

FIRST DRAFT

# Man's life mirrors county's move into automobile era

John Sprott helped move Mesa County into the automobile age, both as a businessman and a government employee.

When he owned the Buick dealership at the corner of Seventh and Main streets in Grand Junction,

"He used to go to Denver (by train) and drive the new cars home,"

said his granddaughter, Jo Lockhart of Delta.

The photo on this page shows that dealership in 1920 when Sprott owned it — the first Buick dealership in the city.

Based on a search of The Daily Sentinel from 1920, Sprott didn't do a lot of advertising for his Buick dealership. Few auto dealers did.

But on several occasions, he participated with other local dealers in collective advertising for Goodyear Tires. His business was listed at the bottom of such ads as "the Buick Garage, John A. Sprott, Prop."

Western Slope Auto Company, the Ford dealer, and R.A. Lija, the Dodge outlet, shared space with Sprott's firm. But Sprott's involvement with motorized machines wasn't limited to Buicks. He later owned the first Caterpillar dealership in this area, Lockhart said, a fact confirmed by his obituary in The Daily Sentinel after his death in 1945.

Perhaps more importantly, Sprott served six years as supervisor of Mesa County's road department. One family history said Sprott purchased the first truck Mesa County ever owned. I wasn't able to find proof of that in newspaper or other records, but there is ample evidence that Sprott played an important role in the development of Mesa County's roads at a time when this county and most of Colorado were transitioning to an automobile economy.

For instance, a Colorado Highway Department bulletin from January 1919 notes that John A. Sprott had attended the previous meeting of the Colo-



PHOTO COURTESY OF JO LOCKHART

The Sprott Buick dealership was located at Seventh and Main streets in Grand Junction in 1920.

rado Highway Commission as Mesa County's "duly accredited representative."

During the meeting, Sprott asked the state agency for a \$12,500 grant, "to be met dollar for dollar from county funds."

The article explained that the Midland Trail — the nation's first transcontinental automobile route — ran through Mesa County, and the county needed additional funds to build bridges for the highway where it crossed the recently completed Highline Canal.

At that same Colorado Highway Commission meeting, Sprott asked that the road west from Whitewater through Unaweep Canyon, then known as 31-S, be made a federal road project. Although the Highway Commission asked for a letter in writing from the Mesa County commissioners, the request apparently never produced the desired results, since that road is today Colorado Highway 141, not a federal highway.

Lockhart, who is now 92, lived with her grandfather and grandmother, Jeanette Morris Sprott, for a number of years at their home at 218 N. Ninth St. in Grand Junction. She also lived at the Sprott family business in Thompson Springs, Utah, when her grandfather engaged in yet another auto-related venture. He built the first gas station at Thomp-

son Springs and a number of cabins that served as an early day motel.

"I went to school there for a few years, and our teacher lived in one of the cabins," Lockhart recalled.

Sprott's obituary said that Grand Junction remained his home during the time he was operating the Utah business.

Long after he sold the Buick dealership in 1923, Sprott remained a devoted Buick customer, his granddaughter said. When Lockhart was still in school, she moved briefly to Ohio with her mother. But circumstances required her to move back to Colorado and return to living with her grandparents, she said.

"When grandmother came to Ohio to get me, grandfather bought her a new Buick for the trip," Lockhart said. "She hadn't learned to drive, so my aunt drove the car."

Later, when Lockhart had reached the age of 14, her grandfather "got me a special driver's license," she said. "He enjoyed me driving. He had a big old Buick, and I had to look out under the steering wheel. I drove him to Glenwood Springs sometimes."

John Augustus Sprott was born in Bethesda, Tennessee, in 1865, and later moved with his parents and 11 siblings to Missouri, where the family



SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL / Museum of Western Colorado

John Sprott in his later years.

farmed. As a young man, Sprott was a schoolteacher and later was involved in the mercantile business in southeastern Missouri.

He married his wife there in 1887, and he served as both a county treasurer and county judge in Missouri before he and his family moved to Grand Junction in 1909.

There is no indication he used an automobile for that trip, but the first Buick was manufactured and sold to the public in 1904.

Bob Silbernagel's email is [bohsilbernagel@gmail.com](mailto:bohsilbernagel@gmail.com).

## CMU December graduation set for Friday

By EMILY SHOCKLEY  
[Emily.Shockley@sentinel.com](mailto:Emily.Shockley@sentinel.com)

Colorado Mesa University will host its fourth-ever December commencement ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Friday at Brownson Arena inside the Maverick Center.

The school is expected to graduate more than 550 students from 35 states and Canada

this month. About 250 of those students are expected to participate in Friday's ceremony.

Midyear graduates also have the option to walk at May's commencement ceremony. Colorado Mesa has had both a December and a May commencement ceremony since the 2011-12 school year.

Final numbers will not be determined until the semester's

end, but it's expected at least 23 of the graduates will earn a master's degree Friday. 16 will get a graduate-level certificate, 300 will earn a bachelor's degree, 127 will get an associate degree, and 126 will receive a technical certificate, with some students included in more than one category.

The keynote speaker at commencement will be Tim Casey,

a political science professor at Colorado Mesa and this year's recipient of the Colorado Mesa University Distinguished Faculty Award.

Anyone who cannot attend commencement can view the ceremony online at [www.usstream.tv/channel/colorado](http://www.usstream.tv/channel/colorado) mesalife.

The online broadcast will begin at 9:20 a.m.

## REGION

SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

### Speed limit rising on some urban freeways in Utah

SALT LAKE CITY — Motorists will soon be able to drive a little faster on most urban interstates along Utah's Wasatch Range.

With a few exceptions, the speed limit will be raised from 65 mph to 70 mph beginning this afternoon. The Utah Department of Transportation said it's adjusting the speed limit to match drivers' existing speeds.

Weather permitting, crews hope to change affected speed-limit signs between the morning and evening rush hours Monday from North Ogden to Spanish Fork.

### Wyoming residents oppose personal marijuana use

LARAMIE, Wyo. — A University of Wyoming survey finds that Wyoming residents oppose legalizing marijuana for personal use but are OK with it for medical treatment.

The statewide telephone survey of 768 Wyoming residents was conducted in October by UW's Wyoming Research Center.

Sixty percent of respondents oppose the personal use of marijuana by adults, com-

pared with 35 percent who support it. But 72 percent of respondents support adult use of marijuana if prescribed by a physician, while 25 percent oppose.

Although Wyoming residents do not support legalization of marijuana for personal use, the poll indicates acceptance for reduced penalties for those apprehended in possession of marijuana. Sixty-two percent believe the penalty for marijuana possession should not include time in jail while 32 percent support jail sentences.

### Local treasures found in Canon City time capsule

CANON CITY — A number of historical treasures were found in a 1902 time capsule opened at the Carnegie Section of the Canon City Public Library.

More than 200 community members anxiously watched as stone masons retrieved a copper-plated metal box Friday. It was filled with letters, newspaper articles, a mysterious sealed letter, a photo of Andrew Carnegie and a typed letter from Carnegie announcing his gift of \$10,000 to build the free library.

The time capsule was opened prior to renovation of the interior of the Carnegie building. Some of the items will be taken to

the history center to be humidified so they can be preserved.

A new time capsule will be re-inserted into the cornerstone at a later date.

### Utah regulators to test wood burning ban

SALT LAKE CITY — State air quality regulators will soon test the waters about a proposal to ban wood burning during the inversion season along Utah's Wasatch Front.

The Utah Air Quality Board will seek public comment from Jan. 1 to Feb. 9 and hold seven public hearings early next year.

The proposed ban would affect counties out of compliance with federal clean air standards for fine particulate matter, which stems in part from wood smoke.

That includes Salt Lake, Davis, Weber and Utah counties west of the Wasatch range.

## BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Law enforcement agencies on the Western Slope did not provide reports about criminal activity in the area Sunday.

Cash 5 Sunday: 5-10-11-20-32

Pick 3 Sunday: 6-9-9

For information, go to [www.coloradolottery.com](http://www.coloradolottery.com).



Features and entertainment.....256-4224  
Sports.....256-4203  
Commentary.....256-4236

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Saturday & Sunday - \$59.80, Sunday only - \$59.80.  
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Single Copy: \$7.75 daily and \$1.50 Sunday.  
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### Change Two Lives... Be a Mentor.

**Partners**  
Next Orientation  
**Tuesday, December 9th**  
at 12 Noon and 5:30 pm at the Partners Building  
[www.mesapartners.org](http://www.mesapartners.org) For Della/Montrose please call  
**970-245-5555 970-874-4661**

Imagine if your infant was too sick to bring home from the hospital.  
Give every family the chance to bring home a healthy baby.

Support the **March of Dimes** on Colorado Gives Day  
Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014  
**Donate at ColoradoGives.org**

GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP  
COLORADO GIVES DAY 12/9/14  
march of dimes  
Connect with us at [MarchOfDimesCO](http://MarchOfDimesCO)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

**Western Slope Food Bank of the Rockies NEEDS YOU!**  
Help feed our neighbors in need on the Western Slope

**WS Food Bank of the Rockies**  
120 N. River Road  
Palisade, CO 81526  
970-4641138 x 201  
[westernslope.org/foodbankrockies.org](http://westernslope.org/foodbankrockies.org)

Volunteer opportunities in our warehouse: Order filling, maintenance, cleaning, dehydrator program, packing food and meat boxes.

Sixteen and older, fourteen if accompanied by an adult.

## ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

The Daily Sentinel's advertising deadlines will be moving up to accommodate the **Christmas & New Year's holidays!** This early deadline schedule is designed to help you plan your advertising around the holidays.

Publication Date	Display Advertising	Deadline
12/25, Thursday	.....	12/19, Friday, 3 PM
12/26, Friday	.....	12/19, Friday, 3 PM
12/27, Saturday	.....	12/22, Monday 12 Noon
12/28, Sunday	.....	12/23, Tuesday, 12 Noon
12/29, Monday	.....	12/23, Tuesday, 12 Noon
12/26, <i>Out &amp; About</i>	.....	12/19, Friday, 3 PM
12/28, <i>Real Estate Weekly</i>	.....	12/19, Friday, 4 PM
1/1, Thursday	.....	12/26, Friday, 3 PM
1/2, Friday	.....	12/26, Friday, 3 PM
1/3, Saturday	.....	12/29, Monday, 12 Noon
1/4, Sunday	.....	12/29, Tuesday, 12 Noon
1/2, <i>Out &amp; About</i>	.....	12/26, Friday, 3 PM
1/4, <i>Real Estate Weekly</i>	.....	12/26, Friday, 4 PM

**Classified Liner Ads** (Private Party & Commercial)

12/25, Thursday	.....	12/24, Wednesday, 12 Noon
12/26, Friday	.....	12/24, Wednesday, 1 PM

1/1, Thursday ..... 12/31, Wednesday, 12 Noon  
1/2, Friday ..... 12/31, Wednesday, 1 PM

**Legals**

12/25, Thursday	.....	12/17, Wednesday, 4 PM
12/26, Friday	.....	12/18, Thursday, 4 PM
12/27, Saturday	.....	12/18, Thursday, 4 PM

1/1, Thursday ..... 12/23, Tuesday, 4 PM  
1/2, Friday ..... 12/23, Tuesday, 4 PM  
1/3, Saturday ..... 12/24, Wednesday, 4 PM

**THE DAILY SENTINEL**  
734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501  
Advertising 256-4289 • Circulation 242-1919 • Classified 242-1313

**THE Daily Sentinel offices will be closed Thursdays, Dec. 25th & Jan. 1st.**

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HOW TO REACH US - 242-5050

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242-1919 or (800) 332-8833

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City desk.....256-4213

Features and entertainment.....256-4224

Sports.....256-4203  
Commentary.....256-4236