

## FOREWORD

For more than a half-century the sugar beet industry dominated the economy of Northern Colorado extending from the Front Range east across the prairie into Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, and Montana. Numerous factories once dotted the landscape and thousands of acres of land were planted in sugar beets. Candy Hamilton brings this most important industry to light in this detailed book that includes not only the sugar factories themselves but a look at the people that operated them. It also includes chapters on the ethnic groups that slaved under the hot sun in the field to insure a good harvest year after year.

What you will learn from *Footprints in the Sugar* is the complexity of this industry. Not only did it take trained personnel to grow and harvest the sugar beets, it also took technical knowledge in the processing. In order to bring the harvested beets in from the field, the Great Western Sugar Company owned its own railroad. There were a number of satellite industries including limestone quarries and specialized equipment manufacturers. There were several communities founded solely for workers in this industry. In all, the sugar beet industry had the greatest economic impact on this region of any single industry to date.

Time is rapidly erasing the Great Western Sugar Company and soon, it will be but a memory. The factories are being razed and the land used for other purposes. Increased development has siphoned away irrigation water that was once used to water the sugar beets. The “sugar tramps” that spent their lives working for Great Western are passing on. This book preserves the memory and contributions of this company for future generations.

- Kenneth Jessen  
*Loveland historian and author,*  
October 2004