

Mary Emma Hottel Street was born in Fort Collins on December 19, 1883 and lived here her entire life.



Mary Emma Hottel Street  
1883-1961

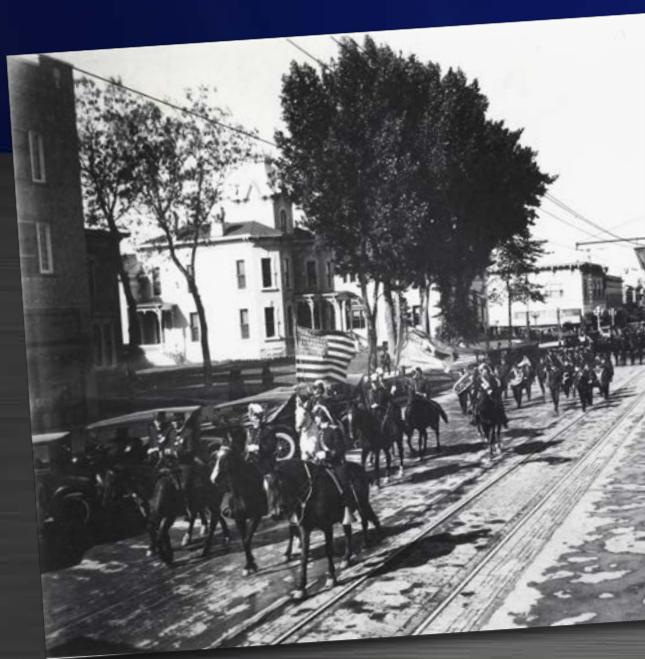
Mary's father, Benjamin Hottel, pictured here at the center, came to Fort Collins from Virginia in 1877, entered the milling business, helped develop the sugar factory, and later became the president of Poudre Valley National Bank.

Pictured on the left are Mary Hottel's mother, Emma Mantz, and Emma's sister Mary Bean. Mary Bean lived with the Hottel family and Mary Hottel called her "Mayme."

Mary Hottel had one older brother, Charles, here in this photo on the right. There was another daughter in the family, Josephine, who died in infancy in 1881.



Mary lived in the Hottel House, an opulent home that was located at 215 South College Avenue, next to the old Post Office that's now the Fort Collins Museum of Art. It was completed in the same month Mary Hottel was born. Both Mary and the mansion shared a nearly identical lifespan.



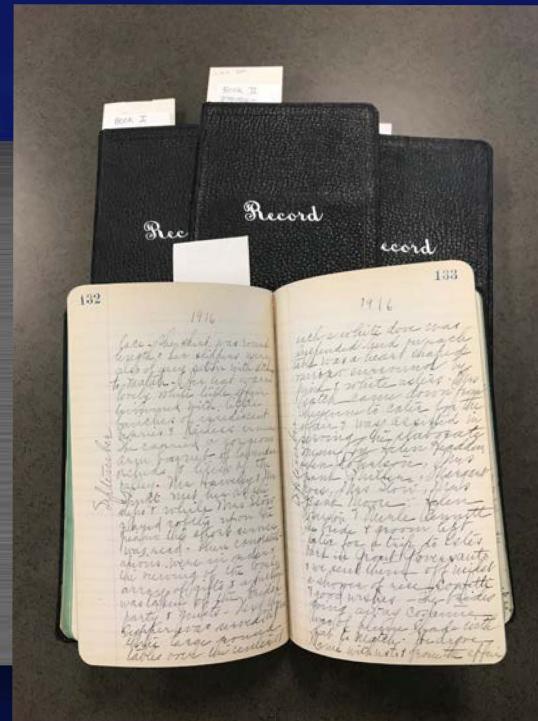
Since Mary was a woman of considerable financial means, her life was unusual compared to most of her contemporaries. She was mentioned in the Fort Collins newspapers over 180 times between 1883 and 1923. Here she is in a children's play at the Opera House, with an article from the *Fort Collins Courier* that mentions her performance.



This panorama of Fort Collins in 1912 was taken from the roof of the old Larimer County courthouse. This is the Fort Collins that Mary would have known as a young woman. From left to right you can see Mason Street, Mountain Avenue, and Oak Street, and there's the Hottel House right there next to the Post Office.



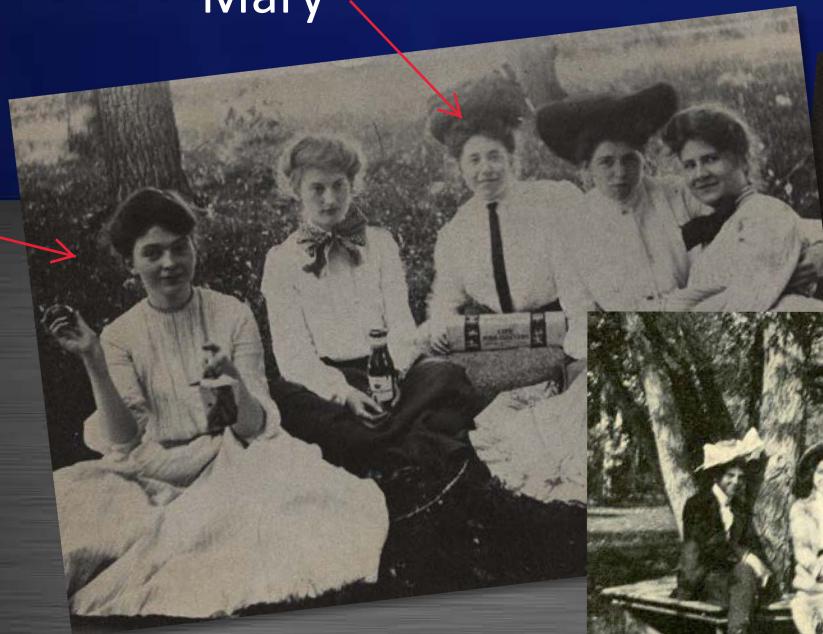
We get a deep, personal look at Mary's life because she kept detailed diaries between 1901 and 1925. Through these diaries, we have gotten to know Mary, and sometimes it feels invasive to be reading her personal thoughts a century after she wrote them. But, these diaries also provide insights into the past like nothing else can. We don't know of any other way we could have gotten so familiar with Mary Hottel's sense of humor, her joys, her personal losses, her boyfriends, and her daily life. So, we thank you for joining us in this balancing act between being respectful of Mary but also enjoying the pure fun that her diaries convey. We also want to thank our dedicated volunteers who are busily transcribing the diaries so we can all share Mary's life.



Mary was 19 when she started her first diary, and made notes on her social engagements, favorite foods, outings with friends, and other details nearly every day for the next 24 years. Her journals indicate that she really enjoyed her life. For example, in her first diary she mentioned making and/or consuming fudge over 30 times! She also frequently wrote about her gal pals. One of her best friends, Edna Baker, whom she called "Bake", is pictured here at the far left. Mary is in the middle.

"Bake"

Mary



From 1901 to 1903, Mary often mentioned Charles, or “Chick,” Davis. Here are a few entries from this time that embody Mary’s busy life and sense of humor.

-May 23rd, 1902: Chick took me to the Junior Promenade, the swellest dance of the season at Odd Fellows Hall. The banquet was fine and the programs ever so cute.

-September 27th, 1902: Chick called and asked me if I would go to a dance the boys are trying to get up Friday next. You bet I will.

-May 22, 1903: ...I missed my supper but filled up on my return and was just enjoying a huge sandwich when Chick came. We took my Commencement programs to the post office and strolled out to the college and thus ends a very busy and important day as it was the last at old Collins High School. Sad but true!! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!



**CHARLES E. DAVIS**

One of the last but not least of the class is Charles E. Davis, a native of Colorado. After attending the Canon school one year, he possesses not only a degree, but a pair of glasses, which with his degree until he is out of company with athletic as a holder of the office of member of the Columbian Literary Society, and can at many subjects, as the political questions, man-aging of ores, and many other products, such as "its fleece was white as snow?"

Another fun entry is this one from 1907:

Aunt Mayme & I boarded the eight A.M. flyer for Denver in company with loads of Collins people. After lunch at Fishers Aunt and I went to see Ethel Barrymore, the dearest, sweetest, little actress in a clever play called “Captain Jinks”. Then we strolled around the stores, made some purchases, took dinner at the Albany & came home on the last train with Bennie & Miss Lee of Greeley. It was a delicious day.



Images courtesy Tulane University and Library of Congress

On September 29th, 1909, Mary wrote about Lamb Day in Fort Collins:  
Today was the great event and the first of its kind held in Collins. "Lamb Day." The crowds were immense...We had the auto out and spun around a long time. At noon father and Mr. Bruce Johnson of Greeley went with us to the scene of the spread but alas the crowd was so large we gave up in despair of even tasting the lamb, sandwiches, and pickles.



**LAMB DAY**

Sept. 29 1909  Sept. 29 1909

**A FREE BARBECUE**

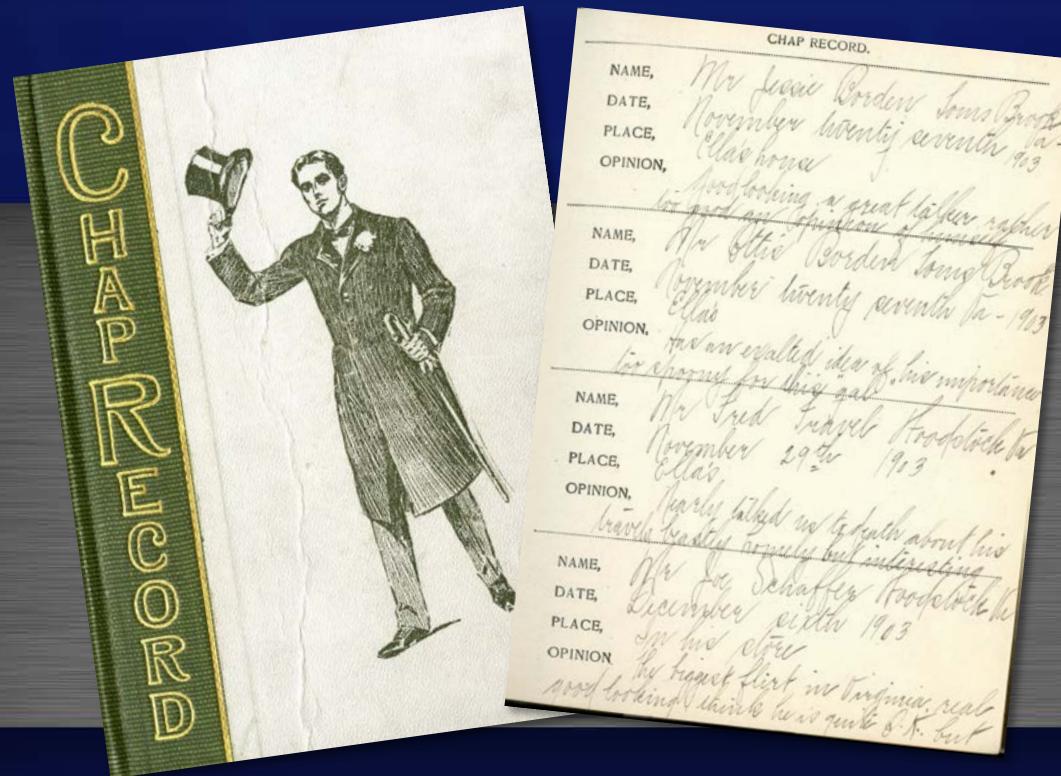
The greatest of festival days—never to be forgotten. Everyone is coming. You can't afford to be away. A fine, wholesome, toothsome dinner at noon. **ITS FREE.**

Races, Games and merry-making during afternoon. With a grand **AUTOMOBILE PARADE**, of decorated floats and its all free. In the evening a great display of **FIREWORKS** and its free **A GRAND TIME FOR EVERYONE. SOMETHING DOING ALL THE TIME.**

**YOUR WELCOME**

COME EARLY STAY LATE

Another special piece of history that Mary created was a "Chap Record," a journal where she recorded the names of every eligible bachelor she met during dances and parties along with her honest, and often scathing, opinion. For instance, she met Mr. Otis Borden in Toms Brook, Virginia and wrote, "Has an exalted idea of importance, too spoony for this gal." Chap Records like this can be found in museums and archives across the country. They show how courtship and the concept of dating were evolving in the early 20th century.



Mary traveled a lot in her life, but her biggest trip came in 1924 at the age of 41. Accompanied by her father and aunt, she vacationed for over 5 months, visiting Honolulu, Hollywood, and the Grand Canyon. Unfortunately, she didn't keep her diary during this time, stating "fare thee well old date book until our return some time in the future." This image from the Hawaii State Archives shows what Fort Street in Honolulu looked like in the 1920s when Mary would have been there.

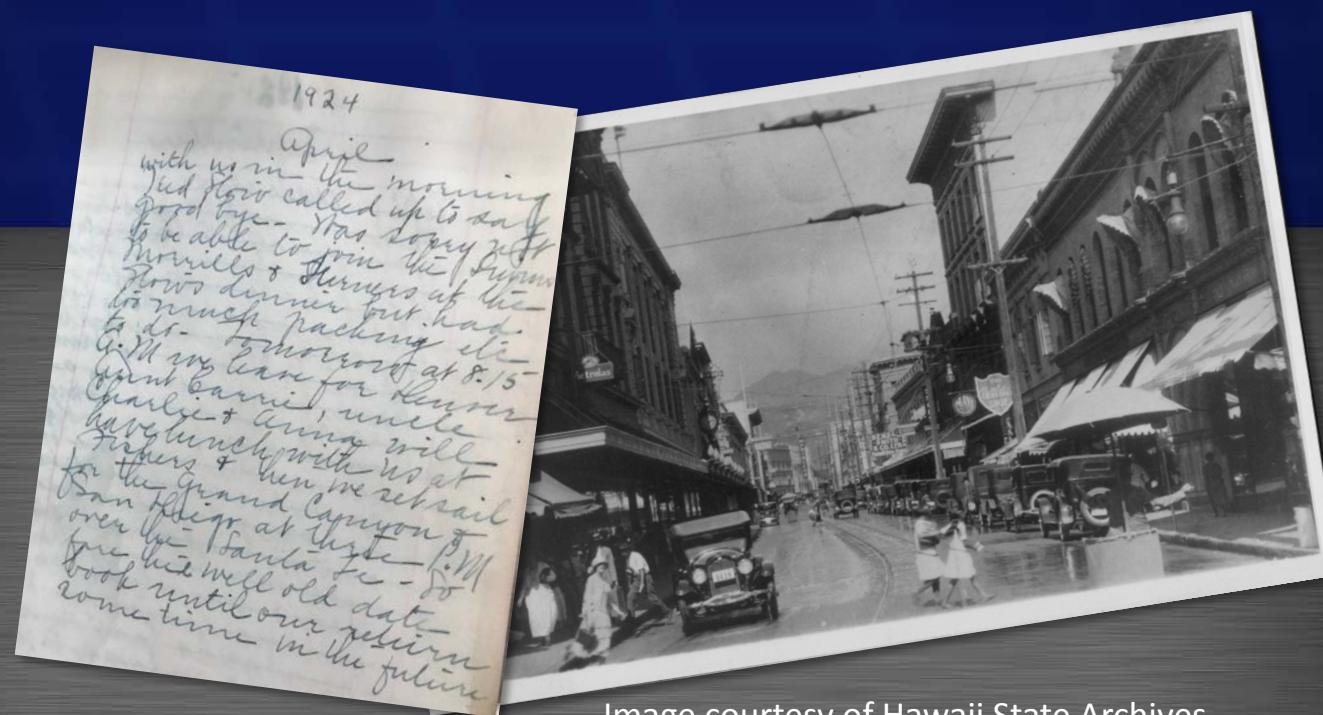
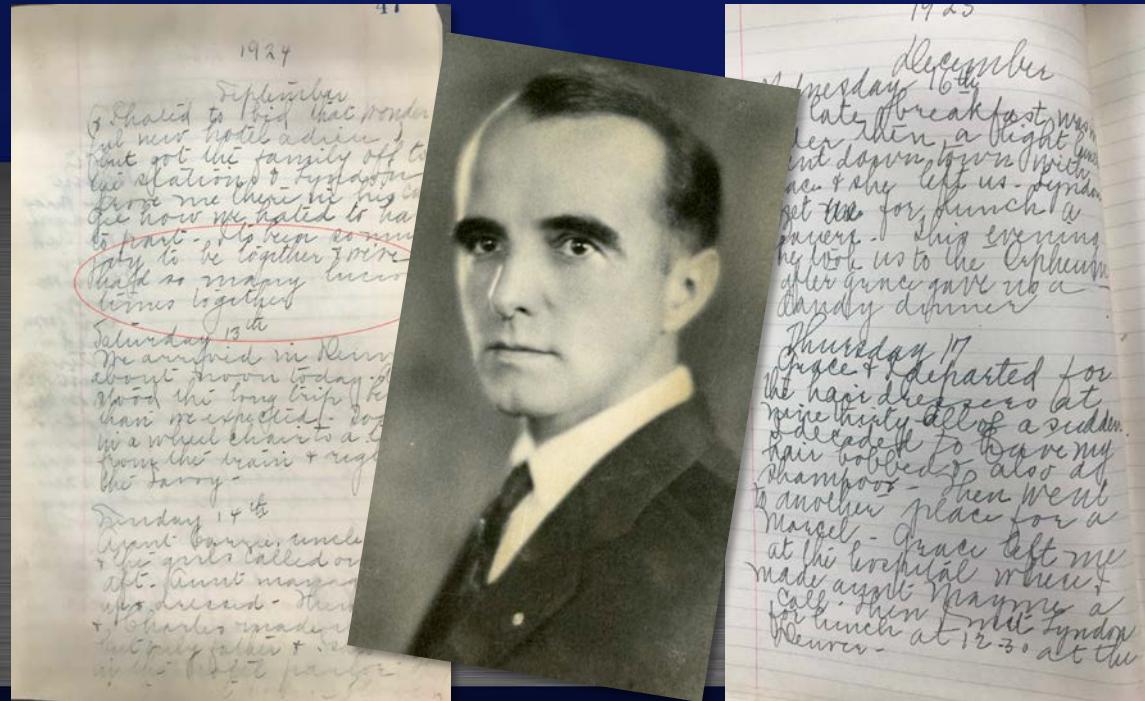


Image courtesy of Hawaii State Archives

It was during this long trip that we believe she met Lyndon Street, pictured here. Mary's final diary entry is from December 17, 1925, when she was in Denver. It reads, "Grace and I departed for the hairdresser at 9:30. All of a sudden I decided to have my hair bobbed and also a shampoo. Then we went to another place for a Marcel. Grace left me at the hospital where I made Aunt Mayme a call. Then I met Lyndon for lunch at 12:30 at the Denver." She and Lyndon were married two days later, and she became Mary Street. News of their marriage was not in our local paper, so we believe they eloped in Denver.

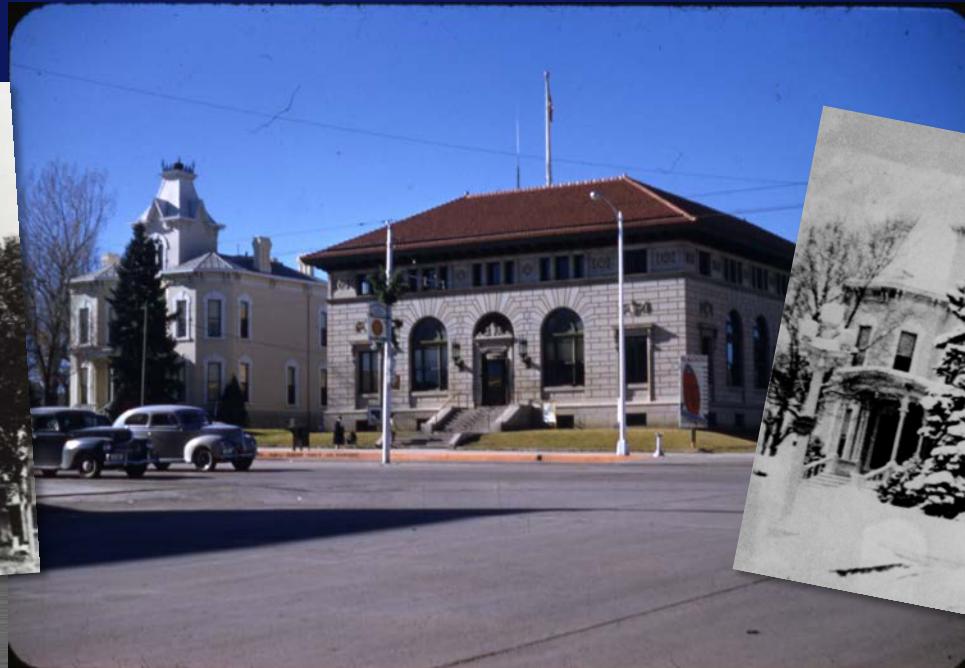


1924  
September  
I failed to bid that wonder  
ful new hotel address  
but got the family off to  
the station & Lyndon  
told me there he had  
the how we hated to have  
to part - to keep so many  
folks to be together & we  
had so many losses  
wins together  
Saturday 13th  
We arrived in Denver  
about noon today &  
found the long trip  
than we expected - got  
in a wheel chair & a  
from the train & right  
the way -  
Sunday 14th  
Aunt Mayme's uncle  
& the girls called on  
Aunt Mayme  
also dressed - then  
& Charles made  
that party & I  
of the party



1925  
December  
Tuesday 16th  
Late breakfast, we  
left then a flight  
out down town with  
me & she left us - Lyndon  
got us for lunch & a  
party. This evening  
he took us to the Capharna  
after Grace gave us a  
dainty dinner  
Thursday 17th  
Grace & I departed for  
the hair dresser at  
nine thirty all of a sudden  
I decided to have my  
hair bobbed & also a  
shampoo - then we  
went to another place for a  
Marcel - Grace left me  
at the hospital where I  
made Aunt Mayme a  
call - then I met Lyndon  
for lunch at 12:30 at the  
Denver -

Mary and Lyndon lived with her father at the Hottel House for the rest of their lives. We know they owned a ranch in Poudre Canyon called LynMar (a combination of their first names), but we don't know a lot about her during this period. If Mary kept diaries during her 25-year marriage, we sadly are not aware of them.



Mary died on November 12, 1960, at the age of 77, one year after the death of her husband. We gain insights about her later life from her long-time house manager and companion Augusta McCrummon. She's pictured here in the house in 1961. These are other photos of the house's interior. In 1979, Augusta gave a speech about her life with the Hottels, and included this description of Mary: She married late in life and was childless. And when my daughter crawled up in her lap and said, "Mary do you have any toys for a little girl to play with?" and Mary melted. And she was hooked for life. So she begged us to come and live with her. Which we did. I was delighted to do this. I could be with her and take care of myself and not be away from her. Mary was quite different than her father. She was an avid reader but her choice of literature was more the romantic and travelogue. She was the greatest traveler, she loved travel. She loved her car, she loved to entertain and take her guests on trips and I used to tease her about being a tour bus driver in a former life. And that would have suited her fine. And that's the way she entertained her guests, showing them Colorado. And she loved the theater. And she loved to travel. We had some marvelous trips together and in fact she wore me out...



After Mary and Lyndon died, the mansion was sold to settle the estate among extended family. In this 1961 photo, there's a sign in front of the house indicating that it was to be the site of the future J.C. Penney store.



Image courtesy of Jim Burrill

By 1962 the house had been demolished. Today this is the location of Downtown Ace Hardware. In the museum's collection we have a few pieces of furniture from the house, a round window from the house's tower, and some artwork.



Mary's journals are in the process of being transcribed, so we still have a lot to learn about her life. We're excited about the social research potential for her diaries. They have already inspired a talented artist that we know well: Colorado artist Kyle Drayton. When we shared a diary entry with him he was inspired to create a graphic novelization of one of Mary's most charming passages.



1906, July, Thursday the 19th-

Well the house party was in full swing all day & the first thing on the program was the determination to pay back Alyia's brothers, whom we suspected of being the culprits who stole & hid our night gowns-therefore unwittingly they heard us talking about what we thought we ought to do & locked their door-However we found another key that fitted the lock...



...& proceeded to sew up the sleeves of their night apparel on the machine ha! ha!

My but I'd like to know just what they felt like saying when the plot was discovered.

Learn more about local history by visiting the Archive at Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, visiting the Poudre River Public Library District, and by checking us out online at the Fort Collins History Connection.