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United States Department of Agriculture



ASPEN--A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

PALEO-INDIANS (11,500 B.C. to 7,000 B.C.)

Origin Theory--crossed over Bering Strait in 3 waves during a 40,000 year period of recession and advancement of glaciers.

Hunting--Hunted mammoths, possibly by ambush, forcing them into canyons and crushing with boulders from above. Extinction of large mammals resulted in change of culture.

Mammoths--14 feet in height, 13 foot tusks. Fossils found in Littleton, CO (11,700 B.C.) along with camel remains (16,630 B.C.). Also present were horses, bison, antelope, deer. 8,000 B.C. glaciers retreated and mammoths died out due to warmer climate and hunting.

Tools found--points, scrapers, blades, choppers, bone tools.

ARCHAIC PEOPLE (7,000 B.C. TO 500 A.D.)

Hunting--smaller game, fish, birds, shellfish and some gathering of seeds and nuts.

Tools found--complex tools for grinding, baskets for gathering, snares, netting, bone fishhooks.

Shelters--rock shelters or caves, small populations.

UTE INDIANS (500 A.D. TO PRESENT)

named the Roaring Fork River --the Thunder River
traded pottery and baskets with other tribes
used fires to improve deer population

1640--first horses introduced. Start of seasonal migrations with elk and buffalo in the summer (mountains) and wintering in the valleys at lower elevations

1863--signed treaty with the U.S. Government giving white men all land east of the Continental Divide, us of mineral rights, and no harassment of miners in exchange for \$20,000 in goods and provisions annually over ten years.

Contact--beginning of contact with the white man, trading furs. The Utes helped the U.S. push out the Cheyenne and Arapahoe.

Chief Ouray--held responsible for all seven bands of Utes in Colorado, signed the treaty of 1863, spoke English, Spanish and two Indian tongues.

1868--more land bought from the Utes for \$25,000.

First reservation--due to trapping and trading conflicts which started when prospectors came from Leadville for silver.

Nathan Meeker and the "Meeker Massacre"--anti-Indian U.S. agent who tried to change the nomadic ways of the Indians by turning them into farmers. He spread false stories of Indian committed crimes and forest fires. Governor Pitkin worked to get rid of Utes and supported Meeker's stories, paid no attention to appeals by Chief Ouray to stop Meeker. The situation worsened, fighting began. The army was called in

to fight the Utes and Meeker was killed.

1880--Ute Removal Act--a forced trek over 350 miles to land in Utah.

MINING DAYS

1879--"Ute City" named by first prospectors over Independence Pass.

1889--Permanent settler skied, snowshoed over Independence Pass.

1883--Silver found in Spar, Smuggler and Galena mines.

Smuggler Mountain Mine--claimed by a prospector in the area who was hunting deer. Another prospector offered him a mule and \$50. for the claim--and he accepted. The mine produced a silver nugget of 1,840 pounds. Total silver production from the Smuggler=\$97 million!

1887--Railroad came into Aspen; Jerome B. Wheeler (Wheeler Opera House, Hotel Jerome) renamed the city Aspen. Population grew to 12,000 by 1983 with 120 saloons, 118 gambling houses and 35 brothels. Aspen becomes the first town in Colorado with electric lights.

1892--"Silver Queen" statue made from silver and gold for the World's Fair; dimensions - 18'x12'x10'. Total sum from Aspen mines this year = \$105 million.

1893--SILVER CRASH! Sherman Act repealed, silver demonitized. No work, banks failed, Wheeler and Gillespie went bankrupt.

1920's--population dropped to 700.

ASPEN'S REVIVAL

1936- Andre Roch organized the Aspen Ski Club

1939--first downhill and slalom events held.

1941--WWII Tenth Mountain Division trained at Camp Hale, near Leadville, for combat in mountainous conditions. On weekends they came to Aspen to ski. After WWII many returned to live and develop a ski industry in Aspen.

1947--opening of lifts, re-opening of Wheeler Opera House

1949--Paepke's and the Aspen Institute brought Albert Schweitzer to a conference.

1950--World Skiing FIS Championships, 14 countries attending. Aspen Music School opens.