Genealogy Research in Colorado

Most pre-statehood settlers of Colorado began arriving at the time of the gold rush of 1858. They came from the Northeastern and Midwestern states, especially New York, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Some came from the New Mexico Territory, and a few settlers came from the Southern states, the Pacific Coast, and from other countries including England, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Scotland, and Wales.
Latter-day Saint settlements were made in the San Luis Valley in the 1870s and 1880s.
Most Plains Indians of Colorado, including the **Arapaho, the Cheyenne, the Kiowa**, and **the Comanche**, were removed to Indian Territory in Oklahoma by 1870.
The **Ute** Indians living in western Colorado did not give up their lands to white settlement until after 1880, when most of them were moved to reservations in Utah.

Early Colorado History

1706: Claimed for Spain by Juan de Ulibarri
1776: Father Escalante explores the western part of Colorado
1803: The United States acquired sections of Colorado north and east of the Arkansas River as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

1806: Government expeditions, including one by Zebulon Pike, were sent to map the area. Fur trappers and traders followed.
1822: First wagons cross Colorado on the Santa Fe route.
1842: Explored by John C. Fremont.
1845: Central part of Colorado acquired with the admission of Texas as a state.
1848: The United States acquired the rest of present-day Colorado from Mexico.
1851: Hispanic families from New Mexico founded San Luis, the oldest continually occupied town in Colorado.
1854: The Colorado area was divided politically among the territories of Kansas, Nebraska, Utah and New Mexico.
1858: Denver and other mining towns were organized by Colorado's early gold seekers. In 1858 the miners also organized Arapahoe County of Kansas Territory.
1859: Pike's Peak gold rush
1859: Colorado pioneers created what they called Jefferson Territory without the sanction of Congress. It was to have included all of present-day Colorado and some areas of Utah and Wyoming.
1861: Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians ceded land.
28 February 1861: U. S. Congress organized the Colorado Territory. The first seventeen counties were organized the same year.
29 November 1864: U.S. Army Colonel John M. Chivington attacked friendly Cheyenne Indian encampments at Fort Lyon on Sand Creek, Black Kettle; a Cheyenne chief and 450 Indians were killed
1865: Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche and Kiowa Indians ceded land.
1867-1869: Indian Campaign
1868: Shoshone and Ute Indians ceded land.
1870:

- Many Indians were removed to Oklahoma.
- Railroad links between Denver and Cheyenne and between Denver and Kansas City connected Colorado with the east and west coasts.

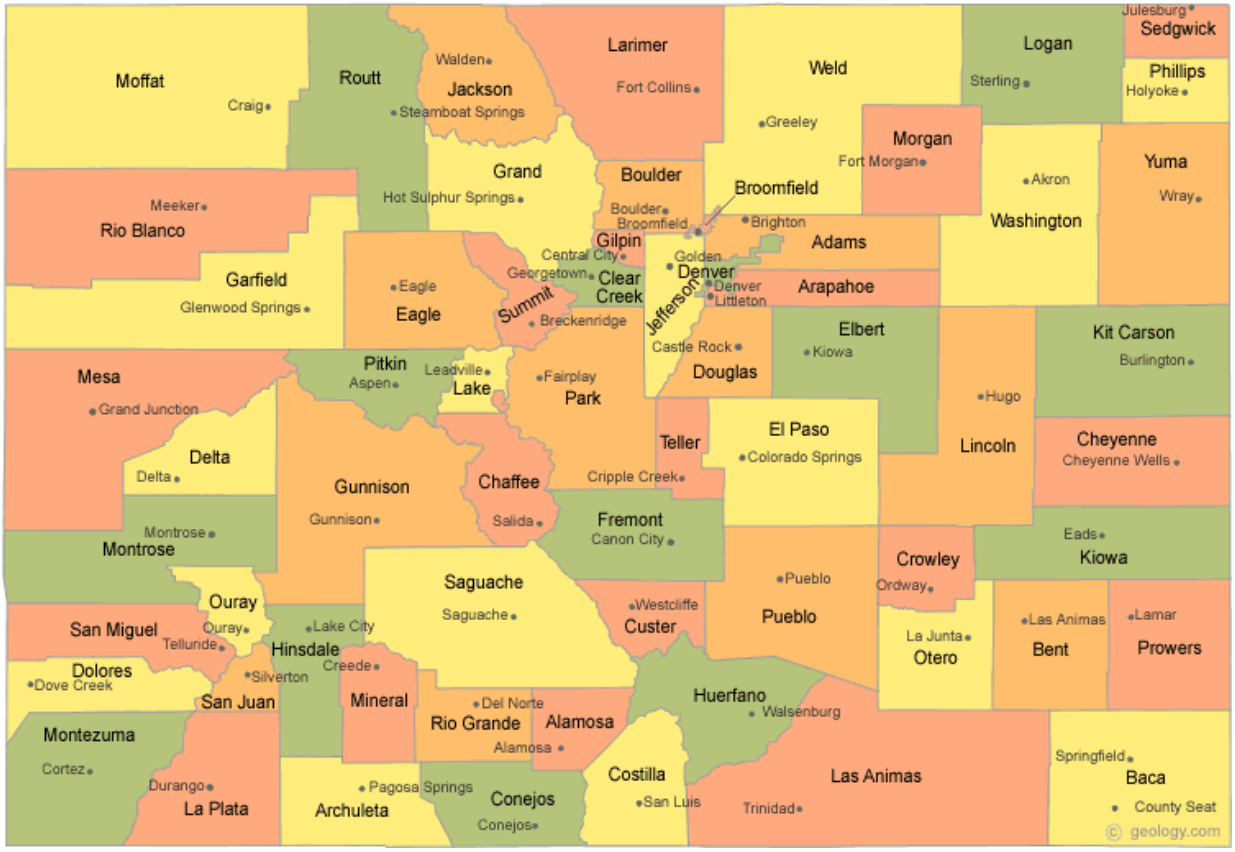
1874: Ute Indians ceded land.
1874-1875: Indian Campaign
1 August 1876: Colorado became a state.

1878-1879: Northern Cheyenne Indians, led by Chief Dull Knife, Wild Hog and Little Wolf surrendered in Colorado to U.S. forces. They were sent to Ft. Reno, Oklahoma. Later they settled on a reservation in Montana.
Summer 1879: White River Ute Indians staged an armed uprising, killing the agent N. S. Meeker and seven of his employees and taking his wife, daughter and another woman. They ambushed two hundred soldiers under the command of Major Thornburgh, killing the Major and nine of his men and wounding forty. A treaty was signed and the entire Nation was removed to a reservation in Utah.
1880:

- Western Colorado Ute Indians ceded land and were removed to Utah.
- Western Colorado was officially opened to white settlement after f the Indians had been removed.

1890: Colorado's population exceeded 400,000 when the last major gold strike was made at Cripple Creek.

Counties



The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries – Interactive maps and text covering the historical boundaries, names, organization, and attachments of every county, extinct county and unsuccessful county proposal from the creation of the first county through December 31, 2000. - http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html

Colorado Migration Routes

Arkansas River | Colorado River | Rio Grande | Chisholm Trail | Old Spanish Trail | Santa Fe Trail | Santa Fe Railway | Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad | Union Pacific Railroad
Additional information about migration through Colorado: *Routes in the Central Plains States* - http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tqpeiffer/Documents/Ancestral%20Migration%20Archives/Migration%20Webpage%20Folder/Central%20Plains%20States%20Routes.htm

Colorado Vital Records

Indexes

Historical Records Index – pre-1907 births, divorces 1890 - 1939, some county vital records of various years - https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/archives/archives-search
Ancestry.com – marriage records various counties, state marriage records
Familysearch.org – county and state marriage records, varying years
Western States Marriage Record Index – nearly 6000 marriages in Colorado - http://abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/westernstates/search.cfm

Birth and Death Records

Counties began recording births and deaths in the 1800's. The state began registering births and deaths in 1907.
Contact the **county courthouse** for copies of *pre-1907 birth and death records*.
Colorado Vital Records Office has copies of *birth and death records from 1907 to the present.*

Marriage Records

Counties began recording marriages in the 1800's through 1899.
The state began registering marriages in 1900 through 1939.
From 1940 – 1974, the counties resumed marriage registration.
From 1975 to the present the state again became the registrar of marriages.
Obtain copies of *marriage records dated before 1900* or *between 1940 – 1974* from the **county courthouse.**
Colorado Vital Records Office has copies of *marriage records 1900 to 1939* and *1975 to the present*

Major Colorado Genealogical/Historical Repositories

Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies
Colorado Genealogical Society
Colorado Society of Hispanic Genealogy
Colorado State Archives
Colorado Historical Society
Denver Public Library Western History and Genealogy Department, Central Library
University of Colorado
National Archives Rocky Mountain Region (Denver)
Norlin Library Western Historical Collection Archives

Colorado Genealogy Research Websites

NOTE: Check online for the *GenWeb* and *Genealogy Trails* of the county in which your ancestor lived.

Colorado GenWeb Project - http://cogenweb.com/
Colorado State Archives Index Search – website searches county birth and death registers, a divorce index 1880 - 1939, will and probate records; pay for copies of original records - https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/archives/archives-search
Colorado Trails to the Past - free online genealogical & historical information - http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cotttp/
Denver Public Library Digital Collections – obituaries, mortuary/cemetery indexes, census and tax lists, naturalization files, military, pioneer, marriage and divorce indexes as well as biographies - https://digital.denverlibrary.org/

Fort Collins History Connection – some city directories, telephone books, historic maps, photos, newspaper clippings, oral histories - https://history.fcgov.com/
Larimer County Genealogical Society Databases – index of land transfers in Larimer County between 1862 and 1872; marriage index of Larimer County marriages from 1858 to 1910; digital index and images of obituaries from the Fort Collins Coloradoan, March 1988 to August 2002, in process; http://www.lcgsco.org/county-indexes/
National Archives Denver – order online copies of tract books and land entry case files - https://www.archives.gov/research/order
Online County Histories - http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/countyhistories1.htm#il
Otero County Genealogy and History – databases of some cemetery burials, indexes of 3 county censuses, yearbook transcriptions - http://www.coloradoplains.com/otero/genealogy.htm
Ouray County Historical Marriage Index – index of marriage licenses 1877 through the present - http://ouraycountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/157
Pitkin County: Aspen Historical Society Records – search Pitkin County *marriage records*, over 20 *city directories and telephone books*, 1885 CO *state census*, *tombstone inscriptions* of 4 Pitkin county cemeteries, index of *naturalization records* - http://www.archiveaspen.org/
Rocky Mountain Online Archive - finding aids, detailed descriptions of primary source materials located at twenty-seven different repositories in Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming - https://rmoa.unm.edu/
Roots-L Colorado Resources - Colorado Genealogical and Historical Resources on the Net - http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/roots-l/USA/co.html
Western States Marriage Index – pre-1900 marriage records in Arizona, Idaho and Nevada counties, some records into the 1930's or later – a significant number of marriages from selected counties in California, western Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Utah, eastern Washington, and Wyoming - very early marriages (1700's) in New Mexico are currently being added - http://abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/westernstates/search.cfm

Colorado African American Research

AfricaMap – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data - http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/
AfriGeneas – slave records, death and marriage records, censuses, surnames – chat or send messages to other researchers - http://afrigeneas.com/
Colorado Historic Newspapers – read 2 African American Denver newspapers - the *Statesman* (1905-1912), and *The Denver Star* (1912-1918) – https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/cgi-bin/colorado?a=cl&cl=CL1&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN--------0-
International African American Museum - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories – military records of the U.S. Colored Troops are currently being digitized - https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/
Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery - search thousands of "Information Wanted" advertisements taken out by former slaves in all states searching for family members lost by sale, flight, or enlistment – the collection currently includes newspapers from 1853 to 1911 in GA, IL, LA, MD, OH, PA, SC, TN, VA, Washington DC, and Canada - http://www.informationwanted.org/
Slave Voyages - the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* documents vessels along the Atlantic slave routes from 1514 to 1866; *Intra-American Slave Trade Database* documents vessels traveling between the Atlantic and Pacific ports ranging from the United States to Brazil; the *African Names Database* gives names, ages, possible origins of slaves liberated from captured slave ships between 1808 and 1862 - https://www.slavevoyages.org/

Colorado Cemetery Research

Animas City Cemetery – *DURANGO, LAPLATA COUNTY:* list of burials by name plus dates of birth and death if known and tombstone photo, there may be additional information - http://www.animascitycemetery.org/BurialsAF.html

Riverside Cemetery – *STERLING, LOGAN COUNTY:* search list of burials by name – http://www.sterlingcolo.com/?page_id=78

Colorado Military Research

Colorado DPA Veterans' Grave Registrations, 1862-1949 - www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/military/graves/index.html

Colorado Historical Archives Index Search – includes records of Colorado veterans - https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/archives/archives-search

Grand Army of the Republic Records Project – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - http://suvcw.org/garrecords/

Colorado Native American Research

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center – student records, cemetery information, much related to one of the Sioux tribes - http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/

Native American Tribes of Colorado - http://www.native-languages.org/colorado.htm

Colorado Newspaper Research

Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection – search over 230 individual newspaper titles published in CO from 1859 to 1922 - http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/

Colorado Online Historical Newspapers – names, publication dates, locations of online databases of **Colorado Newspapers** - https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home/usa/co

Information on these pages is compiled from information in:

- *FamilySearch.org* Wiki
- Family Tree Magazine
- *Dick Eastman Genealogy Newsletter; Genealogy Gems from the Allen County Public Library*