This is a list of over 100 great books about Colorado. The list was created by Tom Noel, Professor of History, Director of Public History & Preservation, Co-Director Center for Colorado and the West at the University of Colorado Denver. To provide feedback or ask questions, please email tom.noel@ucdenver.edu.


Baggs, Mae Lacey. *Colorado, the Queen jewel of the Rockies: Print. Online.* a Description of its Climate and of its Mountains, Rivers, Forests and Valleys; an account of its Explorers; a Review of its Indians—past and present; a Survey of its Industries, with some Reference to What it Offers of Delight to the Automobilist, Traveller, Sportsman and Health Seeker; Together with a Brief Resume of its Influence upon Writers and Artists, and a Short Account of its Problems and How Met, and of its Inexhaustible Resources and their Development. The Page Company, 1918.

James H. Baker, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen, associate ed. *History of Colorado*. Denver, CO: State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado and Linderman Co., 1927. 5 vols. index. footnotes. photos. maps. Vols I, II & III are a topical history, Vols. IV & V are biographical sketches. 6 1/2" x 9 3/4" hardback. Topically arranged, this magnum opus features fine overview essays on major subjects by leading authorities. Hafen, the first official state historian, complains about co-authoring with the dictatorial and dying Baker, an East High principal who became president of CU in his autobiography, The Joyous Journey, which was not always so joyous.


one. "The great braggart city spread out brown and treeless upon a brown and treeless plain," she calls Denver, and the South Platte she found "shriveled into a narrow stream with a shingly bed six times too large for it, and fringed by shriveled cottonwoods."


Great Colorado Books
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½" hardback. Superb railroadiana based on family interviews by one of Colorado's best writers, fiction and non.


Dallas, Sandra. The Diary of Mattie Spenser. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997. 229p. novel. $21.95. 6" x 8 1/2" hardback. This novel from one of Colorado's literary lights focuses sharply on the lives of frontier women, including domestic violence, adultery and other topics that historians usually avoid.


Dodds, Joanne West. They All Came To Pueblo: A Social History. Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Co., 1994. 216p. index. bibliography. 300 b & w photos. drawings. $34.95. 9" x 11 1/2" hardback.


Fogelberg, Ben and Steve Grinstead, editors. *Western Voices: 125 Years of Colorado Writing*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2004. 416 p. 8.8 x 5.9 x 1.2 inches. Paperback. These 25 essays cover a panorama of people and events from Colorado's distant and recent past. This compilation features outstanding writing by the best and best-known authors published by the Colorado Historical Society over the course of its history, including Louis L’Amour, Wallace Stegner, Patricia Nelson Limerick, and Thomas J. Noel.

Fowler, Gene. *Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen*. N.Y.: Covici, Friede, 1933, many reprints. 480 pp. 6” x 9” hardback. A gossipy, not always true, account of the adolescence of The Denver Post, written with as much zest and a shade more accuracy than the former con-man Bonfils and former bartender Tammen ever mustered for their outrageously sensational (and profitable) newspaper. One of the funniest and best-selling books ever written about Denver.


Hall, Frank, 1836-1917. *History of the State of Colorado*, Embracing Accounts of the Pre-Historic Races and Their Remains; the Earliest Spanish, French and American Exploration...the Development of Cities and Towns, with the Various Phases of Industrial and Political Transition, from 1858 to 1890. Chicago, IL: Blakely Print. Co., 1889-1895. 4 vols. index. drawings. Vol. 4
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pub. in a 2nd ed. by Blakely Print., Co., 1897? 2nd ed. of vol. 4 includes 13 new chapters by J.G. Brown, covering Colorado history from 1890 to 1987. 8" x 10 1/2" hardback. Near-definitive early history by Judge Hall, an active participant. Online here.


Hill, Alice Polk. Tales of the Colorado Pioneers. Pierson & Gardner, 1884. 319p. Hill, Colorado's first Poet Laureate, was better known for her prose. Her 1884 book, Tales of the Colorado Pioneers, is a lively, anecdotal account of Colorado's early years, 1858 to 1883. Online here.


paperback 6 x 9." A spirited attempt to replace the comical social climber with a loveable lioness with charitable and feminist inclinations.

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *Nelly's Silver Mine*. Little, Brown, 1910. 332 p. A children's adventure story about the fictional March family, the work is based on Jackson's experiences in Colorado. In contrast to many contemporary stories about the West that presented a barbaric view of frontier life, Jackson's work was lauded for its realistic portrayal. Although the book was praised as a "true classic for the nursery," its appeal has not endured and it is now read primarily as a historical curiosity. Online Here.

Jameson, Elizabeth. *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict and Community in Cripple Creek*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1998. xii + 367 p. index. bibliography. endnotes. photos. maps. charts. $23.95. 6" x 9" paperback. A good example of the new western history written from the bottom up.


Lamm, Dick and Duane Smith. *Pioneers and Politicians: Fourteen Colorado Governors in Profile*. Fulcrum Publishing, 2008. 224 p. In this collection of short biographies, now updated to include Colorado's five most recent state administrators, former governor Dick Lamm and prolific historian Duane Smith portray the lives and accomplishments of 15 Colorado governors. From the fiery and feisty Davis Waite to the forgotten hero Ralph Carr, all the way up to Bill Owens and Bill Ritter, each distinct personality and time period is brought to life.


Lindsey, Benjamin Barr, 1869-1943, and Harvey J. O'Higgins. *The Beast*. NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1910. 1970 edition by University of Washington Press. xxvi + 340 p. photos. 8” x 5 1/2” hardback. Chilling exposé by the celebrated Juvenile Court judge and muckraking reformer who blackens Denver’s power elite--Evans, Moffat, Hughes, Cheesman, and--sparing not even the clergy--Buchtel. The trail of the Beast in Denver led, according to the Judge, "step by step, from the dives to the police board, to the political leaders to the corporation magnates who ruled all. The trail leads from the offices of the corporations to the doors of the Capitol, it ascends the steps of the State House; it enters the sacred precinct of the Supreme Court itself." A fast cure for anyone thinking the good old days when politicians were supposedly honest and democracy supposedly pure. Online here.


Michener, James A., 1907-1997. *Centennial*. (Link to record for movie version of this novel.) N.Y.: Random House, 1974. many editions. x + 909p. endpaper maps. 6” x 8 1/2” hardback. This historical novel provides a lively overview of Colorado prehistory and history. A broad survey of Colorado from prehistoric times to 1976, it is the all time best-selling book on Colorado, a fairly comprehensive, well researched history of the South Platte Valley of northeastern Colorado in the guise of a novel. Michener has chapters on Indians, trappers, miners, cowboys, sugar beets and Hispanos.


day life on the western slope. Ida spent her life consoling the sick, tending the poor, comforting the dying and trying to get her husband to settle down.

Mills, Enos A. *The Rocky Mountain Wonderland*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915. xiii + 363p. index. map. photos. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 hardback; 1991 reprint Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, with introduction and notes by James H. Pickering, iii + 386 p. bibliography. This is a sampling of the two dozen books by Enos Mills (1870-1922), the pioneer--and still the most important--conservationist of Colorado. He settled near Long's Peak as a boy, climbed it hundreds of times, rode avalanches, fathered Rocky Mountain National Park, and instigated and led the crusade to preserve the Colorado wilderness. Mills spent weeks at a time--even in winter--roaming the Colorado high country alone, then recording his experiences in his numerous articles and books. Online [Here](#). For an objective biography of this difficult and controversial hero, see Alexander Drummond, *Enos Mills: Citizen of Nature* (Niwot: Univ. Press of Colorado, 1995) 431 p., index endnotes, illus).


Noel, Thomas J. *Riding High: Colorado Ranchers & The First 100 Years of the National Western Stock Show*. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing Co, 2005. xxi + 318 p. index. bibliography. appendices. maps. 350 photos and drawings. 9 x 12 hardback $50. paperback $32. Yes, Denver is and always will be a "cow town," and that moniker, filled with pride and meaning, is
what sets it apart from the many urban centers that dot the American map. And, this is the story so skillfully presented in Riding High.


Nossaman, Allen. Many More Mountains. Denver: Sundance Books, 1989-98. 352 p. index. footnotes. bibliography. color and b & w photos. maps. tables. 9" x 11" hardback. Vols. 1, II & III. Nossaman, a CU-Boulder grad and editor of the Colorado Daily, resembles Horace Greeley in several ways, including the wire rim spectacles and beard long enough to hide mice in. As longtime editor of the Silverton Standard and Miner, he championed historic preservation and heritage tourism as a tonic Colorado's least populous, most isolated county. His eloquence and fairness led townsfolk to select him as the only non-lawyer municipal judge in the state. This is an exhaustive history of Silverton and San Juan County, once mineral rich but now so small and poor it can't sustain a single attorney.


Perkin, Robert L., 1914-1978. The First Years: An Informal History of Denver and the Rocky Mountain News, 1859-1959. Foreword by Gene Fowler. N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959. 624 p. index. bibliography. footnotes. photos. $5.95. 6 1/2" x 9 1/2" hardback. This witty, highly readable account of the Rocky Mountain Snoozeeand Denver is a splendid complement to the less
reliable *Timber Line* by Gene Fowler, who wrote the introduction for this treasure chest of knowledge and trivia.


Secrest, Luther Clark. *Hell’s Belles: Denver’s Brides of the Multitudes with attention to Various Gamblers, Scoundrels, and Mountebanks and a Biography of Sam Howe, Frontier Lawman*. Aurora, CO: Hindsight Historical Publications, 1996. xx + 348p. index. bibliography. photos. drawings. maps. appendices. $80 limited hardcover edition of 200. $32.95 8 1/2" x 11" softcover. Secrest, a former Channel Nine anchorman, *Denver Post* media columnist, and editor of *Colorado Heritage*, offers the most tenacious and titillating examination of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.


Simonin, Louis L., 1830-1886. *The Rocky Mountain West in 1867*. translated and annotated from the French by Wilson O. Clough from *Le grand-oeust des Etats-Unis*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1966. xiv + 170p. index. footnotes. $5.50. 6 1/4" x 9 1/4" hardback. A look at early Colorado through the letters of a young, witty French mining engineer who was as fascinated by pioneer society as he was by the minerals.


Stegner, Wallace. *Angle of Repose*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1971. 569p. 6 1/2” x 8 1/2” hardback. This Pulitzer-Prize winning novel explores America's mining frontiers from one family's perspective, setting one man’s obsession with mining against his wife's yearnings for eastern cultural opportunities.


Swanson, Eleanor. *Trembling in the Bones*. Ghost Road Press, 2006. One of America’s jarring and bloody conflicts comes to life in this poetry collection that marks the Colorado coal mining wars of the early 1900s. Eleanor Swanson’s verse remembers the people who labored to harvest fuel for the Industrial Revolution, and culminates in the shameful Ludlow Massacre.


index. bibliography. endnotes. photos. drawings. maps. $34.95. 6 1/2" x 9 1/2" hardback. A major re-interpretation, eloquently written by one of the best and brightest Colorado historians.


Wolle, Muriel Sibell, 1898-1977. **Stampede to Timberline: The Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Colorado.** Boulder, CO: 1949. 1st ed., Rev. ed. pub. by Sage Books, Denver, 1962, many more editions. 337p. index. glossary of mining terms. drawings and maps by the author. 8" x 10 1/2" hardback. The first and still the best of Colorado mining ghost-town guides is enriched by the author’s paintings of ramshackle ruins. A professor of art at the University of Colorado, she began painting and writing up ghost towns in the 1920s when many of them were still lively.


Wynar, Bohdan S. **Colorado Bibliography.** Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1980. 565p. index. 7 1/4" x 10 1/4" hardback. Lists 9,182 books and booklets “of permanent and scholarly value.”