Lincoln Hills and Civil Rights in Colorado

Why was a mountain resort for African Americans necessary in Colorado during the 1920s? What did the resort represent to its property owners and visitors? How did the successes of civil rights advocates in Colorado impact Lincoln Hills?

By Dani Newsum¹

Standards and Teaching Strategies by:
Ming Vlasich, Zach Crandall, and Odette Edbrooke**

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¹ Dani Newsum is a former civil rights attorney who teaches U.S. history and African American history at the Community College of Aurora. Her master’s thesis examined the impact of the racial politics of World War II and the Cold War on the Colorado legislature’s passage of an unprecedented body of civil rights legislation during the 1950s. Dani can be reached at dani.newsum@cca.edu or dnewsum@att.net.

** Ming Vlasich is a 4th grade teacher at Peabody Elementary in Littleton, Zach Crandall teaches 8th grade U.S. Society at Southern Hills Middle in Boulder, Odette Edbrooke is the Director of Social Studies for Boulder Valley School District.
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Additional Resources
Teaching Strategies
Standards Addressed
A quick-glance overview of social studies standards that teachers might address in 4th grade, 8th grade, and high school using the resources in this set.

4th Grade
History:
• Standard 1.1: Organize and sequence events to understand the concepts of chronology and cause and effect in the history of Colorado
• Standard 1.2: The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes in Colorado history and their relationships to key events in the United States

Geography:
• Standard 2.1: Use several types of geographic tools to answer questions about the geography of Colorado
• Standard 2.2: Connections within and across human and physical systems are developed

Civics:
• Standard 1.1: Analyze and debate multiple perspectives on an issue
• Standard 1.2: The origins, structure, and functions of the Colorado government

8th Grade
History:
• Standard 1.1: Formulate appropriate hypotheses about United States history based on variety of historical sources and perspectives

Geography:
• Standard 2.1: Use geographic tools to analyze patterns in human and physical systems

Economics:
• Standard 3.1: Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy

Civics:
• Standard 4.1: Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
• Standard 4.2: Analyze the origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens.

High School
History:
• Standard 1.1: Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence
• Standard 1.2: The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time
Overview Essay

In July 1932, the Cosmopolitan Club of Denver held its monthly meeting at the Lincoln Hills resort in the mountains of Gilpin County, just under forty miles west of Denver. The Denver club, an interracial, interethnic, and interfaith organization of educated, middle-class progressives, was a local chapter of the national Cosmopolitan Club movement, whose members were dedicated to interracial and interfaith justice and community. Members of the Denver organization had been invited for “an outing” to Lincoln Hills by Dr. Clarence Holmes and his wife, Fairfax. Dr. Holmes, an African American and Denver native, was a dentist and a founder of the local Cosmopolitan Club. Fairfax had previously worked for the all-black Phyliss Wheatley branch of the Denver YWCA. The Holmeses were a picture-perfect example of Denver’s black middle-class, and were members of the black social and economic strata targeted by the marketers of the Lincoln Hills resort.

The resort offered an ideal physical and spiritual location for Cosmopolitan Club members. Nestled along South Boulder Creek between the small mountain towns of Nederland and Rollinsville, Lincoln Hills was the only mountain retreat for African Americans west of the Mississippi River, and one of only a handful black resorts in the United States. It was first established during the 1920s, a decade in which the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan exerted extraordinary political and cultural influence in Colorado. At the time, African Americans were often not welcome in Colorado’s growing mountain resort communities except as personal servants in the company of white employers. Lincoln Hills was an 1100-acre retreat that served as a testament to the color-based hierarchy of privileges and burdens that was common in early twentieth-century Colorado.

Some historians have called the long era that followed the end of Reconstruction in 1877 the “nadir for black civil rights” due to the crushing racism that pervaded American law, politics, and popular culture. Indeed, during this period, which extended well into World War II, the U.S. Supreme Court officially sanctioned race-based discrimination and segregation in its now infamous 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. In *Plessy*, the Court considered a Louisiana law that required African Americans to ride in rail passenger cars that were separate from those cars designated for white passengers. The Court created the “separate but equal” legal fiction, and held that Louisiana’s government-required segregation of “Negroes” and white persons – and like laws throughout the U.S. – did not violate the U.S. Constitution if the segregated facilities were equal. In reality, the facilities designated for black Americans were rarely equal to those used by white Americans.

Although Denver did not share the pervasive racist violence, terror and de jure (state-required) racial segregation and discrimination that roiled the post-Civil-War South and other regions well into the 1960s, during the 1920s, the Colorado Ku Klux Klan enjoyed a popularity that placed it amongst the largest Klan organizations in the United States. Targeting immigrants and Catholics, as well as African Americans, the white supremacist Colorado Klan could boast that its ranks included a U.S. senator, governor, numerous state legislators, and a Denver mayor and chief of police. Despite an 1895 state law that guaranteed all Coloradans access to the state’s public places regardless of race or color, in actuality Denver was a city in which racial segregation and discrimination was more frequently the rule rather

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than the exception.⁴ Long after the decline of the Klan in Colorado during the later 1920s, a racist web of exclusion and discrimination remained, and ensnared thousands of black, Asian, Jewish, Latino, and Native American people.

By 1920, more than 11,000 black people called Colorado home, and 6075 of them lived in Denver. Although the city’s black population was small when compared to cities like New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago, African Americans in Denver were better educated on average and enjoyed a higher standard of living than their contemporaries in the East, West, or Midwest. By 1938, nearly 40 percent of them were homeowners. During the early decades of the twentieth century, Denver’s middle-class black population—which had been increasingly confined to a small area of northeast Denver known as Five Points—welcomed the opportunity to recreate, socialize, and buy property in the wide-open spaces of Lincoln Hills.

However, interest in Lincoln Hills extended far beyond Denver’s African American community. The resort attracted black people from other Colorado cities as well as from across the country. Although Lincoln Hills was clearly a unique response to racist exclusion, the African Americans who came to Lincoln Hills, either as property owners, week-long lodgers, day visitors, or summer campers, were also part of a developing national tourism industry that lured thousands of middle-class Americans to bucolic western vistas, including many in the Rocky Mountain West.

Lincoln Hills, established during a particularly grim era for American blacks, expressed a determined and defiant African American claim to middle-class respectability in the face of a racist white supremacy that regularly denied blacks access to the employment, housing, education, and amusements — and in some cases even the marital partners — of their own choice. Indeed, it was a white supremacy, written and unwritten, spoken and unspoken, that attempted to deny African Americans not only the rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship, but also their humanity.

And so in 1932 it was indeed fitting that Dr. Clarence and Fairfax Holmes invited his fellow Cosmopolitan Club members to Lincoln Hills to partake of the resort’s breathtaking views while discussing the works of Langston Hughes, one of the most celebrated writers and playwrights of the Harlem Renaissance. For Lincoln Hills, at once a site for outdoor recreation and socializing, was also a place in which African Americans were able to affirm their humanity and ingenuity, and to stake a claim to the equality and respectability so routinely denied them.

⁴ A note on the term “race.” The body of scientific evidence today denies the existence of biologically distinct “races.” Therefore, I do not use the word “race” to denote biological difference, but as shorthand to express the very real privileges and burdens experienced by groups of people based on the meaning and value attributed to their skin color or racial categorization by legal, political, social, and other institutions.
The disinterested and wise have foreseen the danger that the amendment may be adopted, and have spoken against it. The amendment, if adopted, would change the Constitution of the United States in a manner that would be detrimental to the interests of the majority of the people. It is therefore important that we consider the implications of this amendment carefully before we vote to adopt it.

Source 1
Before Lincoln Hills: Race and Racism in Early Colorado
Black Male Suffrage Prohibited

Citation

“The Constitutional Amendment,” Rocky Mountain Daily News, November 18, 1865. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Excerpt

The discontented ones who have suffered defeat at the last election are, we understand, making preparations to oppose the admission of Colorado by the next Congress. Among our eastern exchanges, nearly all are in favor of our admission; some, however, are disposed to object. These are confined to the most radical, who were displeased with the vote given against negro suffrage at the election when the Constitution was adopted. This question of negro suffrage has been very little agitated, and the popular feeling upon the measure could be completely revolutionized by a little systematic effort and discussion. At the recent speech made in this city by the Octoroon orator, the large and attentive audience all voted in favor of according the right of suffrage to the speaker. In this audience alone there were nearly as many voters as there were ballots in favor of negro suffrage at the Constitutional election.

Annotation

Understanding the ways in which both law and social practices made “race” in Colorado from its earliest days as a federal territory is key to understanding the context in which the Lincoln Hills resort was conceived, advertised, and built during the 1920s. In February, 1861, just two months before the outbreak of the Civil War, a United States Congress dominated by northern lawmakers established the Colorado Territory. By that February, the new Republican party – scarcely six years old but determined to stop the spread of slavery into new western territories like Colorado – enjoyed a congressional majority and had also captured the White House after a heated presidential election catapulted Abraham Lincoln to the presidency despite the fact that he had not won a single electoral vote from a southern slave state. By the time of Lincoln’s inauguration in March, 1861, just one month after Congress approved Colorado’s territorial petition, seven southern states had seceded from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America. Four more would follow in the next several months.

The Colorado Territory was born amidst the explosive national issues of black slavery and black freedom. Although pro-Union sentiment dominated the new territory, Colorado’s territorial legislators were not champions of racial equality. In 1864, lawmakers approved a statute that denied “Negro and mulatto” men the right to vote (they also prohibited intermarriage between whites and “Negroes and mulattos”). The same year, delegates to a territorial constitutional convention drafted a proposed Colorado state constitution. The statehood process was a long and highly politicized process that left the ultimate question of statehood to the U.S. Congress, requiring Congress to approve a territory’s proposed constitution as well as its statehood petition. In the Colorado Territory, the battle over black voting
rights had become thoroughly enmeshed in the efforts of a determined group of boosters to achieve statehood.

Before the matter reached Congress, however, Colorado’s statehood boosters suffered a setback in 1864 when the territory’s white male voters rejected the proposed constitution, for reasons that did not involve the black suffrage issue. Meanwhile, a determined group of African American men in Denver, including William J. Hardin, Edward Sanderlin, and Henry O. Wagoner, lobbied state and national politicians as well as influential newspaper editors to condemn the territory’s black suffrage ban.

In November, 1865, Colorado’s lawmakers submitted both a new proposed constitution and the issue of black male voting rights in the territory to a public vote. Voters approved the new constitution and prohibited black suffrage. Two weeks after the election, the Rocky Mountain Daily News warned its readers that opponents of Colorado statehood planned to use the territory’s anti-black suffrage law to secure Congress’ rejection of statehood for the territory. The paper characterized statehood opponents as being among “the most radical who were displeased with the vote given against negro suffrage at the election when the Constitution was adopted.” The News also advised that an organized and strategic campaign might resolve the suffrage issue in Colorado, and observed with favor a recent speech by a supporter of black male suffrage. The newspaper also used the now archaic term, “octoroon” to note the speaker’s race. The term octoroon referred to a person who whites considered black due to having at least one black great-grandparent in the family lineage.

In a twist, Congress enfranchised the territory’s black males almost ten years before it approved statehood for Colorado. In 1867, two years after the Civil War ended with the Union’s victory over Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Confederate forces, reform-minded Republicans were firmly in control of both the U.S. Congress and post-Civil War Reconstruction policies that were designed to ensure a measure of legal and political equality to African Americans. That year Congress, well aware of the Colorado Territory prohibition against black suffrage thanks to the lobbying efforts of black Coloradans, approved the Territorial Suffrage Act. The statute made color-based voting prohibitions illegal in all U.S. territories, including Colorado. Nine years later, Congress approved statehood for Colorado, making it the 36th state in the Union on August 1, 1876.
See 5. Where any person who shall violate any
applicable rule of any charter,
condition or limitation prescribed by any and
each and every such person of any public-
residences, and shall be punished as provided in
the condition or limitation.

Sec. 6. Where any person who shall violate any
applicable rule of any charter,
condition or limitation prescribed by any and

AN ACT

CIVIL RIGHTS

CHAPTER 61

Approved April 12, 1929.

Civil Rights

Sec. 3. Wherein the opinion of the courts,

(a) 18. In the opinion of the courts,

Sec. 4. Wherein the opinion of the courts,

Sec. 5. Wherein the opinion of the courts,

Sec. 6. Wherein the opinion of the courts,
2 / Before Lincoln Hills: Race and Racism in Early Colorado
Equal Access to All - Colorado Civil Rights Law

Citation
The Colorado Civil Rights Law - Colorado Session Laws, Tenth Session, 1895, Ch. 61. Civil Rights, pp. 139-141

Excerpt

Be It enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

Section 1. That all persons within the jurisdiction of said State shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of inns, restaurants, eating houses, barbershops, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and all other places of public accommodation and amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all citizens.

Section 2. That any person who shall violate any of the provisions of the foregoing section by denying to any citizen, except for reasons applicable alike to all citizens of every race and color, and regardless of color or race, the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges in said section [innumerated], or by aiding or inciting such denial, shall for every such offense forfeit and pay a sum of not less than fifty dollars ($50) nor more than five hundred dollars ($500) to the person aggrieved thereby, to be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction in the county where said offence was committed; and shall also for every such offence be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor; and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars ($10), or more than three hundred dollars ($300), or shall be imprisoned not more than one year, or both; and, Provided further, that a judgment in favor of the party aggrieved, or punishment upon an indictment or information shall be a bar to either prosecution, respectively.

Section 3. Justices of the peace in the County where the offence is committed shall have jurisdiction in all civil actions brought under this act to recover damages, to the extent of the jurisdiction of justices of the peace to recover a money demand in other actions, as fixed by law, and either party shall have the right to have the cause tried by jury and to appeal from the judgment of the justice, in the same manner as in other civil suits.

Annotation
National and regional politics during the 1890s combined to present black Coloradans with an opportunity to re-write a chapter in state race relations with the passage of a major piece of civil rights legislation. In 1895, Joseph Stuart, an African American lawyer and Republican who represented Arapahoe County in the Colorado state legislature, successfully sponsored a bill that guaranteed Coloradans “of every race and color” equal access to establishments open to the general public, including “inns, restaurants, barbershops, public conveyances, theaters...and all other places of public accommodation and amusement.” At the time, the legislature did not create a state agency to enforce the law’s provisions, but left it to the individual complaining of discrimination to bring a lawsuit before a local justice of the peace.
It should be noted that two years prior to the state legislature’s passage of the “Civil Rights Law” – as its supporters continued to call it well into the twentieth century – Colorado’s male voters approved a women’s suffrage ballot measure. Both the 1895 public accommodations law and the 1893 women’s suffrage bill were beneficiaries of a surging western populist movement. During the 1890s, a bad economy made worse by the collapse of the national silver market in silver-rich Colorado contributed to the growth of a strong and organized populist movement in western states, including Colorado. As western populists challenged the growing economic and political might of the railroad, banking and other industries, many reached out to form alliances with other marginalized groups, including African Americans and women suffragists.

However, the 1895 civil rights law was difficult to enforce, and segregation – whether by law (“Jim Crow”) or by custom – became the rule across much of the United States after the end of post-Civil War Reconstruction. In Colorado, white politicians and business owners routinely ignored the equal access statute, as did the owners of the recreational resorts that were beginning to spring up in the mountains just west of Denver. Still, many black Coloradans were keenly aware of the oft-ignored law, and as the twentieth century approached, were determined to win its enforcement.
BLOOD WILL BE DRAWN IN COURT TO PROVE THAT WOMAN IS NEGRESS

Mrs. Nora Frazier, Believed by Everybody to Be White, Arrested for Marrying Negro, Insists She Is Octoroon and Offers Blood as Test.

Blood-letting will take place in the municipal court tomorrow morning, if Judge Benjamin F. Stapleton will permit it. Blood will be drawn and analyzed in open court as evidence if the wishes of a woman defendant are granted.

Mrs. Nora Harrington Frazier, who says she is an octoroon, demands that her blood be analyzed to prove that she is a negress. If the blood test proves her contention, she will go free; if not, she will pay a fine or serve a sentence. She offers her blood as the test.

Ten days ago Mrs. Frazier appeared at the marriage license office with Frank Frazier, a coal black negro, and the two asked for a marriage license. The license was denied on the ground that Mrs. Frazier was a white woman and her companion a negro. The law of Colorado prohibits the intermarriage of the two races. Mrs. Frazier offered to make oath that she was a negress, claiming to be an octoroon. Still she was refused.

The services of James A. Harris, an attorney, formerly of Tennessee, were then invoked and Mr. Harris convinced the marriage license department that his client was a negress. He had her bare her neck and he showed dark blots at the root of her hair on the back of her neck. Then he had Frazier press her fingers at the root of the nails. They turned black. He offered to have the marriage license clerk rub the spinal column of Mrs. Frazier, which, he asserted, would turn black, but the marriage license officers were satisfied, the license was issued and the marriage performed. Then she was arrested on a charge of miscegenation.

Judge Stapleton has indicated that he would require substantial proof to satisfy him that Mrs. Frazier is a negress before he discharged her.

Attorney Harris tomorrow will have a surgeon present and the police surgeon will also be present on behalf of the city, and if Judge Stapleton will permit it blood will be drawn in open court and the analysis made in the judge's presence.

Modern surgeons say they can tell upon the examination of the blood whether or not there is any negro blood in one's veins.
The Trial of Mrs. Nora Frazier

Citation

“Blood will be drawn in court to prove that woman is Negress,” Denver Post, August 18, 1913. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Excerpt

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Annotation

In addition to racial discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, during the first half of the twentieth century, black Coloradans also faced discrimination in their most intimate relationships. Colorado’s lone Jim Crow law criminalized marriages between white persons and “Negroes or mulattos.” The Colorado territorial legislature first approved the legal prohibition in 1864, the same year in which the legislature denied black men voting rights. In recognition of the addition of land to Colorado’s land base that resulted from the U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War in 1848, the legislature made the marriage ban applicable to Denver, the Front Range and east to the Kansas border, but exempted that part of the state that had been acquired from Mexico in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
In 1913, Nora Harrington Frazier, found herself on trial in Denver, accused of marrying a black man, Frank Frazier. Mrs. Frazier’s attorney rested his defense on his light-skinned client’s claim to be an “octoroon” – a person with one-eighth black ancestry. The Denver magistrate who heard the case was Benjamin Stapleton, Denver’s future mayor and namesake of the now defunct Stapleton International Airport, which has been redeveloped as a residential neighborhood and is still referred to as Stapleton. There do not appear to be any published reports on the outcome of the Frazier trial. However, almost 30 years after the Denver Post reported on Mrs. Frazier’s trial, the Colorado Supreme Court upheld the legality of the state’s interracial marriage ban in the case of Jackson et al v. City and County of Denver (1942).

The Frazier trial, which was also noted in at least one black New York newspaper with a national readership, highlighted the intersection of race, racist belief, and law. Although every western state legislature banned interracial marriage at some point, Colorado’s was unique in that its prohibitions were limited to white-black marriages. The marriage bans in other western states included prohibitions on marriages between whites and a host of Asian nationalities, and less frequently, between whites and Native Americans. No matter the scope of the marital ban, at the heart of these statutes lay a commitment to preserving the “purity” of a state’s white population by proscribing marriages between white persons and “other” races, and by inference, preventing state-sanctioned procreation. In this context, it is crucial to note that state marital bans never banned marriages between peoples of color, only between whites and peoples of color. In reality of course, in Colorado, as elsewhere across the United States, these laws did not prevent sex between the races, nor did they prevent the conception and birth of mixed-race babies.

Although the Post did not follow up this story to tell readers whether Mrs. Frazier was subjected to a blood test, any conclusion as to Mrs. Frazier’s “race” based on such a test would be rejected out of hand today. Even modern DNA testing, clearly not available in 1913, cannot determine “race;” such testing can reveal genetic markers that are unique to various geographic regions.

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5 In Colorado, rulings issued by the state Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal are published; however opinions issued by trial judges, or as in the Nora Frazier case, trial magistrates, are not published.
A. C. Cash, Chief Organizer
Of the American Woodmen.

There is scarcely a community in the U.S. where a group of colored residents has not had its Vigilance Committee. It is organized for various purposes and becomes a vigilance committee on occasion. In other cases the committee has no regular organization or membership. It spring into being on occasion, consists of approximately the same group of persons from year to year. The work of these vigilance committees is to protect the colored citizens from aggression. The aggression takes form of hostile laws, ordinances, curtailment of civil rights, racial discrimination, over service or otherwise enforcing the law, disfranchisement, and political disfranchisement activities. Sometimes this aggression is the result of the carelessness of thought and need not be taken seriously. There is no reason to call a Vigilance Committee in the U.S. as to make it impossible for any Negro soldier to be more than a mulatto. Against both sorts of racial aggression organized effort is necessary. Many thoughtful colored people have sought to avoid this to act independently and to refuse to meet organization by any means.

The most cases have been found impossible to control. The trials of racial and color prejudice fall alike on all, rich and poor, educated and ignorant and all stand together and fight. Instead of the vigilance committee it is the appointment of a colored man as leader of the group. The colored man is the leader of the group, the group is the leader of the community, and the leader of the community is the leader of the state. The state is the leader of the nation, and the nation is the leader of the world. The world is the leader of the universe.

Denver Needs a Vigilance Committee.

A Call to Arms.

Interesting News
Concerning the Race.

Source 4
Denver Needs A Vigilance Committee.

A Call To Arms.

There is scarcely a community in the U.S. where a group of colored reside that ought to have its vigilance committee; some have them. Sometimes this committee is organized and has a name indicating its function. Sometimes it is organized for other purposes and becomes a vigilance committee on occasion. In other cases the committee has no regular organization or membership; it springs into being on occasion, but consists of approximately the same group of persons from year to year. The work of these vigilance committees is to protect the colored people in their several communities from aggression. The savings take form of hostile laws, ordinances, curtailment of civil rights, new racial discrimination, overtax or over severe enforcement of the law, curtailment of opportunities, etc. Sometimes this aggression is but the careless act of thoughtless folk and needs but a word in season to correct it. More often it is a part of that persistent underground campaign centering largely among white Americans of Southern birth, which is determined to so entrench the color caste in the U.S. as to make it impossible for any person of Negro blood to be more than a menial. Against both sorts of racial aggression organized effort is necessary. Many thoughtful colored people have sought to

avoid this: to act independently and refuse to meet organization by organization. This is in most cases has been found impossible. The blows of racial and color prejudice fall alike on all, rich and poor, educated and ignorant and all must stand together and fight. The methods of these vigilance committees are various. The simplest action is the appointment of a committee of one or more to call on some official or person of influence from this action extends to letters and the press, pamphlets, legislative hearings, mass meetings, petitions, etc. In a few cases threats and violence have been attempted, but those are at present exceptional. From this procedure on the part of tens of thousands of largely isolated groups much actual good has been done and much experience accumulated. The time is now evidently at hand to find and pool this nationwide experience and to systematize this scattered local effort into steady, persistent and unwavering pressure. As it is, unorganized local effort loses much time and energy in reorganizing for every new object; organized local efforts lack experience and knowledge of similar action elsewhere. Henceforth we must act together and we must fight continuously.

The object of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to federate local committees among colored people in every community in the U.S. to coordinate their activities, to exchange experiences and to concentrate the application of funds where the need is greatest. May Columbus in Denver such an important organization is greatly needed. In Denver as in many other public streets the signs are printed and insidiously displayed with the greatest impunity. We cater to white people only," at the Colonial theater; "Colored trade not wanted," at the Paris theater a block apart on Curtis street; around the corner on 18th street below Champlin street, "White People's Restaurant," in the next block above on Champa, "Nigger head bullets," with a picture of a black face painted on a lump of coal. All this discrimination within a radius of two blocks along the thoroughfaries of our city. What are we doing about it? What are we going to do about it? The answer is to form the above committee and do as directed by Dr. Du Bois and meet organization with organization. Then organize a local branch of that Crisis society here. We, in Colorado, are in the greatest fight of our lives; we must fight to retain our civil rights, citizenship and political rights. Every day, new aggressions are made against us and we must either fight together or fight apart. The Star says organize systematically with good, substanial, cool-headed men of honor and integrity at the head. Or, if the politician, the trucker, the gaffer and the notoriety-gearkey. Or, if the business and then do it. The People's Sunday Alliance has a meeting at 2630 Welton street, Sept. 21. Let this meeting be a nucleus for the Vigilance Committee.
4 / Before Lincoln Hills: Race and Racism in Early Colorado
A Demand for Justice

Citation

“Denver Needs a Vigilance Committee: A Call to Arms,” Denver Star, September 20, 1913, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Excerpt

“There is scarcely a community in the U.S. where a group of colored reside that ought [not] to have its vigilance committee... The work of these vigilance committee is to protect the colored people in their several communities from aggression. The aggression takes for of hostile laws, ordinances, curtailment of civil rights, new racial discrimination, overtax or over severe enforcement of the law, curtailment of opportunities, etc. Sometimes this aggression is but the careless act of thoughtless folk and needs but a word in season to correct it. More often it is a part of the persistent underground campaign centering largely among white Americans of southern birth, which is determine[d] to so entrench the color caste in the U.S. as to make it impossible for any person of Negro blood to be more than a menial. Against both sorts of racial aggression organized effort is necessary. Many thoughtful colored people have sought to avoid this: to act independently and to refuse to meet organization by organization. This in most cases has been found impossible. The blows of racial and color prejudice fall alike on all, rich and poor, education and ignorant and all must stand together and fight...

The object of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to federate local committees among colored peoples in every community in the U.S.; to co-ordinate their activities, to exchange experiences, and to concentrate the application of funds where the need is greatest. – May Crisis. In Denver such an important organization is greatly needed. Today along our public street these signs are printed and impudently displayed with the greatest impunity, “We cater to white people only,” at the Colonial theatre, “Colored trade not wanted,” at the Paris theatre, a block apart on Curtis street; around the corner on 18th street below Champa street, “White People’s Restaurant,” in the next block above on Champ, “Nigger head bullets,” with a picture of a black face on painted on a lump of coal. All this discrimination within a radius of two blocks along the thoroughfares of our city. What are we doing about it? What are we going to do about it? The answer is to form the above committee and do as directed by Dr. Du Bois and meet organization with organization. Then organize a local branch of the Crisis society here. We, in Colorado, are in the greatest fight of our lives; we must fight to retain our civil rights, citizenship and political rights. Every day new aggressions are made against us and we must either fight together or fight apart. The Star say organize systematically with good substantial, cool-headed men of honor and integrity at the head. Eschew the politician, the truckler, the gaffer and the notoriety-seeker. Organize for business and then do it. The People’s Sunday Alliance has a meeting at 2630 Welton street, Sept. 21. Let this meeting be a nucleus for the Vigilance Committee.
In 1913, the Denver Star, one of two leading black Denver newspapers, charged that so many of the city’s stores, restaurants, and places of amusement were denying entry to African Americans in violation of the 1895 state civil rights law that it called for the creation of a local branch of the “crisis committee,” also known as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). An interracial group of civil rights activists had founded the NAACP in New York in 1910, after outbreaks of white mob violence in northern cities. The national organization, with satellites in Washington D.C. Baltimore, Detroit, Kansas City, and St. Louis, planned to use litigation to challenge racial segregation. During the next several decades, the NAACP became the United States’ leading and most successful civil rights organization. Noted intellectual, historian, sociologist, and civil rights advocate, W.E.B. Du Bois, became the editor of the NAACP journal, The Crisis. The journal published some of the most acclaimed social critiques, poetry, and fiction in twentieth century American literature.

The Denver Star’s demand for the establishment of a “crisis committee” was a call to establish a local Denver branch of the NAACP. The Star argued that the attentions of such a committee were needed to combat “hostile laws...curtailment of civil rights, new racial discrimination” and “curtailment of opportunities...” In support of its demand, the paper cited signs posted by businesses that advertised “We cater to white people only,” and “Colored trade not wanted.”

In 1915, two years after the Denver Star’s entreaty for its creation, the Denver branch of the NAACP was founded – among its primary tasks: to gain enforcement of the 1895 “Civil Rights Law.” One of its founders, Denver native Clarence Holmes – at the time a young dental student at Howard University in Washington D.C. – would later become a cabin owner in the Lincoln Hills resort.
NEGRO HOME BOMBED BY AUTOISTS

IRISH LEADERS WAIVE DEMAND FOR REPUBLIC

WOMAN SEIZED ON TRAIN FOR KIDNAPPING HERE

GETTING ALL MUSSED UP

HEALER'S EXPLOSION KILLS FOLLOWING DEVIL'S DEVICES

COLLECTION OF CRUTCHES, BOWS, TOBACCO AND CIGARS WILL BE PUBLICLY BURNED.

MEXICO.

GILPIN STREET BLOWOUT WHIT'S THREAT

WATER SUPPLY LOW. SPARKLING BANNED

ANOTHER SHIP MIGHT PLUNGE INTO CAPITOL TODAY

The House Will Introduce Bill to Amend Bankruptcy Act.

ANOTHER SHIP MIGHT PLUNGE INTO CAPITOL TODAY

The House Will Introduce Bill to Amend Bankruptcy Act.

Another Ship Missing. Pirate Theory Scouted

The Way "Out" for Discouraged Men

Source 5
GILPIN STREET BLAST Follows WHITE'S THREAT

Explosion Shatters Windows and Tears Hole in Lawn; Residents in Panic.

HOUSE RECENTLY BOUGHT BY COLORED MAN AND WIFE

Victims Were Warned That Place Would Be Blown Up If They Remained.

Residents near 2112 Gilpin street were terrorized and several narrowly missed death or injury when a bomb, believed by the police to have been thrown to intimidate a negro family which recently moved into this residence district, exploded--at 10:30 o'clock last night, on the front lawn at that address.

Walter R. Chapman, a government mail carrier here for fifteen years, and his wife, the two colored newcomers in the neighborhood, were sitting in the front room of their new home at 2112 Gilpin street when the bomb went off, shattering the front windows of the house and side windows of that of Adolph Christendom, fifteen feet away, at 2108 Gilpin street. No one was injured.

The bomb, which evidently exploded the moment it struck the ground, tore a hole in the front lawn six feet from the house.

Chapman said that after he bought his new property recently, thru F. R. Ross as agent, from Patrolman Richard Porter, also colored, who was not occupying the house, he was threatened by a white man, who said, “Stay out of this neighborhood. If you move in here, your house is going to be blown up.” Since then Chapman had not seen this man again and had not been able to learn his name, he said.

Chapman told the police he had reported this alleged intimidation to Manager of Safety-Downer, his secretary, Cliff Smith, and Chief of Police Williams shortly after the strange man had addressed him.

Residents Alarmed.

Residents for blocks around heard the explosion last night, and for an hour or more telephone lines to the police department and The News were kept busy by inquirers who wanted to know what had happened.

The police were unable to find any pieces of an infernal machine, or home-made bomb, about the damaged Chapman home. They felt confident, however, that the explosion resulted from a premeditated plan against the property and was caused by either a charge of dynamite, or a home-made charge constructed of material which was shattered to atoms with the discharge.
5 / Before Lincoln Hills: Race and Racism in Early Colorado
House Bombing

Citation

“Negro Home Bombed by Autoists,” Rocky Mountain News, July 8, 1921.6 Western History and
Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Excerpt

Residents near 2112 Gilpin street were terrorized and several narrowly missed death or injury when a
bomb, believed by the police to have been thrown to intimidate a negro family which recently moved
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Christendom, fifteen feet away, at 2108 Gilpin street. No one was injured.

The bomb, which evidently exploded the moment it struck the ground, tore a hole in the front lawn six
feet from the house.

Bomb Thrown From Auto.

Patrolmen Jack Des, Carl Wilmot, and C.W. Powers, who were sent to the spot by Police Captain George
Merritt, expressed the opinion that the bomb was thrown from an automobile, which probably got well
down the street before the explosion occurred. So far as the police could learn, however, no witness
saw any machine which might have carried a bomb.

Chapman said that after he bought his new property recently, through F. R. Ross as agent, from
Patrolman Richard Porter, also colored, who was not occupying the house, he was threatened by a
white man, who said, “Stay out of this neighborhood. If you move in here, your house is going to be
blown up.”

Annotation

Black people in Denver, the majority of whom were employed as domestic servants and physical
laborers during the early decades of the twentieth century, enjoyed a higher standard of living
than African Americans in other parts of the country. In 1890, the Denver Republican announced that
there were more “colored” homeowners in Denver than in “any other Northern city.” In fact, Denver’s
small black population nearly doubled between 1900 and 1929, as African Americans moved west not
only for the pleasing climate but for greater opportunities.

6 While the word “autoist” is unfamiliar to most Americans today, at the time this story was published in the Rocky
Mountain News, the word was a synonym for “motorist.”
Despite the opportunities Denver presented for African American residents, the city’s black homeowners were not free to buy and live wherever they might choose: Denver was a segregated city. During the 1920s, most African Americans in Denver lived in the city’s “Negro district” in an area then known as East Denver. Blacks who attempted to buy homes outside of the prescribed Negro district were often targeted with threats of violence, and on occasion, actual violence. On the evening of July 7, 1921, as mail carrier Walter R. Chapman and his wife sat in their front room, the Rocky Mountain News reported that a bomb hurled from a moving car left a six foot crater in the Chapman’s front yard. Mr. Chapman told the police that after he bought the home on Gilpin Street, east of the city’s “color line,” a white man approached him and threatened to blow the house up if the couple remained in the neighborhood.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Denver’s so-called Negro district extended east of Five Points to High Street; the Platte River marked the western border; and East 21st and 32nd Streets marked the district’s southern and northern borders respectively. Although Colorado had no law that required racial segregation in housing, in northeast Denver, the Chapmans and other African Americans continually contested the very real residential color line that local realtors, banks, builders, and hostile white homeowners imposed on them, in what became a slow, decades-long eastward advance towards Colorado Boulevard.

Five Points was the heart of the Negro district, a neighborhood that was home to an estimated 80 percent of Denver’s black population. The Five Points name reflected the five-way intersection of four streets: Welton Street, Washington Street, 26th Avenue, and 27th Street. Although discriminatory mortgage lending policies, restrictive covenants, threats of violence, and acts of violence – as in the case of the Chapmans – had combined to force most African Americans into the neighborhood, “the Points” became a thriving residential, commercial, and cultural hub of immense social diversity, home to wealthy, middle and working-class black people.

The neighborhood was at once a community and a culture that wove together the lives of all its residents, from the most prominent to the most obscure. Five Points residents established and supported their own churches, stores, funeral homes, newspapers, restaurants, and amusements in what many called the “Harlem of the West.” Five Points was also a jazz hub, with nationally known venues such as the Rossonian Hotel, Rice’s Tap Room and Oven, and Benny Hooper’s Casino hosting the top jazz acts of the time, including Duke Ellington, Billy Holiday, and Charlie Parker.

However, as new residential developments mushroomed in response to Denver’s post-World War II population boom, African Americans were forced to remain in northeast Denver: the neighborhood’s fabulous entertainment venues eventually disappeared, and the homes that had once comfortably housed single black families during the early decades of the century became blighted structures forced to accommodate multiple families.
As the Lincoln Hills Company urged African Americans in Colorado and across the United States to buy lots in its Gilpin County resort, their entreaties were made against a backdrop of an increasingly racist political climate in the state. The Ku Klux Klan dominated Colorado politics during the first half of the 1920s. Cross-burnings and public parades like the one in downtown Denver captured in this photograph were common in 1920s Colorado. From the Western Slope to Denver and the eastern plains, the Klan, waving the banner of “100% Americanism,” targeted African Americans, immigrants, Catholics, and Jews. The Colorado Klan did not employ the terroristic violence of southern Klansmen, but utilized its political influence and popularity to tarnish and isolate its targets with claims of “un-Americanism.”

In 1923, Klan support and money propelled Denver magistrate Benjamin Stapleton to victory in the city’s mayoral election. The following year, the Klan reached the zenith of its power and influence in the Centennial State, as it gained control of the Colorado Republican party and achieved an unprecedented number of victories in the November elections. In 1924, Klan member and Denver judge Clarence Morley won the gubernatorial contest, voters sent Rice Means, another Denver Klan member, to Washington D.C. as the state’s new U.S. senator, and Klan candidates won judicial and legislative seats throughout Colorado. They were particularly successful in the City and County of Denver, where, in addition to the mayor, the Klan claimed the chief of police and a majority of the city council. National Klan officials were so impressed with Colorado Grand Dragon Galen Locke’s successful electoral strategy that just one week after the 1924 fall election, an entourage of top Klan officers descended on Denver, with a phalanx of newspaper and radio reporters in tow.

Although internal power struggles, graft, corruption, and tax evasion charges leveled at Colorado Grand Dragon Galen Locke ended the Klan’s grip on political power by the end of the decade, in the fall of 1924, Colorado’s KKK seemed invincible. That year the Denver Post claimed that the Colorado Klan was the “largest, most cohesive, and most efficiently organized political force in the state of Colorado today.”
7 / The Lincoln Hills Country Club and Resort

Laying out Lincoln Hills

Citation:
Lincoln Hills Development Company Plat of Lincoln Hills, 1922. Available from Gilpin County Clerk and Recorder’s Office, in Kathleen Corbett et al, Documentation of Historic Properties in the Gilpin Tunnel District, Gilpin County, Colorado (2009), online at:
http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Auxiliary%20Advisory%20Boards/Historical%20Society/Gilpin%20Tunnel%20Rail%20Corridor_Final%20Report_SWCA.pdf

Annotation

The Lincoln Hills resort nestled along South Boulder Creek between the small towns of Nederland to the north and Rollinsville to the south. The two men behind the development had long been assumed to have been African American, yet, recent research leaves the question of the racial origins of E.C. Regnier and Robert E. Ewalt open to debate. What is certain, however, is that Regnier and Ewalt intended to market Lincoln Hills as a vacation resort to educated, middle-class blacks living in Denver, throughout Colorado, and around the United States.

Ultimately, 470 lots were purchased, some for as little as $25. Many plot owners hailed from out of state, from New York to California and points in-between. However, most of Lincoln Hills’ property owners lived in Colorado, and the majority of those listed Denver as home. A relatively small number of cabins were actually built on the 470 purchased lots. Lincoln Hills was perhaps more popular as a weekend or week-long vacation destination for families, church and other civic groups, as well as the young campers of the Phyliss Wheatley branch of the Denver Young Women’s Christian Association. Barred from Estes Park and other campgrounds, the Phyliss Wheatley YWCA campers spent their summers at Camp Nizhoni, on land leased by the Lincoln Hills Company. During the 1930s, the “Y” bought the land for the incredibly affordable sum of $10.00.

Winks Lodge, a six-room inn, also known as Winks Panorama Lodge, became the vibrant heart of the Lincoln Hills resort. Built by Obrey “Winks” Hamlet and his first wife, Naomi, the three-story lodge served as a restaurant, dining room, social center, and entertainment venue for the resort’s visitors. Winks Hamlet, an accomplished Five Points businessman, built another twenty-two cabins in Lincoln Hills, and rented them, along with the six room in Winks Lodge.

Visitors travelled to Lincoln Hills by car and by train. There was no Lincoln Hills train depot. The train stopped along the railroad tracks that ran by the resort, and after departing the train, visitors could hike the short hill to their cabins. Winks Hamlet frequently met visitors at the train tracks and loaded them into his flat-bed truck for the short, bumpy ride to his lodge or to nearby cabins.

Lincoln Hills hosted average and famous black people alike. During the 1920s and 1930s, some of the brightest lights of the Harlem Renaissance – musicians, poets, novelists, essayists – visited the mountain retreat. After performing in some of Denver’s renowned but segregated jazz clubs, some of the most celebrated African American musicians of the time, including Count Basie, Lena Horne, and Duke Ellington, headed to Lincoln Hills. Denver’s tony hotels were off-limits to even the most famous black celebrities, but in Lincoln Hills, they found welcome, food, shelter, spectacular scenery, and even other performance venues – Winks Hamlet’s lodge and tavern.
MOUNTAIN RESORT
SUMMER HOME COLONY

A BEAUTIFUL, SCENIC, RESTFUL MOUNTAIN HOME. A WONDER SPOT
IN NATURE’S VAST EXpanse OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

IN MANY WAYS EQUALING AND
EXCELLING ESTES PARK OR ANY
OTHER SUMMER PLAY GROUND
IN COLORADO AND FAR SUR-
PASSING ALL IN ACCESSIBILITY.

39 MILES FROM DENVER BY RAILROAD—34 MILES BY AUTO ROAD

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Get away from the routine of business life
for a day, a week or a month. Take a va-
cation on your own property amid the
shady pines, cool glens and dales,
rugged rocks and canons and gentle slopes
beside one of the most beautiful streams in
Colorado. You owe this to yourself, your
wife and your children. Here is one of the
finest trout streams in Colorado and almost
two miles can be reserved for you. Beau-
tiful spaces will be reserved for picnic
grounds for you and friends, for ten-
cnis courts, baseball grounds and an open-
thatched. No building restrictions, just
what you desire to build, from a tent house
to a bungalow.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

It is said that God made the mountains
and man made the city, but remember the
"Hills were God’s first Temples." . . . .
Ten years ago our mountains were a
frontier wilderness but every available place has
been purchased and colonized for recrea-
tion purposes. This resort will be a
NATIONAL gathering place for the
toiled race during the summer months
and you may expect to see property values
increase most rapidly. Lots that could
have been purchased in Estes Park for
$500 a few years ago now bring from
$1,000 to $3,000. This is the only colony
in Colorado that has such natural ad-
vantages. Come play with us.

PRICED FROM $25 to $100 PER LOT

WEEKLY OR MONTHLY PAYMENTS—5% DISCOUNT FOR CASH

Send in your reservation for one lot or as many as
you want. Plans and map and circular will be
sent you immediately.

CAUTION—Don’t delay, other cities are wanting
reservations.

OWN YOUR SUMMER HOME and get a deed
when fully paid.

SPECIAL OFFER—IMPORTANT

A LOT FIRST to the first fifty people selecting
and buying one lot, either for cash or on time pay-
ments. Only one free lot to any purchaser, indi-
vidual or organization.

LINCOLN HILLS
P. O. Box 116
Denver, Colo.

Source 8
8 / The Lincoln Hills Country Club and Resort
“A Beautiful, Scenic, Restful Mountain Home”

Citation

Lincoln Hills ad, “Mountain Resort Summer Home Colony,” published in the Colorado Statesman, May 9, 1925. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Excerpt

MOUNTAIN RESORT SUMMER HOME COLONY

A BEAUTIFUL, SCENIC, RESTFUL MOUNTAIN HOME. A WONDER SPOT IN NATURE’S VAST EXPANSE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

IN MANY WAYS EQUALING AND EXCELLING ESTES PARK OR ANY OTHER SUMMER PLAY GROUND IN COLORADO AND FAR SURPASSING ALL IN ACCESSIBILITY. A restful retreat among the pines. Four automobile highways to the park. Excellent train service during the summer months on the world’s greatest scenic railroad – “The Moffat Road.”

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS
Get away from the routine of business life for a day, a week or a month. Take a vacation on your own property amid the stately pines, the cool glens and dales, rugged rocks and canyons and gentle slopes beside one of the most beautiful streams in Colorado. You owe this to yourself, your wife and your children. . .

PEACE AND PROSPERITY
It is said that God made the mountains and man made the city, but remember the “Hills were God’s first Temples...” Ten years ago our mountains were a wilderness but every available place has been purchased and colonized for recreation purposes. This resort will be a NATIONAL gathering place for the colored race during the summer months and you may expect to see property values increase most rapidly. . .

Annotation

Black newspapers served a vital function in African American communities. They delivered news and opinion of interest to their black readers. Yet, even more significantly, in their pages the papers conveyed a collective sense of shared experience – of community – whether the neighborhood was a five-block square, a city, the nation, or the world. Most importantly, during a period of history so laden with disregard for the basic humanity of African Americans, black newspapers shared a mission to uplift their readers – to uplift the race. Calls to action, as exemplified by the Denver Star’s demand for the creation of a local NAACP in 1913 (see resource number 4, “A Demand for Justice”), were also calls to uplift, to improve both one’s personal lot in life as well as that of the larger black community. Similarly, stories of determination and achievement also signified racial uplift – be it a high school graduation, a
civic honor, or a military exploit. All were news items that helped to create a shared sense of time and space - and functioned as expressions of a collective black aspiration for a better future.

Even the ads published in black newspapers helped weave bonds of community. The Lincoln Hills ad placed in the *Colorado Statesman* in the spring of 1925 fit the paper’s implicit mission of black uplift and achievement, even as it helped to pay the paper’s bills. Declaring the beauty of the mountain resort equal to if not greater than that of Estes Park and other mountain enclaves where African Americans were generally not welcome, the ad worked to remind a black middle class shaped by aspiration as much as by income that by buying a plot of land in Lincoln Hills they could not only escape the drudgery of the work week but could be a part of a “National gathering place for the colored race.”

Surely, the ad promised its readers, Lincoln Hills would deliver “health and happiness... peace and prosperity,” to the black Americans who invested their money and their hope in “a beautiful, scenic, restful mountain home” in a “wonder spot” just for them, high in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.
Gentlemen:

Lincoln Hills, near Denver, where I have purchased 4 lots and where I have visited on different occasions, offers many unique advantages to our group:

1. A beautiful spot for camp, or cabin or fine summer home.

2. A cool, invigorating summer climate which is the finest known tonic for people who have had a hard year of work.

3. A large tract of land containing 2 miles of Trout stream, beside 4 creeks and a fine lake stocked with trout.

4. A railroad and 4 auto roads from Denver to the resort.

5. A summer colony where lots are being sold at such a very low price that buyers will make money on the lots even if they never use them themselves.

6. A place where our race can show to the Nation a constructive piece of work, in the upbuilding of a great national gathering place for health, recreation, education and uplift.

This demonstration of our creative ability seems to me to be the greatest thing about this splendid project. We like the beauty, the climate, the fishing and recreation of all sorts, and we like the money profit, but to point with pride to beautiful LINCOLN Hills as the product of our own creative genius is still more inspiring.

Lincoln Hills is not an old resort abandoned by others, but a new project, started and supported by the leaders of our Group in Denver and other cities, and destined to become a monument to the vision and constructive ability of the Colored Race.

Lincoln Hills deserves the active cooperation of our people all over the United States and has had my hearty support since I first visited there and saw its many wonderful advantages.

Estes Park is 75 miles from Denver by auto, Red Feather Lakes Resort is 115 miles from Denver, but our own Lincoln Hills is only 34 miles from this great Queen City of the Plains.

Congratulations to you on the splendid progress already made, and wishing you continued success in all the cities and towns of the Country, I am,

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Pastor of Zion Baptist Church,
“Many Unique Advantages to Our Group”

Citation


Excerpt

Gentlemen:

Lincoln Hills, near Denver, where I have purchased 4 lots and where I have visited on different occasions, offers many unique advantages to our group:

1. A beautiful spot for camp, or cabin or fine summer home.
2. A cool, invigorating summer climate which is the finest known tonic for people who have had a hard year of work.
3. A large tract of land containing 2 miles of trout stream, beside 4 creeks and fine lake stocked with trout.
4. A railroad and 4 auto roads from Denver to the resort.
5. A summer colony where lots are being sold at such a very low price that buyers will make money on the lots even if they never use them themselves.
6. A place where our race can show to the Nation a constructive piece of work, in the upbuilding of a great National gathering place for health, recreations, education and uplift.

This demonstration of our creative ability seems to me to be the greatest thing about this splendid project. We like the beauty, the climate, the fishing and recreation of all sorts, and we like the money profit, but to point with pride to beautiful LINCOLN HILLS as the product of our own creative genius is still more inspiring.

Lincoln Hills is not an old resort abandoned by others, but a new project, started and supported by the leaders of our Group in Denver and other cities, and destined to become a monument to the vision and constructive ability of the Colored Race.

Annotation

Ministers were among the most respected members of African American communities. In the years that followed the Civil War and the emancipation of more than four million enslaved African Americans, freed blacks joined in the community-building that for decades had engaged their northern counterparts. Long the center of northern African American communities in the north, black churches also became the cornerstone of the communities built by black freedmen and women in the south.
In Denver, the pastor of Zion Baptist Church, the oldest black church in Colorado, enjoyed a level of prestige and respect accorded to few. Founded in 1877, when the city of Denver was less than 20 years old, Zion became the center of Denver’s black community.

During the 1920s, many Coloradans, black and white, wrote letters endorsing Lincoln Hills and urging African Americans to buy lots in the resort. In his letter, Zion’s pastor, G. L. Prince, captured the language of racial uplift so popular among the black middle-class, as well as among those with middle-class aspirations. His was a message at once intended for African Americans who were living lives of respectability; those who were deemed to be in need of social and moral correction; and for those whites who believed that African Americans were a lowly people, incapable of achievement or refinement. Pastor Prince’s endorsement of Lincoln Hills promised black respectability. Among the advantages Lincoln Hills offered to “our group”, wrote Prince, was “a place where our race can show to the Nation a constructive piece of work, in the upbuilding of a great National gathering place for health, recreation, education, and uplift.”

Pastor Prince made clear that from its inception, Lincoln Hills was much more than a summer resort where one might fish, swim, and hike in the clean mountain air. The resort was also about African American dignity, hope, and achievement. Lincoln Hills, promised Pastor Prince, was “destined to become a monument to the vision and constructive ability of the colored race.”
Winks Panorama (Winks Lodge), (circa 1950s). Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, http://cdm16079.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll26/id/0

Annotation

Winks Lodge was the heart of the Lincoln Hills resort community. Built by Obrey “Winks” Hamlet and his first wife Naomi in 1928, the lodge offered six rooms where guests could spend a weekend or an entire week or two. In the lodge’s parlor, guests could sit, read, or talk in chairs while a fire blazed in a fireplace framed with large river rock. Hamlet built an intimate dining room with a ceiling composed of restored ornate white tin tiles recovered from an abandoned office building, and the summer kitchen offered dining tables set behind a wall of large windows that allowed diners to take in the mountain scenery as they ate. During the summer months, the lodge kitchen was the busiest room in the lodge. Naomi Hamlet, and after her death, Winks’s second wife Melba, provided guests with down home meals so exquisite that some travelled to the resort for the culinary experience alone.
The Lincoln Hills Country Club and Resort
A Place for Young Black Girls

Citation

Photograph (detail) of girls from the Phyliss Wheatley chapter of the Colorado Young Women’s Christian Association at play in South Boulder Creek, Camp Nizhoni, Lincoln Hills, Colorado. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library
http://cdm16079.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/67889

Annotation

African American children also suffered the sting of racial segregation and discrimination. During the 1920s and 1930s, as their parents were barred from most mountain retreats, black children were also forbidden entry to summer camps and excluded from many recreational and service organizations, like the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). Camp Nizhoni was a mountain retreat that African American girls could call their very own. Nizhoni – a Navajo word for beautiful – was established in 1925 by the Denver Phyliss Wheatley Colored YWCA on land provided by the Lincoln Hills Company. Most of the campers came from Denver, but others hailed from more distant Colorado cities including Colorado Springs and Pueblo, and more than a few arrived from out of state. The camp offered the girls mountain outings filled with hiking, swimming, fishing, cook-outs, and singing around the campfire.

The Phyliss Wheatley Colored YWCA was located in the heart of Denver’s Five Points community. Opened in 1916, the “Y” chapter was the namesake of the eighteenth-century poet and author who as a young girl had been captured in West Africa and enslaved in Boston, Massachusetts. The Colored YWCA sponsored many service and recreation programs for African American girls and women, but Camp Nizhoni was its jewel in the Rockies.
THE DENVER STAR

(Entered as second class matter at the Postoffice in the City of Denver, Colorado)

GEORGE G. ROSS, Editor
Telephone Tabor 4231

BIRTHDAY OFFICE 510 Twentieth Street

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Six Months $3.50
Three Months $1.60

It occasionally happens that papers sent to subscribers are lost or stolen. In case you do not receive any number when due, inform us by phone or postal card and we will cheerfully forward a duplicate of the missing number. Cliff subscribers should get their papers on Saturday. If you don’t, please complain. Write us your complaints and we will forward them to the Postmaster.

JIM CROW MUST GO!

You can’t have prejudice with, at the same time, having hate and fear and selfishness.

We only rise above and out of prejudice when we rise above and out of the thoughts and suggestions which cause prejudice. We then clear our minds of the belief in prejudice, hate and fear. Moral: Destroy the cause of prejudice and you destroy the effect of that cause. Jim Crow must go—sometime, somehow—why not today? Let’s you and I make America just a little better by daily preaching and practicing it. Prejudice is built on fear and selfishness.

“Be it Resolved. For this year, and for all other years, that I will face unpopularity for the sake of truth. I will declare boldly my convictions, though they make me despised. I will cleanse my heart from all selfishness to the end that the will of mankind’s common Father may be more fully expressed through my life.” Let this be a lesson to you.

“The EAGLE, and NOT the JIM CROW, is our NATIONAL BIRD.” Support the one and destroy the other.

THE DENVER STAR’S VISION

Looking Forward—I don’t look to the past.
Looking Up—I cannot be downcast.
Looking Within—I don’t fear things without.

EDITORIALS

THE EAGLE IS OUR NATIONAL BIRD

NOT THE “JIM CROW”

REPRESSIVE BARRIERS

Repressive social and economic barriers and conditions retard their progress, and, too often, effectively throttle and discourage their laudable ambition to get on in the world.

Thrill at best is a hard and exciting taskmaster. Normal progress at best is almost an achievement. When our social system adds to her handicap, then indeed becomes unbearable the burden of effort, with ensuing self-pity and discouragement.

These observations are called forth by reason of the present-day economic spurt which defense-spending is providing, and because of the calculated, premeditated effort being made definitely to prevent the Negro group from sharing in the wages and spending provided by defense-effort.

Having, too largely, shared the discomforts and sufferings of the depression years, they naturally desire a chance now to loyalty prepare the country for its proper defense.
12 / Roots of Change: World War II and the Cold War
“The Eagle is Our National Bird, Not the Jim Crow”

Citation


Annotation

During the early years of World War II, the Denver Star posted this banner atop its editorial column: “The Eagle Is Our National Bird, not the ‘Jim Crow.’” The argument was clear: America could not fulfill its credo of liberty and equality while condoning segregation, discrimination and racist terrorism. During the war, the Denver Star and other black newspapers drew damning parallels between the monster Hitler and American lynchings, segregation, and discrimination. Although in its most technical context, the phrase “Jim Crow” referred to federal, state, and local laws that required racial segregation, the Denver Star used the term more expansively, as did most African Americans generally, to include discrimination, segregation, and violence condoned by custom as well as by government-mandate.

The United States’ battle against Nazi Germany and its ideology of Aryan supremacy presented long time civil rights advocates (like the NAACP and the Cosmopolitan Club) and black newspapers a crucial opportunity to highlight the chasm that separated American ideals of individual liberty and equality from the nation’s reality of systemic racial segregation, discrimination, and violence. The embarrassing international spotlight on American white supremacy forced by the Allies’ war against the Nazi’s white supremacist ideology as well as Hitler’s territorial aggression, provided critical support for the civil rights arguments that had been long pressed by blacks and other peoples of color but ignored by most whites. Paradoxically, the growing acknowledgment of the moral force of demands for equal rights under the law in the two decades that followed the end of the war would, over time, also upend organizations, clubs, resorts, and neighborhoods established by peoples of color. In Colorado, it was not a coincidence that Melba Hamlet sold Winks Lodge – the heart of Lincoln Hills – in 1965, the year her husband Winks Hamlet died, and perhaps just as significant, one year after Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among the landmark law’s provisions: a ban on racial discrimination in public accommodations anywhere in the United States.

During the war, many officials in the federal government objected to the constant focus black newspapers trained on the nation’s segregated military and federal workforce and the discriminatory employment policies of the government’s private defense contractors. Many government officials accused black newspapers like the Denver Star and the Colorado Statesman of being disloyal. The accusations prompted one notable black newspaper, the Pittsburgh Courier, to launch its legendary “Double V Campaign,” in which the Courier declared its support for victory over the enemies of freedom – in Germany as well as in the United States.8 However, as race riots convulsed American cities during World War II and highlighted a discomfiting synergy between Germany’s white supremacism and the racism practiced on American soil, a growing number of influential white liberals began to embrace the

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8 In February, 1942, the Pittsburgh Courier, a prominent African American newspaper published in Pennsylvania, launched its Double V Campaign with this explanation: “Thus in our fight for freedom we wage a two-pronged attack against our enslavers at home, and those abroad who would enslave us. WE HAVE A STAKE IN THIS FIGHT...WE ARE AMERICANS TOO!”
arguments advanced by civil rights activists. How could the U.S. lay claim to moral superiority in the battle against the German-led Axis powers with a racially segregated fighting force? How could American democracy be superior to Nazi totalitarianism when the nation’s laws and customs condoned lynching, race riots fueled by white mobs, and systemic discrimination and segregation in employment, housing, public accommodations and other aspects of everyday life?

In 1943, a year in which dozens of race riots erupted in cities from Detroit to Los Angeles, an interracial, interethnic, and interfaith coalition of civil rights supporters and organizations in Denver formed the Denver Unity Council (DUC). The DUC expressed the same philosophy as that extoled by the Denver Cosmopolitan Club and local NAACP decades earlier. Americanism, the DUC argued, “is a matter of the mind and heart, and not a matter of race, ancestry, or religion.”
HOW DO YOU RATE AS AN AMERICAN?

1. Do you believe that all people should have an equal opportunity for employment regardless of race, color or national origin?
2. Do you believe that citizens should be granted Denver hotel and restaurant services regardless of their color or religion?
3. Do you believe that all people in Denver should have the right to live where they wish, and not be forced into substandard areas by racial restrictive covenants?
4. Do you believe that people can be encourage by educational programs to better understanding of each other?

If you answered “Yes” to every question, you are a “positive” American, according to the Bill of rights of our Constitution.

Now we want to ask you another question:

5. Do you make it a point to take positive action to secure these rights not only for yourself but for others?

If your answer is “Yes” you will want to join with others who are working toward these ends. If your answer is “No” now is that time to begin to “accentuate the positive.” In either case, you should join...

THE DENVER UNITY COUNCIL

WHAT AND WHY...

Four years ago several Denver citizens, conscious that bigotry and discrimination were not trademarks of Hitler’s world alone, formed the Denver Unity Council. The air: to fight, on the local front, all persons and organizations who should attempt to defy the Constitution by claiming that some races are better than others, by denying employment because of color or creed, by preaching the hatred which, in the end can lead only to bloodshed and repression.”

WHO...

In four years the Council has grown to include 93 organizations and over 800 individual members. Their work and their money have built an increasingly effective Unity Council.

HOW...

It is not ENOUGH to tell a man he should love his brother, that his work and security final depend on the ability of all men to pull together as one. To talk unity is fine, but it is NOT enough. The Council seeks out the causes behind local “anti-Americanism” and works out solutions.
A Denver Unity Council (DUC) pamphlet published in 1947 advocated fair treatment of all Denver residents regardless of race, color, creed, or religion. Even more significantly, the pamphlet linked racial intolerance and prejudice in the United States to the horrors of Nazi Germany. Equality of treatment and opportunity were true American ideals, argued the DUC, while bigotry and discrimination were not “trademarks of Hitler’s world alone.” Another DUC pamphlet that had been published during the war reminded its readers that soldiers of all races were risking their lives in the name of American democracy and that the bullets fired by German soldiers did not discriminate in their targets. The Unity Council’s motto – “Americanism is a matter of the mind and the heart, and not a matter of race, ancestry, or religion” – symbolized the organization’s mission to win a popular rejection of the racist and xenophobic “100 percent Americanism” that had become so popular during the post-World War I era.

The Unity Council sponsored several fair employment bills in the Colorado legislature – the first in 1945. Although the legislature rejected the DUC’s proposal, in 1944 the same legislature succeeded in defeating a virulently racist proposal that would have denied any person of Japanese ancestry who was not an American citizen the right to own property in Colorado. Opposition to the 1944 anti-Japanese land ownership bill was led by war veterans who embraced the arguments of the Denver Star and the Denver Unity Council. State Representative Earl Mann, an African American veteran of World War I and columnist for the Colorado Statesman, expressed solidarity with the Japanese residents targeted by the bill. “If this measure passes,” Mann queried, “what are Negroes fighting for?” Another veteran, Wayne Hill, who was white and had been recently discharged from the Army, defended his vote against the anti-Japanese bill as a vote for freedom. “I am cautioned that I will be sorry [for my vote]... I am just as willing to die a political death as I am to die in battle to preserve American freedom.”

The imprisonment of more than 7000 Japanese Americans and Japanese non-citizens at the Amache internment camp in southeast Colorado during the war made the state legislature’s defeat of the anti-Japanese land ownership bill all the more remarkable. (Please see the set of resources on Amache for more information.) If the legislature could reject an attempt to discriminate against an unpopular minority, civil rights advocates had reason to hope that the state’s lawmakers might one day accept their arguments for broad-based anti-discrimination legislation.

In Colorado, and across the country, the seeds of racial change had been planted. World War II helped to accomplish what decades of protest and advocacy by blacks, other peoples of color, and their allies had not. Hitler’s white supremacist horrors, the critical role played by the United States in the defeat of Nazi Germany, and the war service of thousands of Americans of color helped transform the unquestioned white supremacist assumptions held by many white Americans into beliefs that many would come to consider un-democratic harbingers of strife and war.

Those seeds of racial change sprouted locally and nationally during the following two decades, and ushered in a civil rights revolution not seen since the days of Reconstruction. But in 1945, no one knew that as a consequence, the days of institutions like Lincoln Hills that had been built in part to provide sanctuary from the slings and arrows of exclusion, were numbered.
THE HIGH COST OF PREJUDICE

BY LOUIS E. SIDMAN

DENVER'S COMPLACENCY about its treatment of "minority groups" recently was shattered by the release of a shocking report by Mayor Quigg Newton's Survey Committee on Human Relations. The survey was conducted over a four-month period to analyze the extent of prejudice and discrimination against some 65,000 Negroes, Spanish-Americans, Jews and Japanese citizens in Denver, and to chart a course for future action for city government to remedy these conditions. Thus, Denver became the first city in the United States to critically take inventory of its human relations problems following the creation of the President's Commission on Civil Rights. The glaring fact that the findings of both surveys reveal similar patterns spotlights the urgent need for action on both the national and local fronts. The challenge of obtaining first-class citizenship for all peoples in a democracy is one which has been accepted by Denver's new and forward-looking city administration.

Mayor Newton, shortly after taking office, appointed the survey committee headed by Dean Paul Roberts of St. John's Episcopal church, with W. Miller Barrera, director of the Denver Urban League; Don Cahan, director of the National Opinion Research center; Tom W. Ewing, of Denver Boys, Inc; Guy Fox, of the Denver public schools; Dr. E. T. Hall, Jr., of Denver university; Bishop Herbert Newell, former superintendent of Parochial schools; and Louis E. Sidman, director of the Anti-Defamation league.

Several startling conclusions can be drawn from this report. Denver cannot hope to progress while it denies equal rights to a large segment of its population. Progress is impeded when talent, energy, and the will to succeed are destroyed. Restrictive covenants in housing deeds along with "gentleman's agreements" are continuing to shape geographical ghettos which breed frustration and hatred. Economic sanctions deprive thousands of a right to earn a decent salary with the inevitable result of declining standards of living. A history of police brutality has developed a fear and a lack of respect for law enforcement to the point of becoming a serious factor in the increase in crime and juvenile delinquency. Discrimination at hotels, resorts, restaurants, and at recreational facilities have shaped social patterns contrary to the American way of life. The denial of equal public and private health facilities seriously impairs the lives of too many citizens. A lack of opportunity for apprentice training as well as educational discrimination concerns many young people to a life of scarcity and poverty.

There are many hopeful signs. An aroused citizenry has displayed the desire to eradicate the roots of these problems. Mayor Newton's appointment of a permanent commission on human relations to deal with long-range positive programs of action reflect the hope of the future. The steps taken by the Denver public schools to implement the principles of intercultural education will do much to mold future citizens of understanding and goodwill in recent weeks, hospitals, law enforcement agencies as well as many public and private institutions have made serious attempts to eliminate bad practices.

One word of caution. The habits and morals of a basically conservative community cannot change quickly. Rebuilding of human values and associations requires the patient and devoted efforts of all people in the community. The future of Denver in a large measure depends on intelligent handling of the problems of discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice. The solution of these problems lies in the hearts and minds of its citizens.

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"The High Cost of Prejudice" was previously used as the title of a book written by Berkleu Xeen, and published by Julian Newerly, Inc., in 1947.

This brochure reprinted from the February issue of Deity MOUNTAIN LIFE.
“The High Cost of Prejudice”

Citation


Excerpt

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Annotation

In the aftermath of World War II, the impetus behind the creation of the Denver Unity Council and similar organizations in other northern cities coalesced into a national movement. The new movement to improve “human relations” was dedicated to combating racial and religious discrimination.

Movement activists favored the use of organized public education campaigns, and some – including the Denver Unity Council (DUC) – championed passage of anti-discrimination laws. The DUC, a broad coalition of individual activists and human relations, civic, religious, educational, labor, and business organizations, led the human relations movement in Colorado during the 1940s. In 1947, the DUC secured a key campaign promise from Denver mayoral candidate Quigg Newton to appoint a committee to document discrimination in the city. Newton, a young Navy veteran, won the election and made good on his campaign pledge by appointing several members of the DUC to a new Mayor’s Survey Committee.
on Human Relations. The creation of the survey committee was crucial: it represented a more expansive understanding of a government’s responsibility to and for its citizens. Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of Denver’s residents would now also include combating bigotry and discrimination.

In an article entitled “The High Cost of Prejudice,” published in *Rocky Mountain Life* in February 1948, Louis Sidman, chairman of Mayor Newton’s Survey Committee and director of the Tri-States Anti-Defamation League, noted a grim report issued by U.S. President Harry Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights. In the wake of the Truman committee’s report, Mr. Sidman claimed that Denver had been the first American city to appoint a human relations committee to investigate “the extent of prejudice and discrimination against some 65,000 Negroes, Spanish-Americans, Jewish, and Japanese citizens.”

The published findings and conclusions of Denver’s human relations committee were as sensational locally as President Truman’s committee’s had been nationally. The local committee documented systemic discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, the city’s health care facilities, and a history of brutality against racial minorities by members of the Denver police force. In response to the report, Mayor Newton appointed a permanent Denver Human Relations Committee to develop programs to combat discrimination and prejudice in the city. “The challenge of obtaining first-class citizenship for all peoples in a democracy is one which has been accepted by Denver’s new and forward looking city administration,” Louis Sidman wrote with approval in *Rocky Mountain Life*.

Change was afoot in Denver, as in many other cities in the United States. The seeds of change planted during the war were ever so slowly bearing fruit.
Heeding Communists
Minorties in Denver
Jim Crow Red Ally

Appeal to Minorities
Of Communists in
Jim Crow Strong Ally

It Happens in Denver

Source 15
Excerpt

JIM CROW STRONG ALLY OF COMMUNISTS IN APPEAL TO MINORITIES

(Editor’s note: This is the second in a series of articles dealing with Jim Crow in Denver. It's a story obtained by a young man fully qualified in background and experience. He is a reporter for the Denver Post, He also is a Negro.)

Jim Crow and the people in Denver who let him go on living are leaving the door wide open for Communist propaganda.

The minorities in Denver—and their cousins around the world—are tuning more and more to the Communist lies for relief from daily oppression. I know because I have seen it happen—right here in Denver. The hard fact that the minority races no longer are satisfied with a program of limited concessions, piecemeal adjustments and tardy appeasement was brought into sharp focus recently after the shooting of a 15 year-old Negro boy by a Denver patrolman. From the beginning, Democracy was on the losing side of that particular tussle with Communism. The Communists seized quickly on the dissatisfaction of Denver Negroes to stage emotion-raising propaganda. The Communists got a lot of backing....

Why are we minorities susceptible to such propaganda when the lies are so obvious? I’ve asked myself this many times.

I have talked with many members of my race and other minority groups. They are almost without exception 100 per cent loyal to this country when it comes to fighting a war, and they have nothing but praise for their American heritage.

But they are confused and—above all—they are displeased with many things. They blame the majority for not having national civil rights and fair employment practice laws passed by congress....

Negro veterans can’t understand why they cannot exercise all the civil liberties they fought for in World War II – the same rights for which men of the minorities now are dying in Korea...

The fact that Denver “is better than most places” shows that a constructive and democratic start for better human relations has been made here. But a good start is not enough. The Commies thrive on half measures here, as elsewhere.”
George Brown was first African American journalist hired by the *Denver Post*. Brown’s hiring in 1950 was remarkable enough. Even more remarkable: the *Post* commissioned the reporter to write a series of articles on “Jim Crow in Denver.” In his columns, Brown illustrated the reality of racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, employment, housing, and public accommodations in Denver for the paper’s readers. Taken together, Brown’s hiring and the Jim Crow series (along with the *Post*’s hiring of Bill Hosokawa, a Japanese American reporter who had been imprisoned at Wyoming’s Heart Mountain internment camp during the war) were groundbreaking for their time. No longer would coverage of discrimination – both reportage and editorial criticism – be limited to the city’s black and ethnic papers. The *Denver Post*, one of the state’s largest daily newspapers, had begun to pay attention.

In his column, “Jim Crow Strong Ally of Communists” Brown warned the *Post*’s large readership that racial discrimination and police brutality hurt not only peoples of color, but also left Denver and, by extension, the United States, vulnerable to Communist opportunism. Brown’s argument was not new. During the war, the *Denver Star*, Colorado the Denver Unity Council and human relations activists throughout the U.S. had analogized American discrimination and racist violence to Hitlerism, and now, in the post-war era, activists contended that American white supremacy damaged the credibility of the U.S. internationally.

The argument was important and would have a critical impact on civil rights in Colorado and nationally as well. After World War II, former allies United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) entered a “Cold War” contest for political and economic supremacy. They waged their ideological contest in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As African Americans and other peoples of color were fighting to end the reign of racist discrimination and violence in the U.S., the dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America were fighting to liberate themselves from the yoke of European colonial rule. During the Cold War, the U.S.S.R. used incidents of racist terror and institutional discrimination in the U.S. to argue that whites were the only beneficiaries of American democracy and capitalism. How could the emerging nations of Africa, Asian, and Latin America trust the United States to deal fairly, when America did not deal fairly with its own citizens?

*Denver Post* reporter George Brown reiterated this argument in his Jim Crow column. Citing a recent shooting of a young black teen-age boy by Denver police, Brown warned the newspaper’s readers that these incidents were prime fodder for Communist anti-American propaganda – at home and abroad.
16 / Roots of Change: World War II and the Cold War
“It’s A Record!”

Citation


Excerpt

New Civil Rights Legislation

The last session of the Colorado legislature was the most productive in history in the passage of Civil Rights Legislation. The Legislature passed seven bills which have a direct bearing upon civil rights. They led off by passing a comprehensive Fair Employment Practices Act, covering private employers, and set a new precedent...not a dissenting vote was cast in either house...and then increased the amount of money for the Anti-Discrimination Commission so it could expand its staff for better enforcement.

In other actions, the Legislature placed the enforcement and administration of the Public Accommodations Law under the Commission. They passed a bill requiring motels to post their rates so that one person would not be charged more than another because of skin color or religion. They repealed the miscegenation law...

It’s A Record!

The Colorado Legislature set an outstanding example of what can be done to strengthen civil rights legislation. It’s a record which, to my knowledge, has never been equaled in one session by any other state. Congress can well take a lesson from the Colorado lawmakers!

Annotation

The Personal ADL Letter, the quarterly newsletter of the Mountain States Anti-Defamation League, was exultant. While the U.S. Congress had yet to pass a major civil rights bill in the twentieth century, in 1957 the Colorado legislature passed seven. “It’s a record which, to my knowledge, has never been equaled in one session by another state. Congress can well take a lesson from the Colorado lawmakers,” enthused ADL regional director Sheldon Steinhauser.

The coalition that championed racial equality and civil rights legislation in Colorado, first led by the Denver Unity Council, had reorganized in 1950 under the leadership of the ADL. Under the auspices of the ADL, they achieved a stunning number of legislative victories, starting with the legislature’s passage of the state’s first fair employment law in 1951. These legislative achievements reflected a change in popular opinion as well. Although racist beliefs and practices were still alive and festering, an undeniable sea change in popular opinion had taken place regarding what beliefs were and were not consistent with
American democracy and freedom. It was a change in popular opinion that undermined the very rationale for the creation of the Lincoln Hills mountain resort: during the 1950s, a growing number of Coloradans had come to view openly racist discrimination and exclusion as harmful and unfair.

Among the measures passed by the state legislature in 1957: an extension of the reach of Colorado’s fair employment to include private employers (the original law covered only governmental employers), the repeal of the state ban on interracial marriage. The legislature also placed jurisdiction over the state’s old 1895 public accommodations law in the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Commission – a state agency specifically created to enforce the state’s anti-discrimination laws.

Throughout the decade, human relations activists had effectively used the racial politics of World War II and the Cold War to their advantage. The impact of their strategy was made crystal clear by Colorado Governor Dan Thornton in 1951: as he signed the state’s first fair employment law in front of reporters, Thornton – sounding more like a U.S. statesman than a Colorado governor – declared that the law “was proof to the Communists that this country is interested in the welfare of minorities.”

Yet, perhaps even more telling than these legislative victories, during the 1950s changing public opinion and private business practices led to an increasing number of African Americans and other peoples of color gaining access to stores, theaters, swimming pools, and parks – including mountain parks – that had previously denied them. So much work lay ahead, both to ensure enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and to expand the number of Coloradans protected by them. However, it was clear that over the course of the decade, the seeds of civil rights change had indeed matured in Colorado.
17 / A Changed World
Lincoln Hills Today

Citation


Annotation

Melba Hamlet, the widow of Obrey “Winks” Hamlet, sold her husband’s historic lodge after his death in 1965. The passing of Hamlet, whose lodge formed the social and cultural heart of the Lincoln Hills Country resort community, followed closely upon Congress’ passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Both events were rich in symbolism, as they marked the end of an era. Congressional approval of the landmark civil rights law announced a seismic change in federal policy: discrimination in employment, public education, and public accommodations was now illegal as a matter of federal law. The organizing principle for Lincoln Hills had disappeared as President Lyndon Baines Johnson’s signed the 1964 Civil Rights Act. And, as if on cue, Mr. Hamlet’s passing one year earlier marked the end of Winks Lodge, and in effect, Lincoln Hills.

However, in Colorado change had already settled in years before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The state’s civil rights revolution had begun more than a decade earlier, and by the end of the 1950s, many black people in Colorado were enjoying mountain parks that just five or ten years earlier had been off limits to them. During the 1960s, as African Americans enjoyed access to an increasing variety of mountain recreational parks, hotels, and motels, the lure of Lincoln Hills continued to fade.

In recognition of its singular legacy as the site of African American refuge, recreation, entertainment, and cultural enlightenment in the West during the reign of racial segregation and discrimination, Winks Lodge was placed on the National Park Service Register of Historic Places in 1980. Today, visitors can drive to Lincoln Hills and view the lodge from the outside, or arrange a guided tour of the lodge’s interior through the Lincoln Hills Flyfisher Group, the current owner of the former resort property. Outside of Winks Lodge, however, time has left its mark on Lincoln Hills. A small number of families have maintained their cabins and their connections to a historic time and place, but most of the historic resort’s cabins and other structures have fallen into various stages of disrepair.

Currently the Lincoln Hills Flyfisher Group operates a private fly fishing lodge on the old resort property. The group’s charitable Lincoln Hills Cares operation, in association with various community partners, sponsors mountain trips, recreation, and entertainment programs designed for families and for young people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.
Additional Resources

Websites

Historic Lincoln Hills and Lincoln Hills Cares
www.lincolnhills.com/historic-lincoln-hills/history/

Lincoln Hills – M. Gerwing – Architects Notebook
https://mgerwing.wordpress.com/2010/08/31/winks-lodge/

Lincoln Hills - History Colorado
http://exhibits.historycolorado.org/lincolnhills/lincoln_home.html

Lincoln Hills Country Club
www.blackpast.org/.../lincoln-hills-country-club-1922-1966

Books and Articles


Mark S. Foster, “In the Face of ‘Jim Crow’: Prosperous Blacks and Vacations, Travel and Outdoor Leisure, 1890-1945,” Journal of Negro History (Spring 1999).


Video Programs

Teaching Strategies

General Instructional Strategies for using primary sources in classrooms followed by grade-level-targeted suggestions for essential questions, inquiry questions (including writing prompts and discussion starters), activities, and assessments aligned to specific state academic standards for 4th grade, 8th grade, and high school.

### 4th Grade

**Essential Questions:**

- How are events in U.S. and world history connected to events in Colorado?
- How have different people left an impact on the state of Colorado?
- In what ways do we see Colorado's history reflected in the state today?
- How does connecting people, events and ideas help interpret history?
- How do individuals influence and work with government?

**Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):**

- How did diverse people impact Colorado’s history and culture?
- What are examples of cause and effect relationships associated with the actions of diverse citizens?
- Why was Lincoln Hills created? What effect did it have on Colorado’s African Americans?
- How did civil rights activists work with the government to achieve more equal rights?

**Activities:**

**Warm up/quick activities**

- Choose a random primary source from the set to analyze using the Crop It Method. [http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/25697](http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/25697)
- Students can do a quick analysis using the 6 C's of Primary Source Analysis ([https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3w0Qd99SapzNWY1OGZhMDYtY2lwYS00MDM4LTwYjUtZjQ1YjgxOWFhMTA4/edit?hl=en_US&authkey=CN6XiTw](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3w0Qd99SapzNWY1OGZhMDYtY2lwYS00MDM4LTwYjUtZjQ1YjgxOWFhMTA4/edit?hl=en_US&authkey=CN6XiTw)) using any of the primary source documents. Teachers may choose to use one source from each sub-section of the set.

**Lesson activities**

- Read the following books to students prior to accessing primary sources to provide background knowledge and personal connections to the Civil Rights Movement:
  - Unstoppable Octobia May by Sharon Flake
  - Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

- Take a walking field trip ([http://www.historycolorado.org/educators/explore-denver-walking-tours](http://www.historycolorado.org/educators/explore-denver-walking-tours)) with the History Colorado Center through Five Points to explore the people, places and ideas that shaped African American culture and history in Denver.

- If you are unable to visit the History Colorado Center, visit their online [Lincoln Hills exhibit](http://exhibits.historycolorado.org/lincolnhills/lincoln_home.html) with students. You can also view a [Colorado Experience](http://video.rmpbs.org/video/2339004018/) video.
• Utilize the Library of Congress’ recommendations for analyzing primary sources (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf). To do this, students should either each receive a copy of a primary source that they will be analyzing, or a copy can be projected to the entire class. Each student should have three post-it notes where they can write an observation(s), a reflection(s), and a question(s). After they have done this, they can post their notes on three designated places (i.e.: a bulletin board, white board, charts paper, etc.) The teacher can go through each step of analyzing with students and discuss commonalities. Following the observation stage, the teacher may want to provide students with more background knowledge about the source. A follow up activity may involve having students research their questions in more depth.

• Students can use a comic strip to help explain their understanding of cause and effect relationships. Students should begin by analyzing primary sources #1-6 to explore how racism emerged in our state. This should also explain the need for creating a separate African American mountain resort. Discuss with students the different perspectives of each group of Colorado citizens to help them understand the time period. Relate events in Colorado to events in the United States (i.e.: the Civil War, western expansion, etc.). After students have an understanding of why Lincoln Hills was created, have them analyze primary sources #7-11 to explore the effects of the resort. Then have students use the tool Comic Life (http://comiclife.com) to create a cause and effect comic strip to explain this timeline of events.

• Have students create a vacation poster advertising Lincoln Hills. Remind them to consider their audience and use primary sources #7-11 to highlight specific details that they might use to persuade people to visit. They should also visit the Lincoln Hills website (http://lincolnhillscares.org) to explore history, famous visitors, and any other helpful information that they might include to advertise for the resort. Have students present their posters to the class and explain how their posters might’ve influenced the diverse population in Colorado in the 1920s.

• Have students discuss the contrasting points of view that were prevalent during World War II and the Cold War. Discuss how civil rights activists attempted to draw parallels between world affairs and affairs on the home front in order to give others a better perspective of how African Americans were being treated in the United States. Use primary sources #12-16 and the table below, or something similar, to facilitate this conversation. Make sure that students are also connecting discrimination during WWII to both the European and Pacific fronts to connect learning to Camp Amache.
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<th>World War II Point of View</th>
<th>Civil Rights Point of View</th>
<th>Cold War Point of View</th>
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<td>What does segregation &amp;</td>
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8th Grade

Essential Questions:

• Did the Civil War solve what it intended to solve?
• What social, political, and economic factors encouraged African Americans to leave the South after the Civil War?
• How did culture, geography, politics and economics dictate where people moved during the Great Migration?
• How was Lincoln Hills a symbol of the hope African Americans possessed after the Civil War?
• Discuss the role of politics in Colorado in the 1920s, specifically the role of the KKK, and how those issues impacted African Americans then and in the years to come.
• Was Colorado a leader or a follower in expanding rights of minorities after the Civil War and beyond?
• The 1920s have often been portrayed as a time of wealth and excess in the United States. Discuss the validity of this portrayal as it relates to Denver/Colorado during the 1920s.
• How has race been dealt with in the American West and how has Colorado and Lincoln Hills been a symbol of the issues faced by minorities in the American West?

Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):

• What push/pull factors encouraged African Americans to move out of the South?
• To what extent did the Civil War effectively solve civil rights issues?
• Lincoln Hills was created as a resort or refuge for African Americans to get away from societal inequities. Where or in what ways are people in today’s society seeking “refuge?”
• Document 17 depicts present day Lincoln Hills and the fly fishing group who now owns the resort. The present day owners still allow visitors to Lincoln Hills on historic tours, in addition, the owners still try to use Lincoln Hills as it was once used, as a refuge. As such, the “Lincoln Hills Cares” initiative seeks to take groups of young people and families who otherwise might not enjoy the mountains. What groups of people do you suppose this group assists? Why? What larger conclusions can you make from this?

Activities

• Read excerpts from Isabel Wilkerson’s The Warmth of Other Suns (http://isabelwilkerson.com). As a class, discuss the excerpts, video clips, etc. What was one thing that stuck out to you about the Great Migration? What made you go “whoa”? Did anything resonate with you in another way? Conduct a quick research assignment relating to the Great Migration, specifically, migration from the South to the West.

• Prior understanding of the following events will be required for these activities: Reconstruction, 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, Plessy vs. Ferguson, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act. Identify, in 3-5 sentences, the significance of one of the previous event and how each paint the picture of civil rights in Colorado and demonstrate the context in which Lincoln Hills was born. Use this article as an additional resource and one perspective (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tavis-smiley/tavis-smiley-my-conversat_b_7029466.html) on Reconstruction. Watch the interview to hear about the successes and failures of the era.

• Put together a field trip to Lincoln Hills, a Denver Jazz club, or another significant destination that would expose students to the culture of the African American experience in Denver and Colorado.
• Role play/script writing narrative (similar to a TED talk) discussing the role of race relations in the American West. Students could use events such as the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese Internment camps, and Lincoln Hills as vehicles to discuss the role of minorities in Colorado and the American West. Student products can be recorded using Vocaroo or Voicethread, or performed live.

• Use the website Thinglink (https://www.thinglink.com) to produce a response/product use a primary source photo from the Lincoln Hills collection and dissect its meaning and significance to the Civil Rights movement.

• Guest Speaker: Invite a guest speaker to come in and talk about the KKK in Colorado. Phil Goodstein, author of the book In the Shadow of the Klan: When the KKK ruled Denver 1920-1926 might be a good choice. Other possibilities could include having a round table discussion from a variety of speakers talking about their experiences with race in Colorado, both from a historical perspective and from a present day perspective. Another option for guest speakers might come from the Denver Jazz Club (http://denverjazzclub.com).

• Have students watch segments from Ken Burns’ documentary Jazz explore the foundations of jazz music and the spread of jazz throughout the United States as an indicator or measure of migration and cultural transition and movement.

Assessments (aligned to specific state academic standards for your grade level):

• Use the website narrable (narrable.com) to answer the following question: Did the Civil War accomplish what it set out to accomplish? In answering this question, use primary sources from 1865-present day to support your argument. Student responses should include the historical background of slavery and expansion that ultimately led to the Civil War. Furthermore, students should then trace the struggle of minorities after the Civil War through the Civil Rights era to the present.

• Create your own DBQ. Using the links provided from the Library of Congress, and other sources such as this YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSoeGw3vZms) video familiarize yourself with writing a Document Based Question. Students will be required to use the documents provided form the Lincoln Hills collection and a document of their choice from the Library of Congress to write their own DBQ. Students will then work in pairs to analyze the quality of their document and their questions. In addition, students will create a grading rubric for the questions they write. As a final assessment, students will answer another students question and the students will use peer to peer review and assessment.

• Using the documents provided and facts learned, create an authentic advertisement to be printed in a newspaper advertising Lincoln Hills. Include in your advertisement reasons people should consider buying land or vacationing at Lincoln Hills. Remember, this is an advertisement.
High School
Essential Questions:
• What was the impact of Plessy v. Ferguson and the “separate but equal” decision?
• How has diversity in the West changed over time?
• What does the phrase “all men are created equal” mean?
• How did the geography of the West impact segregation and civil rights?
• How did the treatment of African Americans differ in the US over time and in different regions?
• How does isolationism impact our own society?

Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):
• Compare and contrast the treatment of different minority groups in the South and West of the United States in the early 20th century.
• Lincoln Hills was built as a resort for African Americans in an area where they did not receive equal treatment. How did this impact the civil rights movement in the region?
• The western portion of the United States was heavily influenced by both fronts of WWII: Nazi Germany and the war in the Pacific. To what extent did the war impact the civil rights movement?
• How did Colorado’s treatment of African Americans change over time? How does this compare to movements in other areas of the country?

Activities:
• Take a field trip to Denver’s Four Corners and other areas of the city that have been and are historically African American. Analyze the change over time of treatment of African Americans in Colorado. Lead a discussion (or write an essay) that discusses how things have changed, or stayed the same from the early 20th century to the early 21st century.
• In the summer of 2015, a group in Denver has sought to change the name of the Stapleton community, which is located in the northeast part of Denver and was the former site of Denver’s first airport. The airport, and subsequent neighborhood, was named after Former Mayor Benjamin Stapleton who was thought to be a Klansmen in Denver in the 1920s. (Watch a short clip from the local news, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKdJtIt7MUo) Do you think that Stapleton (or other names in the Denver area with similar histories) should be changed? Explain why or why not.
• Using resources from the Boulder County Latino History Project (http://bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu/category-search?f%5b0%5d=field_topics%3A306), compare the treatment of minority groups in the Boulder area to the Denver area.
• Many of the sources in this project pre-date Brown vs. the Board of Education in which “separate but equal” was ruled unconstitutional. Imagine you are the petitioner who has brought the issue of unconstitutionality of Plessy to the Supreme Court. Write your oral argument to present to the court. You can listen to modern-day oral arguments at www.oyez.org.

Assessments (aligned with specific state academic standards for your grade level):
• Create your own DBQ. Using the links provided from the Library of Congress and other sources such as this YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSoeGw3vZms) video familiarize yourself with writing a Document Based Question. Students will be required to use the documents provided from the Lincoln Hills collection and a document of their choice from the Library of Congress to
write their own DBQ. Students will then work in pairs to analyze the quality of their document and their questions. In addition, students will create a grading rubric for the questions they write. As a final assessment, students will answer another student’s question and the students will use peer to peer review and assessment.

- Looking at the different groups that have been disenfranchised over the course of the 20th century in the US, write a narrative that examines and evaluates the issues of unity and diversity in the United States. Through this evaluation, students will determine if 20th century US history saw more unity or more diversity.