

# History of Sloan's Lake

sloanslakeparkfoundation.org  
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**For Sale.**  
The best farm in Colorado, of 100 acres of land, in section 31, township 3, range 68, fronting on the road from Denver to Georgetown, and running back to Sloan's lake. For information inquire of T. M. SLOAN, at Sloan house, West Denver. feb21d1f



## Farmer Thomas M. Sloan

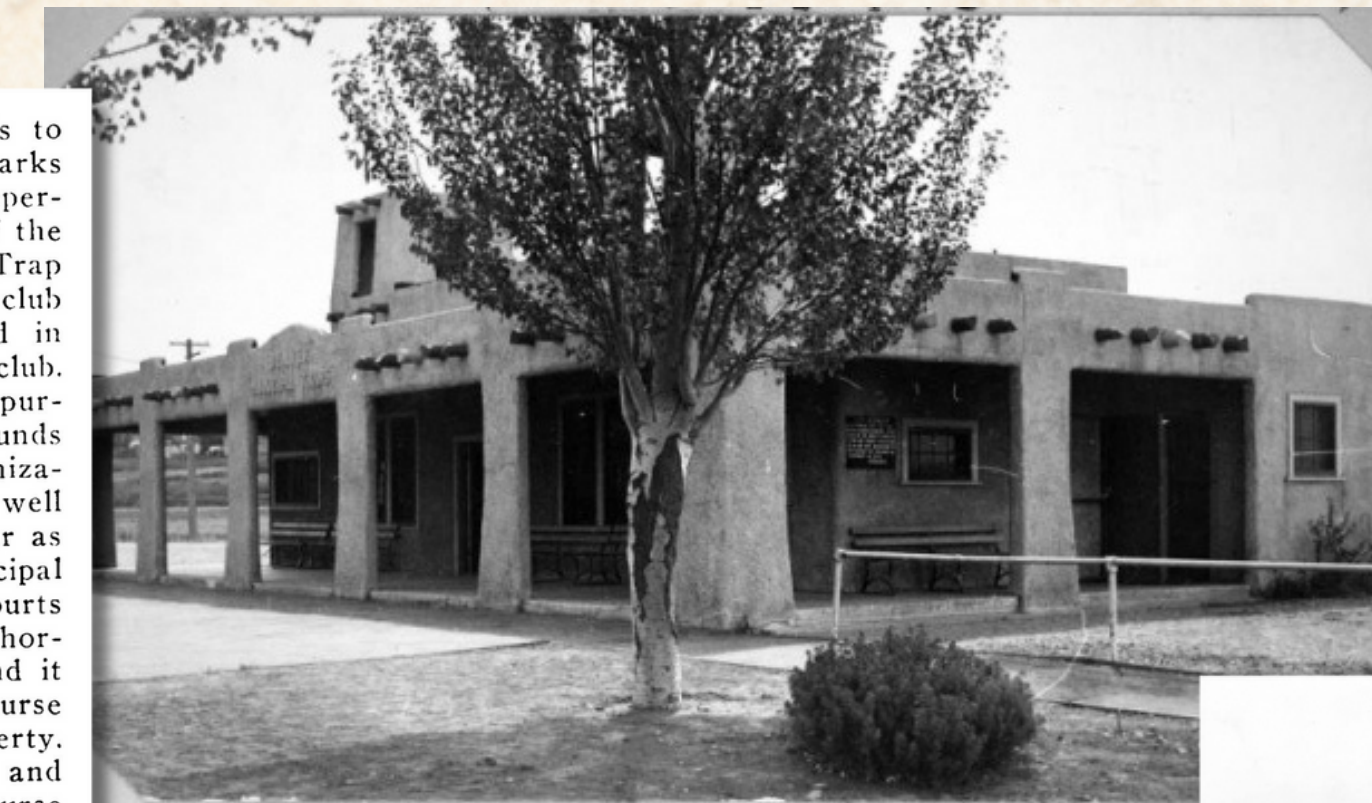
According to legend, in 1861, Thomas M. Sloan tapped into a water aquifer while digging a well to irrigate his farmland in what is now considered West Denver. Almost overnight, the lake spread to a whopping 200 acres and soon attracted onlookers to confirm rumors of a new body of water, graced with monikers such as "Sloan's Leak," "Sloan Lake," and "Sloan's Lake," a name that would continue to be debated over a century later. The farm and an ice house on the lakeshore soon became prosperous sources of income for the Sloan family. Activities such as boating, swimming, and ice skating made Sloan's Lake a popular recreational attraction in Denver. In 1872, Thomas M. Sloan sold his property after placing an advertisement in the Rocky Mountain News for the sale of "the best farm in Colorado."



## The Gun Club

The Denver Trap Shooters Club operated on the Southwest Side of Sloan's Lake from 1923-1969, and used the Gun Club building that exists today. They shot trap and skeet over Sloan's Lake and the location was open to the public as part of the municipal recreation program

A municipal trap shooting grounds is to be added to the attractions of Denver parks as a result of a letter addressed to Superintendent A. K. Vickery of the city parks by the Denver Trap Shooters' Club. The club grounds, formerly located in Aurora, are no longer available to the club, because they are needed for building purposes. In looking around for new grounds it occurred to the officers of that organization that this branch of sport might well be represented in the city parks, insofar as the city is already conducting municipal bathing beaches, golf links, tennis courts and similar activities. City Park authorities met the proposition with favor and it has been decided that a trap shooting course shall be established on city park property, south of Sloan's Lake close to the City and County line, Sheridan Boulevard. The course will be laid out and improved as soon as possible. Trap shooting is one of the cleanest of sports and attracts a class of men who are counted among the best citizens of any community.



## Roger the Elephant

Roger the Elephant's legend is one of many fanciful stories, but the truth is as exciting as any legend could be. Roger was the main attraction at the Manhattan Beach amusement park. One day a child, George Eaton was riding Roger when he slipped off and Roger trampled the young boy to his death. The account in the Rock Mountain News is greusome and should only be read if you have a strong stomach. After the incident, Roger's popularity fell and soon after the park stopped marketing Roger in their ads. He was sold to another amusement park and his whereabouts unknown after the sale. This incident also prompted the owners of Lakeside and Elitch Gardens amusement park to march to Manhattan Beach and 'declare war' in an attempt to steal the animals in their care. No, Roger is not buried under King Soopers, and No, he is not buried in Sloan's Lake...or is he...



## Manhattan Beach

Manhattan Beach was one of Denver's first amusement parks and was located on the North shore of Sloan's Lake. When the park opened its doors in 1891, it was considered the largest amusement park west of the Mississippi. The park was the vision of German-born Adam Graff, an ambitious immigrant who was an ice cutter at Sloan's Lake. With funding support from brothers Robert and Ernest Steinke, they were able to open the park while continuing to add newer attractions such as a roller coaster, a dance hall, a zoo, a skating rink, a theater, and more. The beauty of the park burgeoned as thousands of trees, shrubs, and potted palms were planted in the gardens and picnic grounds. A total of 10,000 visitors traveled from all around Colorado by way of horse, buggy, and streetcar for the grand opening.

Manhattan Beach lured patrons not only with its beauty, but also with its growing variety of attractions, performances, and athletic events held at the park. A pleasure barge named "City of Denver" was a Denverite favorite for its gentle cruises in the afternoon and late evenings. Circus acts, live bands, gypsy groups, baseball games, and boxing matches were all attractions that kept visitors returning. People enjoyed the view of ascending hot air balloons while acrobats were shot out of cannons. New animals such as camels, tigers, lions, elephants, and various Colorado wildlife were continuously added to the zoo within the park. There was even a Cinderella coach hauled by a pair of ostriches!

The park's popularity was short-lived as it suffered from a series of unfortunate events.



Manhattan Beach Park  
THEATRE & GOLF  
ADMISSION 10c  
Week of May  
REOPENING  
H. J. STEINKE  
THEATRE & GOLF  
ADMISSION 10c

**Our Steamboat.**  
When the Times first told the public that a canal was to be made and a steamboat built and run thereon, some people laughed, others doubted, and a few whose faith in our resources would be staggered at nothing, believed. Now the canal is built, the boat ready, and regularly engaged in making trips to Sloan's Lake and back. Twenty-five cents is the fare for the round trip. Thirty-five cents will take one from the corner of Larimer and 14th streets over to the boat-land, out on the lake and back to town again. No one can complain at the price.

