

History of Colorado

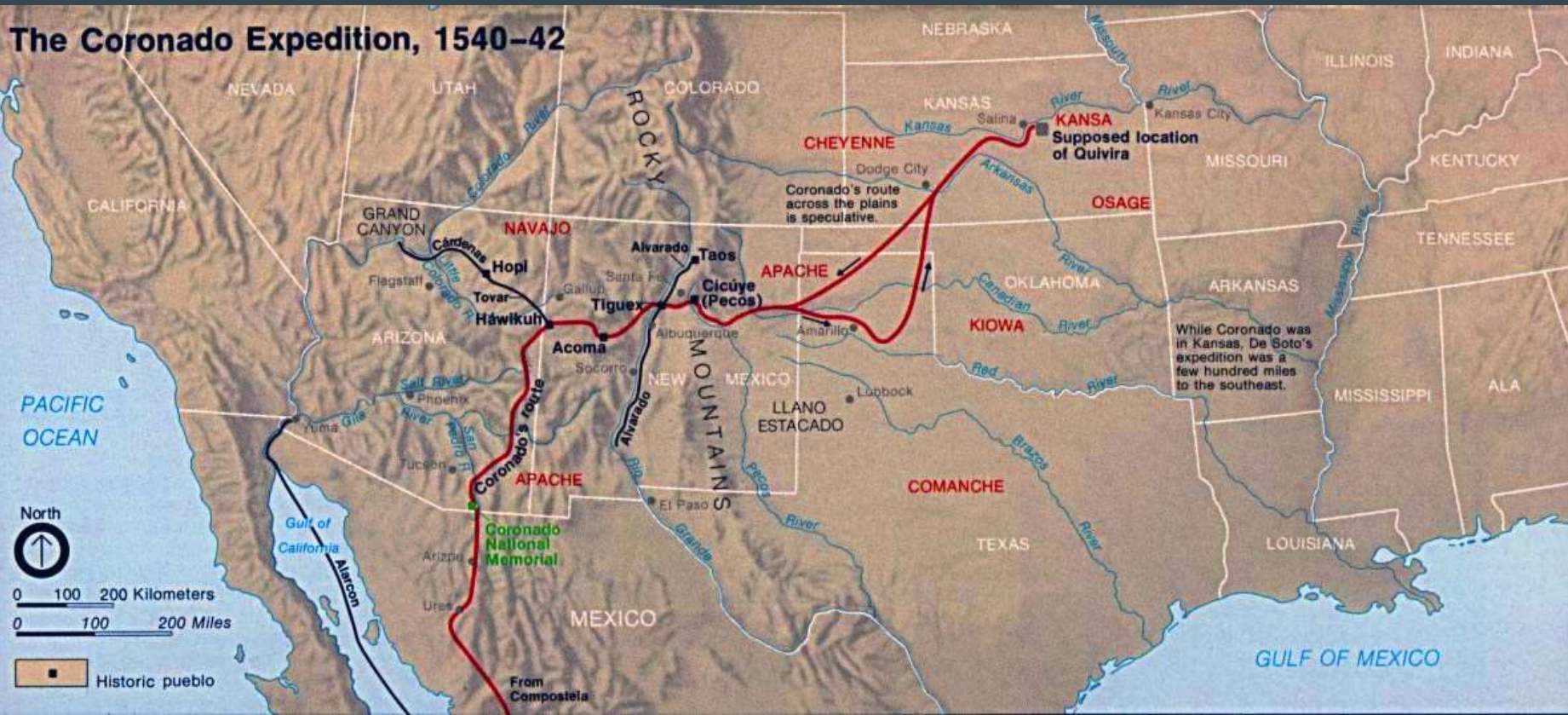
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Francisco Vázquez de Coronado

- Between 1540 and 1542, Coronado led Spaniards on a large exploration of the southwestern United States.
- He found the ***Grand Canyon***, ***Colorado River***, and other natural wonders.
- Other than the Native Americans, Coronado and the Spaniards with him were the very first people to see the Grand Canyon.



The Coronado Expedition, 1540–42



Untouched Land

- After the Spaniards left the United States, the territory remained wild and untouched.
- The Native Americans were the only people living on these lands.
- However, the desire to settle the west and look for silver, gold and other minerals began a large movement of people to these territories.

Settling the West

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 brought into the United States about 828,000 square miles of territory from France.



Settling the West

- The Lewis and Clark Expedition began in 1804, when President Thomas Jefferson tasked Meriwether Lewis with exploring lands west of the Mississippi River that comprised the Louisiana Purchase.
- The excursion lasted over two years, and covered 8,000 miles (12,874 kilometers).
- The journey was deemed a huge success and provided geographic, ecological and social information about previously uncharted areas of North America.



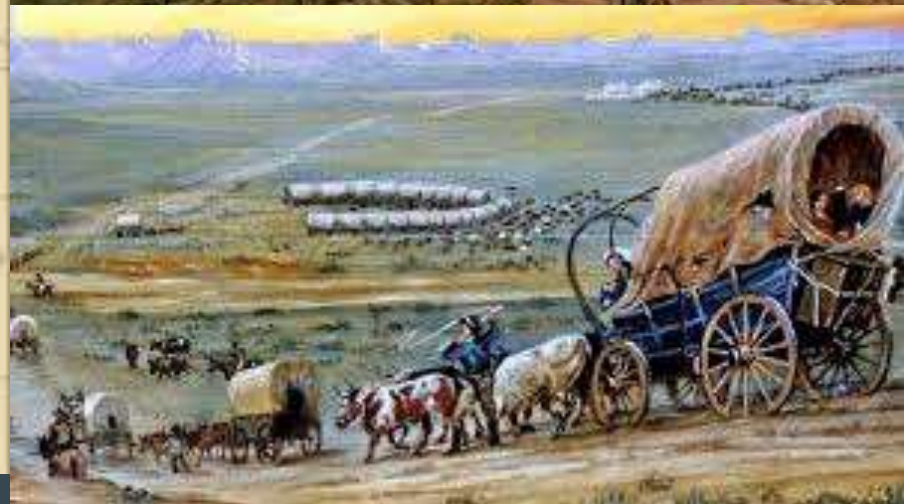
Lewis and Clark Expedition Route



Oregon Trail

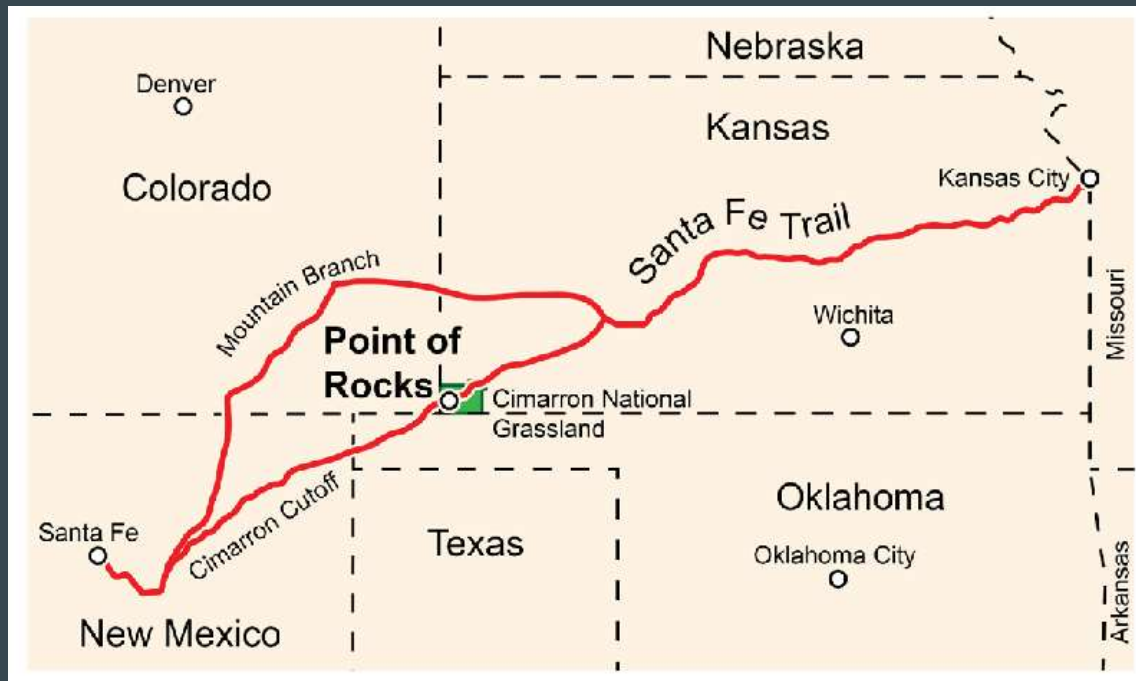
- The Oregon Trail was laid by fur traders and trappers from about 1811 to 1840, and was only passable on foot or by horseback.
- From the early to mid-1830s (and particularly through the years 1846–1869) the Oregon Trail and its many offshoots were used by about 400,000 settlers, farmers, miners, ranchers, and business owners and their families.

Oregon Trail



Offshoot of the Oregon Trail

- The Santa Fe trail branched off the Oregon Trail.
- This new segment of the trail allowed parts of Colorado to be settled.



History of Colorado

- In 1846 the United States went to war with Mexico. Mexico's defeat forced the nation to relinquish its northern territories by the **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** in 1848.
- This opened the **Southern Rocky Mountains** to American settlement, including what is now the lower portion of Colorado.



History of Colorado

- Inhabited by Native Americans for centuries before Spanish Conquistadors and European Settlers came to the territory.
- In 1858, the discovery of gold in Colorado attracted new settlers.
- During the Plains Indian Wars (1860s-80s), Colorado's wild frontier was the scene of intense fighting between Native Americans and white settlers.
- On August 1, 1876, Colorado was admitted as a state, maintaining its territorial borders.

Conflict with the Native Americans

- “**Manifest destiny**” justified the killing of millions of Native Americans.
- **Manifest Destiny**, a phrase coined in 1845, is the idea that the United States is destined—by God, to expand its dominion and spread democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent.



Battles with the Native Americans in Colorado

Battle of Julesburg (1865)

Beecher's Island (1868)

Ute War in Colorado (1855)

Meeker Massacre (1879)

Milk Creek (1879)

Sand Creek Massacre (1864)

Summit Springs (1869)



Elimination of Native Americans

- White Settlers were able to steal the land away from Native Americans due to more sophisticated weapons and continual conflict.
- They also brought diseases that decimated Native American populations.
- There was no regard for the Native Americans' rights to the land. *This continues to be a problem today.*

Mining

- Mining for minerals such as gold, silver, lead, copper, zinc and many others brought a large influx of people.
- Miners looking to make a fortune in the West came in large numbers and settled various towns in the Rocky Mountains.



Breckenridge, CO

- Gold, silver, pyrite and other minerals were found in the mines located in Breckenridge.
- Now the town is a famous ski area.



Telluride, CO

- The minerals found in the Telluride mines were zinc, lead, copper, silver and other ores.



Timeline Summary

1540-1542 → Spaniards come to the Southwestern Territory of the United States for the first time. Native Americans are the only other people living there.

1803 → Louisiana Purchase allows Westward Exploration.

1811-1870 → Fur traders and trappers first move West. The Oregon Trail opens up for large amounts of white settlers to come West.

1858 → Discovery of gold in Colorado attracted new settlers. Mining in Colorado leads to its rapid settlement.

1876 → Colorado was admitted as a state.