



C O L O R A D O

Heritage

The Magazine of History Colorado

Winter 2017/18

The Centennial State in
ZOOM IN 100 Objects

100 Objects.
100 Portals to the Past.

Presented by
Colorado State University

"Mr. Folk Music": Walt Conley
and Colorado's Folk Revival

Azalia Smith Hackley:
Musical Prodigy and
Pioneering Journalist

Tony's Conoco:
A Lasting Symbol
of Crested Butte



At the History Colorado Center

Winter 2017/18

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All images are from the collections of History Colorado unless otherwise noted.

For additional content, see h-co.org/blogs and medium.com/@Colorado-Heritage-Extras

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Send any new books or booklets about Colorado, for listing and possible review, to:

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THE COLORADO ENCYCLOPEDIA

Did you know? More than 100 *Colorado Heritage* articles have been adapted for the *Colorado Encyclopedia*—a new online resource where you can find a wealth of information about Colorado history. What's in this twenty-first-century reference work on the Centennial State? Find out at ColoradoEncyclopedia.org.



Like many mid-century Americans, Golden resident Ray V. Frost loved his camera. A master brewer at Coors Brewing Company during the workweek, Frost spent his weekends and vacations behind the lens. From the 1950s through the mid-1980s, he took thousands of color slides of his road trips and his skiing, hiking, and mountaineering adventures throughout Colorado. Slide collections by amateur photographers like Frost may seem commonplace, but they're actually quite significant; photos like his offer some of the best glimpses of our state's rapid economic and social changes during the mid-twentieth century—including views of bygone fashions, fads, and places. This color slide captures Frost's friend Cliff Evans standing in the "parking lot" of the Berthoud Pass Lodge on April 19, 1953, at the now-defunct Berthoud Pass ski area.

2014.33.77

To order a scan or print of this image, or to see more Ray V. Frost photos from our collection, visit the History Colorado Online Collection at h-co.org/collections.



Zooming in to Make Connections with the Past

Have you seen *Zoom In* yet? Our newest History Colorado Center exhibition, *Zoom In: The Centennial State in 100 Objects*, has been drawing in visitors who've been anxious to see more of our artifacts make their way into the galleries.

Presented by Colorado State University, *Zoom In* has also generated a lot of buzz in the press. In *The Denver Post*, Ray Mark Rinaldi calls the exhibition a "moving tribute to the place we call home." He points out that our exhibit developers "combed through their archives and connected with community groups to select the lineup." The resulting array of artifacts "brings us closer to our past and more aware of the present. Native and newcomer, it unites us."

In her own recent cover story, longtime *Westword* editor Patty Calhoun calls *Zoom In* "a true object lesson in Colorado history." She writes that the exhibition brings out "a variety of objects all designed to give visitors a taste of Colorado's wide-ranging past, and to encourage them to tell their own stories inspired by the collection." She adds that the exhibition is doing just what we'd hoped: "*Zoom In* has exceeded History Colorado's expectations, not only bringing people in, but inspiring them to return."

In the meantime, we're busily planning the next experience at the History Colorado Center. Though we're still in the

depths of winter, we're looking ahead to spring and one of Colorado's favorite pastimes: baseball. *Play Ball!*

A Celebration of America's Game opens in conjunction with the Colorado Rockies' home-opening weekend in April and showcases collector Marshall Fogel's holdings of genuine baseball memorabilia. It's one of the largest collections of baseball artifacts outside the Hall of Fame, and what you'll see is simply amazing.

Watch for more about *Play Ball!* in the March/April issue of our program calendar, *Explore*. For now, enjoy what's left of winter, and we hope to see you among the visitors leaning in for a closer look at their past in *Zoom In*.

Steve W. Turner, Executive Director



A Correction: In our last issue (Fall 2017), we incorrectly identified the father of Denver's Harvey Park neighborhood as Fred "Tex" Harvey. The correct name is Arthur "Tex" Harvey.



MISSION

History Colorado
*inspires generations
to find wonder and
meaning in our past
and to engage in
creating a better
Colorado.*

OUR SITES

HistoryColorado.org/discover-colorado/museums

History Colorado Center

1200 Broadway, Denver
303/HISTORY

Byers-Evans House Museum

1310 Bannock Street, Denver
303/620-4933

El Pueblo History Museum

301 North Union, Pueblo
719/583-0453

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719/379-3512

Fort Vasquez

13412 U.S. 85, Platteville
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appointment.

Trinidad History Museum

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719/846-7217

Ute Indian Museum

17253 Chipeta Road, Montrose
Expanded museum now open!
970/249-3098

Above: Ballot box, 1884, El Paso County Precinct 94, Colorado Springs. Gift, Niles L. Dingman, H.7300.1. On view in *Zoom In*.

From the Hart . . .

A Dark and Stormy Night

Compiled by the staff of the Hart Research Library

A project of the Civil Works Administration in 1933–34, the CWA Pioneer Interviews include memories from residents living all over Colorado, some recalling events as far back as territorial days. The library is digitizing the interviews with help from volunteers Richard Harvey and Mary Burdick, and scanned copies of most interviews are available to view online.

Here, Etta Rouse Shannon Monroe recalls some tense moments from the early days of Logan County, in Colorado's northeastern corner.

One of the most outstanding and terrible experiences happened one evening when father and the older children were all away from home. . . . There had been a terrific storm in the evening about six o'clock which had prevented us from getting our cows and calves corralled for the night. Fearing what the wolves and coyotes might do to our little calves, and after the first of the storm had subsided, mother and the three children started out in search of the cattle that had drifted.

"Going barefoot through the day, we slipped our shoes over [our] bare feet, tied old white towels or rags over our heads, and went up over the hill toward the west. No cattle being in sight, we traveled further than was wise and mother said we should look no more that night. Another dark cloud was gathering and night fell suddenly. Turning toward home, a dispute arose as to which was the right direction, there being neither fences nor houses near, unfortunately the wrong direction was taken and we never did find home that night.

Mrs. Etta Rouse Shannon Monroe

The town of Proctor in Logan County. 10054907



"One of the most terrific electric and dashing rain storms came on us and we wandered all night on a prairie where were numerous open wells, snakes, coyotes, and wolves. We became so tired and sleepy that we would squat down in a circle—the ground being too wet to sit on—and take turns imitating the bark of a dog, thinking by that means it might keep away the prowling animals. . . .

"At daybreak we found ourselves about four miles due west of our house. After getting our bearings and finally reaching home, we stripped and piled into bed, and the great surprise was that none seemed the worse off, no, not even mother. The cattle were grazing quietly about a half mile up the Hielscher draw. This was a beautiful right Sabbath morning, after that terrible, dark night, and mother said, 'No Sunday School for us today.' God watched over his own that night; Divine Providence Guards."

To read Etta Monroe's full interview (PAM 341-23), go to "CWA Pioneer Interviews" at HistoryColorado.org/cwa-research-projects. Etta's interview starts on page 86 of Logan County, volume 341.

History Colorado's research library is now the

Hart Research Library at History Colorado

and is open four additional hours per week:

Wednesday–Saturday, 10 am–3 pm. Open to

the public, the library provides access to an

unparalleled collection of archives, artifacts, and

photographs that document Colorado's history.

Our website—HistoryColorado.org/library—includes

links to our online catalogs and services. For remote

assistance, email us at cosearch@state.co.us.

How Did We Become COLORADO?

How has our state been shaped by the people who came before us? What can we learn from the things they left behind? These were a few of the questions that drove a team of History Colorado staff, local historians and other scholars, and tribal representatives and consultants in developing History Colorado's newest core exhibit,

Zoom In: The Centennial

State in 100 Objects, presented by Colorado State University.

History Colorado's vast collections contain over fifteen million items, including physical artifacts, photographs and moving images, and archival documents. Our goal was to showcase some of these items and provide an overview of Colorado's rich human history. The one hundred objects selected for the exhibit represent Coloradans—both famous and

unknown—whose contributions to our state have made it into the place we know today. In choosing these artifacts, the exhibit team selected objects that serve as portals to our shared past, connecting us to individual stories that help us understand who we are today and who we want to become tomorrow.

Made in Colorado: Products and Innovation

Colorado has always been a home for innovation and creativity. From the Gold Rush to the twenty-first century, Coloradans have been making iconic products and building successful businesses. These objects highlight Coloradans' entrepreneurial spirit and define our state as a leader in some of the nation's most innovative industries.

Above: Rocky Mountain National Park wooden plaque, Roger Wolcott Toll, about 1927. Loan, Rocky Mountain National Park Museum. IL.2017.26.1

BY JULIE PETERSON

In 1858, one lucky prospector found gold south of Denver, setting off the Pikes Peak gold rush. By the next year, over a hundred thousand gold-seekers poured into the state in search of wealth in the Rocky Mountains, including Wilbur Fisk Stone. He crossed the Plains from Indiana to Colorado in 1860 and worked a placer mine in South Park. By 1865 he'd amassed enough gold to cast a 5.6-ounce bar at the US Branch Mint at Denver, which at the time operated in the old Clark, Gruber & Co Bank and Mint. Like other newcomers to Colorado, Stone worked hard to transform the region's rich mineral ores into cold, hard wealth. He went on to a prolific career as a territorial judge, a member of the Colorado Supreme Court, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1876, and author of a two-volume history of Colorado.

Other objects speak to the agricultural production that drove our state's economy in the past and continues to contribute to its economic success today. At the turn of the twentieth century, sugar beet production was the single most important agricultural industry in the state. Immigrant laborers—first Germans, and then Latino workers moving into northern Colorado from the southern part of the state—harvested beets to be processed into table sugar in huge factories. The Western Slope is famous for its peaches, their juicy goodness celebrated at an annual festival and



Above: Ancestral Puebloan basketry tray, AD 900–1100, coiled willow and yucca, feather quill. Wetherill Collection. O.612.1

Mauro Special women's safety bicycle, 1898–1902, Americo Mauro, Denver. Gift, Ben and Barbara Jordan. 98.274.1



known nationwide. The beet topper, used to tear the green leafy tops from the valuable root, and the set of peach crate labels from Mesa and nearby counties, exemplify the state's agricultural heritage.

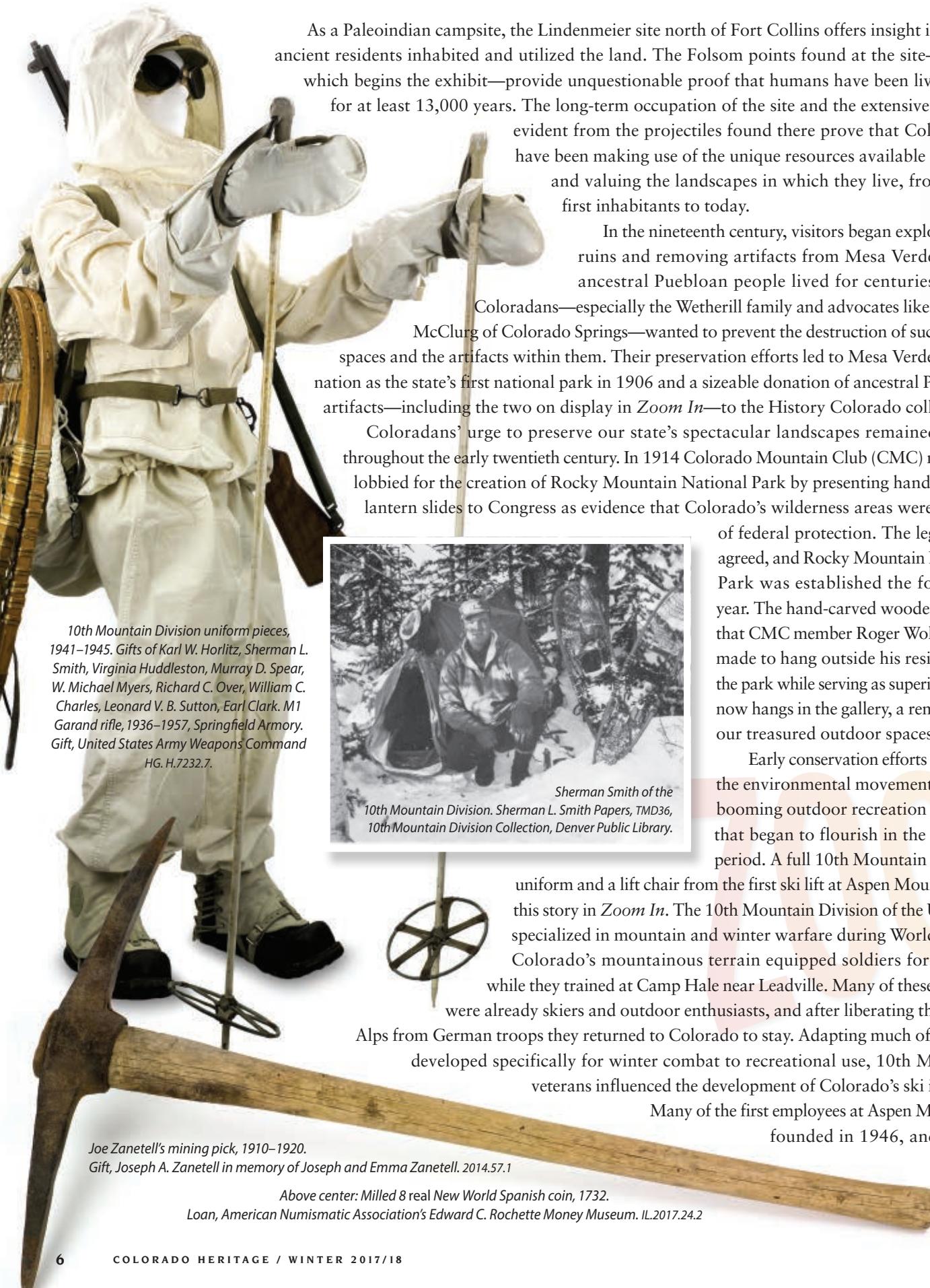
Colorado products are not without controversy. In 1952, the Rocky Flats Nuclear Plant between Golden and Boulder began producing bomb parts made of plutonium. Workers

handled radioactive triggers with anti-contamination gloves like the pair in History Colorado's collection, now on display in *Zoom In*. Fears that the radioactive material would contaminate local waterways and pollute the air downwind of the plant catalyzed years of protests, culminating in an FBI raid of the facility in 1989. No longer producing plutonium, the government shifted to site cleanup in the 1990s, and in 2007 designated Rocky Flats a National Wildlife Refuge. While the materials made at Rocky Flats certainly were a topic of debate, there's no doubt that Colorado-made products have had a lasting impact on our history.



The Land We Love: Conservation, Environmentalism, and Recreation

The Colorado landscape inspires pride in residents and draws visitors from all over. Whether taking advantage of the natural resources available when humans first occupied the area or enjoying the abundant sunshine and gorgeous scenery today, people in Colorado have always had a special relationship with our land.



As a Paleoindian campsite, the Lindenmeier site north of Fort Collins offers insight into how ancient residents inhabited and utilized the land. The Folsom points found at the site—one of which begins the exhibit—provide unquestionable proof that humans have been living here for at least 13,000 years. The long-term occupation of the site and the extensive hunting evident from the projectiles found there prove that Coloradans have been making use of the unique resources available to them, and valuing the landscapes in which they live, from those first inhabitants to today.

In the nineteenth century, visitors began exploring the ruins and removing artifacts from Mesa Verde, where ancestral Puebloan people lived for centuries. Many Coloradans—especially the Wetherill family and advocates like Virginia McClurg of Colorado Springs—wanted to prevent the destruction of such sacred spaces and the artifacts within them. Their preservation efforts led to Mesa Verde's designation as the state's first national park in 1906 and a sizeable donation of ancestral Puebloan artifacts—including the two on display in *Zoom In*—to the History Colorado collection.

Coloradans' urge to preserve our state's spectacular landscapes remained strong throughout the early twentieth century. In 1914 Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) members lobbied for the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park by presenting hand-colored lantern slides to Congress as evidence that Colorado's wilderness areas were worthy

of federal protection. The legislature agreed, and Rocky Mountain National Park was established the following year. The hand-carved wooden plaque that CMC member Roger Wolcott Toll made to hang outside his residence in the park while serving as superintendent now hangs in the gallery, a reminder of our treasured outdoor spaces.

Early conservation efforts presaged the environmental movement and the booming outdoor recreation industry that began to flourish in the postwar period. A full 10th Mountain Division

uniform and a lift chair from the first ski lift at Aspen Mountain tell this story in *Zoom In*. The 10th Mountain Division of the US Army specialized in mountain and winter warfare during World War II. Colorado's mountainous terrain equipped soldiers for combat while they trained at Camp Hale near Leadville. Many of these soldiers were already skiers and outdoor enthusiasts, and after liberating the Italian Alps from German troops they returned to Colorado to stay. Adapting much of the gear developed specifically for winter combat to recreational use, 10th Mountain veterans influenced the development of Colorado's ski industry.

Many of the first employees at Aspen Mountain, founded in 1946, and one of

Joe Zanetell's mining pick, 1910–1920.

Gift, Joseph A. Zanetell in memory of Joseph and Emma Zanetell. 2014.57.1

Above center: Milled 8 real New World Spanish coin, 1732.

Loan, American Numismatic Association's Edward C. Rochette Money Museum. IL.2017.24.2

the founders of Vail Mountain, established in 1962, were members of the famed mountain warfare division. These veterans' passion for hitting Colorado's powdery slopes fueled an industry that still drives Colorado's economy and defines the state's cultural identity today.

Social and Civic Reform: Labor, Suffrage, and Civil Rights

Some of the most compelling objects in *Zoom In*

reveal how Coloradans responded to and rose above controversy, crisis, and fear. Residents sought to make their cities safer through civic reforms that improved the quality of life in the nineteenth century. Coloradans were some of the earliest advocates for women's suffrage and labor reforms during the Progressive Era. Our state continues to be on the forefront of social change today.

In the 1860s, cities like Denver boomed with prospectors and merchants hoping to strike it rich in the Rockies. Yet the haphazard development spurred by the gold rush made boomtowns vulnerable to catastrophe. A massive fire broke out in Denver in 1863, destroying most of the fledgling city's downtown. After the fire, Denver residents formed the first volunteer fire department, members of which wore helmets like the one on display in the exhibit. Civil institutions like this, as well as laws like the "Brick Ordinance," which required downtown structures to be built from brick or stone rather than wood, ensured the city would endure beyond the boom.

As a state full of cyclists, certainly one of our hundred artifacts would be a bicycle. More than just another symbol of our love of outdoor recreation, however, this turn-of-the-century Mauro Special tells the story of women's suffrage in Colorado. Arriving in the state in 1869, bicycles immediately became popular among middle-class men, but women soon embraced the two-wheelers as a means to greater independence. Wearing split-skirt suits, suffragists rode bikes like the Mauro Special—manufactured with details specifically for women including a low crossbar and a net to prevent clothing from getting tangled in the wheels—during their campaign to win the right to vote. In 1893 their efforts paid off; Colorado became the first state in the nation to give women the vote through a popular referendum.

Despite making progress in areas like civic reform and women's suffrage, Colorado's working class still struggled at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Laborers like coal miner Joe Zanetell battled bosses over

fair wages and safe working conditions. Zanetell joined a strike against the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company in 1913. After being evicted from company housing, the Zanetell family moved into a United Mine Workers union tent in Forbes. In March 1914 Emma Zanetell gave birth to stillborn twins. While members of the camp were away burying the babies, the Colorado militia set fire to the camp. Emma, too weak to move, was spared only when one soldier refused to allow another to set her tent ablaze. Violence continued as the militia burned another miners' camp at Ludlow in April, leaving eleven children among the dead. Zanetell's pick, inscribed with his initials, is a heart-wrenching reminder of the challenges facing the working class in the early twentieth century.

Today, Colorado continues to lead the nation in social reforms. Though sometimes controversially, we as a state have moved forward with many social changes, including civil unions for same-sex couples and the legalization of recreational marijuana. Artifacts representing these changes—a civil union license from 2013, the year Governor Hickenlooper signed the Colorado Civil Unions Act, and a water pipe from the Denver County Fair in 2014, the first year Coloradans could legally purchase recreational marijuana—bring the story of how Coloradans influence social change right up to the present day.

These artifacts are more than mere objects. They're portals to our shared past. They give us a chance to take in the breadth of our state's human history and allow us to imagine our future. The objects on display in *Zoom In* provide insight into how Coloradans have made this place what it is today, and guide us toward who we want to become tomorrow.

JULIE PETERSON, an exhibit developer and researcher at the History Colorado Center, was the lead exhibit developer for *Zoom In*. A Colorado native, she holds a master's in public history from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Prior to coming to History Colorado, she worked on the award-winning exhibit *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration* at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site in Philadelphia.

Right: Molly Brown's opera cloak, 1915–1920, Paris, France. H.5899.1

AZALIA SMITH HACKLEY

MUSICAL PRODIGY AND PIONEERING

JOURNALIST

The event of the week was the recital of Mme. E. Azalia Hackley at Zion Church Monday night. Seven years have passed since she left the city yet for months talks of her coming [have] pervaded musical circles and spread throughout the masses and classes of the city.

BY ANN SNEESBY-KOCH

It is in a rare tribute to her personality and to the value of the work she did while here that so much personal interest was taken in the success of her recital. And hours before the time of opening crowds surrounded the doors of the church and standing room was all that was left by the time of the opening number.

—The Statesman, June 6, 1908



By all accounts, and there are several, Emma Azalia Smith Hackley was a remarkable woman. She was born in 1867 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where her mother, the daughter of a freed slave, founded a school for former slaves and their children. Forced to close the school by Murfreesboro's white community, the Smith family moved to Detroit, Michigan. There, Azalia Smith, the first black student to attend Central High School, developed her prodigious musical talent in violin, piano, and vocal skills. She contributed to her family's income by singing and playing piano at high school dances. Azalia graduated with honors and was selected to perform at her school's commencement ceremony. Sharing news of this opportunity with her mother, Azalia said, "My heart nearly jumped out of my breast when Miss J. informed me that the class song I wrote had been chosen and that I was to play it."

In 1883, Azalia Smith became the first African American student admitted to Washington Normal School. There, she studied and worked, giving music lessons and playing at clubs with dance orchestras. After graduating in 1886, she took a position teaching second-grade students in a public school and was soon promoted to teach the fourth grade. Meanwhile, she continued to study voice and violin as well as French. In the evenings, Azalia performed, singing as a member of the Detroit Musical Society. She was the first black woman to do so, but as she once said, "Merit and grit, my dear—not color—count most."

Azalia was introduced to Denver attorney Edwin Henry Hackley while attending a performance by Sissieretta Jones, the African American soprano. The next evening she wrote to a friend, "Yes, I have met him. My mate, I mean. I am sure of it." Azalia and Edwin quickly struck up a correspondence, which went on for five years until the couple eventually eloped in January 1894. Azalia and Edwin returned to Colorado, where Edwin was an impressive figure in his own right, particularly in Colorado politics and publishing.

Edwin Hackley was a lawyer, educated at the University of Michigan. He was not only admitted to the Michigan Bar but was the first African American lawyer admitted to the Colorado Bar. While in Denver, Edwin joined Joseph D. D.

Musician and educator Azalia Hackley (shown in Detroit in 1893) turned her talents to writing and activism while in Denver—founding a branch of the Colored Women's League and serving as editor of the women's section of the Statesman, a preeminent African American newspaper of the West. Photo by Alfred G. McMichael. Courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts, Detroit Public Library.

Rivers—a former student of Booker T. Washington at the Hampton Institute—to form the *Colorado Statesman* newspaper (alternately known as the *Denver Statesman*), the first iteration of what later became the *Statesman* and eventually *The Denver Star*. Founded in 1889, with Hackley serving as editor in 1892, the *Statesman* became the preeminent paper by which the African American communities of Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and other regions of the West could "voice their opinions, assert their rights, and demand their due recognition." Hackley also originated the American Citizens' Constitutional Union, "designed to unite the efforts of the colored people in all parts of the country for the advancement of their rights and opportunities."

Shortly after her wedding, Azalia Smith Hackley enrolled in the Denver University School of Music. In 1900, she became the first black student to graduate from the program. Celebrating her accomplishment, the *Statesman* reported, "Mrs. Hackley . . . is the pride of the faculty and college and one of the most thoroughly educated musicians of her race."

Racial pride and activism were important to both of the Hackleys. Even as she pursued her music degree and served as her church's choir director and as assistant director of a large Denver choir, she devoted time to black organizations. She founded a branch of the Colored Women's League in Denver and as editor of the women's section of the *Statesman*—called the *Exponent*—she advanced the league's agenda. In one column, Hackley wrote:

In mapping out this program we have borne in mind the great need for thought and talk on the practical as well as cultural side of woman's life. Our first work will be toward the education and improvement of our Colored women and the promotion of their interests.

These interests, as discussed in the pages of the *Statesman Exponent*, included "Hygiene, Current Events, Civil Government, Importance and Compiling Facts about the Negro, English Literature and Literature on the Negro, Household Economies, [and the] Influence of Music in the Negro Home and on Youth." In 1916, after leaving Denver and the *Statesman*, Azalia wrote *The Colored Girl Beautiful*, a compilation of informal talks she'd given at boarding schools such as the Tuskegee Institute. Thought to be the first etiquette book written especially for young women of color, *The Colored Girl Beautiful* addressed topics ranging

**"To Denver,
I owe much—
to its schools,
its churches,
its people."**

from “The Laws of Attraction,” “Love,” “Personal Appearance,” and “Deep Breathing” to “Originality” and “Youth and Maturing.” In the book’s introduction, Azalia wrote:

If I had a daughter I would desire that she should know these things and more, that she might be a beacon light to her home and to the race. As I have not been blessed with a daughter, I send these thoughts to the daughters of other colored women, hoping that among them there is some new thought worthy of a racial “Amen.”

Meanwhile, back in Denver in 1899, Azalia performed publicly to great acclaim. *The Denver Post* reported in October of that year:

Mrs. Hackley is considered one of the best vocalists in the city. Under her direction Denver is doing more musical work among the Colored people than any other city in the West . . . [and] her concerts draw audiences that fill the churches to the door.

Azalia was a proponent of music as a means of advancing and promoting racial pride. She once said, “I want my concerts to be more than a mere evening of musical enjoyment; I want to plan them so that the youth may be inspired, stimulated, and trained at the same time.” And by *youth*, she made it clear that she meant African American youth in particular.

By 1900, Edwin Hackley had sold the *Statesman* to G. F. Franklin, who, along with his wife and son, published the *Statesman-cum-Denver Star* well into the 1910s. After selling the paper, Edwin turned his attentions to practicing law. With Azalia’s assistance he organized the Imperial Order of Libyans—a fraternal, patriotic, racial, militant, benevolent organization, which worked toward the “dissipation of social bigotry and the combating of racial prejudice, the equalization of citizenship and the cultivation of patriotism.”

Together, Azalia and Edwin were movers and shakers in Denver’s African American community—socially, politically, and culturally. In 1901, however, Azalia left Edwin and moved to Philadelphia to continue her career as a notable choral director. She received particular acclaim for her direction of the 100-member People’s Chorus (later renamed the Hackley Choral). Eventually, she moved to Paris to study voice under a well-known opera singer and vocal coach.

Azalia Smith Hackley’s celebrated return to Denver in 1908 encapsulates the significant role she played in nurturing the arts and culture among both the black and white communities of Denver, as well as her tireless advocacy on behalf of African Americans in the West. Likewise, Denver had an important place in Azalia’s professional and personal development: “With Denver has come breadth and real living,” Hackley wrote. “Before it there was no assurance of serious, purposeful work. To Denver, I owe much—to its schools, its churches, its people . . .”

Emma Azalia Smith Hackley—musical prodigy, teacher, newspaper editor, community organizer, author, and activist—spent her life promoting black music and training black musicians. She founded the Vocal Normal Institute in Chicago and organized the Folk Songs Festivals movement in African American schools and churches throughout the South. She traveled far and wide, even visiting Tokyo, where she introduced black folk music to an international audience at the World Sunday School Convention.

Azalia died in 1922 in Detroit. The Detroit Public Library established the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts in her honor.

Above: Photographers Jones & Lehman of Arapahoe Street in Denver made this cabinet card portrait of Azalia Hackley in 1897. Courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts, Detroit Public Library.

Facing: The Statesman of June 6, 1908, celebrated Azalia Hackley on the occasion of her recital at Zion Baptist Church in Denver. “The appearance of Mme. Hackley, naturally, was the feature of the evening,” the paper wrote.





THE STATESMAN

State Historian & Natl
Hist Society

TWENTIETH YEAR

DENVER, COLORADO, SATURDAY JUNE 6 1908

FIVE CENTS A COPY

DENVER HONORS MME HACKLEY

The event of the week was the recital of Mme. E. Azalia Hackley at Zion Church Monday night. Seven years have passed since she left the city, yet for months talk of her coming has pervaded musical circles and spread throughout the masses and classes of the city. It is a rare tribute to her personality and to the value of the work she did while here that so much personal interest was taken in the success of her recital. An hour before the time of opening crowds surrounded the doors of the church and standing room was all that was left by the time of the opening number.



MME. E. AZALIA HACKLEY.

It was an audience that was attuned to the occasion. Evening gowns and full dress suits were plentiful and the absolute quiet that prevailed throughout the renditions of the various numbers bespoke as much as the applause the deep interest and perfect delight of the hearers. The admission price could have been much higher so well did Mme. Hackley please the audience.

The decorations lent a festal appearance to the auditorium. The Azalia Hackley Choral Club colors of blue and white hung from the chandeliers, and were festooned in front of the church and in the choir nave, while palms and flowers were used effectively.

The club of thirty-five members occupied the choir loft and platform, and the concert grand piano was placed on the floor. The ladies in their light dresses made a very pretty picture.

The program gave great delight. The choruses of the club were sung with great precision and tunefulness and reflect splendid teaching on the part of Mr. A. A. Waller, and hard work on the part of its members. There is no organization like the club west of Chicago, and it deserves the highest praise for the perseverance in choral work.

The ladies quartet was especially good.

Mrs. Morris read, with her wonted taste and style.

The piano duett rendered by Mrs. Faulkner and Mr. McGruder was particularly good.

The violin solo by Mr. Morgan Jackson, promises a brilliant future.

The solo of Mr. A. A. Waller was greatly enjoyed.

The splendid accompaniment of Mrs. Faulkner added to the success of the program.

The appearance of Mme. Hackley, naturally, was the feature of the evening and she was given an ovation.

It speaks well for Denver's musical taste that the selections sung in Italian and French were as enthusiastically applauded as the English songs.

Mme. Hackley was most becomingly attired, and her Paris gown was greatly admired.

Mrs. Eliza Dishman presented a bouquet in behalf of the club, and Mrs. Lillie Moore, in a neat speech, presented another in behalf of Zion Baptist choir, of which Mme. Hackley was director for nearly six years. Some of the practical friends gave presents of money instead of flowers.

After the recital the friends went to the platform to meet the artist, and the evening closed with one of the most ambitious and successful efforts, not only in Zion Baptist church, but in Denver's history. No expense had been

Continued on page eight

For Further Reading

Many of the quotes in this essay attributed to Azalia Smith Hackley come from M. Marguerite Davenport's *Azalia: The Life of Madame E. Azalia Hackley* (Boston: Chapman & Grimes, 1947). It can be found online at HathiTrust (hathitrust.org). Azalia Smith Hackley's book, *The Colored Girl Beautiful* (Kansas City, Mo.: Burton Publishing Company, 1916) is also available online at The Internet Archive (archive.org). The Hart Research Library at History Colorado holds microfilm for *The Statesman* (later published as the *Denver Star*) from 1905 to 1918. The newspaper has been digitized by the Colorado Digital Newspaper Project and is online in the Library of Congress Chronicling America database (chroniclingamerica.gov) and the Colorado State Library's Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection (coloradohistoricnewspapers.org).

The E. Azalia Hackley Collection of African Americans in the Performing Arts is housed at the Detroit Public Library: detroitpubliclibrary.org.

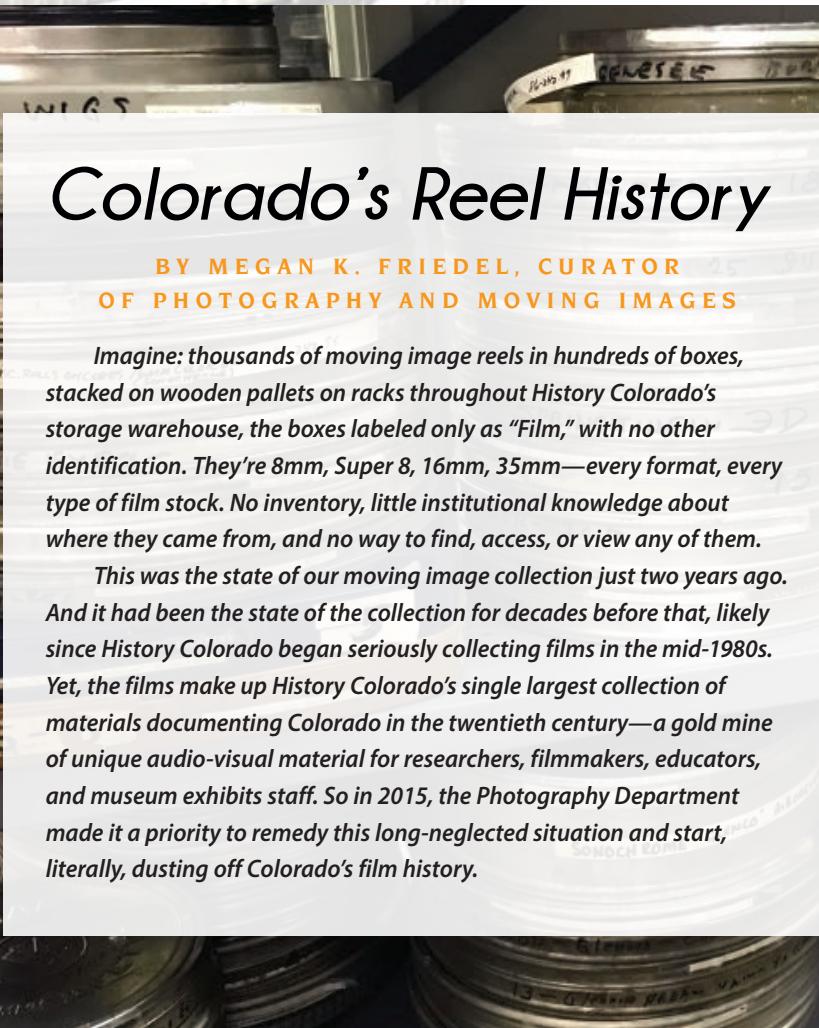
ANN SNEESBY-KOCH is a digital librarian and the project manager for the Colorado Digital Newspaper Project at the Hart Research Library at History Colorado.

February is
African American
History Month!



Spotlight On . . .

The Moving Image Collection



Colorado's Reel History

BY MEGAN K. FRIEDEL, CURATOR
OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND MOVING IMAGES

Imagine: thousands of moving image reels in hundreds of boxes, stacked on wooden pallets on racks throughout History Colorado's storage warehouse, the boxes labeled only as "Film," with no other identification. They're 8mm, Super 8, 16mm, 35mm—every format, every type of film stock. No inventory, little institutional knowledge about where they came from, and no way to find, access, or view any of them.

This was the state of our moving image collection just two years ago. And it had been the state of the collection for decades before that, likely since History Colorado began seriously collecting films in the mid-1980s. Yet, the films make up History Colorado's single largest collection of materials documenting Colorado in the twentieth century—a gold mine of unique audio-visual material for researchers, filmmakers, educators, and museum exhibits staff. So in 2015, the Photography Department made it a priority to remedy this long-neglected situation and start, literally, dusting off Colorado's film history.



Working once a week—from July 2015 through this past summer—that staff managed to haul down and comb through every single box of film in our warehouse. We noted the format of each reel, its condition, and any identifying information (titles or other notations) written on the canisters or leaders. Where possible, we

threaded films onto a homemade rewind bench and manually scrolled through them, looking at frames through a loupe to identify subject matter and

credits. After two full years of this work, we finished a complete inventory of History Colorado's moving image collection last August. Catalog records for more than 400 of the films are now available online at the History Colorado Online Collections website, and over 1,500 other films we've held in deposit for decades are under review for acquisition.

What treasures emerged from this inventory process? We now know that History Colorado's moving image collection holds: films from the 1940s to the 1970s that promote Colorado businesses and tourism; home movies of Colorado families' road trips, weddings, and birthdays; Estes Park photographer Fred Payne Clatworthy's 1930s-era films of mountaineering in Rocky Mountain National Park; mid-century educational films about Colorado history produced

by the Colorado Historical Society (today's History Colorado); and many other subjects.

The unquestionable stars are, however, two television news footage collections from historic Denver stations: KWGN-TV (Channel 2) and KOA/KCNC-TV (Channel 4). Together, more than 15,000 reels of 16mm footage cover nightly news broadcasts from 1961 to 1980—in other words, hundreds of thousands of local and national events over two significant decades. Though Collections staff have completely organized and made accessible the KWGN collection and are working on doing the same for the KOA reels, we've barely scratched the surface of what this footage documents. What we have found, though, is priceless: for instance, footage of the Beatles in Denver for their historic gig at Red Rocks in August 1964, licensed recently from History Colorado for Ron Howard's 2016 documentary, *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week—The Touring Years*.

Because of the age of the original films, most of the moving image collection is too fragile to be projected by staff or researchers. The safest way to view the collection is for staff to digitize the reels and provide access online to reduce handling and wear and tear of the films. We have to send the films out to a digitization contractor—a process that gets very expensive very fast. But thanks to a 2015 grant from the Volunteers of History Colorado, we received financial support to start the digitization process with thirty films from the collection. The Kenneth King Foundation also provided support for digitizing nine home movies made by the foundation's namesake. A philanthropist, Denver businessman, and amateur filmmaker, Kenneth King recorded the footage in Denver and near his second home in the Yukon Territory between 1947 and 1971. Other researchers and private donors have provided support to digitize additional individual reels from the moving image collection.

Thanks to all of these efforts, we're thrilled to announce that we now have forty-four films online for viewing on History Colorado's YouTube channel, with more to come. (Go to YouTube and search "History Colorado Films.") Check out several made by R. B. "Bud" Hooper, who ran the prolific Sonochrome Pictures production company out of Denver in the mid-twentieth century. He produced promotional films for Colorado tourism and railroads like *Mr. Dodds Goes to Colorado*, a cheeky, 28-minute travelogue from the early 1950s advertising the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy's Denver Zephyr rail line, or *Aspen Winter*, documenting the historic opening

ceremonies of Lift One at the Aspen Mountain ski area in January 1947. Or watch *Colorado Legend*, a spooky short made by the renowned experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage for the State of Colorado's Department of Public Relations that tells a tale of murder and mining during Colorado's gold rush.

Other highlights include filmmaker Carl T. Olson's footage of the V-J Parade in Boulder on August 15, 1945, at the end of World War II; a gorgeous silent home movie made at Lodge of the Pines, a guest ranch and inn near Ward, Colorado, in 1927, showing guests readying for horse-packing expeditions and innkeepers playing in the first snowfall of the year; and, of course, the earliest known film in History Colorado's collections: a silent made by B. C. Grey that documents Leadville in 1915.

Photography Department staff will continue to work with History Colorado's moving image collection for years to come, cataloging more films, acquiring new ones, and digitizing reels as funding is available. For now, though, this is an exciting first step toward making Colorado's vibrant moving image history come alive in a way that it never has before.



History Fuels Girl Power

BY DAWN DI PRINCE, CHIEF COMMUNITY MUSEUM OFFICER FOR HISTORY COLORADO AND DIRECTOR OF EL PUEBLO HISTORY MUSEUM

“Who knew a history museum could be so much about the future?” a visitor once commented to me about her experience at El Pueblo History Museum.

I love this statement because, while we interpret the past at El Pueblo History Museum, we understand that the study of history is really about our ability to learn and to navigate the future. We hope that by remembering the triumphs and mistakes of the past, we can do better in our lifetimes and for our descendants.

Based on this philosophy, we designed a history-based program specifically for local teenage girls in partnership with the Pueblo City-County Library District, Colorado State University-Pueblo, and, more recently, the Pueblo County Department of Social Services. I realize that teen girls and history don’t make for an obvious connection, but we started with an interesting hypothesis: “If we helped local teenage girls nurture a greater sense of history and a greater sense of place, would they also develop a greater sense of identity?”



Bridging Borders girls learn about the Four Directions.

COUNTLESS STUDIES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WHEN WE INVEST in the lives of girls, we can make a significant positive impact on the future—from improving community health outcomes to reducing poverty. With this in mind, could we use the power of humanities to improve the lives of our local girls in a way that would bolster our community?

A few years ago, armed with a grant from the American Association of University Women, we built a program called Bridging Borders: Empowering the Future by Understanding the Past. Bridging Borders is a ten-part curriculum designed specifically for teenage girls in Pueblo County. Through the

program, these local girls participate in hands-on workshops that empower them to reconnect with the stories, knowledge, and practices of women who helped build our community.

Participating girls learn about powerful women like Teresita Sandoval, Amache Ochinee Prowers, and Josefa Jaramillo Carson. They learn to make *atole* (a hot drink made with corn, masa, and chocolate), grind corn, make tortillas, bake in an adobe *horno* oven, and understand the self-sufficiency of traditional food practices. They have special access to community cultural institutions like El Pueblo History Museum and the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library. They create unique family trees, honor their ancestors, and deepen their personal roots. They move their bodies to traditional dances, paint murals, build fires, write and recite poetry, meditate on the present, and discover their own leadership skills.

Most importantly, these local teenage girls learn that they are an important link between their ancestors and their descendants. With the choices they make today, they can shape their own future and the future for generations to come.

The key to this, we believe, is the connection to history. French sociologist Claude Meillassoux describes a “social death” that happens when a person is deprived of her ancestry. But, we don’t need scholars to tell us how important it is to know where you come from. We are all vulnerable to outside influences when we are disconnected from our heritage, our culture, and our family. Yet, like a tree, we are stronger when our roots are deep.

While we do not yet have any longitudinal studies that demonstrate our success, we can measure the power of the Bridging Borders program every time we spend an afternoon with these girls. Their insights, their voices, their connections are such a beautiful demonstration that the study of history can be transformational. Most importantly, as a former teenage girl myself, I am reminded that adolescent girls are smart, serious, passionate, and fully capable of leading us into the future.

If you know a teenage girl who's interested in participating in our upcoming spring session of Bridging Borders, email dawn.diprince@state.co.us for an application.



“MR. FOLK

*Walt Conley and
Colorado’s Folk Revival*

~~~ BY ROSE CAMPBELL ~~~

If you were a fan of folk music in Colorado in the 1960s, chances are you saw Walt Conley performing the top songs of the day in downtown Denver. Or in Boulder at college-student hangouts. Or maybe after a day of skiing in Georgetown or at Aspen’s Limelite, one of the first clubs in the nation to exclusively feature folk music. When folk music moved out of the countercultural underground and burst into the pop-culture spotlight, so too did Walt Conley. Not only was Conley one of the first folk revival performers in Colorado in the late 1950s, but he maintained a presence in Denver’s music scene until the 1990s—almost half a century after his first professional performance.

# MUSIC”

In Conley's early career, he crossed paths with some of the most iconic folk musicians of the era. He befriended a young Judy Collins and co-headlined with her at folk rooms around the state. Glenn Yarbrough of the famed folk trio the Limeliters hired Conley in Aspen as the group began its rise to national stardom. While in Aspen, Conley performed alongside the newly formed Smothers Brothers and then booked them for their first engagement in Denver during his stint as manager of the Satire Lounge on East Colfax Avenue. It was there that Conley also gave a then-unknown Bob Dylan a chance as an opening gig in the summer of 1960.

Harry Tuft, the living legend who has done his fair share of promoting folk music with his Denver Folklore Center, referred to Conley as “Mr. Folk Music.” When Tuft arrived in the city in 1962, Conley was a “collecting point” for folk fans and musicians. He was, as Tuft said in a recent interview, “encouraging to the growth of the scene.” When Conley died in 2003 Tuft composed an original tribute song, which he performed at Conley's funeral. The funeral guest book included condolence letters from Judy Collins, Tom Smothers, and many other longtime friends and fans. It was a fitting outpouring of admiration for a man who left such a lasting legacy in Colorado's music history.

What's known publicly about Conley's influential career, however, has largely been limited to brief biographies and newspaper articles. He appears only fleetingly in publications about Denver's folk revival and can be found as a small supporting character in the biographies of Bob Dylan and the Smothers Brothers. Tim Fritz, documentarian and *Westword* contributor, has compiled valuable anecdotes from Conley's family and friends along with biographical insights gleaned from his albums. Yet, gaps in the narratives remain. How did Conley's race affect his life and career? How did his formative childhood and adolescent experiences shape his racial identity? And how did Conley reflect on his life as a performer?

Thanks to a recent—and rather exciting—acquisition by History Colorado, the gaps in Conley's biography can be filled. In the summer of 2016, Conley's widow, Joan Holden, donated Conley's personal collection of photographs,

yearbooks, correspondences, song books, lyric notebooks, and scrapbooks to the organization. Conley's collection, acquired as part of an ongoing project to document Colorado's music history, sheds considerable light on the experiences that formed him. Sifting through his personal archive allows intimate glimpses into Conley's life and career—glimpses that help shift him back into the spotlight of Colorado's early folk revival.

Perhaps the most revelatory items in the collection are oral history tapes and transcripts. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Conley recorded a series of interviews with his good friend Joann Littman to be used for a biographical book. Both Conley and Littman passed away before finishing the project, however, and the tapes, along with Littman's comprehensive notes, found their way to History Colorado. Transcripts of Conley's interviews with Swallow Hill Music Association and *Popular Folk Music Today* also surfaced in Conley's collection. Throughout the oral histories, Conley's personality shines through as he shares his life experiences in his own words.



Here, Conley performs in the intimate space of the Exodus, a downtown hub of Denver's folk-music scene. 30003632

*Facing: Born in Denver in 1929, Walt Conley launched his career as one of Colorado's first performers of the folk revival of the 1950s and maintained a presence in Denver's music scene until the 1990s. 10054900*



At Denver's Manual High School, Walt wrote for the school paper, sang in the chorus, played football, ran track, and served as captain of the golf team. 30003629

The oral histories particularly illuminate what it was like for Conley, an African American, to be in the public eye at a time when racial strife permeated the American sociopolitical landscape. Conley's folk career began as the Civil Rights Movement burgeoned in the late 1950s. Conley, as his reflections demonstrate, was well aware of how race differentiated his career from those of his white counterparts.

Conley realized that his race, in some aspects, was seemingly advantageous. "Being black and a performer," Conley told Littman, "was cool." The "beatniks" and "hip people," as he called them, who attended his shows were "fighting racial intolerance." Conley acknowledged that he was a "standout" in the field because there "were not many blacks in folk music." The predominantly white, bohemian audiences at Denver's new folk clubs and coffeehouses not only accepted Conley, but celebrated and encouraged him.

In other aspects of his career, however, Conley did experience discrimination. He told Littman about the difficulty of finding an apartment in Aspen due to his race when he was booked for a long-term engagement at a folk club there. He discussed his involvement in a major brawl at a South Broadway bar after someone called him a derogatory name during one of his shows. He also recalled the time his car was smeared with ketchup and mustard while he performed in Central City. "Blacks," Conley told Littman, were "not welcome in the 1950s."

As the oral histories reveal, Conley's navigation of racial issues began long before his start as a musician. With the newly available information in his collection, Conley—in all his complexity—comes into sharper focus.

**W**alt was born in May 1929 and adopted by Wallace and Ethel Conley of Scottsbluff, Nebraska. They lived in a predominantly white, lower-class neighborhood. His father worked as a janitor and built the family's home, which had the "only indoor toilet in the town," as Conley remembered with a laugh. In a 1994 interview with the *Irish Eyes in Denver*, Conley explained that his family had little money. "My ghetto was the banks of the Platte River," Conley said. "When I wasn't in school or doing chores for my parents, I spent my time on the river—hunting, fishing, swimming, and ice skating."

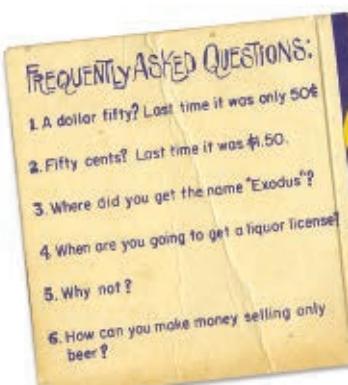
Conley's was one of only six or seven African American families in Scottsbluff—roughly fifty people out of an estimated twelve hundred. Conley experienced little prejudice as a child. He knew he was "negro or colored," but "wasn't rejected hardly at all." Around age ten, he started to learn about the notorious racism in the American South, but that it was "too far away" to seriously consider it. "White kids," Conley noted, "were my friends."

As a teenager, however, Conley became fully "aware of prejudice and discrimination." His father, for example, told him that "you had to be better if you were colored to be accepted by white men." His father's beliefs left a lasting impression on him regarding his racial identity. Conley felt that he, too, "fell into that trap" of thinking that he "had to do so much better" throughout his life due to his race.

When Conley was fifteen, his father died of kidney disease. Conley moved with his mother to Los Angeles to be closer to relatives. Drinking and other vices kept young Conley in trouble during his first year in high school. His mother apparently had enough of his troublemaking and moved with him back to Scottsbluff.

Conley and his mother only stayed in Nebraska for a year, moving to the Five Points neighborhood of Denver in May 1945. Conley recalled that he "started to run with all-black crowd" for the first time in his life. "When I moved to Denver," he added, "I was in a group of black and Chicano guys."

*Right: Walt Conley stands outside the Exodus with Hal Neustaedter, founder of the legendary nightclub at 1999 Lincoln in downtown Denver. Neustaedter signed Conley and Judy Collins on for regular appearances at the club. 10054904, 30003635*



The group generally stayed in Five Points but occasionally visited Lakeside and Elitch Gardens for some amusement-park fun. For extra spending money, Conley worked in the rail yards, delivered newspapers, and changed the marquee at a downtown theater.

Conley attended nearby Manual High School from 1945 to 1948. As his yearbooks demonstrate, he stayed busy with extracurricular activities. He sang in the chorus, played football, and ran track. He wrote for the newspaper and served as captain of the golf team. By his junior year, Conley said, he had “assimilated with whites” and began to go out with white girls. That prompted his “black friends to pick on him” as Littman noted, and some of his peers called him an “Uncle Tom.” While navigating those personal issues outside the classroom, Conley began discussing racial issues in class and joined the Student Relations club, a group dedicated to working on “minority problems.”

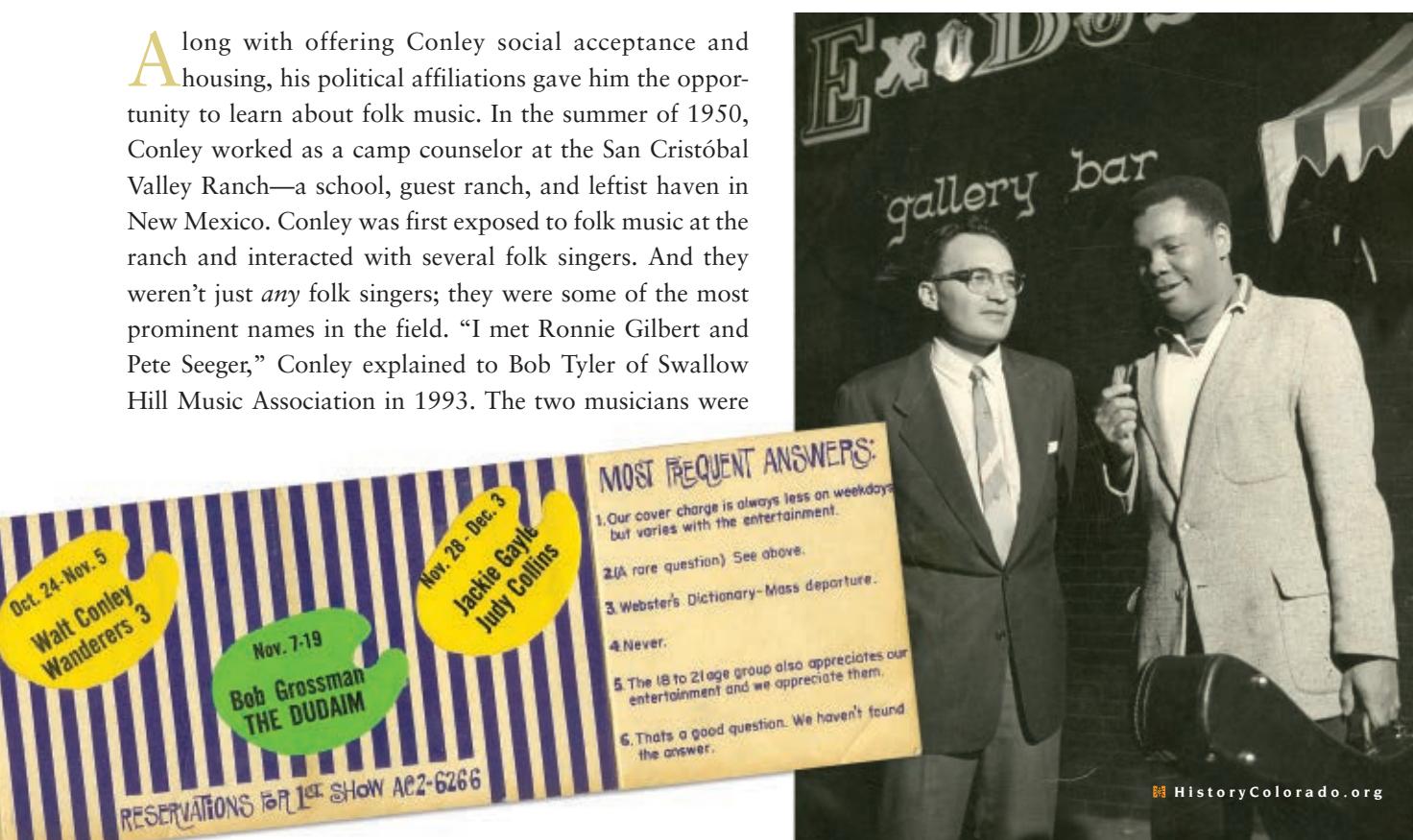
In May 1948, Conley graduated from high school. He briefly attended a junior college in Sterling, Colorado, on a football scholarship, but dropped out after one quarter because he had “no money to eat.” Conley returned to Denver in 1949 and “became a super left-wing teenager” and joined the Communist Party. Conley clarified in 1994 that racial equality was the “only reason” he became involved with the Communist and Progressive parties. Since nineteen-year-old Conley was tight for cash at the time, families involved with the communist organizations also offered him places to live.

Along with offering Conley social acceptance and housing, his political affiliations gave him the opportunity to learn about folk music. In the summer of 1950, Conley worked as a camp counselor at the San Cristóbal Valley Ranch—a school, guest ranch, and leftist haven in New Mexico. Conley was first exposed to folk music at the ranch and interacted with several folk singers. And they weren’t just *any* folk singers; they were some of the most prominent names in the field. “I met Ronnie Gilbert and Pete Seeger,” Conley explained to Bob Tyler of Swallow Hill Music Association in 1993. The two musicians were

“thinking about organizing a new singing group . . . The Weavers.” Conley also took guitar lessons from Earl Robinson, known for writing songs for the American labor movement at the time. Conley shared a room at the ranch with Robinson’s nephew, Alan Arkin, who later became a musician and Oscar-winning actor.

Known for its leftist leanings, the ranch was advertised as “interracial” by its politically active owners. It’s likely that Conley learned about the ranch from his involvement in political associations, or perhaps he even sought out the ranch for the very reason of its “interracial” ideology. When the fervor of the Second Red Scare swept over the nation, the ranch came under scrutiny. Conspiracy theories and accusations abounded when the FBI suspected that the ranch served as the “headquarters for the Communist party” in New Mexico, writes Craig Smith. “All the people” at the ranch, Conley remembered, “were labeled ‘red.’” Conley recognized the social dangers of his political affiliations and felt pressured by his mother and friends to dissociate himself from the Communist Party. He eventually turned himself in to the FBI to avoid any further trouble.

When Conley returned to Denver in the fall of 1950, he gave his first public performance at an event honoring Denver’s mayor, James Quigg Newton, Jr. At the same time, Conley worked multiple and rather diverse jobs to pay the bills. He signed on at a packinghouse while also serving as sports editor at *The Colorado Statesman*, a publication that



was, in Conley's words, the "only media that the blacks had in Denver."

In December 1950, Conley enlisted in the Navy. He'd tried to enlist two years earlier, but the segregated U.S. military limited his options. With Executive Order 9981, issued by President Harry S. Truman, the military was officially integrated in 1950. Conley was one of only two African Americans in his company. He completed boot camp at the Naval Station in Great Lakes, Illinois. Stationed on the U.S.S. *Coral Sea*, he traveled to ports in Haiti, France, Italy, Algeria, and Portugal. As his Navy scrapbook documents, Conley's experience was filled with visiting tourist destinations and cleaning the ship.

After his stint in the Navy, Conley enrolled in Colorado State College of Education (today's University of Northern Colorado) in Greeley. He studied drama and teaching there until 1957. To earn money, he played bass in a jazz combo. He also played folk music in college, which led him to a meeting with a then-teenaged Judy Collins. Conley recalled that he'd heard a poem of hers on a KOA radio show hosted by Judy's father Chuck. Impressed, Conley called the station to get a copy of it. While on the phone, Chuck mentioned that his daughter was also a folksinger and invited Conley over to dinner. Conley remembered playing guitars with Judy after the rest of the family went to bed; the two "stayed up [until] 4 in the morning playing songs."

When asked about her interactions with Conley in a 2017 interview for History Colorado, Collins responded that she "knew Walt Conley *very well, very well, very well*." Collins recalled that "he came to Thanksgiving dinner at my house in 1956." Her grandmother was visiting for the holiday also and "was so appalled at seeing a black man in the house." After laughing about the anecdote, Collins explained that it was "revolutionary" for her grandmother to meet Conley. According to Collins, her grandmother eventually "gave him a big fat embrace and it changed her life."

After college, Conley experienced the "poorest days" of his life and he decided to try "to get [a] career as a folk singer." In the summer of 1957, he landed his first gig as a professional musician in the Showagon, known as "Denver's popular under-the-stars variety program" and hosted at various Denver parks. "For folk-song fans," the *Rocky Mountains News* advertised, "Walter Conley will present many numbers."

Conley taught briefly at a junior high school in Gilcrest, Colorado, but quit the job because "the folk music thing

started to go," he told Bob Tyler in 1993. After teaching for half a year in Gilcrest, he landed a singing job at Denver's Windsor Hotel. He worked at the Windsor for six months through the winter and spring of 1958. Calypso music was a hit at the time, and Conley's race and emulation of Harry Belafonte's voice fit the mold. Quoted in *The Denver Post* in 1993, Conley remembered the Windsor as the "Belafonte era," when he performed "barefooted and [in] cut-off pants."

The Windsor proved an opportune starting point for Conley's folk career. While performing there, he was invited by Bill and Annette Holmes, owners of Georgetown's Red Ram, to play in their establishment. The Red Ram was described as "Denver skiers' No. 1 watering spot" by Pat Hanna of the *Rocky Mountain News*. "With food and drink skier-approved," Hanna wrote, "it followed that there soon would be skier music." Conley, described in one advertisement as "an avid skier" himself, soon became popular with ski crowds. He performed in Georgetown in the winters and occasional summer weekends throughout 1958 and 1959.

At the Red Ram, Conley was recruited by Hal Neustaedter, a major proponent and funder of folk music, to play in downtown Denver. Neustaedter invited him to audition for his new folk club, Little Bohemia, located near Thirty-Eighth Avenue and Lipan Street. With a successful audition, Neustaedter offered Conley, along with Judy Collins, a position at the venue for \$20 a day. It was then, in 1959, that Conley started to regularly appear at folk venues in Denver and Boulder. Neustaedter opened another folk venue, the Exodus at 1999 Lincoln Street in downtown Denver, and signed Collins and Conley each to a one-year contract. The Exodus soon became the hub for folk music in the area and hosted the city's first "Folk Song Festival" in December 1959. Collins and Conley appeared on the album, *Folk Song Festival at Exodus*, released soon after the event.

As his career was taking off, Conley racked up many hundreds of miles on his car driving back and forth between Denver, Boulder, and Aspen. He frequented Michael's Pub in Boulder to entertain the college students and made his way to Aspen for the skiers and summer tourists. Glenn Yarbrough hired Conley in 1960, along with Collins and the Smothers Brothers, to replace his group, the Limeliters—named after the Aspen venue—who were on the path to national notoriety. Conley befriended the Smothers Brothers there as they were starting their professional career. In *Dangerously Funny: The Uncensored Story of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, David Bianculli mentions Conley and explains that "part of the Smothers Brothers' rapid growth in Aspen was due to

the deep talent pool there, and the folk music tradition of swapping and sharing songs.”

The connections Conley made during his time in Aspen were immensely beneficial to his career. One contingency for obtaining a managerial position in Denver, for example, was his ability to book the Smothers Brothers. Conley broke his contract at the Exodus for an “open-ended engagement” at the Satire Lounge on East Colfax with the Smothers Brothers for \$200 a week. Conley and the Smothers Brothers, Bianculli asserts, “soon turned the Satire into one of Denver’s most popular night spots.”

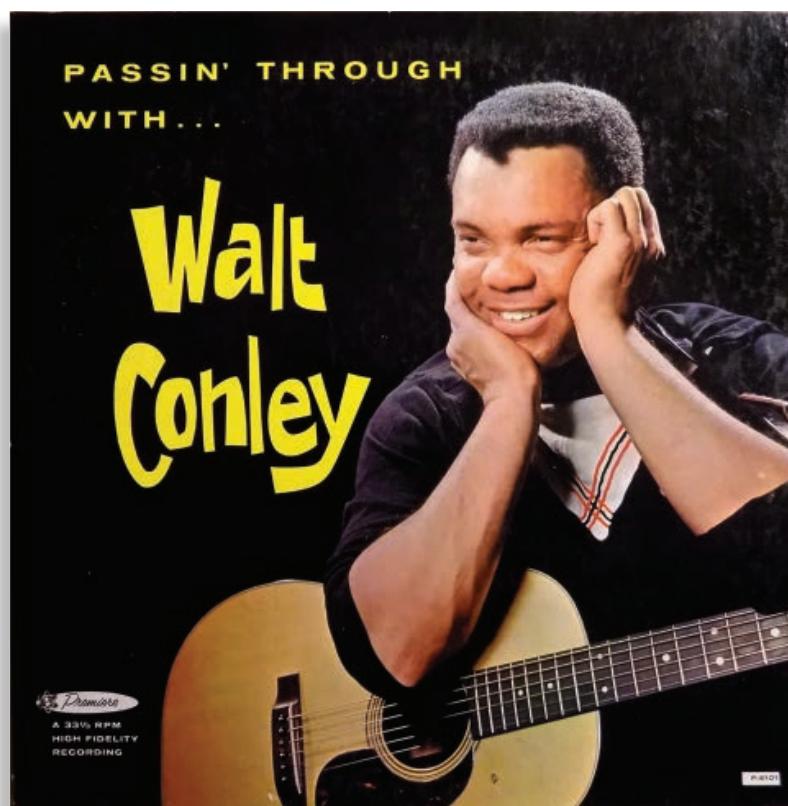
In the summer of 1960, while Conley was manager, a young Bob Dylan arrived in town. The Dylan encounter remains one of Conley’s major claims to fame and appears in almost every Dylan biography. Despite the many variations of the story found in different sources, it’s clear that Conley and Dylan had a fraught encounter. After a poorly received opening gig at the Satire, Dylan stayed at Conley’s house, which was the “crash pad” for local musicians. The Smothers Brothers lived with Conley at the time and didn’t care for Dylan, Bianculli writes. “Everybody had pretty much had it with him,” Conley said in an interview with Bob Tyler, “so we kicked him out.” One account mentions a falling-out over a girl they both liked while another chalked up the animosity to stolen money. Whatever the case, Conley wanted to “get rid of him” and recommended that he play at the Gilded Garter in Central City. On Dylan’s way out of Colorado, he once again stayed with Conley and allegedly stole some records. Needless to say, Dylan didn’t make a very good impression on Conley.

Conley didn’t stay manager at the Satire for long after the Dylan incident. Neustaedter lured the Smothers Brothers back to the Exodus with the promise of a higher salary. Conley was understandably upset and Neustaedter smoothed things over by offering the folk singer a chance to open for the popular siblings. No longer tied to a single venue, Conley, now a veteran performer, sought out the best opportunities in a competitive market, shifting between clubs in pursuit of the highest bidder.

While Conley negotiated the business side of folk music, he found himself working for another, perhaps unexpected, side of that scene—the tourism industry. In 1959, he appeared on “The Colorado Story,” a vinyl single that commemorated the centennial of Colorado’s Gold Rush. The vinyl was marketed as the “Official State Souvenir” and featured two tracks celebrating Colorado’s history from a frontier settlement to a populous, thriving state.

Conley also appeared in a promotional film funded by the Colorado State Department of Public Relations in 1961. *Colorado Legend*, directed by the influential experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage, depicted a mythological rendering of Colorado’s mining history with a tragic story about immigrant miners. Conley sang and narrated the film’s storyline. In both song and film, Conley participated in publicizing the “official” state heritage used for celebrating Colorado and aimed at tourists.

Conley’s centrality to the folk-music scene was also apparent with his appointment, in 1961, as the master of ceremonies for the third annual folk festival at the Exodus. He also co-headlined with Dean Reed as Reed was becoming an international star. Conley’s local fame led to a full-length album, *Passin’ Through with Walt Conley*, released in 1961.



The year 1961 saw the release of the full-length album *Passin’ Through with Walt Conley*. Courtesy of the author.

By 1963, folk music was front and center in American popular culture. The music editor at *The Denver Post*, Larry Tajiri, asserted in 1962 that “the Denver area is currently one of the most receptive in the country to folk music.” As several local performers achieved national fame and performed sold-out shows in Denver, Conley’s star seemed to fade. Tajiri’s article mentioned the celebrities who shaped



Walt Conley (center) belts out a song with the help of Kathi Norris and Clark Birch on bass. Conley appears nightly at the Abbey Cellar where he has been a popular attraction for two seasons. His mixture of songs and humor meet with skier approval. (NEWS Photo)

Conley became a regular in Aspen, where he befriended folk trio the Limeliters and comedian-musicians the Smothers Brothers, who got their first big break in the ski town. Here, the Aspen Times shows Conley performing with Kathi Norris and Clark Birch at the Abbey Cellar. 30003631

Colorado's folk culture—Judy Collins, Lingo the Drifter, the Limeliters, Bob Gibson, and the Smothers Brothers. Conley failed to make the list.

He continued to perform widely on the college campus and coffee-house circuit, traveling to more than a dozen cities in 1963 alone. His out-of-town performances, however, garnered mixed reviews. One critic in Minneapolis, for example, noted that “with the overabundance of folksingers, Conley may have trouble attracting attention.” Conley’s one shot at national television exposure too, on the ABC folk music program “Hootenanny,” fell flat when the series was abruptly cancelled.

Conley’s spotlight in the folk scene may have been dimming, but it wasn’t for lack of trying. On his 1964 album, *Listen What He’s Sayin’*, Conley reiterated his authenticity, marketing himself as a traditionalist in a field of commercial imitation. Conley expressed discontent with the way folk music had changed by the mid-1960s as it took on mainstream appeal. He claimed that he remained true to his roots and to the roots of folk music in general by refusing to conform. In contrast, in a 1963 interview for the *Omaha Star* he acknowledged that since the folk industry had “run into a commercial snag” he had to “change just a little to sell to the public.”

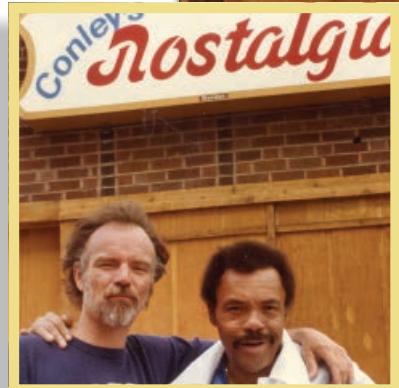
One way Conley changed in the saturated folk market was to participate in projects, both sincere and satirical, explicitly related to civil rights. In 1963, he lent his vocals to the track



Conley in a later publicity photo. 10054902

“The Ballad of the Walking Postman,” commemorating an activist who was murdered while advocating racial equality. In the same year, he helped form a folk-comedy group called the U.N. Trio. “In the group are a Negro, and Japanese, and a Jew,” read one advertisement, who “feel qualified to cover the world race situation.”

The political satire of the trio, however, failed to land with mainstream audiences. A review in *The Seattle Times* mentioned that the “topical humor” cleverly exposed bigotry and hypocrisy, but that the performers were “accustomed to playing before ‘hip’ college crowds and must learn how to gauge the temper of a night-club audience without dulling the sharp edge of satire.” Conley evidently heeded the reviewer’s advice and changed his political satire to more “easy going” topics, according to a review in California’s *Daily Variety* magazine in 1965. By then, Conley reportedly “had no axes to grind” in



After a brief acting career, Conley (shown here with an unidentified companion) returned to music, opening Conley's Nostalgia on South Broadway in Denver and helming the club from 1984 to 1987. 10054905, 10054906

his shows. It's evident that in order to survive as an entertainer in a crowded industry, Conley oscillated between downplaying and emphasizing his racial identity based on the audience.

**B**y the end of the 1960s, the folk craze and Conley's own career had both waned. The Exodus stopped booking folk acts and, with new management, started signing on psychedelic rock acts. The College Inn in Denver continued to hire Conley throughout the late 1960s and early '70s, but the venue didn't maintain as steady a following as the Satire and Exodus had earlier in the 1960s. In response, Conley made a career move. Acting, he remarked in a 1969 *Denver Post* article, had "always been my ultimate goal and desire." Conley believed that "it is the time for the black actor." Hollywood, as he saw it, "has been and continues to be a forerunner in racial equality." Throughout the 1970s, he pursued an acting career in Los Angeles with music gigs on the side.

With limited success in acting, Conley decided to "go back to his old love—folk music" as the *Rocky Mountain News* reported in May 1975. Hoping to "eulogize the era" of the folk revival, Conley opened a venue on South Broadway dedicated to folk music of the mid-twentieth century. He named the club "Conley's Nostalgia" and owned it from 1984 to 1987. In his later years, Conley, always willing to

reinvent himself, started performing Irish songs and became a regular at the Sheabean Pub in Aurora.

In his sixties, Conley reflected on "what possessed me," in his words, to "become a black folksinger." Conley's race, in large part, defined his career choices and continues to shape his legacy. "There were, I guess," Conley acknowledged in 1994, "people who respected me because I was a pioneer."

And rightfully so. As an African American folk singer, Conley's experiences were significantly different than those of his contemporaries—placing him in situations that he learned from and applied as he went forward. Conley has often been marginalized in the public memory of Colorado's folk revival. His collection at History Colorado offers the opportunity to fully appreciate his influence on the state's music scene and the circumstances he faced during a tumultuous time in America's history.



## For Further Reading

For more about Walt Conley's life and career, see Timothy Fritz's "Walt Conley: The Founding Father of Denver Folk Scene" (*Washington Street Media*, November 2016) and "Walt Conley, 'Grandfather of Denver Folk,' Celebrated at WaltFest" (*Westword*, November 2016). Conley's obituaries in the *Rocky Mountain News* and *The Denver Post* are available at History Colorado's Hart Research Library along with the entirety of Conley's collection. Additional newspaper articles about Conley in particular and Colorado's folk scene in general can be found in the Denver Public Library Western History and Genealogy Department.

For general information about Colorado's folk scene, see Paul Malkoski's *The Denver Folk Music Tradition: An Unplugged History, from Harry Tuft to Swallow Hill and Beyond* and Dick Weissman's *Which Side Are You On? An Inside History of the Folk Music Revival in America*. For more about San Cristóbal Ranch in New Mexico, see Craig Smith's *Sing My Whole Life Long: Jenny Vincent's Life in Folk Music and Activism*. More about the Smothers Brothers' career in Colorado can be found in David Bianculli's *Dangerously Funny: The Uncensored Story of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. For a more detailed account of Conley's interactions with Bob Dylan in 1960, see Timothy Fritz's "Passin' Through: Bob Dylan's Ill-Fated Summer in Denver" (*Westword*, June 2016); Robert Shelton's *No Direction Home*; Howard Sounes' *Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan*; and Bob Spitz's *Dylan: A Biography*.

**ROSE CAMPBELL** is the associate director of Regis University's Center for the Study of War Experience. She has worked at History Colorado on a variety of projects and internships since 2011. Most recently, Campbell serves as researcher for an ongoing project to document Colorado's popular music history. She received her M.A. in history at University of Colorado-Denver, where she was awarded the Koch Fellowship and the Ward Family Public History Prize.



**See more photos of Walt Conley's career in Colorado Heritage Extras at [medium.com/Colorado-Heritage-Extras](https://medium.com/Colorado-Heritage-Extras).**

# TONY'S CONOCO

## A Symbol of Crested Butte

BY MEGAN EFLIN  
STATE HISTORICAL FUND OUTREACH SPECIALIST

**A**s we passed through the cold winter night, the wide expanse of stars and the shadow of the Rocky Mountains surrounded our car as we drove down the road. Our destination was what many call the last great ski town in Colorado: Crested Butte. I grew up here, and it's a place I've always loved and cherished for all that it has meant to my family.

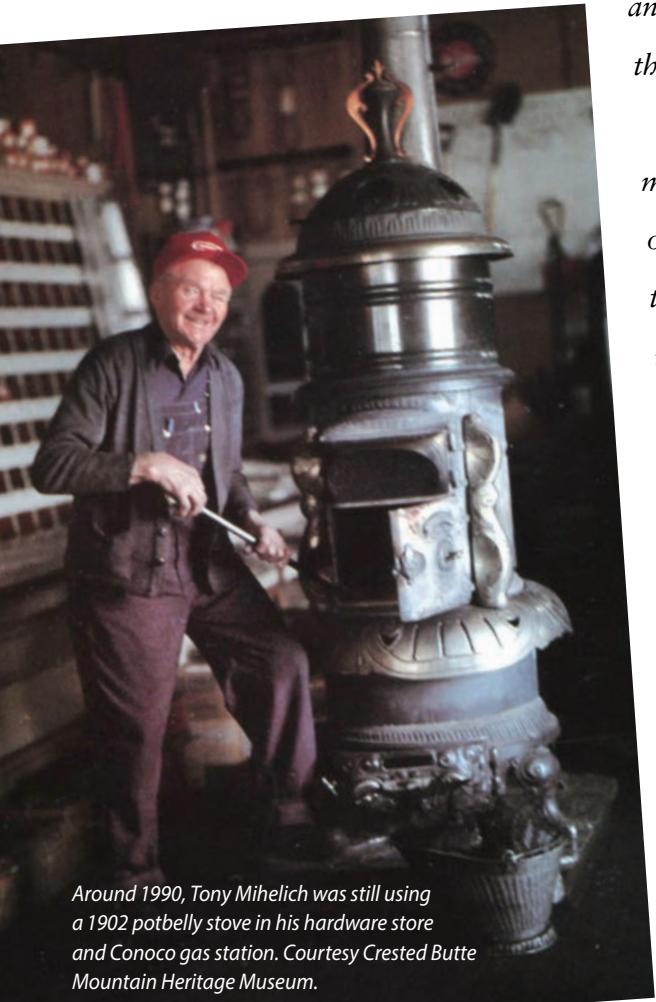
*This night was special. It was my birthday, and my father and I—along with a few friends—were on our way to enjoy a night in Crested Butte. As we talked about our hometown, regaling our guests with stories about this wonderful little hidden gem, naturally we started talking about Tony's Conoco.*

Tony's was a place that I remember through the unique and idyllic lens of childhood memories. It was the place my grandfather would take me on a trip to town for errands. But more than that, it was someplace special. Locals always congregated at Tony's, and every time I went there we'd inevitably stay beyond what a six-year-old could normally tolerate, as my grandfather caught up on all of the town happenings and gossip.

For me, the best part of going was seeing Tony Mihelich. He was the nice man always wearing overalls, a baseball hat, and a gentle smile, who would give me and any child who came in a lollipop. Whether it was your first lollipop or your twentieth he always kindly gave you your sweet treat and indulged your childish excitement like it was the first time.

As I shared these happy memories with my friends, my father interjected. "Hey now, Tony may have given you candy but . . . he gave me candy first when I was a kid." He continued on, telling us of his favorite memories of Tony's and growing up in Crested Butte in the 1970s.

*Around 1990, Tony Mihelich was still using a 1902 potbelly stove in his hardware store and Conoco gas station. Courtesy Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum.*





***It housed not only the  
first gas station in town, but  
the longest-running independently  
owned Conoco station in the world.***

He fondly remembered all of the “old timers” hanging around the hardware store and telling stories of the mining days. When my uncle and my father decided to build a tree house, they of course went to Tony’s for supplies. When they asked for tenpenny galvanized nails, Tony replied, “Those are on order.” He told them to check back in a few days. Tony was notorious for this as he usually didn’t have all of the supplies everyone asked for and would quickly order them once you stepped out the door. The items “on order” always seemed endless, and the phrase “Those are on order” became notorious in Crested Butte.

As I listened to my father, it struck me how intrinsic Tony’s was to the community. While I thought about this I wondered what my grandparents’ perspective of Tony’s was, considering they spent close to sixty years in Crested Butte. I asked my grandmother about it.

She told me, “I remember Tony fondly. He was always working and always friendly. He was so calm; nothing seemed to rattle him. The guys—mostly Yugoslavian first and second generation—sat around the old potbelly stove and shot the breeze.”

My grandfather wrote in his autobiography of an early memory he had of Tony’s just after my family moved to the valley in 1960. “We had no garage so I kept the sports car in the back of Tony Mihelich’s Hardware. It was a bit inconvenient, but far better than leaving it out on the street where it might be hit by a snowplow, a not too uncommon experience in the winter. When they’d see me coming to pick up my Porsche, the old timers, huddled around the potbellied stove, would say ‘Look out boys here comes the “Flying Dutchman,”’ and then laugh and laugh!”

The building itself was built in 1883 by John McCosker and was originally a blacksmith shop but later expanded and became the Crested Butte hardware store. The false-front structure, characteristic of western frontier towns, is one of three remaining wood-frame structures in Crested Butte. Commercially it housed not only the first gas station in town in 1911, but the longest-running business in the community, and the longest-running independently owned Conoco station in the world (1940–1996). In 1974 it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of

***As I listened to my father,  
it struck me how intrinsic  
Tony's was to the community.***

*Tony fills Lyle McNeill's Jeep on  
Labor Day 1960. Courtesy Crested Butte  
Mountain Heritage Museum.*



the Crested Butte Historic District. Tony became the sole owner of Crested Butte Hardware and the Conoco station in 1952 and continued to run it until 1996. Not long after Tony shut down the store, sadly, he passed away.

By 2001 the Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum was looking for a new location. The museum board decided that Tony's would be the perfect place. Within a year the funds were raised to purchase the building. In 2003 the museum opened its doors in its new location for locals and tourists alike. It was amazing to step through those doors and once

again feel that special feeling I felt as a young child. The museum had kept the building much like it was when it was still a hardware store and I half expected to see Tony there. There was even more to explore and see with all the wonderful exhibits showcasing Crested Butte and its mining, skiing, and mountain-biking history.

Time and the tough climate of the Rocky Mountains took a physical toll on Tony's, and it was clear that the building needed work to preserve its legacy. The museum applied for and received two grants from the State Historical Fund to start the process of preserving and maintaining the integrity of the building. A \$15,000 Historical Structure Assessment grant awarded in 2015 was used to review and analyze the current state of the building. From those findings, suggested treatments—using the Secretary



*Tony's Conoco in 1983. Courtesy Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum.*



*Today's Crested Butte Mountain Heritage Museum, housed in the historic Tony's Conoco, preserves and shares the history of Crested Butte and the Gunnison valley.*



of Interior Standards for the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures as guidelines—were compiled to create a roadmap or a preservation plan of necessary work. In the fall of 2016 the museum was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the State Historical Fund for the first of two phases that will focus on the exterior rehabilitation of the building as recommended in the Historical Structure Assessment. The preservation and rehabilitation work that will be done will ensure that the building remains sound for many years to come.

**I**t's buildings like Tony's that physically embody the cultural history of a community. It was clear that the sense of place that Tony and his hardware store provided affected generations of people in our small town.

Every memory from my family—and I'm sure so many other locals—focused around the tangible, physical place that was Tony's. It was the building that housed the local hardware store and gas station, the place where you could catch up on what was happening in town or just remember the good old days, and where every child got a sweet treat from the wonderful owner. Now with the stewardship of the museum and with the help of the State Historical Fund that heritage will continue through to future generations.

#### For Further Reading

For more about Tony's Conoco, see Hord Coplan Macht and Resource Engineering Group, "Historic Structure Assessment and Preservation Plan: Crested Butte Heritage Museum," 2015; the "Museum History" page of the Crested Butte Museum website ([crestedbuttemuseum.com/about-us/local-history/](http://crestedbuttemuseum.com/about-us/local-history/)); and the National Register of Historic Places nomination: Town of Crested Butte, Crested Butte, Gunnison, CO, National Register #74002279.

**MEGAN EFLIN** is the History Colorado State Historical Fund Preservation Grants Outreach Specialist. She is the third generation of Eflins to enjoy growing up in the Gunnison valley. Her grandparents moved to the valley and started the Crested Butte Ski Resort in 1960. Today, Megan lives in Denver and enjoys all her home state has to offer—which includes going back home often. She is passionate about preserving the places that matter for future generations to enjoy and experience.



# Partnering to Safeguard Archaeological and Paleontological Collections

BY TODD MCMAHON, STATE CURATION COORDINATOR  
AND HOLLY NORTON, PH.D., STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Pieces of broken pottery, projectile points, worked stone, square nails, historic porcelain plates—these are all examples of material culture that archaeologists use to study our past. Because artifacts (and fossils, for those who study our ancient natural world) are so vital to our understanding of the past, the highest standards must be set for their care.

In 1973 the State Legislature deemed objects found on state, county, city, or local public lands as having title owned by the State of Colorado under the oversight of the Office of the State Archaeologist. Since then, that office has partnered with local museums, historical societies, universities, and state and federal agencies for the care of the collections—allowing the items to benefit the communities nearest where they were found. But often, small institutions (and sometimes the large ones) simply don't have the space to store all the items our scientists recover. And, some lacked the tools and expertise to care for the collections.

In order to better guide these local repositories and museums, the Office of the State Archaeologist (housed at History Colorado) undertook a revision of the rules and procedures that laid out the responsibilities of various parties and the kinds of support available. In a yearlong, collaborative process, our office rewrote the rules and procedures and held public and stakeholder meetings to ensure that all concerns were addressed.

In 2015 History Colorado formed a workgroup known as “Pillars,” made up of representatives from the Museums of Western Colorado, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, and Colorado State University. The Pillars work as regional partners with smaller institutions in their respective regions on issues of technical assistance, interpretation, and exhibits. This year the Pillars celebrated the third annual “Curation Forum”—an opportunity for the Pillars to identify curation needs while smaller institutions gather information about resources and network with each other. The forum was an opportunity to explain the changes to the new State regulations and clarify what these organizations can expect in the future. Participants included Colorado Parks and Wildlife, local county and city museums from across the Front Range, and paleontologists from the National Park Service.

As a result of the forum, participants felt that they better understood the issues and rewards of holding State collections. The new rules are aimed at creating legal “trusts,” where the approved museums and repositories have a duty to care for collections with the best interests of the artifacts and specimens in mind for the citizens of Colorado. That “duty to care”—and ongoing collaboration—will ensure a secure future for these pieces of our scientifically excavated past.



Clockwise from far left:  
A Late Prehistoric-style projectile point,  
a Burnett's "Cocaine" brand hair tonic bottle  
excavated from the Tremont House in Denver,  
and bones uncovered at the Lamb Springs  
Archaeological Site, Littleton.

## New Listings

### *In the National Register of Historic Places*

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation.

#### **Denver–Colorado Springs–Pueblo Motor Way Company Inc. Garages**

Denver

#### **Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church (Amendment)**

Denver

#### **TBM Avenger Aircraft N53503**

Grand Junction vicinity

#### **Tarryall Rural Historic District**

Jefferson vicinity

#### **Ute–Ulay Mine and Mill**

Lake City vicinity

#### **Haynie Site**

Mancos vicinity

In the heart of the Mesa Verde archaeological region sits the Haynie Site, containing the ruins of buildings constructed of earth, wood, and stone around A.D. 700–1225. The buildings are prime examples of ancestral Pueblo architecture. The two largest ruins exhibit the features of a type known as “Chaco great houses,” since they emulate the large buildings in Chaco Culture National Historical Park in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. Displaying the architectural characteristics that first developed at great houses at Chaco Canyon, the Haynie Site is perhaps the single best example of an outlier great house in the Mesa Verde region. The site also shares architectural characteristics with great houses at Aztec National Monument—home of Aztec West, the largest great house outside of Chaco Canyon.

The Haynie Site exemplifies the expansion of the Chaco–Aztec political and ceremonial system into the Mesa Verde region of southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah.



The establishment of a political and ceremonial center at Chaco and the subsequent expansion of Chaco influence is one of the iconic events in the pre-Columbian history of the United States. As much as any Chaco outlier in the Mesa Verde region, the Haynie Site has the potential to increase our understanding of how Chaco influence spread throughout the region due to its unique architectural details and long occupation.

#### **Removals**

From the National Register of Historic Places

#### **Dotsero Bridge (No. F-08-F)**

Dotsero

#### **Eagle River Bridge (No. F-09-H)**

Eagle

#### **Portland Bridge (No. K-16-K)**

Portland

#### **Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct (K-16-S)**

Florence

Answers on page 30



## *Do you know this building?*

- |                 |                       |                               |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Where is it? | 2. When was it built? | 3. What was its original use? |
| a) Austin       | a) 1888               | a) Bakery                     |
| b) Center       | b) 1899               | b) Bank                       |
| c) Cope         | c) 1907               | c) Funeral home               |
| d) Sunshine     | d) 1918               | d) Millinery                  |

## Do you know this building?

Continued from page 29

BY HEATHER PETERSON,  
NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER HISTORIAN

**Answers:** c) Cope, d) 1918, b) Bank

As the first bank in the Washington County town of Cope in rural northeastern Colorado, the Farmers State Bank of Cope drew twelve initial investors, seven of them women. In the bank's formative phase, a gentleman was named as its president. But by the time the bank opened in 1918, a savvy woman, Nellie L. Fastenau, was its president—a role she held for sixteen years. Nellie was one of the initial investors, advancing \$2,000, and her individual company was eventually the sole owner of the poured concrete bank building.

Nellie, a trained legal stenographer from Minnesota, lived

in nearby Yuma County, and by 1914 was working for the Charles B. Marvin Company, a land investment firm. She soon learned the business and became a land agent—or as the *Wray Rattler* called her, a “land hustler.” Her success with the company enabled her to help form the Farmers State Bank of Cope. Nellie was a progressive employer and hired both men and women to fill bank positions, including Allie Campbell, the cashier, by 1921, and Carrie Ingersoll, a bank director. Both women held long-tenured, key positions at the bank.

Although deposits had decreased toward the late 1920s, the bank survived the 1929 stock market crash. Various factors, though, began to threaten its survival. Colorado's eastern plains suffered from drought and the Dust Bowl—which meant fewer crops to sell and less feed for livestock. A large grasshopper population fed on the sparse crops, leaving little, sometimes nothing, for farmers to harvest. The depressed agricultural economy, and other Great Depression impacts, resulted in the bank's eventual closure. In May 1934 the stockholders and directors paid off the depositors in full.

After the bank closed, Nellie (through her company) continued to own the building. She and Carrie Ingersoll operated a liquor store and pharmacy there, selling package liquor and over-the-counter medications. Nellie also continued with her real

estate investments, buying and selling land in several eastern Colorado counties. She retired in the early 1950s and sold the building in 1955. It was the only bank the town of Cope ever had, the only building in town that ever boasted a sidewalk, and the town's only poured concrete building.

Local residents still remember the legendary role Nellie played in real estate, banking, and commerce in their small community—with the bank building standing as evidence of her talents, influence, and power. The National Register of Historic Places included the building in its list in 2017.



### Good to Know

National or State Register listed properties may be eligible for investment tax credits for approved rehabilitation projects. Listed properties may also be eligible to compete for History Colorado State Historical Fund grants. These grants may be used for acquisition and development, education, and survey and planning projects. The next nomination submission deadline is June 1. For information, call 303/866-3392.

For more about these and all National and State Register properties in Colorado, visit [historycolorado.org/oahp/national-state-registers](http://historycolorado.org/oahp/national-state-registers).

# Marilyn Brown, and How “the Future Can Learn from the Past”

**W**hat's a good piece of advice for anyone considering making an impact at History Colorado? “They should do it not just while they can see the results of their kindness but also with an eye toward paying it forward after they're gone.” So says Marilyn Brown, who, with her late husband, Doug Morton, has been one of History Colorado's most generous contributors.

Prior to Doug's passing in 2016, his and Marilyn's longtime commitment to History Colorado included Doug's years of service on the board, a substantial donation to help preserve the Georgetown Loop Railroad®, and the establishment of a marital trust, which pays benefits to the surviving spouse and then to various charities. Ever since its opening in 2012, the History Colorado Center has boasted a grand staircase bearing the couple's names—a fact Marilyn calls “humbling” but a testament to the significance of their support of the museum Marilyn still loves to frequent. With fond memories of the former Colorado History Museum and its dioramas, she loves the new History Colorado Center for the variety and interactivity of its exhibits. “Also,” she adds, “more people should go on Tours and Treks,” a reference to History Colorado's long-running program of statewide jaunts for adults.

Doug and Marilyn met at a white elephant gift exchange, where she beat him in a pinball tournament. She was immediately smitten by his kindness and sense of humor. After three years of dating, the couple enjoyed twenty-nine years of marriage. Bronco games, holiday-season travel, and a regular Saturday shopping date—their favorite ritual—

were the highlights of their years together.

Ever enthusiastic about History Colorado's mission, Marilyn refers to the couple's gifts as “a way the future can learn from the past.” In that spirit, she has just made another significant donation, this time to the Executive Director's Innovation Fund—a new initiative that ensures History Colorado will have resources ready to embrace time-critical programs, projects, and ideas, allowing us to provide superb experiences that our guests have come to expect.

Good financial planning, says Marilyn, wasn't as hard as she and Doug expected. Her other piece of advice is for couples to work with an attorney they trust. History Colorado is one of four charities that will receive residuals from their estate after Marilyn's passing. She cites Doug's organizational and leadership skills, along with his entrepreneurial spirit, for inspiring them both to establish a well-devised estate plan that takes care of family members first, as well as the charities that have come to rely on their support.



## Society 1879 Members

Anonymous (5)  
Hart and Marguerite\* Axley  
Mary Lyn Ballantine  
Barbara Benedict  
Marilyn Brown and Doug Morton\*  
George Cole  
Joseph Elinoff  
Barbara Garlinghouse  
Edwin Grant  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Kugeler  
Katharine and James Kurtz\*

. S O C I E T Y .  
**1879**  
HONORING THOSE WHOSE ESTATE PLANS  
INCLUDE HISTORY COLORADO

Linda Love and Phil Karsh\*  
Patricia and Ed Martin  
Nancy and Jim Peterson  
Linda and John Roberts  
Martin Sorensen, Jr.  
Phil Sterritt  
Judith Sullivan  
Lydia Toll  
The Vinnik Family  
Grant Wilkins

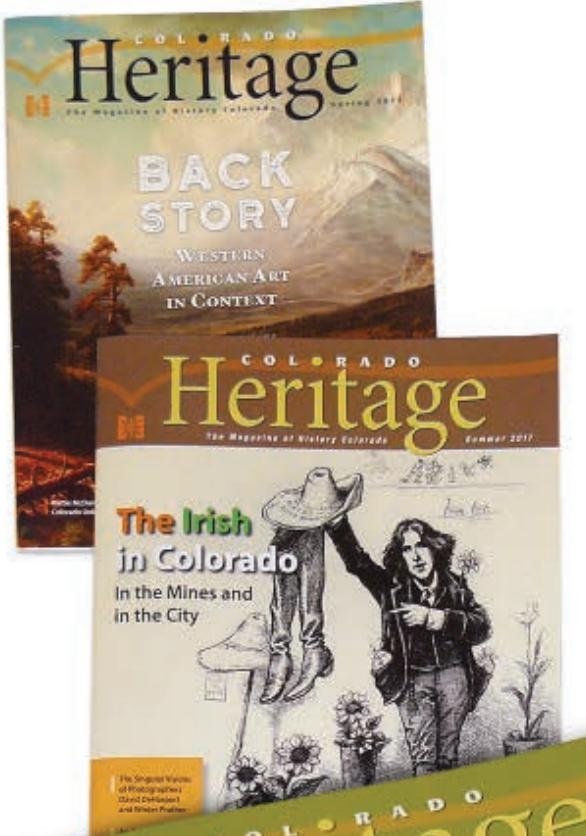
\*deceased



# Ask Us!

*Do you have a question for History Colorado? Ask us! In every issue of Colorado Heritage, we'll field your questions about our collections, your own collections, Colorado history, archaeology, or historic preservation.*

## Q: How do I get published in Colorado Heritage?



## A: This is a question we hear often, and we're glad to hear it!

*Colorado Heritage* authors are often grad students, professors, and professional historians, but just as often, they aren't. You do not need to be a historian to get your essay published in *Colorado Heritage*. As long as your manuscript, or proposed manuscript, deals with a topic that would appeal to History Colorado members and our other readers—that is, readers with a passion for and curiosity about Colorado's colorful past and its people—we'd love to take a look at your work to see if it might be a good fit for the magazine. We're especially interested in topics that tie the past to the present.

If you have an ancestor with a fascinating story, or who left behind a journal or memoir you've discovered, we'd love to know about it. If you've embarked on a study of a topic nobody's written about in depth, and that we've never covered in our own pages, we're interested. The number and kinds of topics we're looking for are too great to list here, so please don't hesitate to contact us with your idea.

Remember, *Colorado Heritage* readers are from all over the state, all around the country, and even overseas. So a history that will primarily appeal to just a single community or an otherwise limited audience simply won't be what we're looking for. The story has to have broad appeal to make it into the magazine.

If you have a topic you'd like us to consider, just send a query to [publications@state.co.us](mailto:publications@state.co.us). If we're interested, we'll ask for a synopsis of your proposed manuscript. Or, if you've already written it, we'll ask you to send it in for our review, along with some of the illustrations—a key component of any *Colorado Heritage* essay.

We can't pay for *Colorado Heritage* essays, but we only acquire the one-time rights to publish your piece in our magazine. You retain all rights to the material otherwise, for future publication in any form.

We're always looking for essays in the ballpark of 4,000 words or less. Our Author's Guide may answer any number of other questions you have, including questions about how to format your manuscript.

You can find the guide at [HistoryColorado.org](http://HistoryColorado.org); just enter "colorado heritage" in the search bar.

*Do you have a question for History Colorado? Send it to [publications@state.co.us](mailto:publications@state.co.us), and please put "Ask History Colorado" in the subject line.*

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

You can make a difference! Volunteers play a vital role in telling Colorado's story. By giving your time, you can help us continue to engage people in our past in order to create a better Colorado. Share your passion by finding the volunteer or internship opportunity that's just right for you. Visit HistoryColorado.org/volunteers or call 303/866-3961.



## LEAVE A LEGACY

In 1879, just three years after Colorado achieved statehood, Governor Pitkin established the State Historical Society (today's History Colorado) to collect and preserve items related to the state's identity. Today, History Colorado's Society 1879 honors those whose estate gifts will help preserve Colorado's past for generations to come. Estate gifts come in all shapes and sizes. Options exist. Contact Cheyenne Johnson at 303/866-4845 or Cheyenne.Johnson@state.co.us.



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Love History Colorado? Join us! You'll get free admission to our museums, a number of Georgetown Loop Railroad® passes based on your membership level, our publications, and much more. Already a member? Members at higher levels get reciprocal Smithsonian benefits. Consider upgrading to get the VIP treatment. Join us or give the gift of membership by going to HistoryColorado.org/membership.



## MAKE HISTORY WITH YOUR NEXT EVENT

Create an unforgettable event with an authentic Colorado experience. The History Colorado Center offers a convenient downtown location with full event-planning services and a team of culinary experts. Treat your guests to a taste of history with our interactive exhibits set in a clean, modern museum setting. Whether it's a dream wedding, 1,500-person cocktail reception, or a meeting for ten, we look forward to creating a custom event in our beautiful museum. Find us—and all our other sites—at HistoryColorado.org.



HISTORY Colorado



HISTORY COLORADO CENTER  
1200 BROADWAY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80203

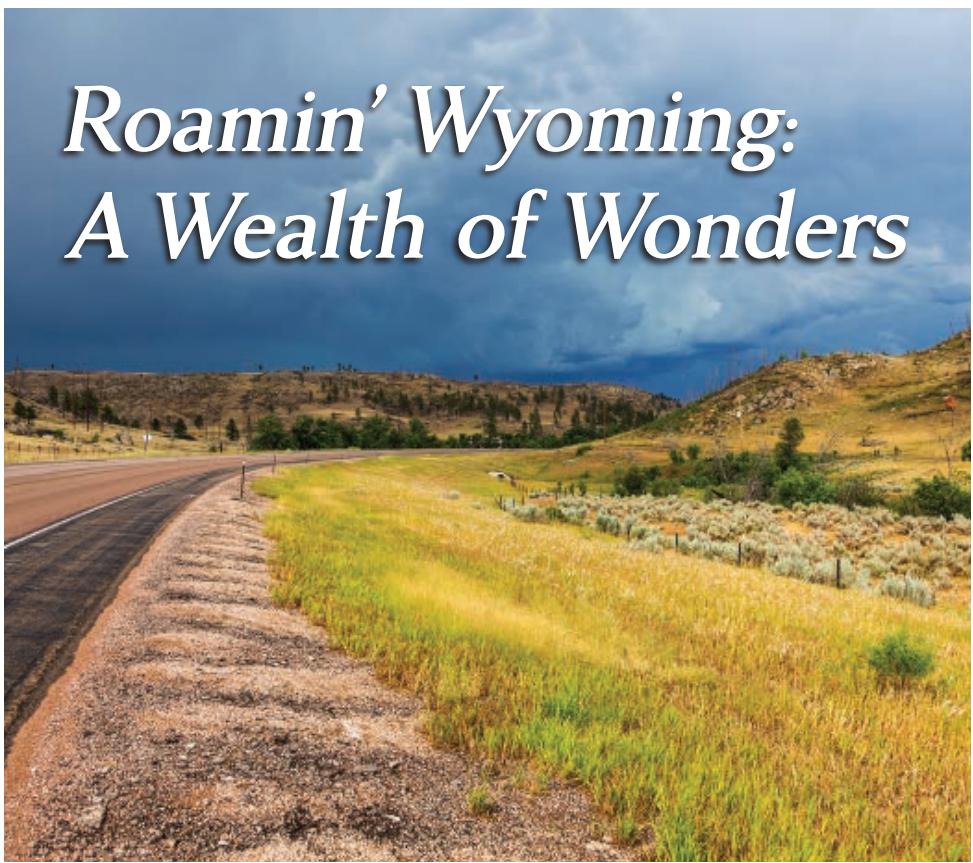


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**8-12 MAY** / Tue-Sat  
Register by April 13

Continuing our march around the states bordering Colorado, it's time to explore the historic, geologic, and scenic offerings of eastern Wyoming. Where dinosaurs once thundered, where Native Americans found prosperity and tragedy, where settlers left their marks, we'll pack the days full with sights. And while we're so close, we'll bound across the border into Montana to spend a day at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Many of the tales have direct connections to Colorado, so don't miss out on the wealth of wonder in store in Wyoming!

## *Roamin' Wyoming: A Wealth of Wonders*



Includes four nights' lodging, bus transportation, guides and interpretation, admissions and seven meals, including a welcome dinner. 303/866-2394

\$925 / **Members \$850** / Single supplement \$325