

COLORADO CITIES – FAMILIES, CHILDREN & SCHOOLS

Families

What do these photos tell you about how city families were like?

The Dofflemyer Family

This is a photo of the Dofflemyer family. They lived in Gunnison, Colorado in the 1890s.



Dofflemyer family

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Many people found good-paying jobs in the cities of Colorado. James Dofflemyer, the man in this photo, managed Gunnison's telephone and telegraph company. His wife, Jennie, was the town's first telephone operator. The Dofflemyers were part of Colorado's growing middle class.

The Brown Family

The Brown family of Greeley posed for this photo. It probably was taken in the 1890s.



Brown family

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Many African American families settled in Colorado. Most lived in Denver, which had an African American population of over 6,000 by 1920. Most worked in service jobs, such as Pullman car porters, barbers, cooks, waiters, and servants.

Their Own Words

“After the third child was born to the Robinson family, in New Mexico, my grandfather decided to move to Colorado. He had never forgotten how beautiful the mountains had been when he first came west. . . . Since he was an excellent cook, he was never out of work.”

Source: Dorothy Bass Spann, in Black Pioneers: A History of a Pioneer Family in Colorado Springs.

The Levy Family

This photo shows the Levy family standing on their front porch. This family lived in Breckenridge. The children's names are Agusta and Max.



Levy family

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Charles Levy, the man in this photo, owned a clothing and dry goods store in Breckenridge. The cities of Colorado provided a comfortable life for the families of merchants like Mr. Levy.

An Immigrant Family

This family of European immigrants was photographed in their apartment in Denver.



European immigrant family

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Large numbers of immigrants arrived in Colorado during the late 1800s. They found jobs in the cities, as well as in mines and on farms. Poor immigrant families like the one in this photo lived crowded together in apartment buildings.

Their Own Words

“In the fifteen or twenty years prior to 1920, the coal companies had actively recruited laborers from the impoverished and crowded areas of southern Europe. The recruiting continued into the 1920s but on a decreasing scale. Few of the children in our school knew any English when they entered. Their parents paid scant heed to some of the subject the children studied—but no so with English! The children were made to repeat English lessons at home—and in this way, of course, parents learned the language too.”

Source: Letha M. DeVoss, “Superstar,” in Margaret J. Lehrer, ed., Up the Hemline (Colorado Springs: Williams and Field, 1975): 99.

The Ferlin Family

This photo shows the Ferlin family. This Denver family played music together. The Ferlins had three daughters. The photo was taken in their parlor or front room. The family dressed up to have their photo taken.



Ferlin family

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The Ferlin family was most likely quite wealthy. What in the photograph suggests that this was the case? One clue the photo offers is that each family member would appear to play a musical instrument. Instruments and music lessons were too expensive for many people to afford.

Children

What do these photos tell you about the things children did in the city?

Young Child In a Carriage

This child's photo was taken in a baby carriage.



Child in a carriage

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

This child belonged to a well-to-do family. The fancy carriage was made of wicker and a ruffled parasol for shade.

Girl Sitting On a Burro

This girl had her photo taken on a burro in Manitou Springs.



Girl on a burro in Manitou Springs, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Manitou Springs was a resort town west of Colorado Springs. Families gathered there to drink and bathe in its mineral springs. Children as well as adults enjoyed vacations at Manitou Springs.

Their Own Words

“At Manitou we could stop to drink some of the mineral water for which I did not care in its virgin state. Provident folk took with them large glass bottles or jugs and filled them with water from the soda springs. They had to be handled with care lest trouble ensue. If too full and subjected to a lot of motion, the jug was apt to blow its cork and the precious fluid be lost. But my mother was careful and on our return we would have ‘soda lemonade,’ a great treat.”

*Source: Quantrille D. McClung, *Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver* (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 66.*

Children Getting Free Medical Care

The children in this photo are gathered at the Women’s Christian Temperance Union mission in Denver.



Children at the Women's Christian Temperance Union mission in Denver, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The W.C.T.U. mission provided poor people with free medical care and other services. It also held daily prayer meetings. These well-dressed children probably did not need free medical care. Even so, in the early 20th century many groups were concerned about the effects that living in cities had on children.

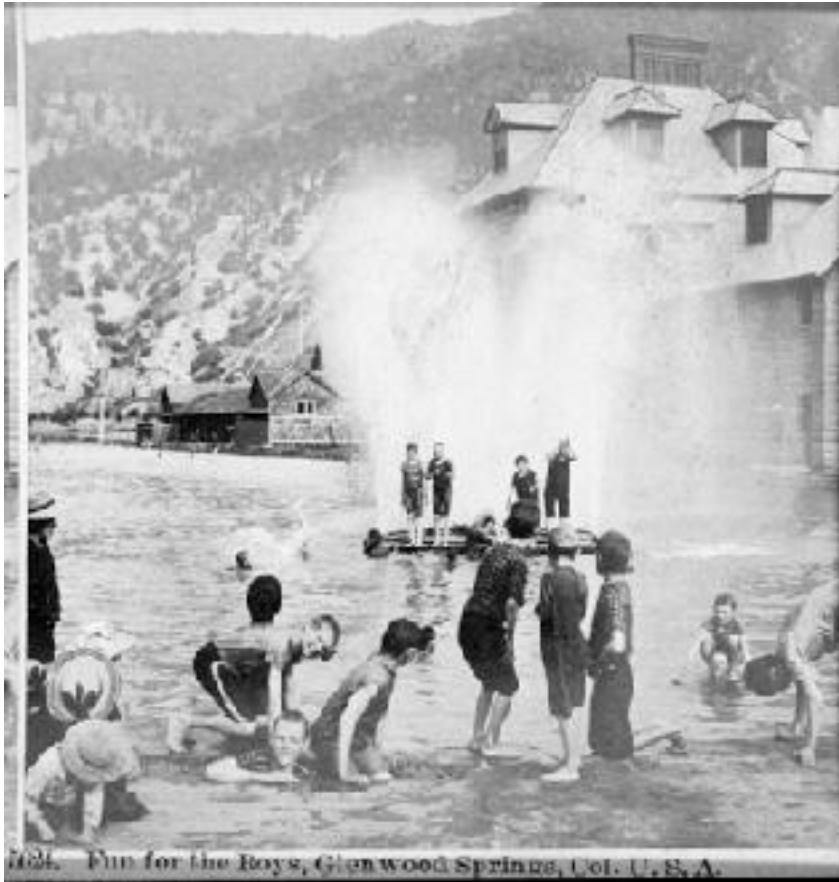
Their Own Words

"At present the Judge [Juvenile Court Judge Benjamin Lindsey] is engaged in trying to complete a code of laws for the protection of women and children, which he hopes will be a model for all other States. . . . This code [of laws] will cover child labor, juvenile delinquency and dependency. . . . and other matters having to do with social . . . justice toward mother and child."

Source: Julian Street, "Hitting a High Spot: Denver," Colliers (November 7, 1914): 29.

Children In Mineral Springs Pool

This photo was taken at a pool in Glenwood Springs. The caption at the bottom of the photo says “Fun for the Boys, Glenwood Springs, Col. U.S.A.”



Glenwood Springs pool

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

This photo shows five boys playing on a water fountain, while others swam, dived or looked on. This resort at Glenwood Springs was famous for its mineral water. Many Colorado cities had places where families went for vacations. Children also had fun at home playing indoor games.

Their Own Words

“There were card games, “Authors” and others. . . . When in my teens a kind neighbor used to favor me with a frequent game of checkers and in those days we young ones got into the habit of gathering around the piano for an evening of song, usually the old fashioned kind.”

Source: Quantrille D. McClung, Memoirs of My Childhood and Youth in North Denver (Denver: Colorado Genealogical Society, 1979): 273.

Children On a Denver Playground

The children in this photo are swinging and climbing at a public playground in Denver.



Denver public playground

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Children who grew up in cities also had parks and playgrounds in which to play. Look closely at this photo. How is it different from playgrounds today?

Their Own Words

"The game was played with a ball, which was made of yarn unraveled from the leg of an old sock. The ball was wound hard and was made large and heavy. Its use was not to be struck with a bat; its mission in the world was to be thrown at somebody with no gentle force. If the ball struck a boy fairly and unexpectedly in the stomach, it knocked him down; this was great fun."

Source: ICC Star, April 30, 1911. Dawson Scrapbooks, Vol. 4, p. 57, Colorado Historical Society.

Classrooms

What do these photos tell you about what city school classrooms were like inside?

Wheat Ridge Elementary School

This is an elementary school classroom in the town of Wheat Ridge.



Wheat Ridge Elementary School

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

Large city schools had many advantages over the one-room schools of small towns and rural areas. Instead of homemade benches and desks, they had "modern" desks with iron sides. They had "graded" classrooms, where all the students in the room were about the same age. And nearly every wall was covered with a chalkboard. Students did more of their work on the chalkboard or blackboard in those days. Paper for homework assignments was scarce and expensive.

Their Own Words

"According to my ideas of school Miss Peabody's First Grade was all that it should be. There were the little desks, five straight rows, seven in each row. The desks were made for the average size six-year-old to slip in, perch on the edge of the seat hinged to the desk behind and ease it gently down into position, or accidentally on purpose slip and slam it down. Those who were small for their age had plenty of room to wiggle about and sit on their feet. "

"Those who were large for their age found the desks a tight fit, but they wiggled just the same. The desks had fancy cast iron sides that were screwed to the floor. Each desk had a sloping wood top and a shelf underneath. "

Source: Edwina Fallis, When Denver and I Were Young, (Denver: Sage Books, 1956): 54.

A Grand Junction Kindergarten

The children in this photo are in kindergarten at a school in Grand Junction.



Kindergarten class in Grand Junction, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

In the 1880s, kindergartens were still a new idea. The first kindergarten was developed in Germany only a few years earlier. The word “kinder” means “children” in German. Having kindergarten was one of the advantages offered by schools in big cities.

Their Own Words

“There were the narrow tall windows on one side of the room, and the big slate blackboards on the other. At the lower edge of the blackboard was a trough to hold the chalk and erasers. Below the trough was a narrow platform for the little children to stand on so they could reach the blackboards. The teacher’s table and chair stood on a wide platform and behind it were her cupboards for books, pencils, chalk, and erasers, the teacher’s lunch and maybe her hat and coat.”

Source: Edwina Fallis, When Denver and I Were Young (Denver: Sage Books, 1956): 54-55.

A School Play In Julesburg

The children in this school in Julesburg are about to put on a play. Can you guess what the play was about?



School play in Julesburg, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

School children in the late 1800s sometimes celebrated holidays by putting on a play. Usually it was a Christmas or a Thanksgiving play. Two of the girls in this photo are dressed in costumes of the colonial period. They may be preparing for a Thanksgiving play.

Their Own Words

“The school had a few programs. The Christmas program was the most successful. . . . We could run off enough copies of our program for our audience. After the old sheet curtains were open, the little ones sang song, ‘a capella’ of course since we had no piano. Then the older students put on a one act play. We couldn’t come by a Santa Claus suit, so we had good St. Nicholas who was easy to dress in a flowing robe and a bishop’s miter.”

Source: Margaret Vandenburg, “Forty Years One Winter,” in Margaret J. Lehrer, ed., Up the Hemline (Colorado Springs: Williams and Field, 1975): 117.

Denver East High School Library

This photo was taken in the library at Denver’s East High School. The students in this photo were busy selecting and reading books.



Denver East High School Library

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

Big city high schools were much better equipped than elementary schools. Schools like East High School had a library, science laboratories, and an assembly hall. The school in this photo was the original East High School. It was built in 1889 and torn down in the 1920s. Then Denver built a second and more modern East High.

Their Own Words

“The whole third floor of the Arapahoe Building was used by the High School. The large assembly room occupied the front of the building. There were two large classrooms and a small one partitioned from the hall—originally the boys’ coatroom. Classes in Greek and French were hard here. The chemical laboratory was in the basement. The teacher performed the experiments while the class looked on. Grade pupils were often interested and peered through the windows, but sufficiently nauseous results [odors] sent them flying.”

Source: Harry T. Baldwin, “The Denver High School, 1874-78,” Colorado Magazine, 15 (May 1938): 110-111.

Golden High School Faculty

This photo was taken in a classroom at Golden High School in the city of Golden. It shows teachers lined up along one wall.



Golden High faculty members

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

By the late 1800s, most teachers in elementary schools were women. That was not the case with high schools. Of the twelve teachers in this photo, six were men.

Their Own Words

" CLASSROOM RULES

1. Are all the pupils busy at their work?
2. Are two studying from the same book?
3. Is the teacher interrupted by questions during recitation?
4. Are the pupils addicted to snickering?
5. Is the floor clean?
6. Are the desks spotted with ink?

7. Are the lips moving during study?
8. Are the pupils polite toward the teacher and toward each other?
9. Is the owner's name written legibly with ink in each textbook?
10. Is the board clean, or any marks thereon that do not legitimately belong to the school-work, and are all marks neatly and properly made?"

Source: Teacher's Handbook, Denver, 1890.

Schools

What do these photos tell you about the kind of schools city children attended?

A Boulder School – 1860

This building in Boulder was Colorado's first schoolhouse. It was built in 1860.



First schoolhouse in Boulder, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

The first schools in most Colorado towns were one-room buildings like this one in Boulder. The new settlers usually began a school as soon as there were a dozen or so children of school age in the town.

Their Own Words

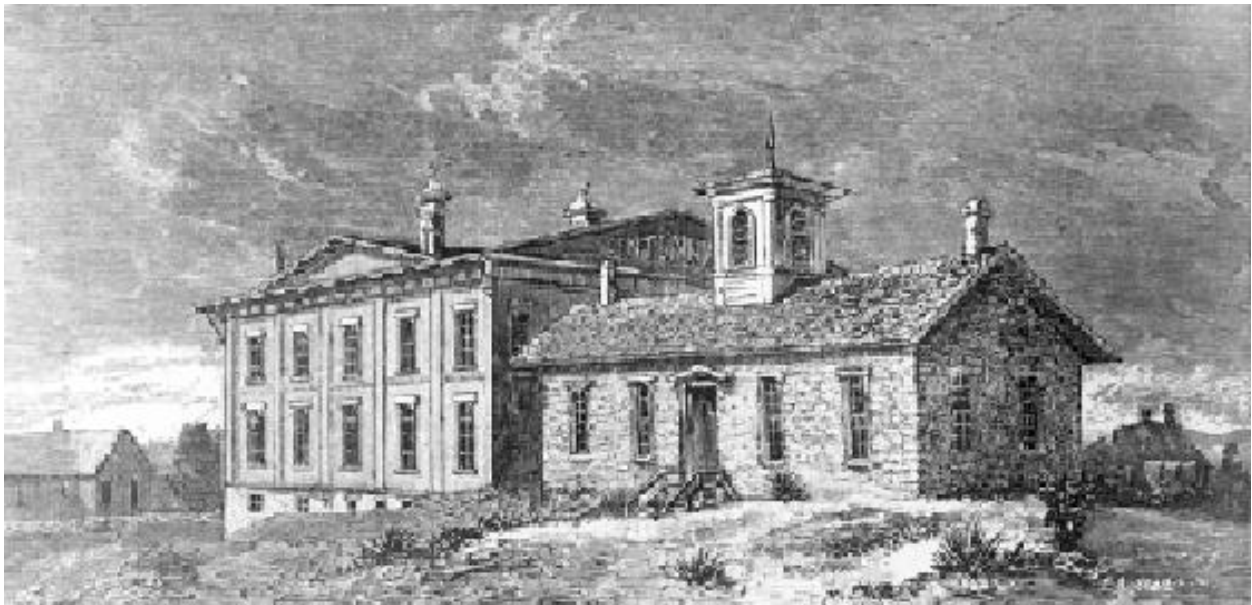
This man remembered when schools were segregated by race in Denver:

"A building on 16th and Holladay Streets was also rented sometime in 1868; where only colored children were taught."

Source: Denver Tribune, September, 13, 1883. Dawson Scrapbooks, Colorado Historical Society.

Two Schools In Pueblo

This drawing shows two Pueblo school buildings. The old Centennial School on the right was opened in 1870. Eight years later, the city built the new two-story Centennial School on the left.



Two schools in Pueblo, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

As towns grew into cities, schools had to keep pace. In less than ten years, the town of Pueblo had to replace its first school with a new and larger building. Growing towns also had to build new schools in new neighborhoods.

Their Own Words

“The early public school was an aid to righteousness such as it does not now seem to be. The bell rang, followed by roll call, then reading of a short Bible lesson, next repeating or sings the Lord’s Prayer or the singing of a well chosen song.”

Source: Recollections of a Colorado Pioneer, Ft. Lupton Press, February 3, 1938.

The Ashland School

This is a photo of the Ashland School in Denver. It was built in 1874 in the Highlands neighborhood of Denver.



Ashland School in Denver, Colorado

Photo: Colorado Historical Society

More About This Topic

The Ashland School is a good example of schools built in Colorado's cities in the 1870s. By then the cities were building large schoolhouses that had eight rooms or more. They usually were built of brick or stone.

Their Own Words

"School athletics were practically nil and were individual only as far as the boys were concerned and were confined largely to 'Marbles,' 'Tops,' 'Foot and a half,' and 'Jacks.' Later, the girls stole the latter... [Girls] were limited to such athletics as 'Charm String,' 'Autograph Albums,' and 'Bean Bags.'"

Source: Harry T. Baldwin, "The Denver High School, 1874-78," Colorado Magazine, Vol. 15, No. 3 (May 1938): 115.

A High School – 1870's

This is a high school built during the 1870s in Colorado Springs.



High school in Colorado Springs

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

In the late 1800s, few students went to school beyond the 8th grade. Few rural areas and small towns even had a high school. Most high schools were located in large cities, such as Denver, Pueblo or Colorado Springs.

Their Own Words

“The whole third floor of the Arapahoe Building was used by the High School. The large assembly room occupied the front of the building. There were two large classrooms and a small one partitioned from the hall—originally the boys’ coatroom. Classes in Greek and French were heard here. The chemical laboratory was in the basement. The teacher performed the experiments while the class looked on. Grade pupils were often interest and peered through the windows, but sufficiently nauseous results [odors] sent them flying.

Source: Harry T. Baldwin, “The Denver High School, 1874-78,” Colorado Magazine, Vol. 15, No. 3 (May 1938): 110-111.

Centennial High School In Pueblo

This is a photo of Centennial High School in Pueblo, Colorado. It is a brick and stone building with four floors.



Centennial High School in Pueblo, Colorado

Photo: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

More About This Topic

During the early 1900s, more and more students attended high school. Pueblo's Centennial High School was a large building that would hold hundreds of students.

Their Own Words

"Most of the houses in Pueblo up to this time were either adobe or frame, with some fired brick of poor quality. The first school of any importance was adobe, with two rooms, on the site where the present Centennial High School now stands. An 8-room brick building was built there in the late 1870s and then removed to make way for the present high school building."

Source: James Owen, "Reminiscences of Early Pueblo," Colorado Magazine, 22 (May 1945): 101.