

Niwot was named for Chief Niwot, an Arapahoe leader, whose people were hunting and fishing along the Front Range when the first gold miners arrived here in 1858. In the Arapahoe language, Niwot means Left Hand.

The town was platted in 1875, two years after the Colorado Central Railroad extended its tracks northeast from Boulder. This expansion provided a significant boost to the local agricultural economy by creating a link to markets as far distant as Wyoming and Denver.

The town site straddled the railroad tracks which, for the next 75 years, played an important part in Niwot's history. A modest business district stood on the west side of town. There, behind the depot and loading pens, were a blacksmith shop, feed mill, and general stores. East of the tracks, neighborhood streets were laid out.

By the turn of the century, the business district had begun to move across the tracks to Second Avenue, where it remains today. John Nelson, a local carpenter, is credited with building the first two commercial structures there in 1905. Most of the remaining shops on the first block were completed by 1915. It is those buildings that comprise today's Niwot Historic District, which was established in 1993 by the Boulder County Board of Commissioners.

Structures remaining west of the tracks were razed or moved. By 1959, when work began on the Diagonal Highway between Boulder and Longmont. Some of the trees were spared, however, and are still growing in the median.

We invite you to extend your stroll into the second block of Second Avenue. Although only the corner restaurant is part of the historic district, block two contains turn-of-the-century homes and several more businesses. Follow the map in this brochure and learn more about our history.

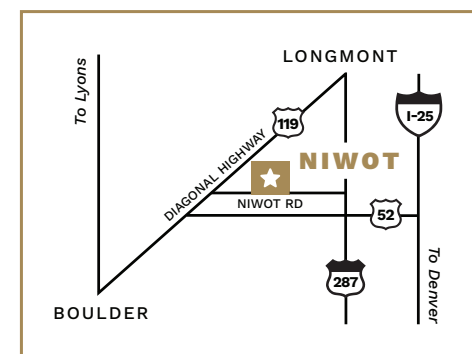


# NIWOT

## *Historical Society*

### SELF GUIDED WALKING TOUR

## of the Niwot Historic District





**1 97 Second Avenue:** When Walter Hogsett arrived in Niwot in 1909, he opened a lumber/hardware business in this small building, which had an attached shed next to the tracks. There, lumber (and in later years, farm implements) were unloaded and displayed for sale. The building later housed Left Hand Water Company, then a series of branch bank offices.

**2 101 Second Avenue:** Walter Hogsett built this building in 1912, which his father managed as a mercantile. Frank Esgar operated a grocery store in the 1920s. Like other stores in the historic district, it has experienced many owners. Subsequent businesses here included tractor, automobile and motorcycle repair shops, a second-hand furniture store and a piano store.

**3 121 Second Avenue:** Reverend William Taylor opened his "White House" grocery store in 1914. As a United Brethren minister, he conducted worship services upstairs when he could gather enough believers together. The open area on the left was occupied by a small house at the time this building was constructed, followed by a Texaco station in the 1930s.

**4 165 Second Avenue:** This shop was Niwot's post office from 1909 until the mid-1930s. During that time, its various owners served as postmasters, sometimes in addition to their regular businesses at the front of the store. Mail arrived in town daily by train.

**5 195-A Second Avenue:** This small structure once served as the town's firehouse and stored the chemical fire cart now standing in front of it. Built in about 1910, it stood beside the Niwot State Bank down the street. Its shed doors were replaced with the current entry door and window when it became a laundry shed behind the Livingston Hotel {no longer standing}. It was donated to the Niwot Historical Society in 1998.

**6 195 Second Avenue:** Nelson Hall, built in 1905 by John Nelson, was one of the first commercial buildings on Second Avenue. Over the years, several small businesses occupied the first floor. The upstairs meeting room was used by local lodges and social groups, including the Royal neighborhoods, Rebekahs, Modern Woodmen and Odd Fellows. Left Hand Grange purchased the building for their meeting hall in 1945.

**7 210 Franklin Street:** Largely unchanged since it was built around 1900, this is the Only residence included in the Niwot Historic District. It was built by Frank Bader, one of Niwot's first postmasters. Frank and his brother George operated the Bader Brothers Mercantile west of the tracks. This home was later occupied by Niwot's first physician, Dr. Dusef.

**8 198 Second Avenue:** Built as a drugstore in 1909, this building was managed by the town doctor. In 1921, it became the newspaper office for Edward S. Hayes and his family, who established the *Niwot Tribune*. For \$1.25 a year, subscribers received the *Tribune* every Friday. When Hayes died in 1945, Doyle Hornbaker took over as publisher until 1958.

**9 190-B Second Avenue:** John Nelson built this cement block building in 1907, shortly after completing Nelson Hall across the street. It served as a mercantile and later as a pool hall and barber shop. Folks stopped by after baseball games and band concerts for treats from its soda fountain. In the back room, a full-sized bathtub provided warm baths for residents of the Livingston Hotel next door...for just 25 cents.

**10 190-A Second Avenue:** As automobiles began to outnumber draft horses, some of the town hitching posts were replaced with gas pumps. A Conoco pump stood in front of this building where Frank Monthey, John Conilogue and John Nelson serviced cars in the 1920s and 1930s. Its wide door accommodated many cars in need of repair.

**11 136 Second Avenue:** The Niwot Emporium building is a newcomer to the block. It stands on the site originally occupied by the Livingston Hotel. When the hotel was demolished in the late 1960s, an antique auction house took its place, followed by a co-op antique store. In 1998, it was extensively remodeled into Niwot's only "indoor mall."

**12 124 Second Avenue:** After the town blacksmith was fatally kicked by a customer's horse, George Atkinson built this building on the same site in 1921. George was a skilled welder and the street was often lined with farm implements and machinery waiting to be repaired. The custom-made branding irons he created for clients were tested on the heavy shop doors that are now on display in the historical museum across the street.

**13 112 2nd Avenue:** George Atkinson built this shop in 1927 as a service garage for the many new automobiles in town. Customers also brought in radio and car batteries to be recharged. This building originally had a grease pit and a small office in back where folks could buy cigarettes, candy and fishing tackle. During the 1930s, local youngsters used the space for boxing matches.

**14 102 Second Avenue:** The Niwot State Bank was founded in 1909 by several local farmers and businessmen. It was robbed in December 1916 when thieves gained access through a side entrance. Unable to open its safe, they attempted to escape on a railroad handcar with the contents of the safe deposit boxes. Thwarted by snowdrifts, however, they ended up walking to Lafayette where they were arrested the next morning. The bank failed in 1931, a victim of The Depression.

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