ON THE INTERNET

Western History Photography Collection

The Denver Public Library Western History/Genealogy Department

YOU CAN DIRECTLY ACCESS THE COLLECTION AT
http://gowest.coalliance.org
or link to it from the Denver Public Library homepage at
http://www.denver.lib.co.us/

Overview

The Western History/Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library has a collection of more than 600,000 photographs related to the history of Colorado and the American West. The major goals of the Photodigitization Project are to provide increased public access to the collection and to preserve the original photographs and negatives by eliminating the need to handle them. The photodigitized images are available for viewing and printing over the Internet and at public library loca-
tions across Colorado. Roughly 95,000 images will be available by the year 2000, and the collection will continue to grow.

Content

The Photography Collection is particularly strong in Colorado subjects. The Colorado Town Collection contains images of more than 11,000 points of interest throughout the state, dating from the 1860s. Architectural details, streetscapes, residences, interiors, parks and ghost towns are included. Some of the prominent architectural photographers in the database are Joseph Collier, Donald Kemp, Harry Lake, L. C. McClure and Muriel Wolle. Railroads are another strength of the collection, in particular the photographs of Otto Perry and Robert Richardson. Other subjects include Native Americans (the photographs of D. F. Barry and Horace Poley), mining, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and the World War II 10th Mountain Division ski troops. The Internet site has a more complete list of photographers and subjects. Click on “Help” and look for the heading “The Online Collection.”

Searching

You can search the collection by keyword, name, subject or call number. Keyword searching is very powerful and is perhaps the best way to start. The computer will search for the words you enter in any order and in any field, so the more words you use the better. The “subject browse” search will give you a selection of library subject headings that you can click on for very specific results.

A few search tips:

- Don’t worry about capital letters.
- An asterisk acts like a wildcard; use it to pick up plurals and variant spellings. For example, “min*” will pick up “mine,” “mines,” “miners” and “mining.”
- Use “not” to limit a search. Ex. “Denver not railroads”
- Use “or” to broaden a search. Ex. “Ute or Cheyenne”
Detailed directions for calibrating your monitor for optimum viewing are available in the “Help” section of the Internet site.

Photographs displayed on the Internet site are low-resolution images, suitable for reference. The thumbnails display 160 pixels in the long dimension. Full-size images are 640 pixels long.

High-resolution images (4,000 pixels long) can be viewed in the Gates Western History Reading Room, on Level 5 of Denver’s Central Library, and at the following locations:

- Alamosa: Southern Peaks Public Library, (719) 589-6592
- Burlington: Burlington Public Library, (719) 346-8109
- Canon City: Canon City Public Library, (719) 269-9020
- Cortez: Cortez Public Library, (970) 565-8117
- Craig: Craig-Moffat County Library, (970) 824-5116
- Denver: Colorado Historical Society, (303) 866-2305; Denver Art Museum Library, (303) 640-5513; Ross-Barnum Branch Library, (303) 935-1891; Byers Branch Library, (303) 571-1665; Ford-Warren Branch Library, (303) 294-0907; Montbello Branch Library, (303) 373-0767; Pauline Robinson Branch Library, (303) 370-1530; Valdez-Perry Branch Library, (303) 295-4302
- Durango: Durango Public Library, (970) 385-2970
- Georgetown: John Tomay Memorial Library, (303) 569-2620
- Glenwood Springs: Garfield County Public Library, (970) 945-5958
- Grand Junction: Mesa County Public Library District, (970) 243-4442
- Greeley: Weld Library District, (970) 330-0208
- Gunnison: Gunnison County Public Library, (970) 641-3485
- La Junta: Woodruff Memorial Library, (719) 384-4612
- Leadville: Lake County Public Library, (719) 486-0569
- Montrose: Montrose Library District, (970) 249-9656
- Pagosa Springs: Ruby M. Sisson Memorial Library, (970) 264-2209
- Pueblo: Pueblo Library District, (719) 543-9600
- Sterling: Sterling Public Library, (970) 522-2023
- Trinidad: Trinidad Public Library, (719) 846-6841

**Ordering Prints**

High-resolution prints, for personal use or publication, can be ordered from the Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, 10 West 14th Avenue Parkway, Denver, CO 80204. For ordering information call (303) 640-6289. The fax number is (303) 640-6298. A price list and an order form can be printed out from the Internet site; click on “Store” for details.

**Funding**

This project was paid for in part by a State Historical Fund grant from the Colorado Historical Society, a grant from the Library of Congress and Ameritech as part of the National Digital Library American Memory Project and grants from the Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, United States Department of Commerce, the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency, Bruce and Virginia Rockwell and the Boettcher Foundation.
Some of the finest materials in the Western History Collection have been acquired through gifts, memorials and bequests. The Denver Public Library is enormously grateful for these gifts from donors who recognize the importance of preserving valuable material where it will be assured the best care and where it will be part of permanent archives for use by researchers. Most donations are tax deductible within the limits of current state and federal tax guidelines.

The Department offers the annual Caroline Bancroft History Prize to an author who has opened new perspectives on the West through nonfiction writing, original style and thorough research. The award was established in 1986 from the estate of Caroline Bancroft, a noted chronicler of Colorado history.
"A PEOPLE WITHOUT HISTORY IS LIKE WIND ON THE BUFFALO GRASS."
—SIOUX PROVERB

This celebrated collection of Western Americana opened to the public in January 1935, and today reflects all phases of development of the trans-Mississippi West. The Collection is comprehensive in scope and includes 82,000 cataloged books and pamphlets; 500,000 photographs; 2,500 manuscript collections; 6,000 historical maps and atlases; hundreds of Western journals and newspapers; and business and family records, scrapbooks, prints and original art.

The staff of the Western History/Genealogy Department gladly provides reference assistance to customers in person, by telephone or by mail. Customers represent a diverse population and a wide geographical area, including the 50 states and foreign countries. clientele includes authors, attorneys, architects, planners, students, genealogists and politicians, as well as theatrical people, scouts, hikers, climbers and nature lovers. Specialists on staff can direct researchers to their desired subject matter, for they realize that the value of the Collection is in its accessibility.

The Denver Public Library's Western History Department was merged with the Genealogy Department in January 1995.

Notable special collections in Western History allow the researcher to focus on particular aspects of the American West.

Collections include:
• The map collection has original drawings and maps of Dragoon Captain Lemuel Ford, as well as land grant materials, mining maps and city plans. The collection is further enhanced by reports and maps of Colorado mines, including New York Newsmanper Horace Greeley's famous report of mining prospects in the Colorado Rockies.
• The Western railroad collection includes such items as railroad publicity material, timetables, tickets and photographs.
• Trade catalogs, autographed books and articles illustrated by Frederic Remington, records and memorabilia of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows, frontier theater programs, territorial imprints and architectural drawings further complement the collection.
• Resources on Native Americans in the West focus on social life and customs, religion, government relations, warfare and military life and tribal history.
• The General Index is a unique index to more than three million selected articles from Denver newspapers, Western journals and other materials from 1865 to the present.
• In cooperation with the Colorado Historical Society, the Department is the national repository for the papers of the 10th Mountain Division, famed ski troops of World War II.
• The Conservation Collection reflects the rise of the conservation and environmental movements in America. National organizations such as the Wilderness Society, Alaska Coalition, American Bonsai Society and Outdoor Writers Association of America are among those which have made The Denver Public Library the repository for their records.
• The collection of rare books includes such diversity as the Douglas collection of Fine Printing, the Bos-Bratett Historical Aeronautics Collection, poet and journalist Eugene Field's Collection of books and manuscripts and the Juvenile Historical Collection.

A major imaging project for historic photographs has been undertaken with start-up grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Boettcher Foundation. Through this photodigitization project, researchers can retrieve pictures on a computer screen that are indexed by subject and photographer. Specialized collections such as the L. C. McChesney city and landscape views, William H. Jackson's photoschromes, Burnis McClymonds collection of Denver's African-American community and the Otto C. Perry and Robert W. Richardson railroad photographs will be accessible.

On-line computer access to bibliographical information for a majority of the Western History Collection is available through The Denver Public Library's on-line catalog (a part of the CARL network), through the On-line Computer Library Center (OCLC) network and through national on-line service providers.

While modern technology allows further access to the Collection, emphasis remains on the books, manuscripts and images that preserve the American West. The vitality of the Collection is continually renewed by ongoing efforts to acquire historical manuscripts, photographs, books, maps, scrapbooks and ephemera.

The Denver Public Library
Western History/Genealogy Department
19 West Fourteenth Avenue Parkway
Denver, Colorado 80204

Reference: (303) 644-6291
Photography: (303) 644-6280/6289
Webpage: (303) 644-6290
PFD: (303) 644-6299

• Eleanor M. Goshorn, Manager
• Open to the public; noncirculating collection
• Lockers provided for customer belongings

Sunday: 1 - 5 p.m.
Monday - Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Thursday - Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Credit must be given to The Western History Collection of the Denver Public Library.
Photo: A stone of the Mary Western History Reading Room at The Central Library of The Denver Public Library. Photograph by Bob Bullock.
THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY

Joy Hiltiard's generous gift, combined with the new quarters of the Western History Department, provides a unique opportunity to reestablish the Conservation Collection as a resource for students, scholars, and policymakers. Physical access to well-organized and well-preserved manuscript and archival collections will improve dramatically. Electronic access to descriptive information about these materials will be available worldwide through the Internet. An infusion of books and periodicals will strengthen coverage of additional topics. Staff whose time and expertise will be fully devoted to the organization of the collection and to assistance to readers will be on duty.

From this reestablished base, the Conservation Collection can continue to grow and serve, depending upon the generosity and commitment of those who value it. Financial support for the preservation and protection of this unique intellectual resource will help build the understanding necessary to preserve and protect America's natural resources.

“Conservation is thought and action directed by man to protect, maintain and fortify the environmental complex that supports and enriches life as it now exists on the planet Earth.”

Arthur H. Carhart 1963
Success, excitement, and fame benefited the Collection in the 1960s. Cahart was an enthusiastic promotor of the Collection and brought in a remarkable quantity of significant materials into the new archive. Lauded in the national press as an unparalleled source for environmental advocacy and research, the Conservation Collection received the prestigious American Museum Conservation Award for 1968.

By the 1970s the Conservation Collection had become a leading center for research, environmental advocacy, and collections. This influence spread from all regions of the U.S. and abroad had used the Collection and donated materials to be added to it. The Collection was more than just the repository for conservation materials – the grass roots conservation movement relied on its presence to help influence awareness of ecological issues. In spite of its unparalleled success the Collection was eventually faced with diminishing private support. Rather than allowing the Collection, administrators sought specific financial support from the federal government allowing the Conservation Collection to continue its work with a new emphasis. In 1977, the Collection became the Regional Energy Information Environment Information Center offering up-to-the-minute research and news about the development and promotion of alternative forms of energy. The older conservation materials continued to be available to researchers and the public.

Within a few years federal energy funding sources dried up and the 1980s became a decade of inactivity for the collection with only limited access given to researchers. Conservation leaders, concerned community members, and historians from around the country lamented the stagnation of the archive and worked diligently during this time to return the Conservation Collection to its former eminence. By the 1990s an increase in requests for use of the Collection had grown significantly and the Denver Public Library began searching for a way to expand accessibility and consent of the Collection. The fortunes of this unique collection changed dramatically in 1994 with a generous gift from Joy Hiillard.

Education Hobbs Hiillard, Jr. played a crucial role in the conservation movement of the 1950s and 1960s. His organization of a Colorado coalition helped achieve passage of the federal Wilderness Bill in 1964. Hiillard was a focal point for conservation action within the Rocky Mountain Region, bringing together previously irconcilable factions and constructing a powerful coalition that influenced grass roots environmental advocacy. His vision of cooperative action in support of the environment is embodied in the Collection. The gift from his family honors his efforts and makes possible future growth of the Collection by providing a research and materials processing facility and through acquisition of additional materials with staff to manage and access them.

Today the Conservation Collection is once again a national center for environmental research. Over the years historians and researchers have used the collection to produce some of the most important works on the American environment, including Wilderness and the American Mind by Roderick Nash (1967), and A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement by Mark W.T. Harvey (1994). Major collections continue to augment the wealth of this singular archive. The Denver Public Library is actively collecting with special emphasis on materials related to resource and land use issues from all points of view and all perspectives. Recent acquisitions include Hal Harrison’s neighborhood field notes and nature studies, Merritt Mead’s slides and photographs of Alaska sites, and Phillipson Rod and Tackle Company records and photographs.

With environmental issues at the forefront of American politics the Collection is more important now than ever. The Denver Public Library is strategically located in a new 540,000 square-foot building on Denver’s Civic Center Park. It reflects the wide diversity of its customers in a dynamic mix of formal and informal spaces, community meeting rooms, relaxing reading areas, and research facilities. The latest and most sophisticated design provides an ideal location for preserving and maintaining the Conservation Collection, now part of the Western History and Genealogy Department, a nationally recognized historical repository with supporting background information relevant to conservation. Public Library also provides an excellent trained staff to ensure the best management and use of materials entrusted to the Conservation Collection.