.

The Defeat of the Denver Olympics: Olympism versus Individual Rights

¹³⁷ Lord Michael Killanin to Avery Brundage, Letter, 22 June 1972, 01.01-1972-08.31, Correspondence of Michael Killanin, PK IOC Archives.

¹³⁸ R.J. Pringle to Members of the Denver Olympic Committee Board of Directors, Letter, February 22 1972, Box 1 Folder 21, DOC DPL "Pringle Quits as Head of Olympic Committee, *Denver Post*, 23 February 1972, p. 3. Pringle claimed to have resigned to make room for a person who could make the position of DOC President a full-time job.

¹³⁹ Avery Brundage to Carl N. DeTemple, Letter, 21 April 1972, 1972.04.01-1972.5.30, Correspondence of Avery Brundage, PB IOCA.

The DOC had been right to gamble that the IOC would allow them to move event locations. Nonetheless, they were wrong to think that satisfying the IOC was their greatest challenge. As CCF began their referendum drive, the DOC came to terms with this reality. They could lose the Olympics by virtue of a popular vote amongst Coloradans.

Denver Olympic promoters won the games to promote economic growth. Yet now Coloradans opposed the Olympics largely because of the very thing that made the games attractive to Colorado's leaders in the first place. Thus, rather than highlighting economic benefits, the DOC and its supporters turned to the rhetoric of the "Olympism." They argued that Colorado should keep the Olympics since it was an opportunity to unite people from across the globe, promoting mutual respect, friendship, and international goodwill – values, they assumed, that no responsible citizens of the world should fail to support. If Colorado citizens took the mission of the IOC and the Olympic movement seriously then the DOC would have made a powerful point.

Nevertheless, on November 7, 1972, Coloradan cast their votes. Results showed 537,400 voted "yes" on Amendment Number 8, while only 358,906 voted "no." The state of Colorado was legally barred from funding the 1976 Denver winter Olympic games. The majority of Colorado citizens did not believe hosting the games was in their best interest. Coloradans proved to be more concerned with protecting the environments near their homes, paying reasonable taxes, and taking part the political process itself.

In the months leading up to the vote, Olympic supporters spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising, relying heavily in the philosophy of Olympism. "Colorado's winter Olympics can bring a return to the Olympic ideal as it was meant

to be,” Governor Love professed in an October 19, 1972 advertisement. As the ad pressed, it “is time for a world re-birth of the true ideals and meanings of the Olympics and we in Colorado have it within our capability to achieve these goals: To dedicate the ‘76 Winter Olympics to the participants themselves, to the world of brotherhood . . . to the true spirit of competition.” As Love’s plea concluded: “Light the torch now. Vote NO on Amendment No. 8.”¹⁴⁰

Denver Mayor William McNichols pushed Olympism as well. As McNichols avowed in a pro-Olympics pamphlet, released just weeks before the referendum: “All men and women of good conscience know that when we meet people from other lands and cultures we understand them better and [we] appreciate the spirit of cooperation which must exist between all peoples of the world if we are to gain peace . . . It is in this spirit that the competition of the Olympics was born.” McNichol promised that the Denver games would be held at a reasonable cost, spark the economy, improve the environment, and advance the city’s housing developments by ten years. On top of that, however, the mayor promised that hosting the Olympic games and spreading Olympic ideals was the right thing to do. “Are we now to turn our collective back on the youth of the world,” McNichols rhetorically asked; are “we now to say that we do not wish to [have] share[d] understanding with our world neighbors through the cultural, philosophic, and athletic excellence of the Olympic Games?” “No!” McNichols insisted: “Join us in defeating Colorado Constitutional Amendment #8 . . . VOTE NO.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Advertisement, “Governor Love: Colorado’s Winter Olympics Can Bring a Return of the Olympic Ideal,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 19 October 1972, p. 42.

¹⁴¹ “Let’s Team Up on Nov. 7 and Keep the Olympics in Colorado,” Pamphlet, circa October-November 1972, Folder 3 Box 102, WMP DPL.

Combining nationalism with Olympism, while promising economically and environmentally beneficial outcomes, Denver Olympic planners urged Colorado citizens to stand with their state, their nation, and the Olympic movement. However, letters written to Governor Love in the months leading up to the November 1972 referendum show Colorado citizens had various other motives in mind. When it came to choosing reasons to oppose the games, such as environment damage, excessive costs, or DOC dishonesty, many selected all of the above. However, most Olympics opponents also expressed concern that their individual rights had been violated.

Merging her concern for the environment with her worry of gratuitous costs, Margaret Fleming, from Boulder, Colorado, asked Governor Love, “what will happen to our environment” if Colorado hosts the Olympics? To which she rhetorically answered: “I, for one, do not want to pay extra taxes for its destruction.”¹⁴² Michael Bram of Colorado Springs, Colorado, similarly attested: “I find that it [hosting the Olympics] is economically and ecologically bad for the state of Colorado.”¹⁴³ Ron Burian, also from Boulder, likewise wrote to Love that the “cost (historically and proposed) is ridiculous and the benefits apply only to tourists and related businesses. Too-rapid growth is already a problem.”¹⁴⁴

Love’s writers emphasized environmental concerns, fiscal prudence, and DOC deceptions. Just as often they underscored their right to decide if the games should come to Colorado or not. Raymond Foster from Colorado Springs expressed these sentiments. “By hosting the forthcoming winter Olympics,” he informed Love, “you are permitting the ecological destruction of a beautiful area . . . Why should we, the

¹⁴² Margaret Fleming to Governor John Love, Letter, 15 January 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁴³ Michael Bram to Governor John Love, Letter, 5 February 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁴⁴ Ron Burian to Governor John Love, Letter, 11 January 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

residents of Colorado, be expected to foot a significant percentage of the bill to see our beautiful state turned into a commercial venture?" Foster then added: "Shouldn't we be allowed to vote on whether or not we want the Olympics to be held here?"¹⁴⁵ When Mary Freed from Denver wrote to Love she did not even take the time to list her reasons for objecting to the winter Olympics, telling the governor he probably knew them all already. "My only request," she asserted, "is that the people of Colorado be allowed to vote on the controversy."¹⁴⁶ As Christie Drake of Denver also pleaded: "I find it distressing that monies are being taken away from health areas and given to the Denver Olympic Commission. Let's once and for all ask the people of Colorado how they feel about the 1976 Winter Olympics. After all, isn't that the democratic process?!"¹⁴⁷

With added anguish, Kathleen Eccles of Littleton, Colorado, expressed a similar feeling. "Apparently, you feel it is more important to give this state the so-called 'prestige' of the Olympics than it is for the populace to breathe clean air," Eccles wrote; "why were we not allowed to vote on the Olympics before they were authorized by the Olympic Committee . . . have you forgotten you are an elected official and not a Demigod?" As Eccles concluded: "What you are doing goes against this country's very beginning; 'Taxation without Representation.'"¹⁴⁸ For numerous and often complementary reason, Coloradans pleaded for Love to let them have a voice in how their society chose to spend their money and allocate public resources.

¹⁴⁵ Raymond W. Foster to Governor John Love, Letter, 10 April 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁴⁶ Mary Freed to Governor John Love, Letter, 1 February 1972, Administrative Correspondence, Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁴⁷ Christine Drake to Governor John Love, Letter, circa 5 May 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁴⁸ Kathleen Eccles to Governor John Love, Letter, 7 February 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

Touching upon all the major issues of the Denver Olympics debate, Fred Douglas of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, provided another important layer to anti-Olympic protests – his political clout as a Colorado citizen. As he wrote to Governor Love: “I oppose the taxpayers financing the Olympics. I think the Denver Olympic Committee has not been honest with the people. I don’t like to think of tearing up the mountains and all the cheap commercial buildings that will happen . . . At the very least I think this should go to a vote of the people.” Douglas then averred, “I will not support any legislator who shoves this Denver Olympics down my throat.”¹⁴⁹ Richard J. Heider from Littleton expressed the same perspective. The “Olympics is the most blatant waste of the average citizen’s money and assets (Colorado’s environment) imaginable for the profit of a very few,” Heider proclaimed. He then added, if “you waste one dime of my money on the Olympics, you will have lost my vote (Republican, ordinarily) forever.”¹⁵⁰ The games became representative of a denial of democracy. Consequently, many of Love’s traditional supporters refused to stand behind him.

“For many years I have been a member of Colorado’s ‘silent majority,’ content to live with, or adjust to, the many decisions made by the elected leadership of this state,” wrote Richard R. Gordon of Littleton. “I am taking this opportunity, however,” Gordon told Love, “to explain my grievous dissatisfaction, and offer my prayer for restitution of a major injustice rendered by you.” As Gordon avowed, the “people of the State of Colorado are being denied the right, granted by the Constitution, of voicing their opinions in the way they are governed. In essence, a form of

¹⁴⁹ Mr. & Mrs. Fred Douglas to Governor John Love, Letter, 8 February 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁵⁰ Richard J. Heidler to Governor John Love, Letter, 2 March 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

dictatorship has been imposed upon Colorado with the 1976 Winter Olympics.” Bringing attention to unreliable cost estimates, the prospect of taxpayer contributions, and the “destruction” of the environment, Gordon professed: “I will do everything in my limited power to prevent the 1976 Winter Olympics from being held in the State of Colorado for the simple reason that I firmly believe, as our founding fathers did, that our form of government is a government by the people, for the people, rather than a government by the government, for the government, as you are attempting to force upon us.”¹⁵¹ Although a member of the traditionally conservative “silent majority,” Gordon and Colorado Republican governor stood on separate sides of the Denver Olympics debate.

The arguments presented to Governor Love in these letters came from across Colorado. Middle-class environmentalists, minority advocates from Denver, Democratic politicians, and liberal-minded political operatives brought the Denver Olympics debate into the public sphere. Lamm, Jackson, and CCF literally put Colorado’s anti-Olympic referendum on statewide ballots. Still, at least some Olympic adversaries came from conservative backgrounds. The campaign waged by CCF against the 1976 Denver winter Olympic games aimed to reach more moderate Americans. In the instance of the Denver games, the approach worked.¹⁵²

The DOC, Governor Love, and other Olympic supporters never anticipated the anti-growth environmental movement of Jefferson County. Nor did they foresee how easily such anti-growth sentiments could be spread across the state. They did not take minority activists or CCF seriously. Meanwhile, by arguing that the Olympics

¹⁵¹ Richard R. Gordon to Governor John Love, Letter, 15 March 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR.

¹⁵² Some letter written to Love literally copied CCF advertisements and literature point for point, see Martha Daiss to Governor John Love, Letter, 12 January 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR; Michael Bram to Governor John Love, Letter, 5 February 1972, Administrative Correspondence Box 67068, JLF CSAR;

represented a misuse of state resources and that it subverted democratic ideals, environmentalist, Lamm, Jackson, and CCF led a diverse set of Coloradans to the ballot box. Once there, the Centennial State's citizenry determined that in the late 1960s and early 1970s the politics of growth and individual rights did not align with hosting an event such as the winter Olympic games.

SIGNIFICANCE

This inquiry into the 1976 Denver Olympics has reveal multiple points of significance for the history of the American West, American sport history, and the history of the Olympics Movement. The Denver Olympics grew out of pro-growth and pro-Olympic sentiments in Colorado after World War II. In the early 1960s, Denver bid for the Olympic was directly connected to Colorado Governor John Love's pro-growth agenda. Denver's Olympic bidders wanted the games badly. So much so that they presented what amounted to a counterfeit bid to the International Olympic Committee. Meanwhile, the bidders never imagined that the majority of Colorado citizens would turn against the winter games. Yet, by the end of the 1970s, views toward growth had changed. As result, Coloradan asserted their right to take part in the politician process, aiming to prevent environmental incursions and reckless spending.

There are certainly lessons in this story relevant to the present day. As Colorado politicians did over forty-eight years before, in August of 2016, current Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper and contemporary Denver Mayor Michael Hancock are considering a bid for the Olympics. Last summer they traveled Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to witness the 2016 summer games and learn first-hand about the planning process and the economic impact of hosting the sports extravaganza. They may yet decide once more to try to host the winter Olympics in Denver (and

surrounding areas), perhaps as soon as 2026. If they do, given the democratic practices and ideals imbedded in their state, history would advise them to be transparent in their planning and to consult their constituents first. As the failed 1976 winter Olympic games of made clear, the decision over whether or not to sponsor one of the world's most renowned and expensive sports spectacles will ultimately be up to Colorado voters.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ John Murray, "Colorado Group Seeks Lessons from Rio for Potential Olympics Bid," <http://www.denverpost.com/2016/06/22/colorado-group-seeks-lessons-from-rio-for-potential-olympics-bid/> [Accessed 4 August 2016].