

Charles A. Lory and the Challenges of Colorado's Semi-Arid Frontier

By James E. Hansen, II, Professor of History, Colorado State University, 1980

Reviewed By – Ralph Trenary

What did you get out of this book? This is an easy to acquire PDF item available as a download. A literary vignette is a well-established glimpse into the experiences and contributions of historic figures. In this case, the “rest of the story” on our local and perhaps taken for granted Lory State Park, the CSU Lory Student Center, the Colorado – Big Thompson Project and Northern Water.

Would you recommend it to class members? Yes, the realities of arriving in Northern Colorado in May 1888 as a young boy and the subsequent life experiences of Charles A. Lory are valuable, even if lacking in drama. Hard work and persistence are proven to prevail in the causes that he chose to champion. The sequence of his life experiences of homestead farmer, ditch digger, ditch rider, educator and CSU President are a compelling combination. Knowing the biography of one of the key figures in the Colorado – Big Thompson Project, Northern Water and CSU holds additional value.

What key points would you like to discuss with the class?

The value of long-term relationships emerges in the timeline of Charles Lory, the C-BT and Northern Water. The inferred patience and diplomacy of Lory in events that have already been presented solidifies the impact of the extended circle of contacts who were involved.

Writing a timeline of a person like Charles Lory is an interesting experience. My impression is that this is the technique followed by the author, Professor Hansen, to research and outline the paper. There is also an element of “be careful of your friends, they will ask for favors.” That is my impression of the payback Lory endured serving on the Reclamation Debt Board. Although this is revealed in the biography as yet another lasting contribution that he made to national (Federal) water law.

As with every publication that I previewed, the end-notes (or bibliographies) are valuable future references. Several revealing cross-paths for the original water users group (of which Lory was a founding member) are cited in great detail.