

THE

HISTORY COLORADO | FALL 2020

# COLORADO

MAGAZINE

# WHAT FREEDOM MEANS

Toppled Monument / The Most Corrupt Colorado Election / Doing Our Part

# The Monumental Relevance of History



For most of our recent history, old monuments have been seemingly neutral backgrounds of the civic landscape and passive witnesses to history in the making. Today, forcefully, this irrelevance is no more. Here in Colorado and across this country, monuments hold a magnetic new power, and those invested in civic progress must choose how we harness that power, or risk letting it go to waste.

History Colorado is meeting these incredibly historic moments with action and engagement. This

October, we placed the 1909 Civil War statue, which was toppled from its pedestal in front of the State Capitol this summer, on display with a multi-prismatic interpretation that spans three historic periods and includes many perspectives. (See pages 6–7 to learn more.)

Part of this statue's history is the selflessness exemplified by the all-volunteer force that comprised Colorado's response to the Civil War. Another part of this history is also the atrocities committed against the Cheyenne and Arapaho under the flag of the Union forces and state of Colorado. This monument is a source and a symbol of so much.

We believe that service to community—all of our Colorado communities—is as important as our stewardship of the artifacts and archives that document Colorado's histories. Placing this monument statue on display is an example of how museums and historical societies can rise in these tenuous times in ways that are constructive and meaningful to both civic dialogue and healing.

In this spirit, we will be showcasing the inkwell that was used at Appomattox, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, to end the Civil War. This important artifact of American history is surprisingly in History Colorado's collection. We are placing the object on display at the History Colorado Center from November 20–30, as a symbol of our country reunifying when it was at its most fractured.

History museums, like our eight museums across Colorado, continue to demonstrate that we can expand how we share and understand our history and who is included. We offer community, continuity, belonging, and the space to understand the many elements that define us and bind us to each other.

Steve W. Turner  
Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

In the spirit of healing and education, we acknowledge the 48 contemporary tribes with historic ties to the state of Colorado. These tribes are our partners. We consult with them when we plan exhibits; collect, preserve, and interpret artifacts; do archaeological work; and create educational programs. We recognize these Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants of this land.

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**DEMOCRACY FOR BREAKFAST** Satisfy your appetite for democracy on a provocative historian-led encounter with America's democratic traditions, featuring the Smithsonian Institution's *American Democracy* exhibition presented at the History Colorado Center / Thursdays, 9 am

Tours are limited to 10 people to ensure safe social distance for everyone. Your ticket also includes admission to the museum.  
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# THE FORUM

We love hearing from you

## The Colorado Magazine

Your most recent magazine arrived and the articles, the intent and the tone were very dramatic. . . . Even the graphics and layout are different and much improved. Thank you and well done!

—John Gray, former director, Smithsonian National Museum of American History

I read with interest the Summer 2020 *Colorado Magazine*. I have a question about the “This is what Democracy looks like” portion. I assume that the two political articles by Anthony Grimes and Nicki Gonzales will be balanced by two political articles from two conservative writers. If this is not correct I would like to know what the political position of our historical society actually is.

—Michael L. Larsen, Colorado Springs

*Editors’ Note: The articles you referenced in the most recent issue were intended to provide historical context to current events. We study history, after all, to help us illuminate the present more clearly. At History Colorado, we are always interested in understanding our present more fully by approaching it from a historical and inclusive perspective.*

## Toppled Civil War Monument on Display

I still struggle with the idea that we’re memorializing and honoring the concept of the soldiers who committed such atrocities. I wonder what other items could be installed near it to help tell a more complete story—could we also put up statues of Cheyenne and Arapaho leadership next to it? Where do we draw the line between remembering/learning from history vs using art to revere people and actions that shouldn’t be revered.

—Cathryn Matheson, via Facebook

Most importantly, tell the story. The whole story from as many perspectives as possible. Because each angle reveals something new and perhaps not understood. The statue represents several things at once. It’s not as simple as just a piece of metal on a stone pedestal. It’s something more. Thank you for taking the time to explain the nuance and remembering the meaning behind the subtext.

—Rachel Gamblin, via Facebook

## State Historians Council

Instead of a state historian, @History Colorado has “council of historians,” with each taking turn as lead historian sharing scholarship with public, advising on current issues. We should have this nationally, serving collectively as “historian laureates.”

—John Garrison Marks, via Twitter

## Lost Highways Podcast

My COVID-19 binge. A must for every Colorado transplant! This is a great way to feel connected to not just the beauty of the state, but also its history. It’s also been comforting in these wild times to know that we as a state have faced similar challenges.

—Cnbella, via Apple Podcasts

## Justice Ginsburg Mural

I understand the powerful memorial statements for RBG. But I would applaud even more a History Colorado program discussing the role of the Supreme Court, its record of constitutional successes (as well as failures), and the fine line it always treads to maintain true-impartial balance of power in our representative constitutional system.

—James Grafton Rogers Hart

*Editors’ Note: We agree with you that it’s important for an organization like ours to focus on the role of the judiciary in a democracy. We’re happy to say that we recently released an audio companion piece to our American Democracy exhibition that does just that. It features Justice Gregory Hobbs, formerly of the Colorado Supreme*

*Court, examining the role the courts have played (in Colorado and beyond) in our history. It sounds similar to what you are suggesting.*

*Additionally, History Colorado has a special initiative this year celebrating the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment called Bold Women. Change History. We’ve brought in a number of elected political leaders, scholars, and others to explore women’s history. The celebration of the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the second woman appointed to the Supreme Court and herself a “bold woman who changed history,” was, we believe, an appropriate part of that initiative.*

## Borderlands Lecture Series

Your programs are just wonderful. It has helped me get through these difficult times we are all going through. I hope you keep them online once this pandemic is over. Because I cannot come into Denver to see these.

—Denise Knowles, History Colorado Member

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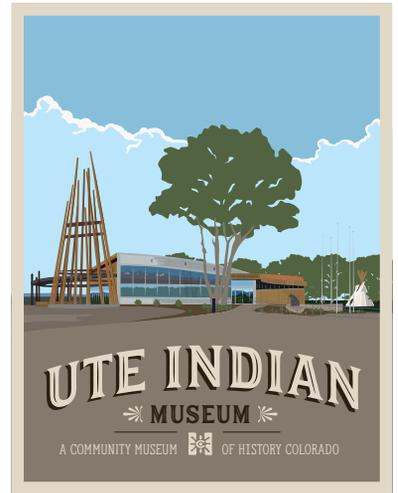
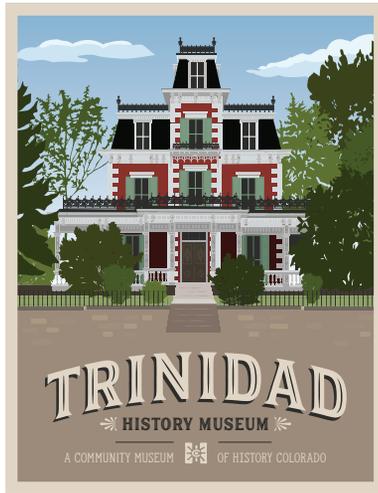
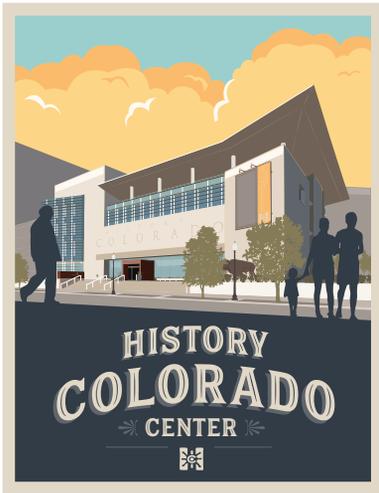
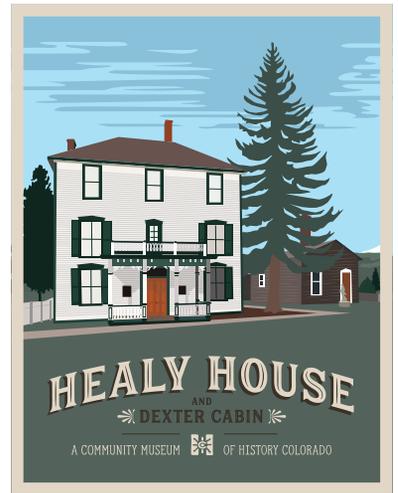
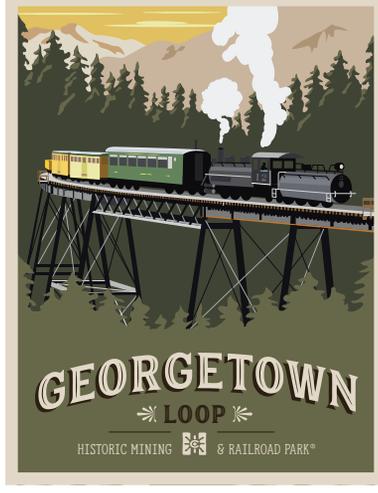
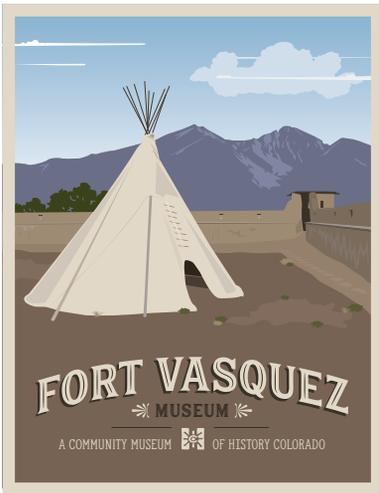
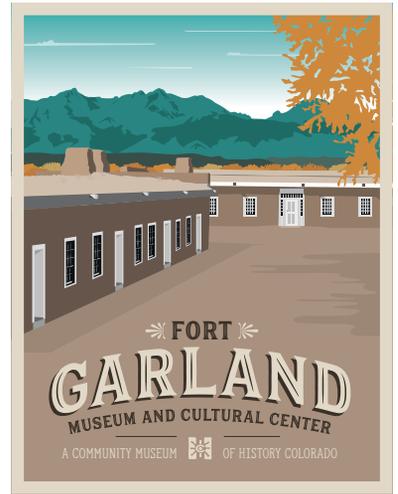
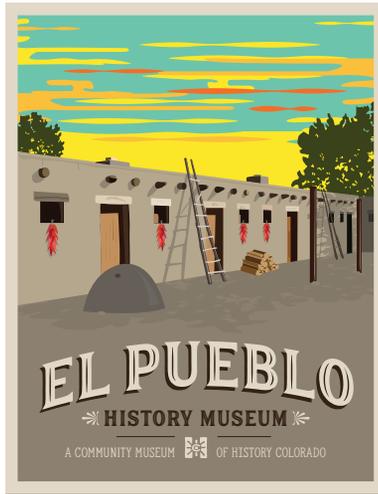
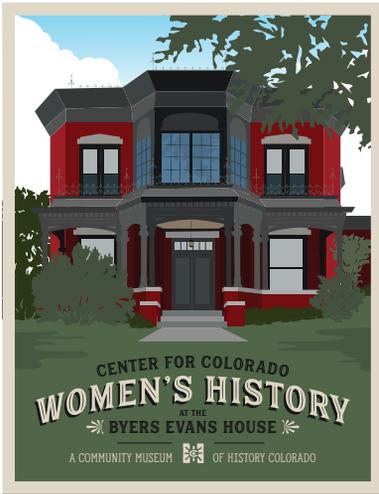
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**WE ARE  
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**BECOME A MEMBER  
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# CONSTRUCTIVE CONTEXT FOR A TOPPLED MONUMENT

**COLORADO WAS BORN IN THE MIDST OF THE CIVIL WAR.** Colorado troops, drawn primarily from local volunteers, fought for the Union Army. They engaged in several battles, most notably the Battle at Glorietta Pass in northern New Mexico, where they played a vital role in protecting western gold fields from Confederate takeover.

But in this wartime context, soldiers also used military force to clear Indigenous peoples from their homes and secure the land for white settlement. On November 29, 1864, US cavalry regiments attacked a peaceful camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho people on Colorado's eastern plains at Sand Creek. Under Colonel John Chivington's command, the troops murdered more than 230 women, children, and elders. It was the bloodiest day in Colorado history.

The over-militarized response to Native peoples was an action of a nation at war, and events like the Sand Creek Massacre sparked decades of government-sanctioned violence against Native Americans in the West.

In the early 1900s, as the generation of Civil War veterans was beginning to pass away, veterans' groups representing both Union and Confederate soldiers worked to commemorate their service by erecting monuments

*Don't focus so much on the monuments, focus on bigger issues like getting hate laws passed in Wyoming. This pandemic has pulled everyone out of the dark and I look forward to having a hate crime law in Wyoming where I live. I support both the veterans and their sacrifice and my people, many who died at Sand Creek. The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes are survivors of genocide and the Sand Creek Massacre. They are resilient and remember and memorialize the victims and survivors at Sand Creek. I hope we get a memorial to the Sand Creek Massacre in place of the soldier statue. I respect everyone's intentions in these matters—ideas and teachings change, sometimes for the positive. "We Forgive and Don't Forget."*

—Gail Ridgely, Tribal Historian and Sand Creek Descendant, Northern Arapaho Tribe

throughout the nation. This bronze figure of a dismounted Union cavalry soldier, titled *On Guard*, was installed on the west side of the State Capitol in 1909 to honor Coloradans who'd served in the Union Army. John "Jack" Dare Howland, himself a veteran, designed the sculpture. Plaques on its pedestal listed engagements Colorado troops had fought in.

But monuments like *On Guard* represent the values and agendas of their time even as they honor events of the past. Among the soldiers' laudable actions, the monument also included the Sand Creek Massacre, characterizing it as a "battle"—one among many—in a way that masked the atrocities committed that day. In 2002 the State Legislature, in consultation with Cheyenne and Arapaho descendants of Sand Creek, added a plaque to the monument condemning this damaging mischaracterization.

The monument was toppled in June 2020 during protests for Black lives. Now, it stands in the History Colorado Center to give everyone an opportunity to discuss what it means to them.

Following are just a few of the viewpoints shared with us. We invite you to come in, or write to us, to share your own.

*As a Vietnam Veteran and founder of the Colorado Veterans Monument, I am concerned that the statue could be hidden away from public view. It is important that this physical symbol of proud service and sacrifice be available for the past, present and future. I would like to see the Colorado community get together to reach an inclusive agreement about the statue's future. One option would be a place among other military monuments/memorials in a renamed Colorado Veterans Park across from the State Capitol.*

—Tim Drago, Founder of the Colorado Veterans Monument



# History Colorado

Events. Exploration. Experiences.



PHOTO / History Colorado Executive Director Steve Turner speaking at press event for the installation of On Guard, Civil War monument statue, at History Colorado Center

*Having researched, written about, and given tours at the Colorado State Capitol for nearly a quarter-century, I feel a kinship with the building and its grounds. When I visited hours after John Howland's On Guard was toppled, I felt a numbness deep within me. The statue had become a casualty of the passions that turned the capitol into a battleground of chemical weapons and vandalism. The monument has its flaws, its interpretive plaques in particular. Their casual portrayal of the Sand Creek Massacre has long infuriated many Coloradans, and rightly so. Yet I believe that the statue's place remains on the statehouse grounds, accompanied by a more inclusive, honest interpretation of Colorado in the Civil War. I hope to see Howland's On Guard restored to its pedestal, where it can honor the past, embrace the present, and enlighten the future.*

—Derek R. Everett, Colorado Historian and State Capitol Scholar

*The statue stood for the Civil War. But because of what happened right after the Civil War, the Southern Arapahoes think of the soldier as the militia that were involved in the Sand Creek Massacre. When the statue fell, I said a little, "Yea! It's gone." It's a small victory because it will be replaced and we're trying to commemorate Sand Creek in our own way. I'm not saying that Colorado wasn't in the Civil War and they should not commemorate that victory at Glorieta. History should be told. This was a part of our nation's growth. But the Civil War commemoration and the Sand Creek commemoration are two different things.*

—Fred Mosqueda, Arapaho Coordinator, Southern Arapaho and Cheyenne Tribe

*Designed by Private John D. Howland, who fought in 1862 at Glorieta Pass, New Mexico, the statue represents and honors all those brave Colorado soldiers who sacrificed, fought, and died to preserve the Union, end slavery, and defeat the invading Confederate forces. The vandals who tore down the statue had no idea of its true meaning and demonstrated their own ignorance and intolerance. As a veteran myself, and a military historian, I believe that defacing history equals erasing history.*

—Flint Whitlock, Author, *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums: The Union Response to the Confederate Invasion of New Mexico*, and Board Member, Broomfield Veterans Museum

*Traditionally, history has been told by the winners, who have taken pains to shape the historical narrative so that they're seen in the best light. This means we don't get the full story, unless we do a lot more work to find it. With the toppling of this statue, we have a rare opportunity to address disparities in history and to tell, if not a more complete story, one that elevates stories of those made most vulnerable by the victors' actions.*

*Missing from mainstream Civil War history is its impact on Native Americans. Also missing is the fact that Anti-Blackness was as prevalent in the North as it was in the South, and that Union Soldiers also mistreated the formerly enslaved. These narratives feed into one another and have shaped race relations in the United States today, not just as a Black and White issue, but also among races considered "minorities" in this country. I believe it's important to bring them up in tandem to better understand who we are as a people.*

—Adri Norris, Artist ■

# A BIG, COMPLEX AND INCOMPLETE STORY OF THE VOTE

BY JILLIAN ALLISON



PHOTO / *Colorado ratifies the 19th Amendment, December 12, 1919.*  
*Library of Congress, Records of the National Woman's Party Collection.*

In the fall of 2018, I started working on plans to COMMEMORATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT. As we marked this occasion on August 26, 2020, what I thought would feel like an ending to this work felt like just the beginning.

The simple stories that we have been told about the women's vote quickly unspooled and became unwieldy as I traveled throughout the state to talk with people about their local history, looked through archives, and discovered more about the national conversations on this subject.

Talking about this history is a balancing act of letting go of the neatly packaged narratives and of being precise because the words used to explain the story can change the impact. It has been a reminder that we are living in a continuing history, not discrete moments in time.

The story of Colorado and the 19th Amendment is often summed up in this way: women got the right to vote in 1920 and Colorado was the first state to enfranchise women using a referendum, or by popular vote, in 1893. These two statements are far too simple, and, set side by side, one begins to challenge the other. The 19th Amendment itself is even simpler and less absolute than I had been taught. It states: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” Although its adoption was the largest expansion of voting rights in our nation’s history, it does not give or guarantee the vote. Practices like poll taxes and literacy tests have been used to disenfranchise Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color throughout the nation. We also know millions of women could vote before 1920 in Colorado and other states.

Talking about what happened requires some precision to reflect an accurate story, but talking about how it happened challenges us to tell a big, complex, and incomplete story. One of the reasons this history is so expansive is because of the circumstances of these pivotal moments of change. Another is the sheer number of people it took over decades to secure the amendment.

It is often said that a “confluence of conditions” led to the women’s vote in Colorado in 1893. This was a *second* attempt at a referendum. In 1877, one year after becoming a state, Colorado put equal suffrage on the ballot. It failed in every county except Boulder. By 1893 the state had changed. The nation, and Colorado

in particular, was in an economic crisis after the Silver Panic wreaked havoc on the mining industry. During Reconstruction, labor organizations like the Grange sought to build more stability and innovation for their industries. Many allowed for women to fully participate and serve in their offices. Women’s clubs had also formed, and the confederation of these clubs allowed for strong grassroots organizing. The Populist Party rose as a formidable third-party alliance that competed with, and in some instances beat out, the Democrats and the Republicans.

In this climate of stress and destabilization, suffragists campaigned throughout the state, reaching struggling mining towns, rural farming communities, and cities on whistle-stop tours. They wrote for newspapers and convinced many in the press to support their cause—or at least not come out against them. They called on pastors and religious leaders to do the same. As national suffrage leaders like Carrie Chapman Catt toured the state, suffrage organizations formed to convince neighbors, fathers, and brothers to stand with them in solidarity. After securing their own vote, women from Colorado continued to campaign for national women’s suffrage.

Leading up to the passage of the 19th Amendment, another “confluence of conditions” was building the foundation for change. The United States declared war on Germany in 1917 and the war ended in 1918. Earlier that year, what is now known as the Spanish flu pandemic broke out. The 18th Amendment was ratified in January of 1919, launching Prohibition. The suffragists continued on with their efforts, changing and adapting their tactics as the world and their goals changed.

Unlike the suffragists of Colorado in 1893 who appealed directly to the voters, now the larger suffragist movement worked to sway the legislators to adopt a constitutional amendment. In an article published in

1918, *The Denver Post* called on readers to sign a petition urging the Senate to adopt the amendment in order to “keep America safe for Americans.” The Women’s City and County’s Defense Council members are listed among the petition supporters. The call claims that women wanted to “carry forward to the polls in the spirit and will of their men” and “outbalance the vote of enemy aliens.”

This single *Denver Post* article is one example of the complexity of this moment. It demonstrates the intersection of local and Colorado women’s history, the national suffrage campaign, and a world war. It raises questions about the role of the press, the changing voting rights of immigrants, anti-German sentiment during the war, organizations that supported women’s suffrage, and the individuals who signed the petition.

In my endeavor to commemorate this amendment’s milestone, I realized that the history of the vote does not begin and end with women’s suffrage. It is intertwined with the narratives of war, economics, identity, and health because our vote gives us political power within those contexts as well. The history of the vote is one we are all living. With each new election, a new chapter begins. The candidates, the initiatives, and access to the vote are ever changing—our long, complex, and endlessly fascinating history can help give us tools to understand the process. ■

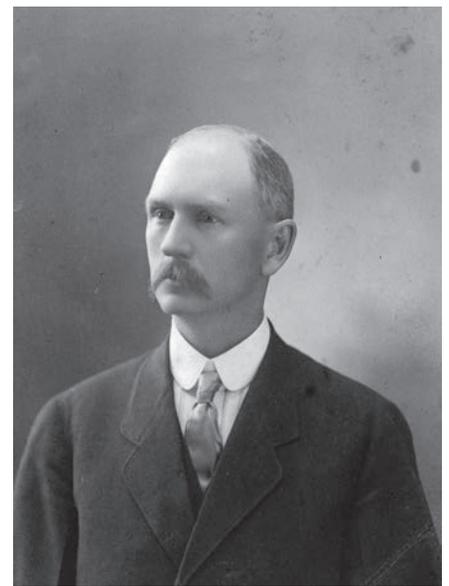
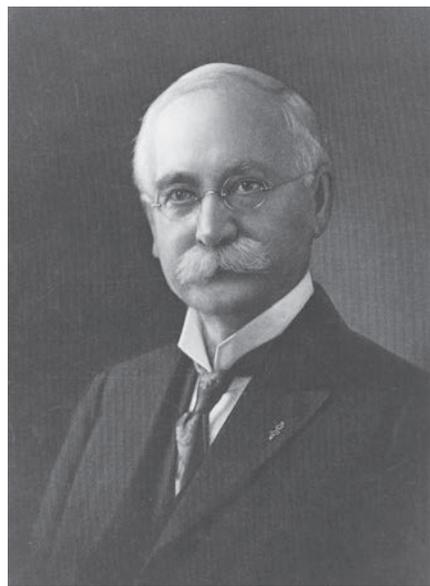
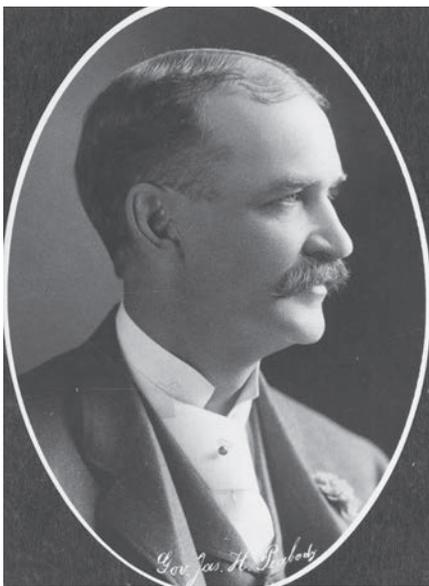
Learn more about the Women’s Vote at the Center for Colorado Women’s History. **Bold Women. Change History. The Exhibition** is on view through February 2021.

JILLIAN ALLISON *is the director of the Center for Colorado Women’s History. In addition to her work at the museum, located in a historic house in Denver, she also collaborates with the other Community Museums of History Colorado throughout the state.*

# 1904

## The Most Corrupt Election in Colorado History

BY DEVIN FLORES



PHOTOS / Governors Peabody, Adams, and MacDonal: These three men were all governor of Colorado within the same twenty-four hours. While none of their political careers would survive the 1904 election scandal, Adams' brother William Adams would serve as governor in the 1920s, while his son Alva B. Adams was a US senator in the 1920s-40s. *History Colorado*

### IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1905, THE WHOLE STATE OF COLORADO WAS IN AN UPROAR.

Miners were on strike, an election clerk had just jumped out of a moving train while fleeing the law, and nobody knew who the governor really was. And it was all

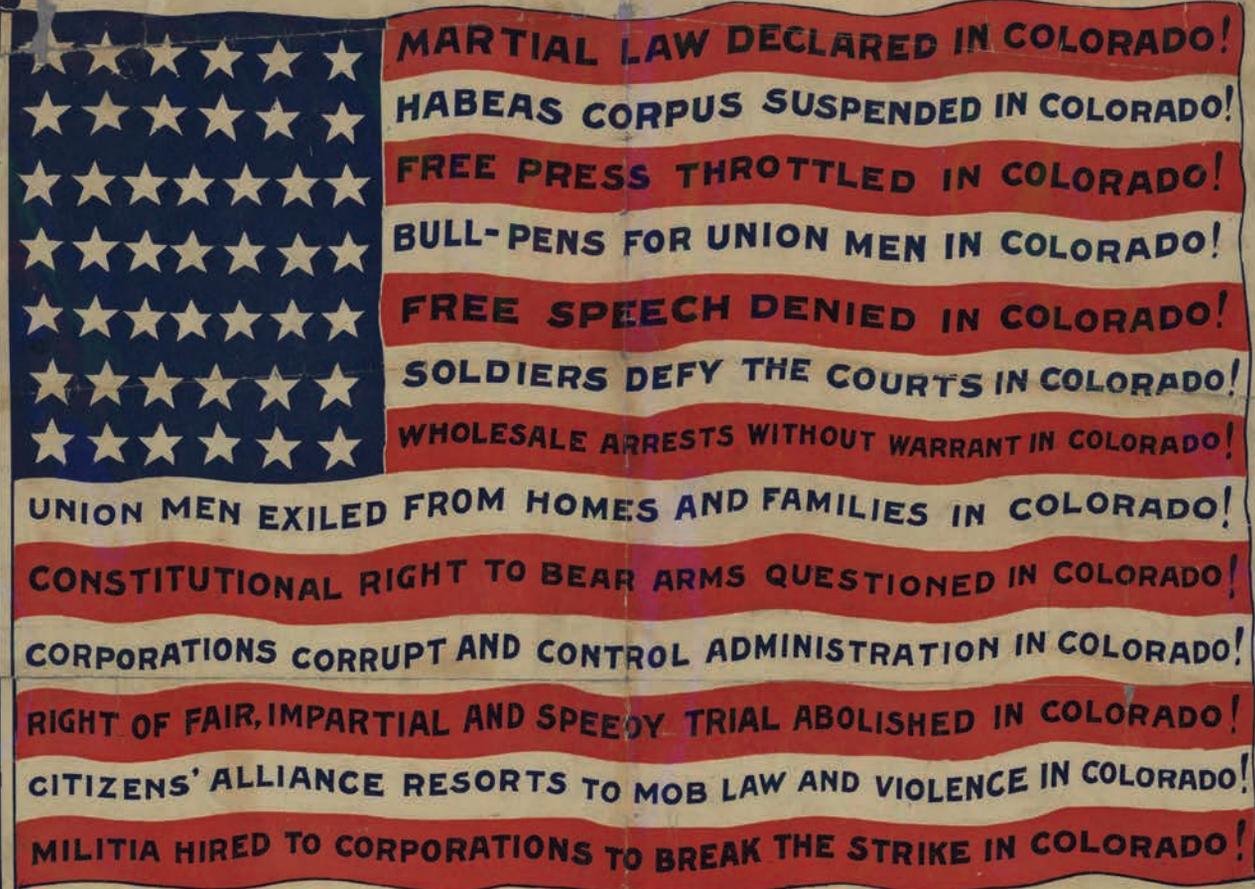
caused by one of the most corrupt elections in American history.

The election of 1904 came on the tail end of the Gilded Age, a time of rampant corruption nationwide. Political machines were hard at work in every major American city, churning out votes for their party no matter

the cost. Things had grown especially bad in Colorado, where over a decade of troubles were reaching a boiling point.

The incumbent governor was Republican James H. Peabody, and while his political career was relatively short it was also very contro-

# IS COLORADO IN AMERICA?



THESE are absolute facts and are not the only outrages that have been perpetrated in Colorado in the name of law and order. It has been charged and never successfully denied that the corporations contributed \$15,000,00 towards the election of the present Republican administration, but Governor Peabody has been unable to "DELIVER THE GOODS."

THE unions have not been nor can they be abolished, and before the strikes in Colorado are settled, we will have demonstrated the right to organize for mutual benefit. The eight-hour day as decreed by over forty thousand majority of the voters will be established.

IF you desire to assist the striking Miners, Mill and Smeltermen of the Western Federation of Miners of Colorado in this battle for industrial and political freedom, send donations to Wm. D. Haywood, Sec'y-Treas., 625 Mining Exchange, Denver, Colorado.

*Charles Moyer*

PRESIDENT

*Wm. D. Haywood*

SECY-TREAS.

POSTER / Riots, arrests, and violence marked 1904 as the Colorado Labor Wars were in full swing. The Colorado National Guard, with the backing of business owners' associations and corrupt local governments, often assaulted and arrested union members. In return, the union workers would strike, riot, and ultimately defend themselves violently. The tumultuous situation inspired this nationally distributed poster, which boldly asks: "Is Colorado In America?" Wikimedia Commons.

# The investigation swelled to a truly ludicrous level, eventually amounting to almost 200,000 pages of evidence and the testimonies of over 2,000 witnesses.

versial. During his tenure, the state was wracked with continuous strikes by miners fighting for rights and representation. Previous governors had sided with the working class in such disputes, but Peabody instead responded with brute force. He sent out the state militia to crack down on striking workers, starting the brutal Colorado Labor Wars. Peabody gave command of the militia to an officer who notoriously scoffed: “They want habeas corpus? We’ll give them post mortems!”

Peabody was beloved by big business and hated by working-class citizens. So when the election of 1904 came around, it quickly became one of the most fiery in state history.

Peabody’s opponent for governorship was Democrat Alva Adams, who had already served two terms as governor. He was more popular than Peabody, but his reputation was far from spotless. Leading up to the election, both parties threw accusations of corruption at each other freely. And when election day finally came it was a wild affair, with bristling reports of voter fraud and stuffed ballot boxes coming in from all over the state.

Once the dust had settled and the votes were counted, Adams had won the governorship by a narrow margin and the Democrats had won the state senate. But the fight was far from over.

Immediately, accusations of corruption broke out again, and the state government ground to a halt. Peabody contested the results, demanding an investigation before Adams could be sworn into office. At first the two parties struck a deal, allowing

Peabody to appoint members of the state Supreme Court if he conceded, yet he refused to cooperate even after Adams took his governor’s oath for the third time.

An investigation was called, which rapidly devolved into chaos. The probe was headed by the state legislature, but as more and more corruption was uncovered, seats were suddenly changing hands.

According to *The Denver Post*, “Never has there been such wild disorder in any legislature.”

The investigation soon found evidence of blatant and egregious corruption on behalf of both parties. In Denver, the Democrats had stuffed ballot boxes to ridiculous extremes. Democrat-controlled police had promised criminals acquittal if they committed voter fraud by voting multiple times using disguises, or simply by traveling from ballot box to ballot box. One individual was found to have personally voted 169 times—and 717 Democrat ballots were cast in a precinct with only 100 legal voters. In addition, the police were not only turning a blind eye to the obvious crimes, they were often assisting in them.

Meanwhile, in the mining towns Republican voter coercion was everywhere—and just as brazen. Mining and railroad companies were banking on Peabody’s victory, so they told their workers—who had suffered the worst of Peabody’s anti-union crackdowns—that they had to vote Republican or lose their jobs.

“If the Democrats should win, we may have to close the mine down . . .” said the owner of the Victor

Fuel Company to his assembled workers, “. . . And if the Republicans should win and find out that one of the working men voted the Democratic ticket, they would fire him.”

The mine workers were furious at being bullied like this and they were all too happy to report these threats to investigators, along with other tales of physical coercion, voter fraud, and ballot stuffing. The mining towns of southern Colorado, especially Cripple Creek, Walsenburg, and Trinidad, came under close scrutiny as a result.

The furor of investigation and scandal reached its climax when Juan Montez, the election clerk of Huerfano County, jumped out of a moving train.

He was en route from Denver to Walsenburg with orders from the court to bring back a ballot box used in the most recent election—and a Denver County sheriff’s deputy rode along to ensure there was no funny business. He had already failed to produce the ballot box once, and the legislature wanted to be sure he brought it back this time. But not long after the train left the station, the clerk jumped off and tried to flee. He was captured and was eventually charged with election fraud, but he was far from the last to attempt manipulation of the election results. The Huerfano County ballot box was eventually recovered—completely empty. It didn’t even have a poll book inside. Apparently the official box hadn’t even been used during the election and, as a result, all of the ballots cast in the precinct were considered unofficial ballots and had to be discounted.

Many other ballots were thrown out, and not all of them justly. It's hard to say where investigation turned into even more corruption, but Coloradans were quickly losing faith in their government. Thousands of voters across the state were furious when their own legal votes were dismissed, leaving them voiceless in one of the most energetic elections in state history.

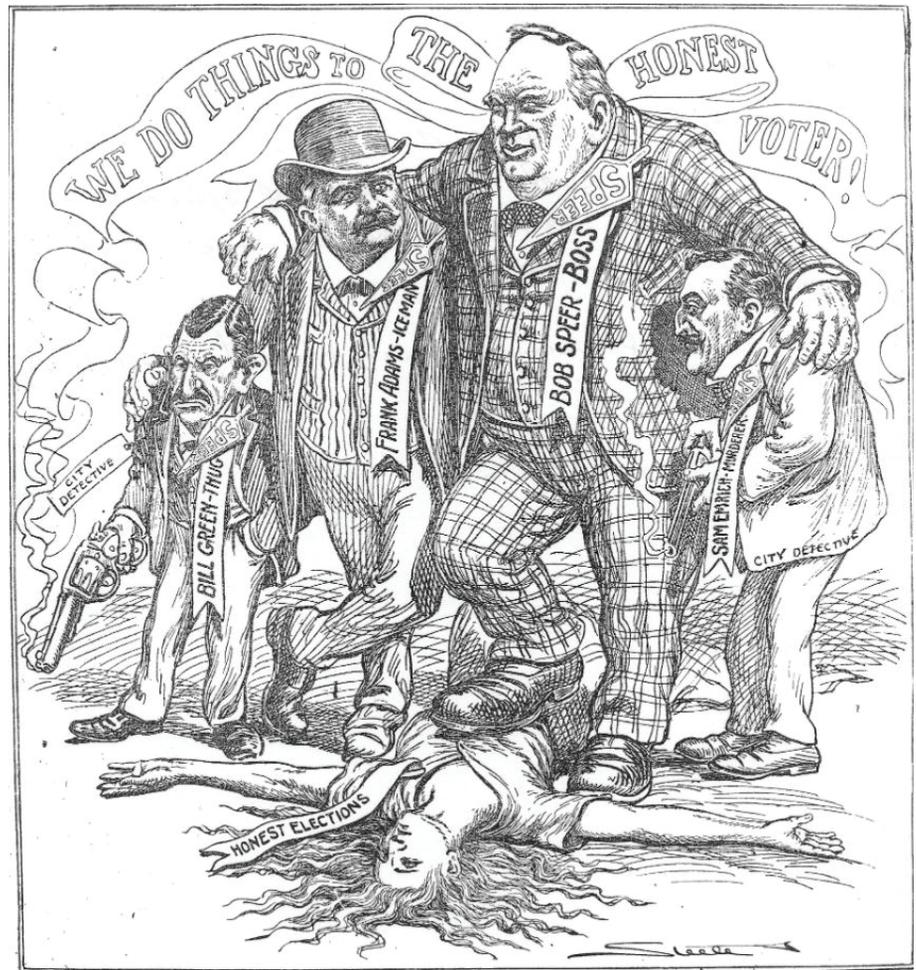
The investigation swelled to a truly ludicrous level, eventually amounting to almost 200,000 pages of evidence and the testimonies of over two thousand witnesses. The entire governance of the state had come to a halt, with Adams in office but unable to exercise any power without being called a “usurper” while legislators dedicated weeks to hurling corruption charges against one another.

In the end, the “most flagrantly corrupt incident that has ever happened in Colorado,” according to the *Rocky Mountain News*, ended not with justice but with backroom deals.

Adams, his once-robust political career now in tatters, willingly resigned late in the day on March 16, 1905. He had been in office for barely two months. Peabody was immediately sworn in as his replacement, but his victory was extremely short-lived.

He had also agreed to concede the election, so early the very next morning he, too, resigned and lieutenant governor Jesse MacDonald was sworn into office. The question of the governorship was finally resolved—a full five months after the election—and Colorado won the dubious distinction of being the only state in American history to have three different governors within a single twenty-four-hour period.

The election of 1904 was uniquely undaunted in its corruption, and it left a lasting mark on everyone involved. Many careers were ruined, from police chiefs to election clerks to both Adams and Peabody, who



**THE VOTER WILL NOT FORGET THIS PICTURE ON ELECTION DAY!**

CARTOON / This political cartoon (first printed by The Denver Post in 1904) is focused on the Denver mayoral race, not the gubernatorial one, but it depicts the general air of corruption surrounding the elections that year. Especially noteworthy is the “city detective” on the far left, wielding a smoking gun. Denver police were known to coerce voters and to aid and abet in voter fraud. Courtesy Colorado Encyclopedia.

simultaneously retired from politics in disgrace. To be blunt, the 1904 election was a failure of democracy. But it was obviously not the end of democracy in Colorado.

Voters all across the state were emboldened by this election, especially traditionally underrepresented groups who fought to secure their representation. Many of the loudest voices calling for fair elections were women voters, who had only won the right to vote in Colorado eleven years earlier. Mine workers, many of them immigrants, continued to unionize and valiantly stand up to their employers and the state government.

With thousands of voters fighting back against corruption, laws

were changed. The political machines were shut down, and united workers refused to be bullied by crooked employers. Voter fraud went from a casual crime, likened in 1905 to public drunkenness, to a serious charge. It took decades, dozens of elections, and many bitter struggles, but eventually the lessons of 1904 were learned. With hope, those lessons will continue to serve us well as we participate in future elections and our democratic process as a whole. ■

DEVIN FLORES is History Colorado’s Digital Storytelling Coordinator for Community Museums. He graduated in 2019 from CSU-Pueblo with a degree in mass communications and Spanish.

BY AMY UNGER

**IN** February 1903, a small group of freedpeople and children of freedpeople, led by Frank Loper, formed the People's Methodist Episcopal Church to serve the needs of the growing African American community in northern Colorado Springs. A stately Queen Anne-style church was completed in 1904 and for sixty-one years, the People's Methodist Episcopal Church served as a focal point for social justice work while playing a central role in the social and religious lives of its congregants.

Born into slavery at Jefferson Davis's Brierfield plantation, Loper arrived in Colorado Springs in 1886. As headwaiter at the Antlers and Alamo hotels and later doorman at the second Antlers Hotel, he became well known to tourists and local residents alike. In the 1890s, Loper and two partners formed the Antlers Publishing Company and established the *Colorado Springs Sun*, the city's second black-owned newspaper.

Over the years, the People's Methodist Episcopal Church provided meeting space for civic and social organizations seeking to improve the lives of Black Americans, including the People's Literary Society, Du Bois Study Club, Colorado Springs Unity Council, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. From 1921 to the mid-1930s, the church housed the headquarters of the Colorado Springs Division



PHOTO above / *Marcus Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey, Cheyenne Canyon, Colorado Springs, May 1922. Published in Ebony, March 1960. Wikimedia Commons.*

PHOTO right / *Frank Loper, circa 1925, when he was working as a doorman for the Antlers Hotel (with Mrs. Glen Hutchinson, the hotel's bookkeeper). Pikes Peak Library District, 001-9142.*

**FREEDOM, FAITH**



Number 508 of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

Founded by Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Jr., in his native Jamaica, the UNIA grew into one of the largest Black empowerment movements in the world. Garvey decried the rampant racism and unjust working conditions he witnessed while living in Jamaica and Latin America and established several newspapers devoted to publicizing social justice issues and promoting Black pride. Moving to London in 1912, he studied the work of leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington under the mentorship of Pan-African nationalist Duseé Mohamed Ali. Returning to Jamaica in 1914, he organized the first chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African

Communities League in Kingston.

After his ideas gained little traction in Jamaica, Garvey relocated to New York City in 1916. He traveled extensively for a year, giving speeches and witnessing firsthand the unfair and hostile treatment Black people received throughout the United States. After returning to Harlem, Garvey's Black nationalist rhetoric made him the target of federal investigations and put him at odds with Du Bois and some Black civil rights leaders. Nevertheless, Garvey's message of Black pride resonated throughout the world and his influence grew quickly. In 1917 he opened the first US chapter of the UNIA in Harlem and his newspaper, *Negro World*, became the most widely read Black weekly in the country.

Colorado's first chapter of the UNIA, Division Number 118, opened in Denver's Five Points neighborhood in 1921. Shortly after, in January 1922, Reverend G. Sterling Sawyer, the new pastor at People's Methodist Episcopal Church, organized UNIA Colorado Springs Division Number 508 with the church as its headquarters. In May, Garvey visited Colorado Springs as part of a multistate membership drive, delivering a speech to a large and supportive crowd at Colorado College.

Garvey returned in October 1924 with his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, who played a pivotal role in the UNIA, especially after Garvey's incarceration in 1923 for mail fraud. Jacques Garvey stepped forward,

continuing the UNIA's work, editing *Negro World*, and proving herself a compelling orator. After Garvey's release, the couple traveled west on a membership drive with stops in Denver and Colorado Springs.

On October 13, 1924, Jacques Garvey delivered a stirring message of Black pride at the People's Methodist Episcopal Church. Her words impressed skeptics such as Dr. I. E. Moore, a physician in Colorado Springs and medical director of the Lincoln Sanatorium for Colored People, and inspired local UNIA members.

Garvey was again incarcerated in 1925 and deported in 1927, actions that began to erode the organization's influence in the United States. In the 1930s, UNIA Colorado Springs Division Number 508 disbanded.

In 2014, the People's Methodist Episcopal Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for both its architectural significance and, most importantly, its historical association with the Black empowerment movement in Colorado Springs. ■

AMY UNGER is a State and National Register Historian in History Colorado's State Historic Preservation Office.

**PRESERVATION INCENTIVES PROGRAMS /** Properties listed in the National or State Register may be eligible for investment tax credits for approved rehabilitation and to compete for History Colorado State Historical Fund grants. The next nomination deadline is January 29, 2021, and the State Historical Fund's summer competitive grant deadline is forthcoming.

[HistoryColorado.org/preservation-archaeology](https://www.historycolorado.org/preservation-archaeology)

# & BLACK EMPOWERMENT IN COLORADO SPRINGS



With schools facing surging COVID-19 cases in their communities as winter approaches, an educational experiment during another pandemic more than a century ago suggests an intriguing possibility: **Could fresh air be part of the solution to school in the time of coronavirus?**



PHOTO / In Cañon City, the senior class put “every safeguard” in place, including wearing masks in class, as they completed their studies for graduation during the 1918 flu pandemic. History Colorado.

# COLORADO IS MY CLASSROOM

## What Earlier Pandemics Can Teach Us About School

BY JASON L. HANSON

*No more pencils, no more books,  
No more teacher's dirty looks!  
School's out for summer!*

— Traditional children's rhyme, or Alice Cooper,  
depending on when you were in school

**T**he usual children's song celebrating the end of another school year sounded different last summer, tinged with the hollow, echoey sound of a Zoom call on tiny laptop speakers. By the time school let out, students around the country had been learning remotely since spring break. School officials spent the summer sizing up strategies to continue learning in the face of COVID-19, but no consensus emerged. The new school year opened unevenly across Colorado and the nation, as school districts and families weighed the merits and necessities of opening schools to in-person learning, conducting classes virtually, or exploring new arrangements like homeschooling or privately tutored “pods.”

Now, as COVID-19 cases crest again throughout Colorado and in many parts of the nation, questions

about how to continue learning through the long winter have grown more pointed than a freshly sharpened pencil. A growing consensus suggests that this novel coronavirus is not transmitted as readily when we're outside, particularly if we keep our distance and wear masks. Which raises the question: Could school be held outside?

More than a century ago, open-air classrooms had a moment in response to another pandemic. Then it was tuberculosis, another era-defining airborne pathogen that attacked the respiratory system. And the results were encouraging. But this breath of pedagogical fresh air was largely abandoned during the second half of the twentieth century. Could bringing them back be part of the solution to school in the time of coronavirus?

## The Origins of Open-Air Schools in the United States

The idea for outdoor classes in the United States originated in 1907 with two doctors in Providence, Rhode Island, as a strategy for teaching children with tuberculosis. Classes were convened in an unused school building remodeled to have floor-to-ceiling windows that allowed air and light to wash over the classroom. The windows remained open straight through the cold winter months (and it was an unusually cold winter in Providence) with students wrapped in “Eskimo bags” and warmed by heated soapstones at their feet.

By the time summer arrived, the concept had proved successful by every measure—children recovered their health, did well academically, and generally thrived—and the model was adopted in cities throughout the country.

Within a decade, more ninety-three American cities had open-air public schools for sick children, and nearly another sixty had adopted the model for unafflicted students (more than half of these were in California, where the weather made the concept especially popular and viable). Often situated on the edges of the city, in parks, or in remodelled buildings like the Providence school, campuses were established in major urban areas such as New York City and Chicago as well as smaller communities like Hazelton, Pennsylvania, and Eveleth, Minnesota.

As one might expect in a place known as a haven for “lungers” (as those suffering from tuberculosis were often called), Colorado cities were among those giving students a breath of fresh air. In 1911, officials in Denver Public Schools created two open-air classrooms at existing city schools to serve afflicted children, patterning them after the examples in New York, Chicago, and Providence. By 1916, another open-air school had opened in Boulder.

## Keeping Schools Open During the 1918 Flu Pandemic

When the (misnamed) Spanish flu struck American cities in the fall of 1918, many public health officials suggested that the disease was less likely to be transmitted outside. (Tragically, they rarely paired that observation with suggestions to remain well-spaced or wear masks even when outdoors, which in many cities led to a second wave of the pandemic propelled by crowded parades celebrating the end of World War I.) However, despite the existing models provided by open-air schools, instead of heading outside, districts throughout Colorado and in most urban centers around the nation closed in the fall of 1918 and spring of 1919 during the most intense waves of the influenza pandemic.

While most cities closed their schoolhouse doors in the face of the flu, a few notable exceptions persisted. Schools in New York City, Chicago, and New Haven bucked the nationwide trend, remaining open as officials argued that students were “better off in school.” While some classes in these cities were held outside, they were part of the already-established open-air schools, and the vast majority classes continued as normal indoors.

The strategy in each city hinged on the assumption of Progressive-era reformers that, as a result of significant investments in public health infrastructure in the decade leading up to the pandemic, even indoor schools were more sanitary spaces—and therefore safer—than home for many students. In New York City, for instance, 75 percent of the district’s nearly one million children lived in tenements whose crowded and unsanitary conditions were notorious for spreading infectious diseases. Schools were kept exceedingly clean, school officials and medical personnel

regularly monitored students’ health, and public health officials deployed additional resources where circumstances warranted.

In all three cities, these measures proved largely successful. None saw uncontrollable influenza outbreaks in schools. Nonetheless, many parents kept their children home, and absentee rates were high—between a third and half of students in Chicago and New Haven stayed home during the pandemic.

## Colorado Schools During the 1918 Flu Pandemic

School officials in Colorado did not scale up existing models for open-air schools to keep children healthy and in school during the 1918 pandemic. Schools around the state—in locations as varied as Ouray, Rifle, Cañon City, Montrose, Greeley, and Denver—closed for extended periods during the intense first and second waves of the pandemic from October 1918 to March 1919.

During the closures, some communities provided alternative activities for otherwise footloose students. In Denver, the city worked with the Red Cross, the YMCA, and other organizations to provide outdoor activities and “military fun” to keep idle students engaged. But these activities were not formal education, and many districts—then as now—were keenly aware of the potential impact on learning. Around the state, schools reopened each time the flu seemed to abate, hoping to make up for lost instructional time.

In Cañon City, schools were closed through the fall of 1918, but in mid-December the senior class was allowed to come back to the high school to complete their studies for graduation. Local reports specify that the school put “every safeguard” in place, including requiring masks, spac-

## **Many parents seemed more concerned with their children's health than instructional time. The superintendent of Montrose schools estimated that absenteeism ran as high as 70 percent when schools reopened in December 1918.**

ing out desks in classrooms, and eliminating opportunities to congregate between classes. In Denver, *The Denver Post* reported on the reopening of city schools on January 2, 1919, lamenting that school had been in session for only five weeks (spread over two separate periods) during the fall semester. Both communities announced they would hold classes later into the spring to make up for lost time.

Many parents, however, seemed more concerned with their children's health than instructional time. The superintendent of Montrose schools estimated that absenteeism ran as high as 70 percent when schools reopened in December 1918. *The Denver Post* also reported that attendance was notably below normal when schools there reopened in January 1919, as

parents continued to keep their children home.

At the college level, a few schools did experiment with holding courses outdoors during the early days of the pandemic. Newspaper reports in Gunnison note that the Colorado State Normal School (today's Western Colorado University) held classes outdoors in early October. But these outdoor classes were not widely reported on, and appear not to have continued for long as winter arrived and the pandemic deepened. The state's largest universities—the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado State University in Fort Collins, and the University of Denver—all closed their campuses. At CU and CSU, soldiers who had been stationed on campus became sick, prompting campus and Army officials to establish hospitals on the otherwise-shuttered campuses.

In the end, the students who missed significant instructional time during the 1918-19 school year and lived under the twin stresses of war and pandemic proved to be, as a group, resilient. In Colorado and around the nation, they grew up to be the leaders of the so-called “Greatest Generation” who led the United States through the Great Depression, powered the Allies to victory in World War II, and inaugurated an era of astounding economic growth and social reform in the middle of the twentieth century.

### **What Earlier Pandemics Teach Us About School**

Despite the existing model of successful open-air education in the first decades of the twentieth century, Colorado classes—indeed, most classes around the nation—did not move outside in significant numbers during the 1918 pandemic. The flu descended on communities ferociously fast, and it's doubtful whether the state's school districts could have scaled up

the existing open-air school models quickly enough, or secured the resources necessary to keep all students warm through the Colorado winter, to effectively move classes outdoors. In most places throughout Colorado, schools safeguarded their students and communities by closing during the most intense waves of the flu.

The abrupt arrival of COVID-19 last spring recalled the sudden assault of the flu in 1918, leaving schools little option again but to send students home, albeit in most cases with some effort at virtually continuing the lessons. But as the virus's initial blitz has settled into a siege, the approaching school year has given us more time to prepare and consider our options. Some are opting for (or have little choice but) in-person learning with strict safety protocols in place, similar to the successful efforts in New York City, Chicago, and Providence during the Spanish flu. In many other communities, instead of closing schools outright, teachers are being asked to develop robust remote learning strategies as an alternative to in-person classes.

Yet history shows that the options go beyond this binary. As students, parents, and school officials explore additional alternatives, open-air classrooms offer a compelling possibility. Already, in an echo of the past, public health officials are recommending that schools “increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible” to keep students healthy. The innovative open-air approach to school that proved so successful in combating another airborne disease more than a century ago seems poised to have another moment. Instead of a treatment for sick students, can open-air classrooms be deployed to keep them healthy? ■

JASON L. HANSON is the Chief Creative Officer and Director of Interpretation and Research at History Colorado.

# “Is AMERICA

## The Space Between David Ocelotl Garcia's and Norman Rockwell's *Freedom of Worship*

BY NANCY RÍOS

*The author borrowed her title, “Is America Possible?” from an interview with Vincent Harding in the On Being with Krista Tippett podcast and his essay of the same name. Harding was active in the Civil Rights Movement and chaired the Veterans of Hope Project at Denver’s Iliff School of Theology. He reminds us that the movement was also a deeply spiritual one and that hope can be found in our youth, who are the future.*

**A** mountainous and pyramid-like terrain is set in the distance of David Ocelotl Garcia’s creative interpretation of Norman Rockwell’s *Freedom of Worship*. Rockwell’s original monochromatic grey-hued painting from 1943 features human forms tightly assembled in profile with hands in prayer facing towards the left of the canvas.<sup>1</sup> Religious objects—a rosary, a wedding ring, and a book of worship—can also be discerned. In Garcia’s interpretation, commissioned by History Colorado for its installation of the Smithsonian exhibition *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith*, the land appears to give rise to six human forms placed in the foreground, each holding and offering their unique blossoming hearts to what is just out of view to the right of the canvas. Garcia’s *Freedom of Worship* is a personal meditation on spirituality told through color, form, and elements of Chicana/o muralism. The historical space between the two

highlights erasure and affirmation within American society and provides space to reflect on the future.

Garcia’s murals, paintings, and sculptures can be found throughout Denver and beyond. Born and raised among Denver’s multiracial communities, Garcia and I discussed his artistic process and his commissioned painting over two conversations. Our first took place one Saturday morning in September at Denver’s History Colorado Center, where Garcia, Lucha Martínez de Luna (History Colorado’s Associate Curator of Latino Heritage and founding director of the Chicano/a Murals of Colorado Project), and I explored the *American Democracy* exhibit.

Our walkthrough elicited numerous comments, but it was Garcia’s comment regarding Rockwell’s use of color in *Freedom of Worship* that frames the conversation before you. Garcia explained that color is one of the techniques he favors in his artistic expressions because of its emotive qualities. Colors’ ability to inspire emotions in the viewer, he explained, reveals that color is imbued with energy, and energy is at the core of Garcia’s worldview and of his *abstract imaginism*—his use of technique, color, and composition to manifest what moves as energy in the material world and in the imagination. Consequently, Garcia shared how he had been struck by the absence of color in Rockwell’s painting, which was especially pronounced when placed among the other *Freedom*s in

the series.

We returned to this topic in our second conversation, when we discussed how Rockwell’s elimination of color gestured towards a diversity of faiths as fundamental to American democracy. We further discussed how perhaps this also gestured towards a vision of a colorblind, separate-but-equal society, which, in Rockwell’s time, was still racially segregated by law and would continue to be so until after World War II.

Rockwell’s *Freedom of Worship* features seven heads crowded together in repose with three figures dominating the space. The remaining four figures on the canvas include an African American woman who can barely be discerned in the top left corner. As Bridget R. Cooks, art historian and scholar of African American studies, writes, “Rockwell’s awkward tilt of her head positions her profile so close to the picture’s edge that she seems to have just made it onto the page. She is tightly compressed into the shallow representational space with a group of figures Rockwell painted to show a diversity of faiths.” Further obscuring her presence are the words “Each According To The Dictates of His Own Conscience” at the top of the canvas. Cooks helps us understand how Rockwell’s oeuvre ultimately portrays “white national unity” given his engagement of African American figures throughout the span of his career. While Rockwell used models to capture his iconic realism, this realism belies reality as his narrative

# Possible?"



IMAGE / Freedom of Worship, by Norman Rockwell

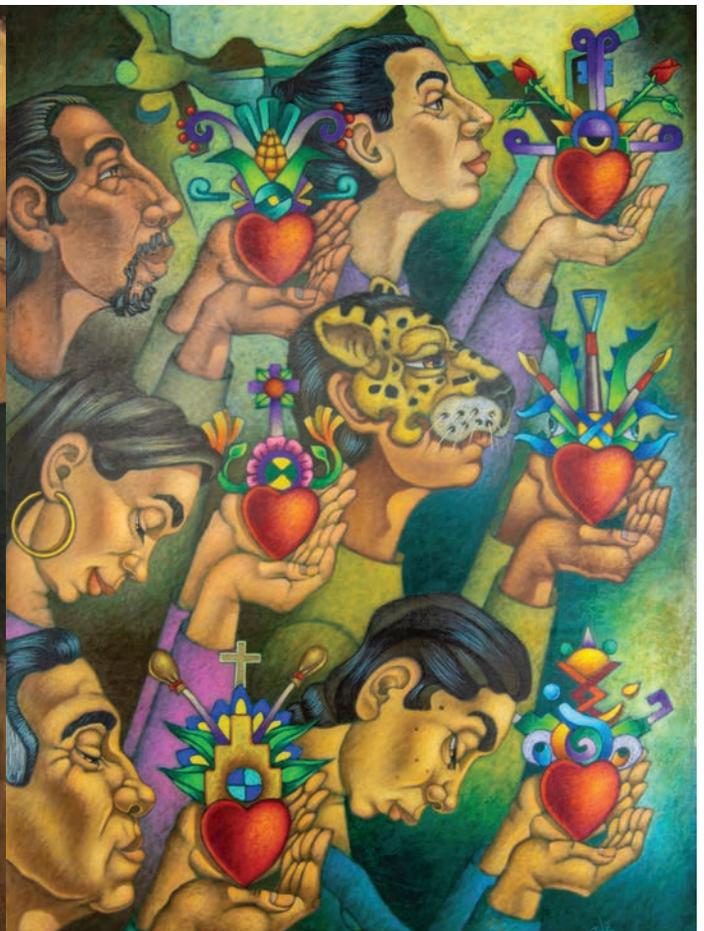


IMAGE / Freedom of Worship, by David Ocelotl Garcia

of America equates equality with diversity, significant given the logic of elimination as a framing principle of settler colonialism.

Although Garcia emphatically explained that he does not make overt political statements in his art, he inevitably partakes in a politicized landscape since he affirms lifeways that have continuously been denied and erased in American society. (Of note is that Garcia's first exterior mural, *Huitzilopochtli* of 2009, was whitewashed and erased earlier this year in violation of the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990.) The viewer of Garcia's *Freedom of Worship* may be drawn to a central figure wearing a

mask of a jaguar, or ocelotl in Nahuatl. This figure, Garcia explained, represents himself and affirms his spirituality and beliefs in Indigenous lifeways. His worldview, he said, is grounded in Indigenous lifeways, aesthetics, and symbolism, specifically Mexica, which he first began exploring at home through his father's copy of the Codex Nuttall and later through his participation in Denver's Chicana/o communities. Indigeneity among Mexican-descent populations and communities is complex, but the holding of space for Indigenous lifeways, including Mexica-embodied practices of dance, storytelling, symbolism, and the Nahuatl language,

is a response to colonization and assimilationist efforts that seek to erase and eliminate these knowledges and practices.

When Rockwell painted *Freedom of Worship*, US tribal Indigenous nations were not legally permitted the freedom of worship, and racially segregated US combat units fought and lost lives in defense of freedom and democracy and against growing fascism on European soil. This hypocrisy was a catalyst for social and racial justice movements of the mid-twentieth century, which led to judicial, political, educational, and cultural changes in pursuit of racial, economic, and gender equality. Garcia's

**When Rockwell painted *Freedom of Worship*, US tribal Indigenous nations were not legally permitted the freedom of worship, and racially segregated US combat units fought and lost lives in defense of freedom and democracy and against growing fascism on European soil.**

inclusion in a cultural institution's exhibition on American democracy is demonstrative of this effort but still politicized given museums' and cultural institutions' enduring legacy as institutions that have historically excluded racialized others as visionaries of, and as belonging to, the nation.

In the decade leading up to the signing of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, members of Denver's Chicana/o community used public spaces to express their presence and grievances against an oppressive government that did not protect and invest in their communities and instead continually favored their displacement and criminalization while ignoring their histories and contributions to the history of Colorado. One telling example took place in 1936, when Colorado Governor Edwin C. Johnson created an international stir because of his anti-Mexican position (against both New Mexicans, who were American citizens, and Mexican nationals), which he constructed as a defense of American, i.e. white, laborers.<sup>2</sup> But absent from his position was the articulation that a migration pattern between New Mexico and Colorado had been created after US annexation had dispossessed former Mexican nationals and then American citizens of those lands through a litigation system foreign to them.

World War II would see an increase in Mexican migration to Colorado and other parts of the United States as the Bracero Program, a series of laws and agreements between Mexico and the United States established in 1942, recruited Mexican laborers to work US agricultural fields, creating new networks and communities of Mexican-descent peoples in the United States.

These histories are seldom affirmed in official historical narratives, but art, inside and outside of gallery walls, does so in spite of and because of constant threats of

erasure.<sup>3</sup> Garcia's *Freedom of Worship* affirms the self and the people in his community, whose knowledge and passions are shared and kept alive through memory and practice, while also honoring the Mexican-descent peoples' relation to land as herencia, or heritage—much like Chicana/o muralists in Colorado have historically done on exterior and interior walls in public spaces.<sup>4</sup>

Garcia explained that for this project he began with a meditation on worship and the role of spirituality in his life, which led him to recognize his art as a spiritual practice reliant on faith and passion. He also shared that he had not been surprised that chance had granted him *Freedom of Worship* to reinterpret, given that it features profile imagery, one of Garcia's favorite creative manifestations. He elaborated: "I love profile imagery of people because when you look forward, you only see a certain part of the lines of your face. A three-quarter view is a little better because you can see more of the nose structure and face structure. But from the profile, it's just this amazing organic line that travels around a person's face and even their body."<sup>5</sup>

Lines, for Garcia, capture movement and the essence of energy, while angles capture depth—aspects of his work that he describes as abstract imaginism.

Garcia's artistic process relies on the self, intuition, and instinct, which he recognizes as energy and hence as an abstraction in part because of the difficulty in defining it and imaginism because it requires disconnecting from the physical world and materializing what lies in the mind. His exploration of lines and their movement results in a distortion and the creation of figures that resemble caricatures but retain a realism—for they invoke a feeling, a curiosity, an energy within the viewer. Garcia's abstract imaginism affirms the existence of energy that lies within each one of us and

within our communities, while the historical space between the two works of art suggests that manifesting and achieving a more perfect union, which has been structured by racializations and the logic of elimination, is a persistent work in progress. ■

NANCY RÍOS is a Hulbert Mellon Faculty Scholar at Colorado College, where she teaches in the Hulbert Center for Southwest Studies and conducts ethnographic research on the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College's acquisition of the mural *Arte Mestiza* (1986) by Emanuel Martinez. She also serves as Education Director for the *Chicano/a Murals of Colorado Project*. She received her PhD in anthropology and a doctoral portfolio in Mexican American studies from the University of Texas at Austin.

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#### NOTES

1 Rockwell illustrated President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1941 vision of a postwar society based on the democratic ideals of the freedoms of worship and speech and the freedoms from fear and want. Rockwell's *Four Freedoms* first appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* and were then circulated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to sell war bonds and stamps as a war effort.

2 History Colorado's *Lost Highways: Dispatches from the Shadows of the Rocky Mountains* podcast shares some of this history in the episode "A Line in the Sand."

3 Between 1968 and 1978, sixteen Chicana/o/x murals, five interior and eleven exterior murals, made claims to public space, but only three remain visible.

4 Garcia specifically honors Kasi Garcia (his wife), Melissa Ortiz, Eduardo Sandoval, Siri Martinez, and Adrianna Abarca.

5 This quote has been edited slightly for clarity.



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**LOST HIGHWAYS**

# Doing Our Part

## 11 Ways World War II Came to Colorado

BY FLINT  
WHITLOCK

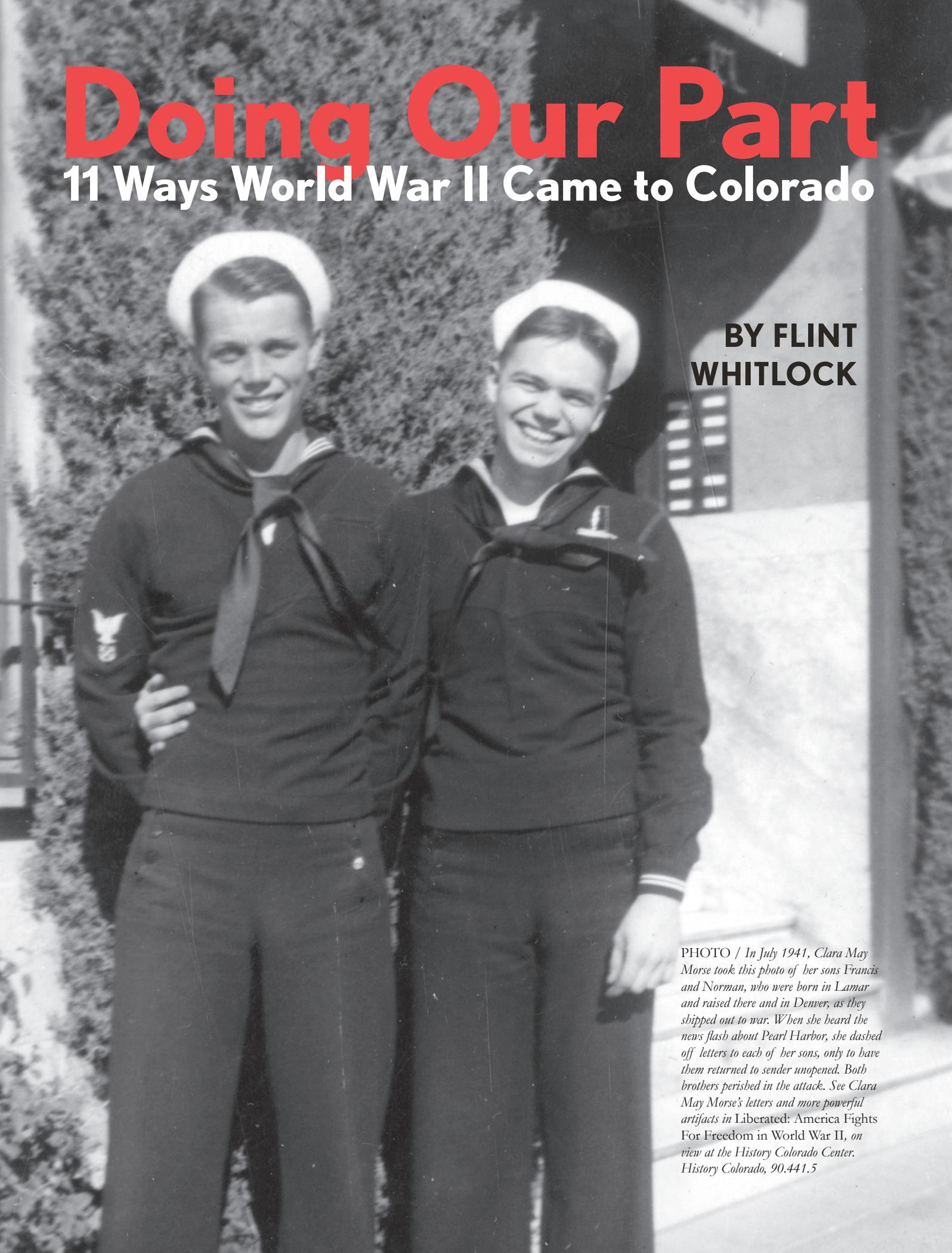


PHOTO / In July 1941, Clara May Morse took this photo of her sons Francis and Norman, who were born in Lamar and raised there and in Demer, as they shipped out to war. When she heard the news flash about Pearl Harbor, she dashed off letters to each of her sons, only to have them returned to sender unopened. Both brothers perished in the attack. See Clara May Morse's letters and more powerful artifacts in *Liberated: America Fights For Freedom in World War II*, on view at the History Colorado Center. History Colorado, 90.441.5

**T**HREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY HAVE PASSED since the most widespread and destructive war in history ended—a war that many historians have called the pivotal event of the twentieth century. That the conflict ended in victory for the Allied nations—the United States, France, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and its commonwealth partners, and others—has much to do with Colorado’s role in it.

While the state had no shipyards or tank or aviation production facilities, that didn’t mean Colorado’s contributions were insignificant. Far from it. Let’s take a look back and see what our state contributed to the war effort—and vice versa.

## 1. We embraced the end of isolationism

Ever since Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 and then when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, many in the United States had been viewing the growing conflict with alarm but also a reluctance to see the country get dragged into another foreign war. It was one thing to sell the tools of war (through the Lend-Lease Act of 1941) to Britain and the Soviet Union so that they could fend off the attacker, but sending American boys to fight was quite another.

That isolationist sentiment vanished in an instant on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The bombs that fell on Pearl Harbor sent shock waves across the country. Millions of young men (and many women, too), angered by the surprise attack, flocked to military recruiting offices, eager to serve their country. Colorado saw an outpouring of patriotic sentiment that has never been equaled; in December 1941 alone, more than 2,000 citizens swamped recruiters’ offices.

## 2. We built the arsenal of democracy

On January 4, 1941, eleven months before the Pearl Harbor attack, the federal government, perhaps anticipating that war was inevitable, awarded a \$122 million contract for the development of land, buildings, and equipment for the Denver



PHOTO / *Women make clothing, Arapahoe Manufacturing Company, Englewood. History Colorado, 94.308.2*

Ordnance Plant—a “bullet factory” that the Remington Arms Company would operate. It would be built on the 7,000-acre Hayden Ranch in what would be known as Lakewood.

The contract was a godsend for Denver, which, like virtually everywhere across the Depression-ravaged country, was suffering from high unemployment rates. The Denver Ordnance Plant project created thousands of construction and factory jobs over the next five years.

On October 25, 1941, the bullet factory was dedicated at a ceremony, five and a half months ahead of schedule. Some 200 buildings were grouped according to function to

lessen the explosion risks involved in ammunition production. Nearly 20,000 people—half of them women—worked in three shifts around the clock.

The primary product was the .30-caliber bullet—used in standard-issue American weapons like the M-1 Garand rifle, Browning automatic rifle, and M-30 Browning machine gun. Eventually the plant was turning out an astonishing 6.2 million rounds of ammunition per day—more than any other factory in the United States, and perhaps anywhere in the world. Workers later made fuses for 8-inch, 90mm, and 155mm artillery rounds. The plant was declared surplus in



PHOTO / *A worker stokes a furnace for the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company in Pueblo, around 1940. History Colorado, PH.PROP.215*

October 1945. Today, the complex of buildings, known as the Federal Center, sits at its original location at West Sixth Avenue and Kipling Street.

As young men were drafted or volunteered for military service, other massive changes began to sweep the state. Government contracts revived moribund businesses that had struggled to stay open during the Great Depression. The Schaeffer Tent and Awning Company, a small Denver manufacturer, received an order from the Army Quartermaster Corps for thousands of eight-man pyramidal canvas tents. Soon the plant was scrambling to find and train enough workers to turn out nearly 100 tents a day at its facility at 1421–1423 Larimer Street.

The army needed vehicles, and Denver manufacturers answered the call. The Winter Weiss Company, at 620 Broadway in Denver, was a manufacturer of automotive items, including commercial auto and motorcycle bodies. It received an Army order to build thousands

of platform stake trailers capable of carrying 7,000 pounds. Gates Rubber Company, farther south on Broadway, switched from making tires and fan belts for everyday use (virtually no new tires were available to the civilian market for the duration of the war) to making tires and fan belts for jeeps and other military vehicles. And the Coleman Motor Company of Littleton produced the Model G-55A 4x4 chassis with a 6-cylinder engine as the platform for a Model E crane made by Quick-Way Truck Shovel Company of Denver. Engineering units used the combined 4x4 truck-crane vehicle for bridging, construction, and other purposes.

Eight other Denver fabricating firms were shaping and welding hull parts to fulfill a \$56 million contract for the US Navy. They shipped the parts to Mare Island Navy Yard near San Francisco for assembly.

In addition to bullets and shells, tents and tires, the military needed weapons of great destructive power. In 1942, the US Army acquired

nearly 20,000 acres of land northeast of Denver and began construction of the \$50 million (in 1942 dollars) Rocky Mountain Arsenal. This facility manufactured deadly chemical weapons such as mustard gas, Lewisite, chlorine gas, and incendiary (napalm) munitions because it was believed that the enemy was making the same. The controversial facility was deactivated in 1992 and, after extensive cleanup, turned into a wildlife refuge.

Pueblo also made a great contribution to the war effort. Colorado Fuel & Iron steelworks, then the state's largest private employer, produced barbed wire, railroad rails, pig iron, iron and steel bars, and plates for use by heavy industry, as well as coal, limestone, and iron ore from its many mines across the state.

The Pueblo Ordnance Depot, 15 miles from the city, was built in 1942 to serve as an ammunition and material storage and shipping center; it employed thousands of defense workers during the war. Today, as the Pueblo Chemical Depot, its main

function is to destroy hundreds of thousands of obsolete chemical weapons. A warehouse here was also once the repository for Third Reich propaganda war art before the collection, numbering about 300 pieces, was relocated in the 1980s to the US Army Center for Military History in Washington, D.C.

The sudden availability of jobs brought in a tidal wave of new residents to Colorado. According to Colorado historian Tom Noel, in the decade between 1940 and 1950, Denver's population grew almost 29 percent—from 322,412 to 415,786. The suburbs, too, exploded; Adams County's population increased nearly 79 percent; Arapahoe County, 62 percent; Boulder County, 29 percent; and Jefferson County, 83 percent.

### 3. We powered the war effort

High in the mountains, the discovery of molybdenum, an element used to strengthen steel, brought the down-and-out silver- and gold-mining town of Leadville back from the brink of

extinction. Steel was in great wartime demand and the ore from Leadville's Climax Molybdenum mine became a highly prized commodity. In the 1940s, the mine's annual production was more than \$13 million. The mining boom, plus the presence of 15,000 young soldiers training for high-alpine warfare at Camp Hale just 10 miles away, brought an economic resurgence to the old town.

Zinc, too, was an important metal. The Empire Zinc Company had established a mine at Gilman, south of Minturn, in the early 1900s. During the war, the mine was in full production. Empire Zinc built a company town on a spectacular ridge, which still stands along Highway 24, weathered and abandoned.

While mining companies continued to extract gold, silver, lead, and zinc from Colorado's mountains, coal was an essential mineral, too—necessary for electrical power generation, factory furnaces, locomotives, and home heating. The Colorado coal-mining industry was primarily located in Las Animas and Huerfano

Counties in an area known as the Southern Coal Fields. The major employer was Colorado Fuel & Iron.

In 1943, the scientists involved in the top-secret Manhattan Project contracted the Coors Porcelain Company of Golden because the company had the experience, expertise, and capacity to make large quantities of desperately needed ceramic insulators capable of handling the tremendous electrical loads produced by the calutrons used in the separation of uranium 235 and 238—materials needed to make atomic bombs.

That uranium: It came from Uravan, a mining town near Grand Junction.

The state's agriculture sector also boomed with the heightened demands of wartime. In 1942, the federal government asked Colorado farmers to increase the production of their spring pig crop by 30 percent, eggs by 10 percent, and milk by 4 percent. The government asked cattlemen to increase the slaughter of cattle and calves by 18 percent and of sheep and lamb by 9 percent. And the



PHOTO / A woman plows her family's field on the Colorado plains during wartime. History Colorado, PH.PROP.2583

feds requested a 13-percent increase in potato acreage along with a 6-percent increase in oats and 2 percent in barley and corn.

As a result, during the war Colorado had its highest agricultural output ever—much of which went to the armed forces, leaving little for civilians.

#### 4. We sacrificed for the common good

Though the state's economic engines were on overdrive, Coloradans were not enjoying the benefits. Coloradans, like everyone else across America, were hit hard by rationing. The much-despised Office of Price Administration (OPA) imposed strict rationing on the American people for most of the war's duration. As *Time-Life* noted, "The major sacrifice that was required of most people on the home front was involuntary—the unprecedented rationing of some 20 essential items by the federal government. . . . Canned foods, for example, were rationed because tin went into armaments and cans for soldiers' C-rations, coffee because the ships that would ordinarily carry the coffee beans from South America had been diverted for military purposes, shoes

because the Army alone needed some 15 million pairs of combat boots." Rationing of items "from gasoline to tomato ketchup" kept supply chains active and inflation down.

Certain fabrics—such as silk and nylon—were in short supply because they were needed for parachutes and ropes. Skirts and dresses became shorter because cotton and wool were needed for military uniforms. Shoes were almost unattainable.

The Office of Price Administration issued every family a ration book and ration stamps that were required to buy items at the local grocery store. The OPA's complex, ever-changing "point system" allotted a certain number of points to each food item—meats, butter, sugar, and processed foods—based on its availability.

It took 48 "blue points" a month to buy canned, bottled, or dried foods, and 64 "red points" to buy meat, fish, sugar, coffee, and dairy products each month—if the items were even available. Butter was so scarce that margarine, made from vegetable oils, became a substitute for the dairy product.

Because food shortages were real, many Colorado families turned back-

yards into "victory gardens" and built coops so they could raise chickens for fresh eggs and meat.

Strict quotas on gasoline purchases went into effect nationwide, beginning in the spring of 1942. Depending on one's occupation, drivers with an "A" ration windshield sticker were limited to four gallons a week while those with "B" (issued primarily to business owners) and "C" (issued primarily to seventeen professions—physicians, nurses, dentists, clergy, farm workers, and construction or maintenance workers) stickers qualified for five gallons a week.

It goes without saying that black-market activities proliferated, both for gasoline and food.

In 1940, Colorado's tourism industry was the state's largest and most profitable enterprise, grossing about \$100 million annually. But the onset of the war, with its gasoline rationing and other priorities, saw tourist travel in the West plummet by as much as a third. Further burdening tourism, the government imposed a nationwide speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Besides saving fuel required for military purposes, drivers had to cut down on their driving to save tires. Civilian tires were virtually unavailable during the war because rubber, needed for military vehicles, was in short supply.

No new cars were available for the duration, either; the major car manufacturers—Ford, General Motors, Dodge, Chrysler, Plymouth, Packard, Studebaker, Nash, Hudson, DeSoto, and Graham-Paige—completely ceased making cars for the civilian market and devoted their assembly lines to turning out military vehicles and aircraft.

Because of the scarcity of tires and fuel, many drivers simply put their cars up on blocks and waited for the hoped-for peace and return to normalcy.

To further give civilians the sense that "we're all in this together," the government encouraged nationwide



PHOTO / A woman feeds livestock around 1944 in a photo from the collection of Edmund Aladar Schramko, who served as a medical officer at Camp Hale for the 10th Mountain Division. History Colorado, 2019.123.11

scrap drives. In Colorado's big cities and small towns, wherever there was a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop, a 4-H Club, or a church youth group, young people could be seen pulling their Radio Flyer wagons from door to door, asking residents for their scrap. People gave up tin cans, iron, steel, and scrap aluminum, old tires, automobile bumpers, newspapers—anything that could be recycled and turned into military products. They even turned in kitchen fats so the glycerol/glycerine could be converted into explosives.

“Sacrificing” because of a lack of consumer goods paled in comparison to the personal sacrifices many families made. Virtually every household with a family member in the military displayed a “service flag” in a front window of their home or apartment. This was a small white flag with a red border and one or more blue stars in the center, each star representing one family member in military service. If a member was killed, the family could exchange the flag for one with a gold star, indicating the loss.

Colorado newspapers often carried stories about “local boys in uniform”—which, of course, included “girls” in uniform, too—and lists of casualties. Over 3,400 Coloradans died in the war that claimed over 405,000 American lives, and thousands more were wounded. Many, too, were listed as “missing in action”—a status that did nothing to ease the heartbreak.

## 5. We provided spaces for bases

Facilities to train the millions of enlistees or draftees who had never fired a rifle or flown a plane were in great demand across the country, and Colorado saw its share of a nationwide military building boom.

In Pueblo, the Army established an advanced school to train Boeing B-17 “Flying Fortress” and Consolidated B-24 “Liberator” four-engine



PHOTO / Stationed in Guam, the crew of a B-29 bomber display their plane's Denver decal. *History Colorado, 2019.96.1*

bomber crews. Eight different bombardment groups also trained there before being deployed overseas. Today the facility is the Pueblo Municipal Airport, which is also home to the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum.

Colorado Springs also benefited from the building boom with several projects. South of the city, Camp Carson (named for the Army officer and fur trapper Christopher “Kit” Carson), sprawled across 60,000 mostly barren acres. On land bought by the city, civilian contractors completed the camp's first building, the headquarters, on January 31, 1942—less than two months after the United States declared war on Japan and Germany. An army of 11,500 civilian workers quickly put up hundreds of other wooden buildings, and soon more than 35,000 new recruits and their cadre populated the post; more than 100,000 trained there during the war. Renamed Fort Carson in 1954, today it's Colorado's largest military establishment at 137,403 acres, or 214 square miles.

Nearby, the Army established the Colorado Springs Army Air Base in 1942; within a year its name had changed to Peterson Air Force

Base—a name it retains to this day. Its name honors Lieutenant Edward Joseph Peterson, who died in a crash of his P-38 “Lightning” photo reconnaissance plane at the base in 1942.

A smaller air base, named Ent Air Force Base after its first commander, Major General Uzal Girard Ent, was established in 1943 at the site of a closed sanatorium in the Knob Hill neighborhood of Colorado Springs. Ent housed the first NORAD command headquarters. Today the US Olympic Training Center occupies the site.

Straddling the line between Aurora and Denver was the Lowry Army Air Force Base. In 1935, a group of prescient state and local officials contacted the War Department in order to secure a military airfield and training base for Colorado. The group offered to donate the Agnes C. Phipps Tuberculosis Sanatorium and adjoining property for the site; the War Department accepted the offer and began building the base, which was named for Denverite Lieutenant Francis B. Lowry, a pilot who was killed during World War I.

The base's main focus was technical training, including aerial photog-

raphy. It remained active until 1994, when it closed and transformed into a large, master-planned residential and commercial community. A few original buildings remain, including the officers' quarters, headquarters building, and Chapel No. 1, called the "Eisenhower Chapel," and two immense hangars, one of which houses the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum.

Twenty miles southeast of Denver, the military established the 100-square-mile Lowry Bombing and Gunnery Range in 1938; pilots based at Lowry used the range for bombing practice during World War II. The range closed in 1963, and the site became home to a Titan intercontinental ballistic missile complex. The Lowry Landfill, an EPA Superfund site today, is at the northwest corner of the range.

In Aurora is Buckley Air Force Base, named for 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley, a World War I fighter pilot from Denver who died in 1918 while on a mission over France. Shortly before World War II began, the City of Denver bought 5,740 acres of land and donated it to the US Army, which quickly established an Army

Air Force base, training over 50,000 airmen to become bombardiers and armorers. Buckley today is an active Air Force base with over 12,000 military and civilians working there.

Also in Aurora, Army General Hospital No. 21 (later renamed Fitzsimons Army Hospital) was built in 1918 to care for wounded World War I soldiers. A few months before America was thrust into the Second World War, the US government expanded and upgraded the hospital. After the war, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower had a heart attack while golfing at Denver's Cherry Hills Country Club in September 1955, he was nursed back to health at Fitzsimons.

Since 1903, Golden had been home to Camp George West, a training facility for Colorado National Guard soldiers. While a rifle range was located on post, artillery practice went on at Green Mountain, near Lakewood. Today Camp George West is home to the Colorado State Patrol training academy and Colorado Correctional Center.

Colleges and universities also felt the impact of the manpower drain caused by the war. The US government established the ASTP—

the Army Specialized Training Program—which offered a college education to gifted soldiers with the anticipation that they would become officers. As part of ASTP, the University of Colorado at Boulder opened a Japanese-language school on campus, and Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College (later renamed Colorado State University) in Fort Collins offered veterinary training. In Colorado Springs, Colorado College offered the similar V-12 Navy College Training Program.

## 6. We were the home of soldiers on skis

Perhaps the Army's most unusual post was Camp Hale, sited at 9,250 feet above sea level along Highway 24 between Leadville and Minturn. From April to November 1942, 10,000 workmen built nearly 1,000 buildings in this remote valley. This 250,000-acre training ground prepared the men of the famed 10th Mountain Division for winter and mountain warfare in the Apennine Mountains of Italy in 1945.

Also at Camp Hale was a detachment of 200 WACs—the Women's Army Corps. They did secretarial work, served as drivers and as telephone and telegraph operators, ran the post office and finance office, and more. About 75 nurses in the camp hospital and ten American Red Cross workers served at the camp as well.

Because the Army believed there would be no future need for specially trained mountain troops, it tore the camp down after the 10th departed in 1944. (There is no truth to the persistent rumor that Camp Hale was dismantled in error.) Only a few building foundations remain, but a memorial to the 1,000 mountain troopers who died in the war is at the top of Tennessee Pass, at the entrance to Ski Cooper, which once had been the division's advanced ski-training facility.

After the war, many of the veterans returned to start the ski resorts of



PHOTO / Camp Hale near Leadville housed the "soldiers on skis" of the 10th Mountain Division, who trained for wintertime warfare in the mountains of Italy. History Colorado, Edmund Aladar Schramko Collection, 2019.123.27

Aspen, Vail, Arapahoe Basin, and other ski areas around the country. The Colorado Ski and Snowboard Museum in Vail has an extensive display of 10th Mountain Division memorabilia.

## 7. We lived with the enemy in our midst

As the war rolled on, the military brought more and more captured German and Italian soldiers to the United States, housing them in prisoner-of-war camps far from the battlefields. Across the nation, about 700 POW camps held some 425,000 captured enemy soldiers (375,000 of them German, the rest mostly Italian); from 1943 to 1946, Colorado maintained three large camps and more than forty smaller ones.

Most of the POW camps had barracks and other buildings surrounded by watchtowers, searchlights, barbed-wire fences, armed guards, and dogs. In spite of that, life for the POWs was about as pleasant as it could be. For entertainment the prisoners could watch movies, participate in sports, organize singing and theatrical groups, play musical instruments, have free medical care, and use the camp's library facilities.

Camp Carson in Colorado Springs held the greatest number of prisoners (12,000), followed by Trinidad (2,500) and Greeley (2,000). The military established other camps in Longmont and Brighton, while Rose Hill at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal held as many as 300 who had been captured in North Africa; Rose Hill operated from November 1943 until April 1946. A *Denver Post* story noted that, one day, three Afrika Korps prisoners walked away from a work detail at Rose Hill and went into Denver, looking for female companionship; they were quickly rounded up and returned to the facility.

In Brighton, the Colorado Sanitary Canning Factory became a POW camp for 589 German POWs while, in Longmont, the military converted



PHOTO / Nursery school teacher Sumi Kashinagi serves milk and graham crackers to children in a recreation hall at Amache in December 1942. Photo by Tom Parker. *History Colorado*, 88.312.1

the Great Western Sugar dormitory at Third Avenue and Kimbark Street into a barracks where Italian and German POWs who worked on area farms lived.

Because America's military draft had reduced the number of available agricultural workers, many POWs in Colorado helped tend farm fields and ranches; for their labors they earned a small daily wage that they could spend in their camp canteens.

In December 1944 *The Denver Post* ran a story under the headline "Denver Soldiers Overseas Don't Like Coddling of Nazi Prisoners." The soldiers were reacting to news that Colorado farmers were too nice to the German POWs who worked their fields.

Although fraternization was officially discouraged, many prisoners developed close bonds with individuals and families for whom they worked. Sometimes the fraternization went too far. At Camp Hale, some of the WACs got a little too friendly with the Germans, and six of the women were court-martialed.

## 8. We had a prison camp for American citizens

Only slightly lower than the POWs in the eyes of many Americans were the Issei and Nisei—American residents or citizens of Japanese descent. In the panic following Pearl Harbor, there were fears (unfounded, as it turned out) that many Japanese Americans were likely to be spies and saboteurs working secretly for the Japanese government.

On February 19, 1942, ten weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was persuaded to sign the controversial Executive Order 9066 that authorized the relocation of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans from their homes along the West Coast and sent them to ten temporary "assembly centers" around the country, there to be held under guard until the war was over. To the Japanese Americans, these were little better than the concentration camps where the Nazis isolated and incarcerated Jews and other people thought to be "undesirable" or a threat to Germany.

One of these camps, known as both Camp Amache and the Granada War Relocation Center, was built in August 1942 in southeastern Colorado near the small farming town of Granada in Prowers County, 140 miles east of Pueblo. Barbed wire surrounded the windblown camp, and armed guards stood watch over the internees.

Families were forced to live in cramped quarters, and the government provided three meals a day, and offered internees work to relieve the boredom: digging ditches and irrigation canals, tending gardens, and working in the mess hall. Professionals (doctors, nurses, teachers, and others) could practice their disciplines in the camp. There was a school for children and a Boy Scout troop.

There was also a compensation system that paid professionals \$19 a month, skilled workers \$16, and non-skilled workers \$12. As the war turned in America's favor, according to a National Park Service brochure, "From all ten camps, 4,300 people received permission to attend college, and about 10,000 were allowed to leave temporarily to harvest sugar beets" and other crops.

At its peak, Amache held over 7,300 men, women, and children, making it the smallest of the relocation camps—but the tenth largest "city" in Colorado. The government released most internees in August 1945 and closed the camp on October 15. After the war, the camp's 550 buildings were auctioned off and removed. Today the mostly barren site is a National Historic Landmark; efforts are underway to reconstruct some of the buildings.

Proving their loyalty to the United States, scores of young men from Amache—and the other nine camps across the country—enlisted in the Army as part of the 3,000-man 442nd Regimental Combat Team. That unit, made up almost entirely of Japanese Americans, compiled a sterling combat record in Italy and France,

earning more medals for courage—many of them awarded posthumously—than any other US Army unit of its size. One of the men, George T. Sakato, who moved to Denver after the war, received a belated Medal of Honor from President Bill Clinton in 2000. Kiyoshi Muranaga, an internee at Amache, received a posthumous Medal of Honor after being killed in action in Italy.

One man who tried to fight this injustice and prejudice was Colorado Governor Ralph L. Carr. He refused to allow any Issei or Nisei living in Colorado to be sent to a relocation camp, believing that the Constitution protected all Americans. Likely because of his stand for human rights, he was voted out of office in 1943. But he was later memorialized by a statue in Denver's Sakura Square, the naming of the Ralph Carr Memorial Highway along US 285 from Denver to his hometown of Antonito near the New Mexico line, and the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center in Denver's Civic Center.

## 9. And, of course, we served

In addition to the men of the 10th Mountain Division and the Fighting 442nd, many other Coloradans served with distinction. Ten men with a connection to Colorado were awarded the Medal of Honor—the nation's highest award for valor in combat—six of them posthumously. One of them, Joe P. Martinez of Ault, has a statue dedicated to him in the park in front of the State Capitol. Colorado's Medal of Honor recipients and their deeds are remembered in a display at the Broomfield Veterans Museum.

Colorado A&M University physicist Philip G. Koontz contributed to the war effort by working on the "Manhattan Project"—the top-secret atomic bomb program in laboratories in both Chicago and New Mexico. And George "Bob" Caron, who would move from Brooklyn to Den-

ver after the war, was the tail gunner on the *Enola Gay*—the B-29 bomber that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and of Nagasaki three days later, unleashed previously unimaginable destruction and human suffering in hastening the end of the war in the Pacific. Japan surrendered shortly thereafter.

Another unit with Colorado roots was the 3,000-man 157th Infantry Regiment, a part of the 45th Infantry Division—made up of two National Guard regiments from Oklahoma and one from Colorado. Whereas the 10th Mountain Division saw only about three months in combat, the 45th saw 511 days of combat—in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany—made four amphibious combat landings in the Mediterranean, and liberated the Dachau concentration camp in April 1945. And, while the 10th lost 1,000 men, the 45th had over 3,500 men killed and more than 14,000 wounded—a casualty rate of over 100 percent, as many soldiers were wounded more than once.

One of the thousands of Coloradans who died in combat was Major General Maurice Rose, a graduate of Denver's East High School. He became a two-star general in command of the 3rd Armored Division fighting in Germany—making him the highest-ranking Jewish officer to serve in the war. On March 30, 1945, five weeks before the end of the war in the European Theater, Rose was leading a tank column when it came under enemy fire; he was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire. After the war, Rose General Hospital in Denver was named in his honor.

Another prominent wartime Coloradan was Victor H. Krulak, who rose to three-star rank in the Marine Corps. Born in Denver in 1913, Krulak graduated from the US Naval Academy. While serving as an observer in Shanghai during the

Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, he saw Japanese landing craft whose bows could be lowered to permit the discharge of troops. So unique was the idea that he passed it along to New Orleans boat builder Andrew Higgins, who developed the idea; the US military adopted the design, and the LCVP (Higgins boat) was born. Krulak repeatedly distinguished himself in combat in the Pacific Theater, and served later in Vietnam.

## 10. We liked Ike (and he liked us)

Undoubtedly the most well-known individual with Colorado ties was Dwight D. Eisenhower. A year after graduating from West Point in 1915, he married Mamie Doud, daughter of a prominent Denver family (her family home still stands at 750 Lafayette Street). They honeymooned at Eldorado Springs near Boulder.

Stationed from December 1924 to September 1925 at Fort Logan, in the Denver suburb of Sheridan, “Ike” went on to become the supreme commander of SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) and oversaw all forces in the European Theater of Operations. Seven years after the war, he became the thirty-fourth President of the United States and enjoyed spending his summers in Colorado, with Lowry Air Force Base as his “Summer White House.”

## 11. We went a little crazy for peace

On May 8, 1945—Victory in Europe Day—Nazi Germany officially surrendered. The Japanese did likewise on September 2, 1945, in a formal ceremony aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*, anchored in Tokyo Bay. Throughout the nation and Colorado, people laughed, cheered, celebrated, got drunk, danced, paraded in the streets, and went to church to give thanks.



PHOTO / Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower and their children greet admirers outside Denver's Brown Palace hotel in May 1959. *History Colorado*, PH.PROP.5708

On August 18, the national wartime speed limit of 35 miles per hour was lifted. Two days later the front page of *The Denver Post* sported an eight-column banner headline: “Nylons & Girdles Due Any Day Now”—much to the relief of fashion-conscious women. The government suspended the rationing of shoes and ceased most food rationing by year's end.

Two days of celebrations—marred by drunken brawls, car accidents, and small fires—broke out throughout Denver and other Colorado cities and towns as the end of the war was in sight. Scotty Wallace, head of Denver's street-cleaning department, could only shake his head at the mounds of paper and broken glass

that littered the city's streets—worse, he said, than after the Armistice in 1918.

Pueblo held a massive victory jubilee on August 26, complete with parades, marching bands, and fireworks at the Colorado State Fairgrounds.

To the great relief of people around the world, the war that had claimed 60 to 80 million lives was at last truly over.

And Colorado had done its part to bring about the Allied victory. ■

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# Immigration to Colorado

**MYTH AND REALITY** BY WILLIAM WEI

PHOTO / T. Owaki and family, 1915. Photo by Oliver E. Aultman. History Colorado, 2001.41.625

**F**or most of its history, America has been a haven for those seeking a better life and a refuge for those fleeing for their lives. Indeed, since its inception, America has been an inspiration to others, a place where the downtrodden could find hope.

Among the proponents of immigration was President John F. Kennedy, who laid out his inclusionary vision of America in his 1958 book, *A Nation of Immigrants*.

Kennedy's paean to immigrants notwithstanding, the history of immigrants in America has been a fraught one. Their story is more complex than the proponents of immigration would have it. Instead of working together to transcend their cultural differences to achieve the ideals embodied in America's founding documents, immigrants brought with them their inherited prejudices of race and nationality. As historian Thomas Andrews notes in *Killing for Coak*: "The Welsh and Scots despised the Irish, the French bore a grudge against the Germans, and the Germans claimed superiority over the Poles, who could not forgive the Austrians, who despised African Americans, who distrusted Yankees, who saw Hispanos as dirty, lazy, and primitive."

Indeed, immigrants have often contended with each other in their pursuit of the American Dream.

Of course, another president, Donald J. Trump, has more recently been the country's most prominent opponent of immigration. Like many in the past, he has often cast immigrants as a burden on the rest of society. Is that really the case?

### Where Immigrants Came From

A mountainous and arid area, Colorado initially attracted few colonizers. Up through the first half of the nineteenth century, it was a relatively sparsely populated place, inhabited mainly by Native Americans, who had long occupied the area, and Hispano settlers, who traced their origins in the region back to the seventeenth century. Before the Territory of Colorado could become an integral part of the United States, it needed settlers willing to face the daunting challenge of an inhospitable landscape and climate and, later, to weather the area's boom-and-bust economy. Many of the people who took on this challenge were immigrants and their descendants.

What started the colonization of Colorado was the 1858–61 Colorado Gold Rush, also known as the Pikes Peak Gold Rush. This initiated a flood of habitation into what was once deemed an uninhabitable region. In the wake of the gold rush and in the midst of the secession of the southern states, which precipitated the Civil War, the US government established the Territory of Colorado on February 28, 1861. The creation of the Colorado territory enhanced federal control of the Intermountain West and its resources, protecting them from depredations by southern secessionists.

By 1870, immigrants constituted 16 percent of Colorado's population. For most of them, westward migration was a two-stage process: first they migrated from the East Coast to the Midwest, then they migrated again to the Interior West. They were welcomed in labor-starved Colorado. Edward M. McCook, Colorado Territorial Governor in 1869–73 and 1874–75, certainly appreciated their value. As a Union general in the Civil War, he readily acknowledged the important role that immigrants played in the Union's victory against the Confederacy and considered them the solution to Colorado's chronic labor shortage. In his 1870 message to the Territorial Legislature, McCook observed that "those new States of the West, like Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, which have made organized efforts to secure European emigration, have increased in population and wealth beyond all precedent in the history of our country." He further observed that European immigrants were interested in coming to Colorado, noting that he had received communications from "two German colonies containing over two hundred families each, and from one containing forty families" inquiring about agricultural and other resources of the territory.

From the information provided by the 1870 Census, it is evident that

## The grim reality in many areas of the world was that there were now too many people on too little land to support them, a situation exacerbated by adverse climatic changes.

the majority of immigrants living in Colorado who had been counted a decade earlier in the 1860 Census were the offspring of immigrants who had settled in nearby midwestern states as part of an earlier wave of immigration. The Census Bureau appreciated their immigrant origins as well, so in 1870 the Census began to enumerate the number of descendants of earlier immigrants. It noted the value of “ascertain[ing] the contributions made to our *native* population by each principal country of Europe; to obtain . . . the number of those who are only one remove.” Because most of the immigrants who came first were males, the descendants of immigrants tended to have foreign-born fathers and native-born mothers. As people moved westward, there was increasing intermarriage. Of the Coloradans enumerated in the 1870 Census, 23 percent had foreign parents, and an additional 26 percent had one parent who was foreign.

Most of the migrants were young men who migrated from nearby Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. A significant number also migrated from as far away as New York and Pennsylvania. In all likelihood, those from New York and Pennsylvania were also descendants of immigrants: Irish (the so-called famine Irish) who sought to escape the urban ethnic enclaves into which they were crowded and German (the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch or Deutsche) who sought land to farm. Because of proximity, midwestern descendants of immigrants were able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Colorado. And the advent of rail transportation enabled those living on the East Coast to do so as well. They were

persuaded that a better life awaited them in the Colorado Territory.

Many of these descendants of immigrant Americans identified with their ethnic group first and spoke the group’s language rather than English. As the 1870 Census itself noted, it was commonplace to refer to people by their ethnicity rather than their nationality, that is, where they were born. With the end of the Civil War (1861–65), these descendants of immigrants, along with other Americans, would increasingly identify with the nation rather than the state or their ethnic group, a phenomenon that was reinforced by civic education taught in American schools.

### Why Immigrants Came

A variety of push/pull factors led to immigration to America and Colorado, and these changed depending on the prevailing circumstances. The national narrative emphasizes the search for freedom that brought early colonists to America. In 1883, Emma Lazarus described immigrants as the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” This is reflected in the 1860 US Census that described immigrants as those “impelled to seek . . . a refuge from the persecutions of religious bigotry and political exclusion at home.” English Pilgrims, French Huguenots, and German “Forty-Eighters,” for example, were religious and political dissenters who sought refuge in America.

A more important reason the majority of immigrants came to America was poverty. Many were driven from their homelands because of an unfavorable land-to-people ratio. Population growth was a driving factor. At the beginning of the nineteenth

century, there were about 900 million inhabitants on earth. Within a century that number had climbed to 1.6 billion. The grim reality in many areas of the world was that there were now too many people on too little land to support them, a situation exacerbated by adverse climatic changes. For example, in the 1800s, southwestern Germany suffered from extreme weather conditions that resulted in a series of disastrous crop failures. In the early 1900s, so-called Volga Germans—Germans who had migrated to Russia—were eventually forced by famine and politics to migrate again. For those wishing to escape this precarious existence or live at something better than a subsistence level, the solution was to become economic immigrants. Many Germans voluntarily went to America in search of a materially better life for themselves. Many of them settled in Colorado’s farm country.

As the 1860 Census observed, for immigrants America was a place “more than anywhere else, [where] every man may find occupation according to his talents, and enjoy resources according to his industry.” And that primary resource was “land beyond the capacity of the people to till, and consequently cheap.” This vision of plentiful land was encouraged by the Homestead Act (1862), a bill signed by President Abraham Lincoln to stimulate western migration by providing settlers 160 acres of public land. To receive ownership of their homesteads, settlers had to be US citizens and complete five years of continuous residence on the land. With this incentive, immigrants came in droves looking for land they could call their own. In 1880, immigrants

represented only 13 percent of the national population, but 23 percent of those who settled in the American West.

Their settlement of the land was expedited by the building of the Transcontinental Railroad (1863–69), a 1,912-mile railroad line that connected the US rail network at Council Bluffs, Iowa, to San Francisco, California. The railroad provided a comparatively cheap and fast way for people in the United States and from around the world to go beyond the 100th meridian to Colorado. Along with another advance in technology—steamships—railroads brought America and the Interior West closer than ever before to immigrants. Advances in modern technology facilitated the settlement of the American West. Railroads and steamships made America and the Interior West closer than ever to people around the world.

The Transcontinental Railroad, which promoted immigration to the American West, was also built by immigrants, mainly Chinese who worked on the Central Pacific and Irish on the Union Pacific. Arguably, the over 20,000 Chinese who worked on the railroad had the worst of it since they had to negotiate the Sierra Nevada Mountains. As Ava Chin, a descendant of a Chinese railroad worker, described it in a May 26, 2019, article in the *Washington Post*, the workers “risked their lives hammering and detonating gunpowder, surviving avalanches and extreme conditions—engaging in the kind of backbreaking, chisel-to-granite ‘bone-work’ that others refused to do.” The Chinese and Irish immigrants can be credited with unifying the nation economically and culturally. After completing the railroad, many immigrant workers remained in the Interior West, making their way to Colorado and the other Intermountain states, where they contributed significantly to local economies by working in the mines, on railroads, and in other occupations.



PHOTO / Tintype of Volga German immigrant, circa 1872. History Colorado, 87.155.12

**Another sizable group to migrate to America were those who involuntarily immigrated as a matter of life and death. They were refugees.**



PHOTO / Florence Bath (shown circa 1920) immigrated from Scotland to the town of Avalo in Weld County, Colorado. History Colorado, R.93.2009.319.2

**Immigrants arrived at a crucial moment in Colorado's history. Besides contributing to the economy, their very presence provided the numbers needed for Colorado to become a state.**

Another sizable group to migrate to America were those who involuntarily immigrated as a matter of life and death. They were refugees. The best known were the Irish, who fled rural areas because of the Great Potato Famine. The famine claimed the lives of more than a million Irish peasants who died from starvation and disease. Ironically, food was available in Ireland to feed them, but their English landlords exported it abroad. As journalist Timothy Egan has recently observed, some of the English thought that “a merciful God was doing a favor by killing off the starving masses” who came from a country infested with crime, famine, and disease. Penniless Irish peasants thus joined the exodus abroad, ending up in unfamiliar urban enclaves on America’s eastern seaboard. In the first half of the nineteenth century, some three million immigrated to America.

### **What Immigrants Did**

By the 1870s, 74 percent of those living in Colorado were born in America, mainly descendants of an earlier wave of immigrants; 26 percent were newly arrived immigrants.

The 1870 Census grouped these immigrants and their descendants into four major employment categories: agriculture, professional and personal services, trade and transportation, and manufacturing and mining. Most were engaged in some sort of physical labor: agricultural laborers (with immigrants comprising 41 percent of that workforce), laborers (at 53 percent), officials and employees of railroad companies (34 percent), and miners (46 percent). Among the laboring masses were large numbers of British and Irish, viewed at the time as boasting superior strength. Lacking the capital to start farms or the skills needed to farm the arid high plains of Colorado, they had few alternatives but to work as common laborers. In this capacity,

immigrants played a significant role in developing the territory's economy, doing the work necessary to make it a wealth-producing area and building the infrastructure necessary to make the area accessible to the rest of the nation. They laid the economic foundation necessary for the Territory of Colorado to become the State of Colorado.

Immigrants arrived at a crucial moment in Colorado's history. Besides contributing to the economy, their very presence provided the numbers needed for Colorado to become a state. Jerome Chaffee, territorial representative from Colorado in Congress, was able to push through the enabling act for statehood only because he could convince his congressional colleagues that the territory had the required 150,000 people in 1875 due to a rapid increase in population. In 1870, according to the Census, Colorado's population stood at a mere 39,864; by 1880, the population had increased almost five times over to 194,327 people (20 percent of them first-generation immigrants), making it the most populous as well as prosperous mountain state. Colorado became the nation's thirty-eighth state on August 1, 1876.

### Changing Patterns of Immigration

The pattern of immigration to Colorado was changing, however. From the nativist perspective, the change was ominous. Though there were comparatively few immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, and Asia in the 1880s, the general populace in Colorado, including earlier groups of immigrants, viewed the newcomers with apprehension. Indeed, the populace believed the new arrivals would overwhelm them. Their response to these later immigrants was out of proportion to any real threat the newcomers actually posed to their livelihoods or culture. Different groups of immigrants faced

different levels of discrimination. While the bigotry against immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe was severe, the discrimination lasted longer and was far worse for people of color. Traditionally, Asians, along with Black people, Latinos, and Native Americans, were stigmatized because of their race rather than ethnicity.

Discrimination against newcomers has been a recurring pattern in the history of immigration. Earlier European immigrant groups, such as the Irish and Germans, also perceived succeeding groups of new immigrants this way, even though they themselves had experienced discrimination. Compared to British immigrants, who were Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, the Irish were viewed unfavorably for being Celtic and Catholic, their Catholicism being considered their most unfavorable characteristic. The Irish were also racialized, described as dark, brutish, and simian-like.

When different immigrant groups found themselves in economic competition, the perception of racial or ethnic otherness provided fuel for heightened antagonism. In Gilpin County, for example, Cornish and Irish immigrant miners found themselves competing with each other. The Cornishmen (from Britain) had arrived the earliest and had been recruited for their expertise in sinking shafts and tracing veins. But they felt that their livelihood was being threatened with the arrival of the Irish, who were being paid less. The antagonism of the Cornishmen toward the Irish was exacerbated by what was considered a natural antipathy based on cultural and religious differences. As Lynn Perrigo observed in her 1937 *Colorado Magazine* article on the Cornish and Irish conflict in Gilpin County, "it did not take many drinks to precipitate a fight between members of these two groups." Sometimes, such ethnic differences

resulted in violent clashes such as the Philadelphia Nativist Riots in 1844, a result of rising anti-Catholic sentiment and the growing presence of Irish Catholic immigrants in the City of Brotherly Love. Anti-Catholicism persisted in America to at least the sixties, when John F. Kennedy's election was dogged by allegations that as a Catholic, he was a de facto agent of the Pope.

The Germans were similarly viewed unfavorably for being Teutonic and Catholics. They were feared and disliked for allegedly being socialists with violent tendencies and then for being potential subversives during World Wars I and II. Early on, during colonial times, the venerable Benjamin Franklin took a dim view of their language and customs, complaining of the adverse influence they were having on Pennsylvania, though it should be noted that they, along with the Swiss, were the ones who opened up Pennsylvania's backcountry.

Generally speaking, native-born Americans (themselves descendants of immigrants) condemned Irish and German immigrants, considering them unalterably foreign and inferior. The national nativist Know-Nothing Party (1844–60) opposed their immigration to America, seeing them as an existential threat to the American way of life. As far as nativists were concerned, the Irish and Germans were suspect people intent on stealing American jobs. The Know-Nothings tried to disempower Irish and German immigrants already in the country by requiring them to be residents for twenty-one years before being eligible for citizenship. Fortunately, this did not come to pass.

As time went on, the Irish, Germans, and other white ethnic groups assimilated into mainstream society. They became citizens, attained political power, and moved up the economic ladder. Through ethnic solidarity, Irish immigrants advanced themselves politically whenever



PHOTO / Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, August 7, 1869. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

they could. For example, in 1881 in Denver, though most Irish were Democrats, they banded together to elect a countryman, Robert Morris, as Republican mayor.

White ethnic assimilation was facilitated by intermarriage, which served to attenuate the individual's original ethnic identity by combining it with that of another. As previously mentioned, immigrants married native-born Americans at a high rate. Contrary to nativists' conviction that immigrants were unassimilable, immigrants always assimilated into American mainstream society to some extent for reasons of survival, if nothing else, and their descendants assimilated to an even greater extent, learning to speak English (the American version, of course), embracing American customs, and espousing American values as the way to achieve security and success for themselves and their families. Ironically, this included the acceptance of the mainstream's prejudices toward various ethnic and racial groups.

Take the Irish, for example. As they moved westward, their socio-economic circumstances improved steadily. They moved up from the

bottom of the economic ladder to its middle rungs and higher, enjoying a status they never could attain in East Coast urban ghettos. "An Irishman might be described as a lazy, dirty Celt when he landed in New York, but if his children settled in California [or in Colorado] they might well be praised as part of the vanguard of energetic Anglo-Saxon people poised for the plunge into Asia," as Reginald Horsman has noted in his study, *Race and Manifest Destiny*. However, Irish upward mobility came at the expense of other groups. The Irish stood shoulder to shoulder with older immigrants in opposition to other immigrants who were viewed as being even more foreign than they were.

Southern and Eastern European immigrants were denigrated for belonging to an alien culture, exhibiting exotic customs and having a low standard of living. For example, Italians, most of whom were from southern Italy, were among the most unpopular immigrants in Colorado. They were recruited as cheap labor for mines, smelters, and railroad construction gangs. With the promise of good pay and safe working conditions, Italian workers immigrat-

ed to America looking for economic opportunity. Many were recruited by labor contractors known as padrones during the great railroad construction period from 1880 to 1895. By 1890, Italian immigrants could be found working in industrial centers and mining camps in Colorado. Like other immigrants, the Italians endured what they did to earn money to send back home to support their families, or to save enough to enable them to buy farmland or open a business when they returned to their native land. Many succeeded in improving their economic circumstances. Even with the hardships they experienced, Italians and other immigrant workers wrote letters to friends and relatives about the high wages that could be earned in America. In comparison to their homelands, America was the place to make money.

Though Italians suffered discrimination, exploitation, and hostility, they did have one advantage. They were Europeans and were considered whites, which paved their way to acceptance into American society. The Italians eventually found common ground with other European immigrant groups in their opposition to the capitalists who exploited them. Many of them participated in the labor movement in Colorado, where they engaged in labor disputes. Some of the disputes ended violently, such as the infamous Ludlow Massacre on April 20, 1914, where twenty-one people were killed, mostly children and women.

Unlike Irish and Italian immigrants, the Chinese were ostracized because of their race. But they were condemned for being racially rather than ethnically different, placing them squarely in the middle of the long-standing black-and-white binary that has shaped race relations in America ever since its founding. The Chinese bore the dual burden of being new immigrants as well as a people of color. The driving force behind the

anti-Chinese movement was mainly racial antagonism toward Asians. As John Higham notes in his classic, *Strangers in the Land*:

No variety of anti-European sentiment has ever approached the violent extremes to which anti-Chinese agitation went in the 1870s and 1880s. Lynchings, boycotts, and mass expulsions still harassed the Chinese in 1882. . . . Americans have never maintained that every European endangers American civilization; attacks have centered on the “scum” or “dregs” of Europe, thereby allowing for at least some implicit exceptions. But opponents of Oriental folk have tended to reject them one and all.

The Chinese tried to defend themselves against this hostility but were handicapped. Chinese (and other Asians) were among the most vulnerable because they suffered the disadvantage early on of being declared aliens who were ineligible for citizenship. In 1870, Congress had passed a Naturalization Act that limited naturalization to whites and Africans. Denied the right to vote and to hold political office, Chinese were unable to protect themselves from their nativist enemies. For them, “Not a Chinaman’s Chance” was more than just an expression.

Politicians demonized Chinese immigrants as a way to gain people’s votes, and union organizers vilified them to build up their incipient labor movement. Together, leaders of these groups waged a vitriolic campaign against the Chinese. They encouraged the lynching and expulsion of Chinese, and the boycott of Chinese businesses. Their enmity toward the Chinese, couched in terms of solutions to the so-called Chinese Question in the 1870s, centered on the need for restrictions on their immigration to the United States. The exclusion of the Chinese from the country in 1882 was the harbinger



IMAGE / An engraving by N. B. Wilkins in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper of November 20, 1880, depicted Denver’s Anti-Chinese Riot. *History Colorado*, 2001.149.9

of a restrictive immigration policy. It was only a short step from the racism that was the basis of this policy to the establishment of an ethnic hierarchy that would later restrict new immigrant groups from Southern and Eastern Europe during the 1920s.

The nativists did not wait for an answer to the “Chinese Question.” In the wake of the Panic of 1873 and the worldwide depression, nativists in Colorado used the Chinese as scape-

goats, declaring “the Chinese must go!” Nativists engaged in a campaign to drive them out of Colorado’s mining communities. In Leadville, where the silver boom began in 1877 and one third of the miners were Irish, the Chinese were forbidden from entering the town on pain of death. In Como, during the so-called Chinese-Italian War (1879), Italian miners attacked and expelled Chinese miners whom they feared were being

brought in to replace them, vowing to kill them if they returned.

The hate campaign against the Chinese in Colorado culminated in the Denver anti-Chinese race riot of October 31, 1880. An estimated three to five thousand people, approximately 10 percent of the city's residents, descended upon the city's Chinatown to rape and pillage. They sought to kill or expel Chinatown's 450 residents. Given that Chinatown was located in an area of the city with a large immigrant population, comprising between 30 to 40 percent of the population, it is highly likely that many of the rioters were fellow immigrant workers. After the race riot, there was never a recurrence of large-scale violence against the Chinese in Colorado, though there were a series of isolated incidents. Ethnic cleansing of Chinese continued.

The Denver anti-Chinese race riot contributed to the passage of the federal Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), which blamed the Chinese for local disturbances and held them responsible for the violence against them, adding insult to injury. The Exclusion Act placed a ten-year moratorium on the immigration of Chinese laborers from entering the country as a way to ensure social order. By 1902, anti-Chinese groups were able to convince the US Congress to make the Exclusion Act permanent.

Colorado's need for workers persisted, however. So Japanese and other Asians immigrants were recruited to replace the Chinese. At the same time, anti-Asian groups lobbied to exclude *all* Asian immigrants from the country. Unions used the race card to foster worker solidarity among its members at the expense of racial groups such as Asian and Latino immigrants, Blacks, and Native Americans. The Western Federation of Miners, for instance, publicly opposed the continued presence of "Asiatics" in the United States" in 1901.

### Golden Door to Guarded Gate

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act had consequences well beyond the Chinese. As an opponent of the original legislation, Massachusetts Senator George Frisbie Hoar (Republican), noted in 1882 that the act legalized racial discrimination. It was the first law enacted targeting a specific group of people to prohibit them from immigrating to the United States. Before then, there were no significant restrictions on immigration, and those that existed were simply ignored. The Chinese Exclusion Act signaled the beginning of the end of free immigration to the country.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the character of immigration to the United States and Colorado had changed. In 1890, immigrants constituted 20.3 percent of Colorado's population and those with a foreign parent constituted 33.02 percent, a significant portion of the population. Immigrants from Northern and Western Europe began to decrease while those from Southern and Eastern Europe began to increase, with some groups like the Italians present in numbers almost equal to those from Great Britain and Germany.

Between 1890 and 1910, immigrants to Colorado from Southern and Eastern Europe rose steadily but did not surpass those from Northern and Western Europe. The number of immigrants from Asia continued to be comparatively small. By 1910, 38 percent of the immigrants were from Southern and Eastern Europe, and 51 percent were still from Northern and Western Europe, while only a handful were from Asia, mainly Japan. Much of this change had occurred since 1900, with the numbers of immigrants coming from Italy, Russia, and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire showing the largest increases.

The influx of immigrant workers from Southern and Eastern Europe compensated for the decrease of those from Northern and Western

Europe, some of whom had benefited from upward mobility and were now working in a managerial capacity. A significant portion of all European immigrants, however, continued to work as laborers, particularly in the mining industry, which remained the preeminent part of the state's economy. Mine workers accounted for fully 10 percent of those employed, with workers from Southern and Eastern Europe filling the most dangerous and onerous occupations in the mines.

After World War I (1914–18), emigration from Southern and Eastern Europe to the United States was severely restricted because of the post-war economic depression and a rising isolationist sentiment that had emerged across the country. As was the case with the earlier Chinese Exclusion Act, people called for immigration restriction because of the widespread fear they would lose their jobs and suffer a decline in their standard of living.

Justifying the call for immigration restriction were eugenicists who created a hierarchical taxonomy of races. They placed Nordics at the top of the hierarchy, justifying this ranking with pseudo-scientific arguments about Nordic genetic supremacy. According to eugenics adherents, Nordics from Northern and Western Europe were superior in every way that mattered and should be encouraged to immigrate to America, while "Mediterraneans" from Southern and Eastern Europe were inferior and should be discouraged from immigrating. A corollary to this was that intermarriage with people belonging to intellectually inferior and morally degenerate groups inevitably led to the birth of weaker rather than stronger progeny. Nativists claimed that eugenics proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that certain disparate groups of people did not mix well and when they did, the result was degeneration.

On the one hand, eugenics adherents advocated what was called



PHOTO / Italian and/or Hispano coal miners pose in front of coke ovens at Tercio, Colorado, in Las Animas County, circa 1910. Photo by Almeron Newman. History Colorado, 86.296.5375

“positive eugenics,” emphasizing selective breeding of those at the top of the racial hierarchy, and on the other, “negative eugenics” to restrict or end the breeding of those on the bottom. Tragically, this movement would lead to such malevolent practices as the sterilization of Black people in America and the genocidal extermination of Jews in Europe. Not surprisingly, to prevent intermarriage among races, many states kept supportive anti-miscegenation laws on their books until they were struck down by the US Supreme Court in the case of *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967 as violations of the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the 14th Amendment.

On the basis of bogus genetic science, nativist leaders called for the country to change its time-honored policy of free immigration and adopt restrictive policies to prevent “inferior” people from entering the country. The federal government responded by passing a series of measures to do so. The laws were patently prejudicial from the get-go, favoring the old immigrants from Northern and Western Europe and disfavoring the

new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

At first, Congress tried to reduce the number of entrants with the passage of a Literacy Act in 1917. The act required that all immigrants be able to read or write English or some other language, and created the “Asiatic barred zone,” which prevented immigrants from most of Asia and the Pacific Islands from emigrating to America. But this proved inadequate for the nativists, so they persuaded Congress to institute the notorious “national origins” system to restrict immigration even further. In 1924, Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act, which limited the number of immigrants to two percent of those living in the United States according to the 1890 decennial census. The act also excluded all Asians, including Japanese, from entering the country. In essence, the measure sought to return the country to what it was like before 1882, when the majority of the population consisted of white people from Northern and Western Europe. This new immigration barrier was erected with the complicity of

older immigrant groups from Northern and Western Europe, who saw it in their interest to disavow their past and direct animus toward newer immigrant groups from Southern and Eastern Europe. By so doing, the earlier immigrant groups deflected criticisms from themselves onto the new arrivals while also affirming their assimilation into mainstream American society. The older immigrants and their descendants dealt with this cognitive dissonance by declaring that the new immigrants were somehow different from their own immigrant group, though their criticisms of the new immigrants were eerily similar to those that had been leveled against their own ethnic group in the past.

In 1929, the government made this restrictive immigration system permanent with the National Origins Clause, limiting the total number of so-called quota immigrants to no more than 150,000 a year. The immigration system put in place served as an invisible wall to exclude emigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, notably Asia. Given the antipathy toward the



PHOTO / *Braceros traveling to northern Colorado, 1959. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Z-769*

new immigrants, it is hardly surprising that in 1931, for the first time in American history, the number of migrants leaving the country exceeded those entering the country. Consequently, from 1930 to 1970, immigrants as a percentage of Colorado's population began to decrease.

Fortunately for Colorado, there were no quotas or limitations applied to immigrants from the Western Hemisphere, that is, Canada and Latin America. Immigrants from Latin America, mainly from Mexico, continued to enter the United States in general and Colorado. More than half of the net increase in immigrants to the United States from 1910 to 1930 was due to immigration from Mexico. By 1900, an estimated 12,816 immigrants from Mexico had come to the Centennial State, joining the large Hispano population who were already here. The Hispanos were originally Mexican inhabitants who had been incorporated into the United States and given American

citizenship as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Altogether there were 57,676 Coloradans of Mexican ancestry in 1930 when they were first counted as a separate census category. Previously, their numbers had been included with the white population. But as the 1930 Census noted, "Because of the growing importance of the Mexican element in the population and among gainful workers, [the Mexican population] was given a separate classification." Between 1910 and 1950, Mexican immigrants constituted a significant proportion of the state's population, reaching a highpoint of 13.4 percent by 1930.

The Hispanos and the Mexican immigrants played an important role in the state's economy. They could be found working in the coal mines, in the smelters and steel mills, and in the beet fields. As coal consumption increased exponentially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, coal mine owners went to Hispano communities

in Colorado and throughout the Southwest to recruit workers.

As seasonal agricultural workers, Hispanos and Mexican migrants were essential to Colorado's sugar beet industry, which became the mainstay of the state's commercial agricultural economy after World War II. Working in the beet fields required workers to perform some of the most physically demanding and disagreeable jobs in the agricultural sector. Hispano and Mexican migrant workers engaged in other types of back-breaking "stoop labor" as well.

Between 1910 and 1930, it has been estimated that more than 30,000 Mexican migrants worked in the state's sugar beet industry. This number is far greater than was recorded in the Census, suggesting that many may have been undocumented immigrants. Even though Colorado farmers needed them, racial antagonism towards Mexicans and other Latinos increased. This led to the strange and short-lived border

incident in 1936 when Governor Edwin “Big Ed” Johnson tried to halt mainly New Mexicans from entering Colorado to work in its beet fields. An “America First” isolationist, Johnson declared martial law and sent 800 National Guardsmen to police Colorado’s 370-mile southern border to blockade what he called the invasion of “aliens” and “indigents” from New Mexico. Implicitly, Johnson was questioning whether New Mexicans were really Americans or at least the type of Americans who were welcome in Colorado. His pretext was to save jobs for Coloradans, but the blockade was actually an act of political posturing intended to curry favor with voters. It was also a brief effort, as New Mexico Governor Clyde Tingley announced a boycott of Colorado products in response, and Johnson met with pushback from Colorado farmers and ranchers who had difficulty recruiting enough low-wage workers from within the state. After ten days, Johnson rescinded his xenophobic executive order.

As a result of labor shortages during World War II, when farm workers left to join the armed forces or went to work in the better-paying defense industry, sugar beet companies as well as farmers in general once again relied on Mexican workers. They were recruited through the Bracero Program (the Spanish term *bracero* means “one who works using his arms” or “manual laborer”), the largest contract labor program in US history. In an effort to provide farms and factories with the workers they sorely needed, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the program in 1942. It was agreed that the braceros would receive a minimum wage of 30 cents an hour, be given decent living conditions, and be protected from racial discrimination such as being excluded from segregated “whites only” public facilities. The braceros traveled around the country, working wherever their labor was needed. Un-

fortunately, employers often violated the agreements, failing to provide them with adequate housing, health care, safe working conditions, and even wages. Most braceros endured the exploitation and discrimination because they believed correctly that they would make more money in the United States than they could in Mexico. They saw it as an opportunity to improve their family’s prospects. The monies earned in the United States allowed them to own a home, open a business, start a farm of their own, and send their children to school. Contrary to what some critics believed, the braceros did not adversely affect native-born farm workers, and when the braceros no longer were available, the economic situation of native-born farm workers did not improve.

As a result of the program’s success, American farmers came to rely on Mexican migrant workers. When the Bracero Program ended in 1964, they complained to the US government that Mexican workers had done jobs that Americans refused to do and that their crops would rot in the fields without them. This situation continues to the present day. Ever since then, Mexican workers have been coming to the United States and Colorado to work, some on H-2A temporary work visas and others as undocumented migrant workers.

With the passage of the discriminatory immigration laws of the 1920s, the United States was able to prevent so-called undesirable peoples from entering the country for several decades. It would take World War II and the Cold War to end these prejudicial laws and replace them with fairer ones. These new laws significantly changed the character of immigration to Colorado. But by the early twenty-first century, some Americans would, once again, advocate that immigration in general be curtailed and that some immigrants be denied entry into the country. ■

## For Further Reading

Works referenced are John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Harper Perennial; Reprint Edition, 2008); Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Governor Edward M. McCook, “Female Suffrage,” in “Message to the Colorado Legislature, January 4, 1870,” in *Council Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Colorado, Eighth Session* (Central City, CO: David C. Collier); Ava Chin, “Racists kicked my Chinese ancestor out of America. He still loved the railroad he worked on.” *Washington Post*, May 26, 2019; Timothy Egan, “Send me back to the country I came from,” *New York Times*, July 19, 2019; Lynn Perrigo, “The Cornish Miners of Gilpin County,” *The Colorado Magazine* 14 (May 1937): 92–101; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1974).

This essay is adapted from “Immigration to the Intermountain West: The Case of Colorado,” presented at the 9th Annual Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences & Education Conference, Honolulu, January 2020. It has been published in the conference’s online proceedings.

WILLIAM WEI was the Colorado State Historian for the 2019–2020 term. A frequent contributor to *History Colorado’s* publications, he was the lead advisor on the *History Colorado Center exhibit Zoom In: The Centennial State in 100 Objects*. The book he authored for that exhibit, *Becoming Colorado: The Centennial State in 100 Objects*, is due out from *History Colorado and the University Press of Colorado* in 2021.

# A Philanthropic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis



**R**OSE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S founders could never have anticipated the COVID-19 pandemic, but in many ways this is a moment for which the foundation was built. Started in 1995 with proceeds from the sale of Rose Medical Center—built by the local Jewish community as Denver's first hospital to allow physicians to practice regardless of their race or religion—Rose Community Foundation proudly carries on the hospital founders' legacy of philanthropy, inclusion, and a commitment to serving the region in all its diversity.

"Twenty-five years after our founding, Rose Community Foundation's roots and values continue to inform our approach to serving the seven-county Greater Denver community," says President and CEO Lindy Eichenbaum Lent. "Our com-

mitment to funding through lenses of equity, justice, and inclusion is not only expressed in our mission, values, and strategic goals, but is embedded in our organizational DNA."

That commitment is evident in the foundation's philanthropic response to the COVID-19 crisis. From mid-March to date, the foundation and its donor-advised fundholders have awarded over 525 grants totaling over \$7 million. While deploying rapid-response dollars to nonprofits on the front lines of prevention, containment, and response and supporting efforts to mitigate the pandemic's mid-term and longer-term impacts, the foundation directed funds to organizations serving populations and communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic's health and economic implications.

"None of us knows when the COVID-19 pandemic will ultimately

end, but we do know that the economic, public health, and societal ripple effects will be felt far beyond that time horizon," says Lent. "We must all commit to our region's long-term recovery and to building a new normal that is more resilient, equitable, just, and inclusive."

PHOTO left / *The Emergency Family Assistance Association is helping mitigate the pandemic's economic impact on Boulder's low-income households through housing support, food distribution, and resource navigation. EFAA is one of the 395 organizations that received a grant from Rose Community Foundation during the second phase of COVID-19 grantmaking.*

PHOTO right / *Rose Community Foundation president and CEO Lindy Eichenbaum Lent engages with community members.*



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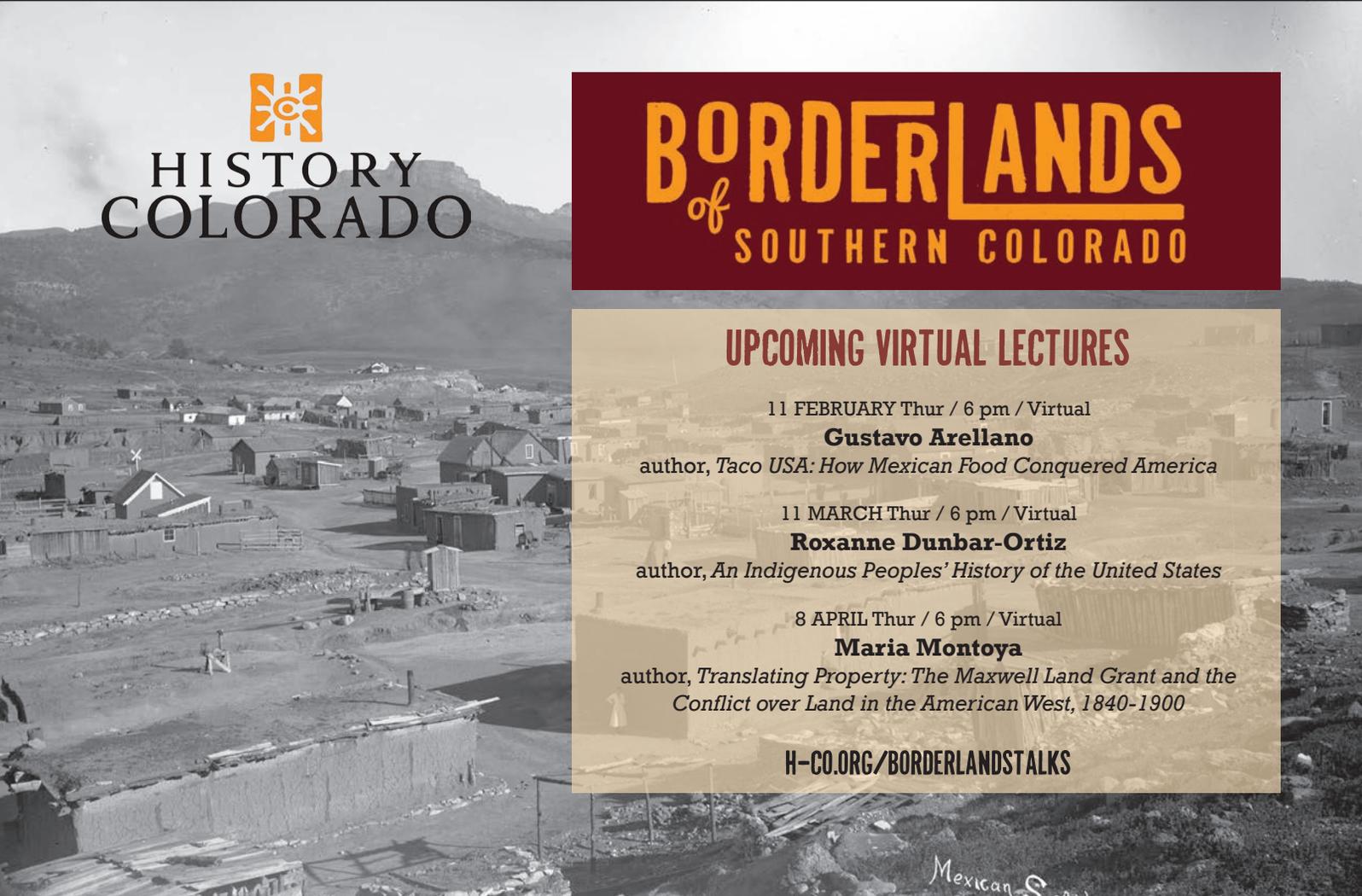
author, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*

8 APRIL Thur / 6 pm / Virtual

#### **Maria Montoya**

author, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900*

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