



The Centennial State

Established 1876

38th State

EXTREMES

Coldest: The coldest recorded temperature in the state was -61°F (-52°C) at Maybell in 1985.

Hottest: The record high temperature in Colorado was 118°F (48°C) at Bennett in 1888.



Did You Know?

- The Four Corners area, in the southwestern corner of Colorado, is the only place in the United States where four states meet.
- The 13th step of the state capitol building in Denver is exactly 1 mile (1.6 km) above sea level.
- The federal government owns more than one-third of Colorado.
- The United States Air Force Academy is located adjacent to Colorado Springs.
- The view from Pikes Peak inspired Katherine Lee Bates to write "America the Beautiful."
- Colorado was the second state to pass a law allowing women to vote.
- The professional Rodeo Hall of Fame is located in Colorado Springs.
- More than one thousand of Colorado's peaks are over 10,000 feet (3,048 m) high!
- Colorado is known as the "Centennial State" because it joined the union one hundred years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Place

Climate

Colorado has a cool and sunny climate, but the weather can vary greatly depending on elevation and proximity to the mountains. It is much cooler in the Rocky Mountains than in the Great Plains. The average July temperature in the state is 74°F (23°C), and the average January temperature is 28°F (-2°C). Colorado is considered to be a dry state, with an average of only 15 inches (38 cm) of precipitation a year. But at Silver Lake, on 14 April 1921, 76 inches (193 cm) of snow fell within 24 hours, a North American record!

Geography



Colorado is the eighth largest state, with a total area of 104,100 square miles (269,618 sq km). Many people think of snow-capped mountains in Colorado, but only a part of the state is mountainous. Colorado's three main geographical regions include the Rocky Mountains in the central part of the state, the Colorado Plateau in the west, and the Great Plains in the east. The Continental Divide is an imaginary line running along the top of the Rocky Mountains. Rivers on the west side flow toward the Pacific Ocean and those on the east side flow east and south. The state's name comes from the Colorado River. Early explorers called the river *Colorado* (Spanish for "colored red") to refer to its muddy waters. Colorado is the highest of the 50 states, with an average altitude of 6,800 feet (2,073 m).

Resources and Economy

Once primarily a mining and agriculture state, service industries and manufacturing have become increasingly important to the economy. Service businesses include software development, health care, restaurants, and ski resorts. Machinery production, printing and publishing, and food processing, are important manufacturing industries. Many Coloradoans work for the federal government, including national defense. Denver is also a leading financial center. In agriculture, cattle and sheep are raised in large numbers. Corn, wheat, and hay are the leading crops. Important resources include oil, coal, sand and gravel, and uranium. The state's spectacular scenery is popular year-round with tourists, especially skiers, hikers, and campers.

History

Time Line

A.D. 700

A.D. 700 The Anasazi begin building pueblos



1300

1300 The Anasazi abandon Mesa Verde

1600

1682 Eastern Colorado is claimed for France

1706 Juan de Ulibarri claims Colorado for Spain

1800

1803 The United States obtains eastern Colorado as part of the Louisiana Purchase

1806 Zebulon Pike reaches Colorado



1833 Bent's Fort is founded

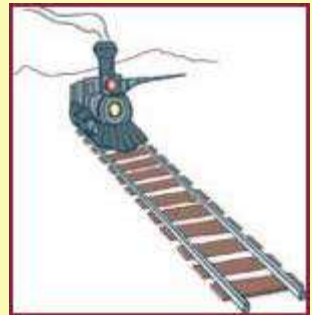
1846 The area north of the Rio Grande is given to the United States by Mexico

1858 The first gold rush in Colorado occurs; Denver is founded

1861 The Colorado Territory is established

1864 Hundreds of Native Americans are killed in the Sand Creek Massacre

1870 The railroads reach Colorado



1876 Colorado becomes the 38th state

1900

1905 The Denver U.S. Mint begins operation



1958 The U.S. Air Force Academy opens



1966 The North American Aerospace Defense
Command (NORAD) is completed

1993 The Denver International Airport opens

PRESENT

Native American Inhabitants

Long before Colorado became a state, Native Americans lived in the area. For example, the Anasazi lived in southern Colorado. Around A.D. 700, they built *pueblos*, or “towns,” much like modern day apartments, in the sides of steep cliffs. These cliff dwellings provided protection from harsh weather and enemy invasion. The pueblos were made of clay bricks and were connected by ladders. Some had more than two hundred rooms. Around 1300, the Anasazi mysteriously left the area, perhaps because of drought, but no one is sure.

The Louisiana Purchase

In 1803, France sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States for \$15 million. The Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the country, included eastern Colorado. Zebulon Pike led the first U.S. expedition to explore the region in 1806. He visited southeastern Colorado and the Rocky Mountains. When he crossed into Spanish territory, he was arrested and accused of spying. After a year, Pike was released. Pikes Peak is named after him.

Trappers and Mountain Men



Mountain men came to present-day Colorado in the early 1800s in search of beaver and other furs. After beaver fur went out of fashion in the 1830s, buffalo robes became popular. The quest for buffalo hides led to one of Colorado's first permanent non-Indian settlements, a trading post called Bent's Fort. Built on the Arkansas River between 1828 and 1833, Bent's Fort became the crossroads of the Southwest. Trappers and Native Americans came to trade hides, get supplies, and exchange information.

Gold Rush

In 1858, William Green Russell, a



Georgia miner, discovered gold in Cherry Creek, near present-day Denver. Once the word got out, prospectors poured into the area in hopes of striking it rich. In just two years, as many as 50,000 people came to find gold. Others arrived in the area to sell supplies, build hotels, and establish schools and churches. Only a few became wealthy by panning for gold, but the search for gold, as well as silver, led to the establishment of permanent settlements in Colorado.

Sand Creek Massacre



As miners, ranchers, and other settlers moved into the area, it created problems for the Native Americans who lived there. The whites killed the buffalo, which the Native Americans depended upon for food, clothing, and shelter. They also repeatedly ignored treaties and pushed native inhabitants off their lands. This sometimes led to conflicts between whites and Native Americans. One of the most unfortunate incidents occurred at Sand Creek in 1864. Colonel John Chivington led the First and Third Colorado Cavalries in an attack on a camp of sleeping Cheyenne and Arapaho who had been promised that they would be safe. The troops killed 150 Native Americans, including many unarmed elderly, women, and children.

Colorado's Water Supply

Because of its dry climate, Colorado's water supply has long been an issue of concern. There are several problems. One is getting water from where it is to where it needs to be. While most of the state's rain falls on the western side of the Rockies, the majority of the population lives on the eastern side. Also, most of the farmland is in the east. Another problem is that Colorado has to compete with other western states for water. The Colorado River provides water for seven states and Mexico. In dry years, it is difficult to find enough water for everyone. Colorado's increasing population only complicates matters.

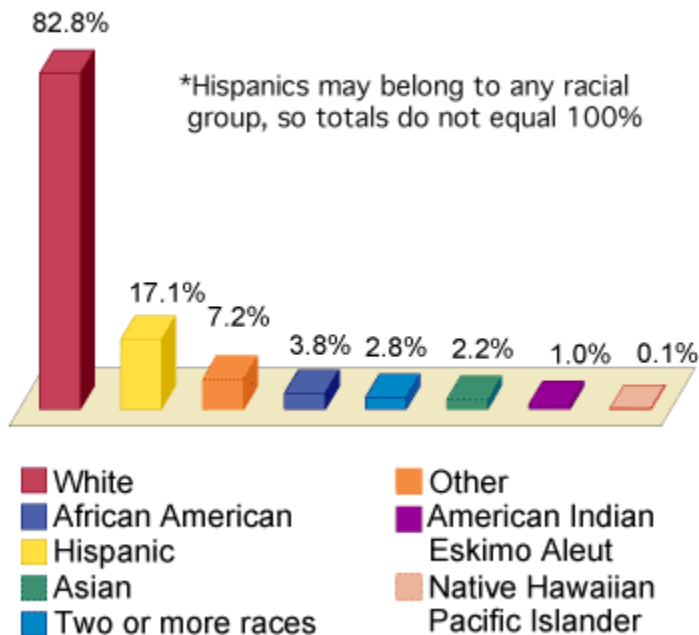
The People

Population

Colorado is one of the fastest-growing states. The vast majority of Coloradoans (more

than 80 percent) live on the eastern side of the Rockies in such cities as Denver, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, and Pueblo. More than 80 percent of the population is white and of European descent. Many early Coloradoans came from Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Scandinavia, and Germany to farm and mine. However, the percentage of minorities is increasing. Hispanics currently make up the largest minority group in the state.

Total Population: 4,506,452



Government

Capital: Denver

U.S. Senators: 2

U.S. Representatives: 7

Counties: 63

- Colorado has had only one constitution since achieving statehood in 1876, but the constitution has been amended many times.
- Colorado casts nine electoral votes in presidential elections.

Famous People

- *Byron White* — Supreme Court justice
- *Helen Hunt Jackson* — Writer
- *John Denver* — Singer
- *John Elway* — Professional football player
- *Kit Carson* — Trapper and scout
- *Lon Chaney* — Actor
- *Lowell Thomas* — Commentator
- *M. Scott Carpenter* — Astronaut
- *Margaret (Molly) Brown* — Survivor of the *Titanic*
- *Ouray* — Ute Indian chief
- *Tim Allen* — Actor and comedian

State Symbols

State Animal

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep—The horns of the Rocky Mountain sheep can be as long as 50 inches (127 cm).



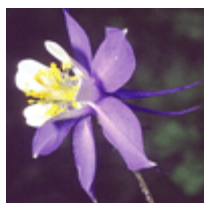
State Bird

Lark bunting—This migratory bird was adopted as the official state bird on 29 April 1931.



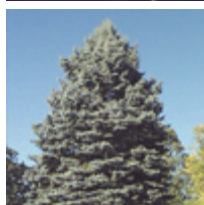
State Flower

Rocky Mountain columbine—The law prohibits people from digging up this rare flower on public lands.



State Tree

Colorado blue spruce—The Colorado blue spruce was first discovered on Pikes Peak in 1862.



Cultural Note



The first skiers in Colorado were probably miners who came to the state in the 1800s from Norway and Sweden. They used handmade skis to get around in the deep, powdery mountain snow. Sometimes early settlers used skis to deliver the mail. Today, skiing is a multi-billion dollar industry in Colorado, with more than two-dozen resorts. Downhill and cross-country skiing are popular, as well as snowboarding. The resorts are also open in the summer for conventions and for outdoor enthusiasts.

For More Information

See www.colorado.gov or contact the Colorado Tourism Office, 2370 South Trenton Way, Denver, CO 80231; phone (800) COLORADO; web site www.colorado.com.