

COLORADO CITIES – COMMUNITY LIFE

Churches

What do these photos tell you about what city churches were like?

Presbyterian Church – 1872

This is the Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs. This photo was taken in about 1872.



Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Religion played an important role in the towns and cities of Colorado. The new townspeople brought their religion with them. Churches were among the first buildings constructed in the new many towns. This Presbyterian Church was built within a year after Colorado Springs was founded.

Their Own Words

"When the [Larimer Street Methodist] church was completed it was as much of a landmark in the city as the capital is today. It could be seen plainly from any point of the city, and people came from over the state to see it."

Source: Description by an early pioneer, Denver Post, October 20, 1912.

Presbyterian Church - 1898

This is the choir of the Presbyterian Church in Greeley. The photo was taken in 1898.



The choir of the Presbyterian Church in Greeley

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Music was an important part of the services in most Protestant Christian churches. Men and women sang in the choir and played the organ or other musical instruments.

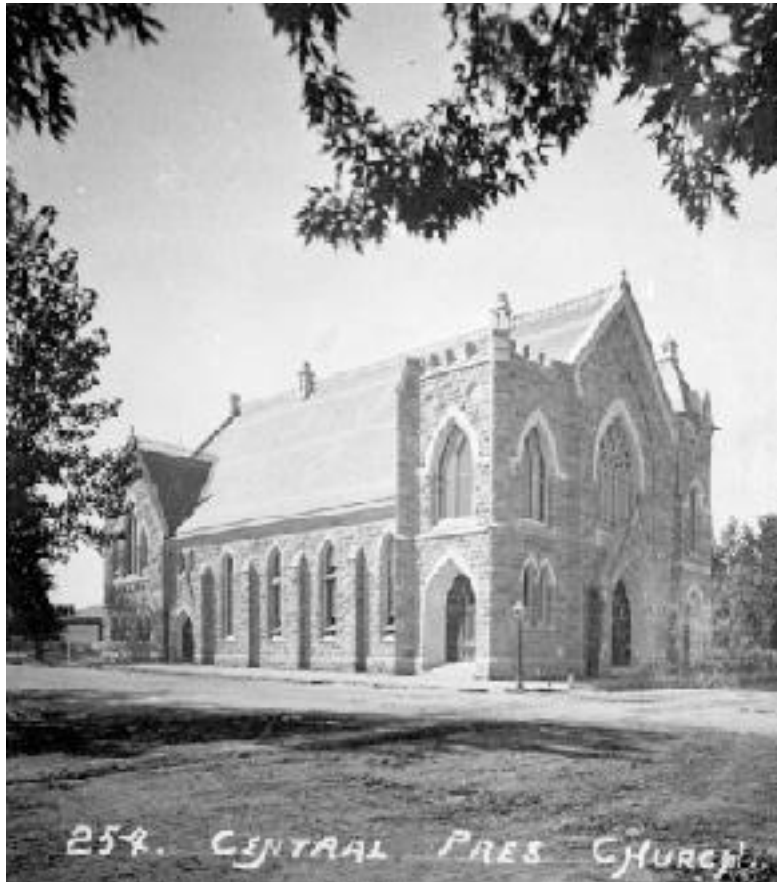
Their Own Words

"On Sundays, oh we had to go to church, of course. We went to the Episcopal Church then. I don't remember too much about it except that as I grew older, a teenager, I suppose, I always sang in the choir."

Source: Anabel Barr quoted in Maria M. Rogers, ed., In Other Words: Oral Histories of the Colorado Frontier, (Golden: Fulcrum Press, 1995): 117.

Central Presbyterian Church

This is the Central Presbyterian Church in Denver, which was built in 1878.



Central Presbyterian Church in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The cities of Colorado had many fine examples of church architecture. The Central Presbyterian Church in Denver was built in the Gothic style. That is, the windows and doorways had pointed arches like those of churches in Medieval Europe.

Their Own Words

"Our first Sunday was spent in Denver. We were fortunate enough to be directed to the Jesuit Church, which we found to be poor, small, and dingy, unworthy alike of the great Order and the growing city. We were assured, however, that it was the best Catholic church in Denver, which is the more surprising

as [other Catholic orders] had kept pace with the progress of the city, fine Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Unitarian churches have been erected."

Source: Dr. Edward J. Nolan quoted in J. Manuel Espinosa, "The Neapolitan Jesuits on the Colorado Frontier, 1868-1919," Colorado Magazine, 15 (March 1938): 70.

First Baptist Church

This photo shows the exterior of the First Baptist Church in Denver. The Church was built in 1883. This photo was taken in 1893.



First Baptist Church in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The First Baptist Church in Denver was a large church. It seated several hundred people. The brick church has many features of Victorian architecture. These include towers with spires and arched windows and entryways. The windows were made of stained glass.

A Church Pipe Organ

This photo was taken near the front of the First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs.



Pipe organ at the First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The man seated on the bench is playing the church's pipe organ. You can see its tall pipes in the center of the photo. The man standing at the right is the minister. He is standing in the pulpit. Ministers preached to their congregations from the pulpit.

Their Own Words

"The Methodist Church was always striving to bring advantages to their members in the way of musical events, lectures, and study groups of which my father was ever a member. Once I was taken to hear a young man talk about Russia. . . . Another time a young man in a turban told us about India. He also included some of his experiences in this country."

Source: Quantrille McClung, Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 28.

St. Peter's Catholic Church

The church in this photo is St. Peter's Catholic Church in Pueblo.



St. Peter's Catholic Church in Pueblo

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Most people from the East who settled in Colorado were Protestants. However, the larger cities also included many Catholics. Most of the Italians who worked in Pueblo's steel mills were Catholic. Many attended the church in this photo.

Their Own Words

"The various religions early started churches. Although they had few members they were very diligent. The Methodists had a small adobe church on the corner of 7th and Main. Later in the '80s they built a large brick church which they kept for many years on the corner of 7th and Santa Fe. The Catholics early had a substantial brick church. They also had Loretto Academy for girls and a hospital."

Source: James Owen, "Reminiscences of Early Pueblo," Colorado Magazine, 22 (May 1945): 105.

First Congregational Church

This is the First Congregational Church in Colorado Springs.



First Congregational Church in Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

This church is a mixture of architectural styles. Can you find evidence of the Gothic style described under Photo 3 above? (Look for the pointed arches.)

Their Own Words

"Now and then my father would take me to a "Love Feast," a Sunday morning prayer meeting where those present partook of bread and water in a manner similar to the communion service. Every Wednesday evening there was the regular Prayer Meeting and on New Year's Eve there was a Watch Night service where the Old Year was ushered out and the New welcomed in with prayer. All this would appear to be too large a dose of religion but, after all, there was little else for a God-fearing family to do in those days."

Source: Quantrille McClung, Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver, (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 31.

Recreation

What do these photos tell you about the different sports and recreation activities that people living in the city would engage in?

Man With Bicycle

This man posed with his high-wheel bicycle. The photo was taken about the year 1888 at Denver's Sportsman Park.



Man with bicycle at Denver's Sportsman Park

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

In the 1880s, bicycling was a new form of recreation. The bicycles of that time had one large wheel, with one small one in the rear. It was a man's sport because women could not ride a high-wheeler in a skirt. The man in this photo is dressed in a sports outfit that includes tight pants, a fitted jacket, and a cap.

Their Own Words

"[A] High wheel bicycle . . . it was one of the first. . . [There] was a little trick to [riding] it. Maybe a little more than riding a bicycle today. The way you got on and off . . . was from the back, and you stepped up on a step, and you got on. You had to be in motion to ride it. . . It wasn't bad ridin' on the pavement and all, but I always thought, boy, ridin' on cobblestone on the streets . . . and the bricks—it was a little trick. I read where they used to have races on these high-wheelers, and I imagine it was quite a thrill to those who could race 'em at that time."

Source: Lyndon Switzer, quoted in Maria M. Rogers, ed., In Other Words: Oral Histories of the Colorado Frontier (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1996): 71.

Bicycle Race

This photo shows men gathered near Denver in 1895 for a bicycle race. Although extremely popular for a time, the "bicycle craze" was soon replaced with a new "craze"—the automobile.



Bicycle race near Denver

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

Men also raced bicycles as a sport. The modern-looking bicycles in this photo were called “safety” bicycles. During the 1890s, they replaced the old high-wheelers. Women as well as men could ride these bicycles.

Their Own Words

“Bicycle clubs sprang up all over the state, their membership running into the thousands. There were in Denver professional bicycle exhibitions and races . . . and there were professional and amateur races galore. . . . Everybody rode a ‘wheel’—men, women and children, old and young, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, business men. When the first automobile, a ‘one-luger’ [one cylinder engine], made its appearance in Denver, about 1901, the number of bicycles in the city was nearly or quite as great, in proportion to population, as the number of automobiles of the present day [1933].”

Source: Andrew Gillette, “The Bicycle Era in Colorado,” Colorado Magazine, 10 (November 1933): 13-14.

Ice Skating In Denver City Park

The people in this photo are ice-skating on City Park Lake in Denver. The photo was taken about 1900.



Ice-skating on City Park Lake in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

In the late 1800s, ice-skating was popular kind of family recreation. This photo includes families with children as well as adult couples. Denver's City Park Lake was a popular place for ice-skating.

Their Own Words

"He kept the old mill pond flooded for all of us in the winter time so we'd have a place to skate. . . . First we [had skates that clamped on your shoes], you know, with a key and then, oh boy, finally got a pair of shoe skates for Christmas, and things were lookin' up."

Source: Ruby Jackson quoted in Maria M. Rogers, ed., In Other Words: Oral Histories of the Colorado Frontier, (Golden: Fulcrum Press, 1995): 108.

Elitch Gardens Miniature Train

This miniature train was an amusement ride for children at Elitch's Garden. The train was pulled by a small steam-powered locomotive.



Miniature train at Elitch's Garden

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Families also enjoyed going to Elitch's Gardens. It had a picnic area, a small zoo, and roller coaster rides for children. Elitch's also had a theatre that offered plays for adults.

Their Own Words

"Elitch's Garden, the city's great summer amusement place, is famous all through the country. It was originally a farm, and still has a fine orchard besides its orderly Coney Island [a New York City amusement park] features. Children go there in the afternoons with their nurses, and all of Denver goes there in the evenings, when the great attraction is the theatre with its splendid stock company [of actors], which is of a very high order."

Source: Julian Street, "Hitting a High Spot: Denver," Colliers (November 7, 1914): 30.

Picnic In The Garden Of The Gods

The group in this photo was having a picnic at the Garden of the Gods near Colorado Springs.



Picnic at the Garden of the Gods near Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

People then as now enjoyed hikes, picnics, and just being out of doors. The Garden of the Gods, located near Colorado Springs, was a popular place for sight-seeing and picnicking. It was well known for its unusual sandstone formations.

Their Own Words

"The last part of July we could go into the mountains for picnics because then the danger of cloud bursts and floods was over. . . . We rode in excursion cars that didn't have any glass in the windows and the cinders from the engine showered down on us. . . . When we came to Crystal Lake the train stopped and we all got out and carried our lunch boxes and baskets with us."

Source: Edwina H. Fallis, When Denver and I Were Young (Denver: Sage Books): 145.

Sports

What do these photos tell you about the different sports and recreation activities that people living in the city would engage in?

Ignacio Indian School Softball Team

This is the girls' baseball team at the Southern Ute Indian School at Ignacio. The photo was taken about 1915.



Softball team at Southern Ute Indian School

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Girls as well as boys played school sports by the early 1900s. The girls in this photo wore bloomers and a sleeveless top as uniforms. Sports clothes like these would in time influence the styles of women's everyday clothing.

Children Skiing At Steamboat

These young people from Steamboat Springs are preparing for a ski race.



Skiing at Steamboat Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Since the 1860s, miners had used skis to get around in the mountains. They called them Norwegian snowshoes. By the early 1900s, young people as well as adults were taking up skiing as a sport. At that time Steamboat Springs was the center of recreational skiing in Colorado.

Girl's Basketball Team

This photograph shows a girl's high school basketball team.



Manual Technical High School girl's basketball team

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Basketball was a new sport in the early 1900s. It was played by girls as well as boys. The young women in this photo were the girls basketball team for Manual Technical High School in Denver.

Their Own Words

“Well, we didn’t do too much. The high school over here was just three little rooms. We didn’t have dances like they have now, [but] we did play basketball, the girls did, and I was on the basketball team; I was a guard.”

Source: Margaret Tagert Jones quoted in Julie Jones-Eddy, ed., Homesteading Women: An Oral History of Colorado, 1890-1950 (New York: Twayne, 1992): 113.

High School Football Team – 1919

In the early 1900s, football also was a new sport. This photo shows the football team for Pueblo Centennial High School in 1919.



Pueblo Centennial High School football team

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

The uniforms worn by football players in the early 1900s had very little padding. These boys are wearing light padding under their sweatshirts, leather helmets, and pants with padded knees.

Their Own Words

“Our opponents in football were Aspen and Salida. We played two games each season with each team, giving us a total of our contests and this was plenty inasmuch as the football season in high altitudes was short. High school dances followed the home games in Leadville.”

Source: Ivan C. Crawford, “School Days in Leadville,” Colorado Magazine, 26 (July 1959): 226.

Denver Bears Baseball Team – 1906

This was the Denver Bears professional baseball team. The photo was taken in 1906.



Denver Bears professional baseball team

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

Baseball was America's most popular sport in the early 1900s. It was called "the great American pastime." Many cities in Colorado had amateur baseball teams that played against one another. The Denver Bears were Colorado's first professional baseball team.

Broadway Baseball Park – 1901

This is a photo of Broadway Park in Denver. It was one of Denver's early sport parks.



Broadway Park in Denver

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

The people of Denver attended many outdoor events at Broadway Park. They went there for baseball games and to attend the opening ceremony of the Festival of Mountain and Plain. It was located at Broadway and 7th Avenue, close to the uptown residential areas of the city. This large park seated 15,000 people.

Holidays and Festivals

What do these photos tell you about the different holidays & festivals city people celebrated?

Christmas In Denver – 1905

The children beside the Christmas tree are Richard and Virginia Downing. The photo was taken at their home in Denver on December 25, 1905.



Christmas in Denver

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

In the early 1900s, Christmas was one of the biggest holidays of the year in Colorado. It still is. However, the Christmas tree and the gifts children receive have changed. The tree in this photo is decorated with strings of popcorn, paper chains, cards and ball ornaments. The gifts include a saw and sawbuck, a little boom and carpet sweeper, and a ball.

Their Own Words

"Everyone who was anyone had a Christmas tree, and we made most of our own decorations. Strings of popcorn and cranberries, paper chains, popcorn balls, strings of tinsel, a few "boughten" balls of brightest color, and so on. We had saved during the year every scrap of tinfoil which we used to cover

various shapes cut from cardboard, making a small hole at the top through which we drew scraps of ribbon for hangers."

Source: Quantrille McClung, Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 61.

Labor Day Parade – 1901

This is a Labor Day parade that took place in Denver on September 2, 1901.



Labor Day parade in Denver

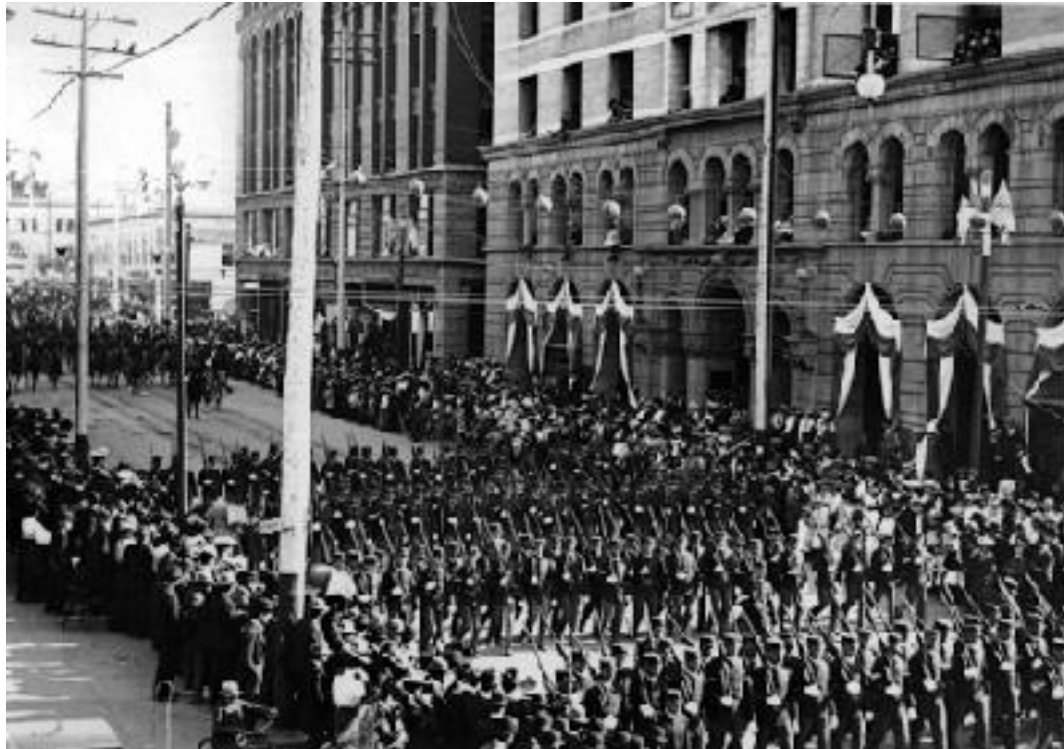
Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

Labor Day was another important holiday. It was held on the first Monday of September to honor working people.

Festival Of Mountains and Plains

This parade was held in Denver in October 1901 during the Festival of Mountain and Plain.



Festival of Mountain and Plain parade

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

Denver held a festival each year from 1899 to 1905 called the Festival of Mountain and Plain. It included parades through downtown Denver. The men in the front rows of this photo are soldiers marching with rifles.

Their Own Words

"For years the annual Festival of Mountain and Plain was eagerly looked forward to. It must have taken place in the autumn for some of the downtown streets were closed to traffic and booths set up where all sorts of the products of the state were displayed, always the choicest varieties of the yield of farm and garden and anything of unusual size or quality was given special attention."

"There were several parades, but the finest of all was the parade of 'The Slaves of the Silver Serpent.' There were many glittering floats lighted by torches carried by men in fire-proof costumes and walking alongside the floats. This was the last word in mystery and glamour to a child."

Source: Quantrille McClung, Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 61.

Decorated Carriage – 1899

The decorated carriage in this photo took part in the 1899 parade of the Festival of Mountain and Plain.



Decorated Carriage in the Festival of Mountain and Plain parade

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

The Festival of Mountain and Plain included a decorated carriage contest. Dozens of carriages covered with flowers, crepe paper, and other decorations rode in the parade. The best decorated won prizes. The carriage in this photo won the first prize in 1899.

Their Own Words

“One of the most pleasing features of the long line will be the parade of decorated carriages, buggies and traps of various kinds.... The decorations will not be limited to flowers, natural and artificial, but grains and grass, ribbons and bunting and other decorative materials will be used.”

Source: Official Programme of the Festival of Mountain and Plain, Denver, Colorado, Oct. 16, 17, 18, 1895 (Denver, 1895): 14.

Sunflower Carnival Parade – 1900

These women drove this carriage in the Sunflower Carnival parade in Colorado Springs. The photo was taken about the year 1900.



Sunflower Carnival parade in Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Other Colorado cities also had parades in which people drove decorated carriages. Colorado Springs called its festival the Sunflower Carnival. The carriage in this photo was decorated with evergreen branches and white, crepe paper calla lilies.

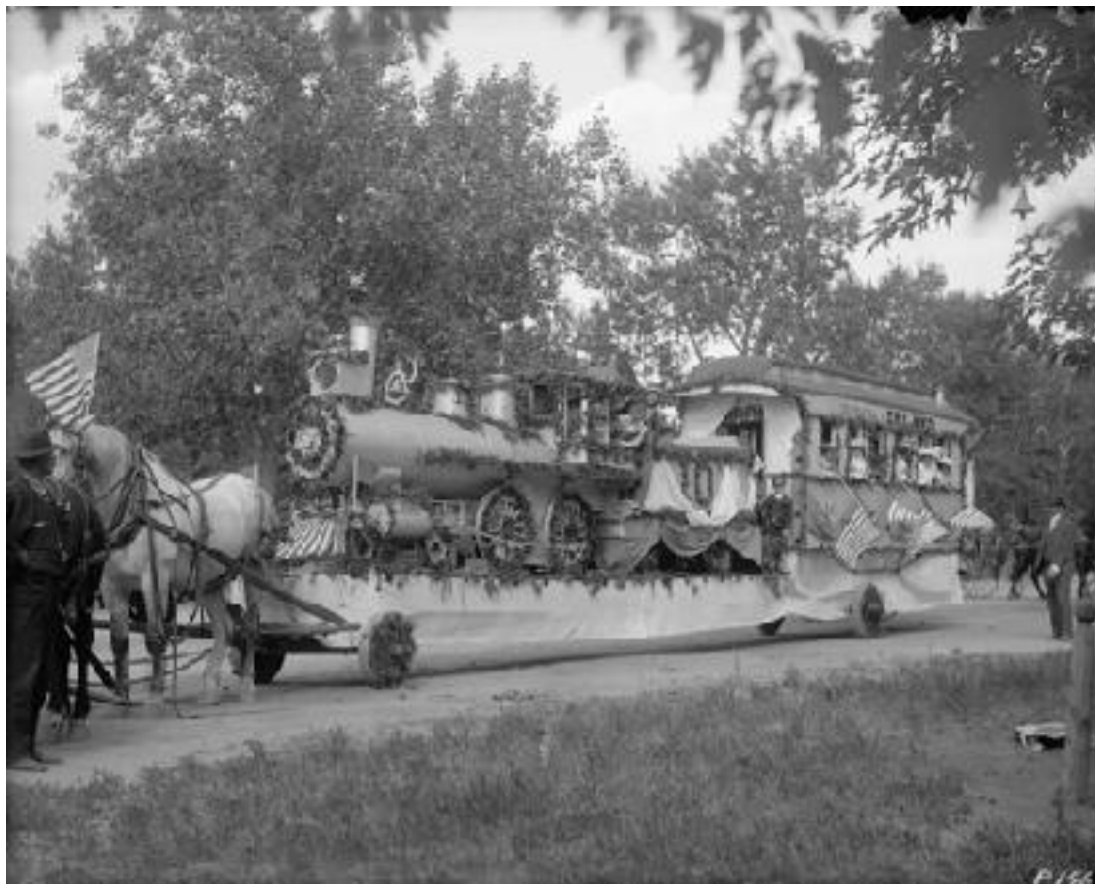
Their Own Words

"A very interesting and unusual spectacle will be seen on the streets [of Colorado Springs] next Saturday afternoon in the form of a sunflower parade. It is often seen in the East, but this will be the first time in Colorado. . . . Colorado Springs adopted its new holiday with an enthusiasm that extended to all classes. Delicate and cultured ladies risked their complexions in the rays of the afternoon sun. . . ."

Source: Colorado Springs Gazette, September 6, 1893, and September 10, 1893, quoted in Therese S. Westermeier, "Colorado Festivals (Part III)," Colorado Magazine, 30 (July 1953): 200.

Float In Sunflower Carnival Parade

This float is a replica of a railroad locomotive and caboose. It took part in a Sunflower Carnival parade in Colorado Springs.



Railroad locomotive float in the Sunflower Carnival Parade

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The float in this photo was sponsored by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. It won first prize.

Their Own Words

"The flower carnival of 1894 is a thing of the part and was pronounced by the judges to be the largest, fairest and most beautiful fete ever held in the West. . . . The procession was fully a mile long. There were pretentious four-in-hands [carriages drawn by four horses] fancifully and vividly decorated with all sorts of flowers and with fair women gracing the seats and from these a long line of vehicles graduated to the little goat-cart. . . . the pageant was witnessed by fully 10,000 people, and the various exhibits were all heartily applauded. . . ."

Source: Denver Republican, August 17, 1894 quoted in Therese S. Westermeier, "Colorado Festivals (Part III)," Colorado Magazine, 30 (July 1953): 200-201.

Entertainment

What do these photos tell you about what city people did for entertainment?

Montrose Opera House – 1915

This is the stage at the Opera House in Montrose. The photo was taken in 1915.



Opera House in Montrose

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Nearly every large town had a theater or high school auditorium where local townspeople put on plays. Sometimes a professional actor from out of town would play the lead role. Going to watch plays at the local "opera house" was a popular form of entertainment.

Their Own Words

"We didn't have to wait for the dramatic critics to tell us what people thought of the show. The critics sat in the gallery, and when they didn't like us they called down to us and said so. If the show was dull someone in the gallery would put life in it. . . . The price of seats was high, but gold dust and vegetables were acceptable as money. A dozen eggs would buy a seat in the gallery, provided the eggs were left at the gate."

Source: : Denver Republican, October 21, 1902.

Inside A Theatre – 1900

This photo shows the interior of a theatre that probably was located in Denver.



Interior of a theatre

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Attending a play at a big theatre in Denver was an experience to remember. The theatres were lavishly decorated. The ceilings and walls had colorful designs. The seats were padded and soft. The electric lights dimmed, the audience hushed, and the play began. Such fine theatres helped even not very good actors become almost fine performers.

Their Own Words

“It was a great day for me when I went in the front door of the Tabor Grand and walked up hill through the wide hall to the door where the man stood to take the tickets. . . We went through the door into the opera house. There were rows and rows of seats. A boy with brass buttons on his coat came up and took Aunt Carrie’s tickets. . . . The boy ran down the aisle and stopped at a row of seats. . . . He flip-flopped

the seats down, handed the tickets back to Aunt Carrie, gave us each a program and scurried back up the aisle.”

Source: Edwina Fallis, When Denver and I Were Young (Denver: Sage Books, 1956): 48.

Elitch Gardens Theatre

This photo was taken outside the Elitch's Gardens theater in Denver.



Elitch's Gardens theater in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The theater at the Elitch's Gardens amusement park was a popular Denver theater. It put on vaudeville shows that included a variety of comic performers and acrobats as well as plays and musical performances.

Their Own Words

"From 1888 to the spring of 1890 we were very busy laying out the grounds for the amusement park. We were also building the theater and animal houses. At 1:30 o'clock the doors of the theater were opened for the first performance in Elitch's gardens. Admission was free, and those who could not get seats stood around under the trees and watched the show, for the sides of the playhouse were not enclosed in those days. We had a vaudeville show. Here is the program from that first performance:
"

"Refined comedy Sketch, Duo and Banjoists

"Miss Minnie Zola in Clever Feats of Contortion

"Baily and Reynolds

"The Great Knockabout Comedians, Singers and Dancers

"Charles W. Goodyear, Comedian

"Vanb Auken and La Van, Champion Triple Horizontal Bar Performers of the World

"Bijou Mignon, America's Youngest Singer and Soubrette

"The Quaint, Comical Musical Genius, Charles F. Schilling

"The Gifted and Refined Balladist, Miss Rosa Lee,

"The San Francisco Twins, Ed Neal and John Sully."

Source: Early Denver Days Described in Mrs. Elitch Long's Memoirs, Denver Post, May 31, 1914.

Grand Junction Coronet Band

The men in this photo are the Grand Junction Coronet Band.



Grand Junction Coronet Band

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Most cities in Colorado in the late 1800s provided musical entertainment. That usually meant a performance by a local band or choir. Nearly every town had a brass band. Visiting bands from nearby cities also put on concerts.

Their Own Words

“The band was organized in 1888. It is interesting to note that these bands were the outcome of politicians who saw the necessity to boom parties for presidential campaigns. The uniforms for these bands were usually purchased with funds raised by the subscription method. When there was a deficit they usually gave a dance to raise the amount.”

“The men of the band were mostly CC&I (old CF&I) [Colorado Fuel and Iron Company] and depended largely on the support of the mill. If the mill was running steadily the band flourished. If the mill shut down for any length of time the band was busted and finally disbanded.”

Source: Recollections of Christina Schultz, CWA Interviews, Doc. 344/28, Colorado Historical Society.

White City Amusement Park

This is the White City amusement park in Denver in about 1910. The park was later renamed the Lakeside Amusement Park.



White City amusement park in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The people of Denver in the early 1900s loved amusement parks. They could choose between Elitch's Gardens and the White City park. The latter was known for its Big Splash ride, which is shown in the photo. Amusement parks were designed for adults as well as children.

Denver's "Moving Picture Row" – 1913

This photo was taken on Curtis Street in Denver about the year 1913. The brightly lit signs are the marquees of movie theatres.



"Moving Picture Row" in Denver

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

In the early 1900s, movies were the newest form of entertainment. Nearly every town had a least one small movie theatre. Denver had a row of theatres clustered on Curtis Street, which also was known as "moving picture row." The marquees or electric signs in this photo advertise the Princess, the Isis, the Empress, and the Tabor Grand theaters.

Their Own Words

"The second picture represented the breaking of waves on the seashore; the effect was simply marvelous, wave after wave came tumbling on the sand and as they struck and broke into tiny floods just like the real thing, some of the people in the front row seemed to think they were going to get wet and looked about to see where they could run to in case the waves came too close."

Source: Denver Republican, August 16, 1896.