

January 1927

## Chase Withrow - Gentleman of the Bar

Denver Bar Association Record

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/dlr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Chase Withrow - Gentleman of the Bar, 4 Denv. B.A. Rec. 10 (1927).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Denver Law Review at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Denver Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact [jennifer.cox@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.cox@du.edu), [dig-commons@du.edu](mailto:dig-commons@du.edu).

## *Chase Withrow—Gentleman of the Bar*

---

**O**UT in Room 319, at St. Joseph's Hospital, bravely fighting against a long illness, there sits a towering and aristocratic personality, impatiently awaiting the time when he can board the train for his mountain bailawick and once more get back into the harness as an actively practicing lawyer.

And no less impatiently do the people of Central City and Gilpin County, who have relied upon the counsel of this learned and clear-thinking man for more than half a century, await the return of the Honorable Chase Withrow to the mining camp which has been his home since he arrived in Colorado with the first settlers.

### *Pioneer Colorado*

When Mr. Withrow came to Colorado from Virginia, in 1860, more than 10,000 people swarmed into Central City, where gold had shortly before been discovered, and Gilpin County was humming with activity and romance. He had studied law in Illinois before making the long journey westward in a covered wagon but the gold excitement was much too alluring for a romantic and adventurous boy of twenty-one to resist and he therefore put aside his law books for the time being and plunged into active mining, staking out claims and digging for gold with varying fortune. Thus it was that in practical every-day contact with actual mining operations he laid the foundation for the important part he was to play later in the development of the mining law of the western states.

### *A Law-Abiding Community*

Speaking of the early days in Central City, Mr. Withrow describes the camp as a law-abiding, orderly com-

munity, quite unlike the wild and woolly early Denver, early Leadville and early Cripple Creek, but with plenty of pioneer Western atmosphere nevertheless.

### *Saw-Mills and Indians*

In 1862, he established a saw-mill in Missouri Gulch from which he supplied lumber for building, which was then booming in Gilpin County, and a little later started another mill at the head of Kiowa Creek. In the operation of this latter mill, he and his partner were handicapped by the constant depredations of the Indians with whom they fought frequent and numerous battles, but Indians and Indian fighting worried these hardy pioneers not at all. It was all part of the game and they carried on their saw-mill enterprise successfully notwithstanding until the man for whom they were making the lumber suddenly went into bankruptcy which resulted in a \$14,000.00 loss for the partners and the closing down of their mill.

### *Admitted in 1874*

One more year of studying law following this experience, and Chase Withrow was admitted to the Colorado Bar in 1874. For five or six years after his admission to practice, he served as Clerk of the District Court in Gilpin County and in 1881 opened an office for the general practice in Central City where he has since practiced continuously, appearing as counsel in many of the most celebrated Colorado causes.

### *Married in 1875*

In 1875, he married Mary Howard Thomson, of St. Louis, who died only a few years ago. A brilliant son, Edgar Withrow, who, after

graduation from college at the University of Colorado and from Columbia University Law School, practiced with his father in Central City, died in 1910, and a daughter, Marian, also a graduate of the University of Colorado, died a few years later.

#### *Upheld Finest Traditions*

In the fifty-three years of Mr. Withrow's practice at the Bar of this State, he has always upheld the finest traditions of his profession and has won a permanent place in the affections and esteem of his brother lawyers as a gentleman of scholarly attainments and of the highest integrity.

#### *Related to Salmon P. Chase*

He is a scion of the same family that produced Salmon P. Chase and many other illustrious men and his early life is replete with interesting reminiscences.

#### *Knew Lincoln Intimately*

Abraham Lincoln was a frequent visitor in his father's home and an intimate friend of the Withrow family. Lincoln always talked to boys, Mr. Withrow says, about things boys were interested in and so he always particularly enjoyed Lincoln's visits. While attending Knox College, sitting close to the speakers, he heard every word of the famous Lincoln-Douglas debate.

#### *Welcomed General Grant*

Mr. Withrow was one of those to welcome the victorious General Grant on his visit to Central City and the street in front of the famous old Teller House was paved with solid gold and silver bricks for the occasion.

#### *News Seven Days Old*

During the Civil War, news of military events travelled slowly across the plains to Colorado and

when the Rocky Mountain News got out a "War Extra" with news that was seven days old, Mr. Withrow says that it was every bit as thrilling as the instantaneous news we received out here during the World War.

#### *City Attorney of Colorado's First City*

For many years Mr. Withrow has served as City Attorney for Central City and in this capacity has had an intimate glimpse of the vicissitudes of fortune which have visited the famous old mining camps.

#### *Prohibition and Primaries*

With the advantage of more than three score and ten years of perspective on life and law, Mr. Withrow sees some of our current problems in a somewhat different light from the ambitious reformer. He regards many of the legislative remedies prescribed for human ills as being worse than the disease they are prescribed to cure, and in this category includes the Primary Law, the Initiative and Referendum, and National Prohibition.

Chase Withrow is a gentleman and a scholar; a lawyer of the old school whom it is a distinct privilege to know.

—J. C. S.

#### *Needed a Clew*

A well-known minister, famous for absent-mindedness, once met an old friend in the street and stopt to talk with him. When about to separate, the minister's face suddenly assumed a puzzled expression.

"Tom," he said, "when we met was I going up or down the street?"

"Down," replied Tom.

The minister's face cleared. "It's all right, then. I had been home to lunch."—*New Outlook*.