

## **Biography of Thomas Cathcart**

Prepared for the *History of the 2100 Block of Lafayette Street* 1987

Thomas Cathcart was born in Pennsylvania in 1841. At age 22, he enlisted in Company F 25th Regiment of the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was mustered in on May 2, 1861 as a private, and his company, having enlisted for three months, was mustered out on July 26, 1861. Following the Civil War, he engaged in the dry goods business in Minnesota, and then in Pueblo, Colorado. He lived on Santa Fe Ave in Pueblo with room mates Edward A. Nixon, a 22 year old dry goods clerk, and M. S. Chilcott, a 24 year old clerk. Although he first came to Colorado in about 1873, he was first listed in the Denver Directory in 1877 as a clerk for Joslin's. He worked in several enterprises for the next ten years while becoming established in real estate. In 1881 he may have been involved in the skating rink located at the present site of the Denver Dry Goods Company, and operated by Warren and Cathcart. No Cathcarts were listed in the Denver Directory during the surrounding years. By 1887, he had affiliated himself with Robert Marquis and Co., a cannery. The partnership was dissolved by 1889, and Cathcart devoted more of his time to real estate establishing a solid reputation for integrity and ability. It was during this time that he built the three houses in the 2100 block of Lafayette.

Starting in a boarding house, Cathcart moved on to a residence at 842 11th St. (1886). Then, for two years, he lived at 2093 Ogden. In 1889, he moved into a residence that he had built at 2129 Lafayette. This was probably only a temporary home until his new Lang-designed residence at 2105 Lafayette was completed. Inscriptions on the under side of the staircase indicate that the house was built specifically for him. Cathcart occupied 2105 Lafayette only two years (1890-1892). Why he moved is uncertain. Although it is tempting to attribute the move to financial reverses during the panic of 1893, he retained significant real estate holdings at the time of his death. He was a member of the Colorado Mining Stock Exchange (Mining Stock Exchange Building) in 1896, but the extent of his mining interests is unknown. After leaving Lafayette Street, the Cathcarts moved to 1026 S. 14th (now Bannock). The latter was to remain his home until his death in 1905.

During the latter part of his life, Cathcart worked for the Denver Dry Goods Company, and became a trusted employee. In 1904 he suffered an attack of pneumonia from which he never really recovered. On the advice of his doctors, he moved to San Diego in November 1905 to be in a warmer climate. In spite of the move, he died there on January 3, 1906 at the age of 65. The move to San Diego explains the peculiar Denver Directory listings that show him as a boarder in his wife's house. He was buried in Denver, and was survived by his wife, Emma, and his son-in law, Edward H Conkle, a carpenter for the Rio Grande Railroad.

## Denver Directory Listings for Thomas L. Cathcart

1877	clerk for Joslins
1877-1885	No listing
1886	Boards 414 W. 11th St.
1887	Residence 842 11th St.
1888	(Robert Marquis and Co.), Res. 2093 Ogden
1888	Marquis Robert and Co. (Robert Marquis and T. Cathcart) packers of canned mince meat, pickles, etc., Platte corner of 17th St.
1889	Real estate, 839 17th St., res. 2093 Ogden
1890	Real estate, 1630 Arapahoe, res 2129 Lafayette
1891	Real estate, 1630 Arapahoe, res 2129 Lafayette
1892	Real estate, Londoner Block, res. 2105 Lafayette
1893	Real estate, Londoner Block, r 1026 S. 14th
1894	Real estate, Londoner Block, r 1026 S. 14th
1895	Real estate, 1622 Arapahoe, r 1026 S 14th
1896	Cathcart, Thomas L., Real Estate, Loans and Mines, 1 1622 Arapahoe
1897	Real estate, 2, 1623 Curtis, bds 1026 S. 14th
1898	Real estate, 5, 1624 Curtis, res 1026 S. 14th
1899	Real estate, 5, 1624 Curtis, res 1026 S 14th
1901	Real estate, 4-5, 1624 Curtis, res 1026 S. 14th
1902	Real estate, 4-5, 1624 Curtis, res 1026 S. 14th
1903	Real estate, 19, 1643 Curtis, res 1026 S. 14th
1904	Real estate, 19, 1643 Curtis, res 1026 S. 14th
1905	Cathcart, Emma E., Mrs., res. 1026 S. 14th

### List of Cathcart Built Properties: in the 2100 Block of Lafayette (from building permit files)

--23 May, 1889 - Two-story brick dwelling, \$4,000.00, lots 22-26 blk. 47 (2129 Lafayette).

--5 Nov-Dec, 1889 - Two-story brick dwelling, \$4,000.00, lots 25-26 blk 47 (2141 Lafayette, now Lafayette Apts)

--2105 Lafayette, Cathcart-Foster Mansion, already in National Register

### References:

Inland Architect Sept 1890 vol XVI(2) p 24. "Architects Lang & Pugh: For T.L. Cathcart, a two story brick dwelling; cost \$10,000" (sic)

Rocky Mtn News Jan 5, 1882. "Warren and Cathcart have removed their skating rink from the old Sixteenth Street theatre to Warren's old dancing academy in the Tappan block on the corner of Fifteenth and Holiday Streets."

### Denver Post Jan 7, 1906 p3, Sought health, but death awaited him; Denver pioneer and businessman passes away at San Diego

Thomas L Cathcart, an old pioneer of Colorado and a trusted employee of the Denver Dry Goods Company, is dead in San Diego, Cal. He had gone there in search of health.

Mr. Cathcart had been in the employ of the Denver Dry Goods Company for several years prior to his departure for California last November. Two years ago he suffered an attack of pneumonia from which he failed to rally completely, and under the advice of his physicians, sought recovery in a warmer climate. His death on January 3 followed an attack of pleurisy.

Before coming to Denver Me Cathcart had been engaged in the dry goods business in Pueblo, and prior to that time in Minnesota. He was a veteran of the Civil war, having been a member of the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania volunteers. He was also a member of Masonic Lodge No 5 and the owner of extensive real estate interests in Denver and elsewhere. He is survived by a wife. The funeral will be held in Denver under the auspices of the Masonic order at a date to be announced later.

### Lethem, John, Historical and descriptive review of Denver; her leading business houses and enterprising men, GM Collier, 1894.

TL CATHCART, 4 and 5 Londoner Block, Real Estate and Loans.--among those gentlemen in the City of Denver who have gained a solid standing among a constantly increasing clientage is Mr. TL Cathcart, 4 and 5 Londoner Block. He has been established ten years. Mr. Cathcart is a native of Pennsylvania, and has lived twenty years in the Silver State. He is highly regarded in business circles for his integrity and ability.

Morgan, DL and Hammond GP, *A guide to the manuscript collections of the Bancroft Library*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1963

Cathcart not listed

Sanborns map of 1889 shows the Mammoth Skating Rink on the NW Corner of 16th and California (with swimming pool underneath the floor). This is the same location as the Denver Dry Goods Co.

San Diego Union, January 4, 1906 p 10 c 1, "CATHCART--In this city, Jan 3, 1906, Thomas L Cathcart, a retired real estate broker and merchant of Colorado, a native of Pennsylvania, aged 65 years. Interment at Denver, Colorado."

Colorado State Mining Directory, 1896

US Census of 1880

Bates, SP, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5*, Harrisburg, 1869, vol 1 p 229.