

Akron, Colorado Collection

Mss.00005

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
1200 Broadway
Denver, Colorado, 80203
303-866-2305
cosearch@state.co.us

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Summary Information

Repository	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
Title	Akron, Colorado Collection
Date	1867-1896
Extent	1.0 Flat box(s) 1 flat box (16x20)
Language	English
Collection [Flat-Box]	1

Preferred Citation note

Cite as: Akron, Colorado Collection, Mss.00005, History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

Historical Note

Akron, in northwestern Washington County, is one of the older towns on the eastern plains of Colorado. Located 110 miles northeast of Denver, it is the highest town in the area, at an altitude of 4,669 feet. The name "Akron," Greek for "summit," is appropriate, since the town is the highest point in Colorado east of Denver. Near the site of the town, in a gulch, the first settlers discovered arrow heads and other clear evidence of an early Indian battleground. The plains around Akron, first isolated from the East by hostile Indians who found herds of antelope there, were grazed by large herds of cattle in the 1870s and 80s. Occasional overland stage coaches passed through on their way west. But the plains were largely overlooked in favor of the Denver area and the mountains.

In all directions, Akron provides a view of gently-rolling plains known as the "dryland flats," except for the Fremont Buttes, four miles northwest, where the explorer General John C. Fremont, passed on his way west. The usually astute statesman Daniel Webster said of this region in 1846: "What do we want of this vast, worthless area... This region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts, of shifting sands, of cactus and prairie dogs?" In fact, the Akron area boasts a growing season of 143 days, with an average annual precipitation of 17.91 inches, 33.6 inches of snowfall and an average annual temperature of 48 degrees.

In 1882, Akron was a townsite on the new Burlington Railroad. When the railroad approached the area, it was first surveyed in May 1882 by A.B. Smith for the Lincoln Land Company, a subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. A plat was filed July 1 1882. The town was named by a Mrs. Calvert, the wife of a railroad official, after her home town of Akron, Ohio. On September 22 1882, the town was incorporated, with H.G. Pickett as the first mayor, Dr. Bragg as the first postmaster, and Hettie Irwin as the first teacher. The site of the county seat was determined by a vote between Akron and Yuma. Akron won the vote, but is said to have imported a load of railroad men from McCook, Nebraska to insure a majority.

Although Patrick Dougherty opened a store in the area in 1882 and did business with the railroad workers on the Burlington line, Akron was not largely a vacant townsite and not settled until 1886, when emigration and farming began in earnest on the eastern plains of Colorado. The Akron townsite was then homesteaded in part by Phillip Stiles and James B. Sheek. The first addition to the town, platted in 1886, was homesteaded by George E. Leonard.

A genuine railroad town in 1886, Akron consisted of Patrick Dougherty's home, a general store, a hardware store, and the railroad round-house, depot, and section house. The town grew quickly, however, and soon served as one of the largest and most important in the area. Akron sported two newspapers, four blacksmiths, a carriage shop, three livery stables, three dry goods stores, a large hotel, three small hotels, five doctors' offices and a library by the end of the decade.

Agriculture is still the most important industry in the area. Washington County devotes 88% of its 1,616,400 acres of land to farming. Oats, wheat, potatoes, corn, sorghum and hogs are brought to Akron for shipment and storage. The large Burlington shops and round-house, grain elevators, creameries and stockyards comprise the city's industries. Akron also remains an important location for dry farming

experiments. Today there are three conservation districts in the county and the United States Department of Agriculture's Central Great Plains Research Station is located in the town.

Akron also has an airport facility, which is a popular refueling stop for small planes, since it is easier to gain altitude out of Akron than out of Denver when heading west over the Rockies.

Chronology

1876	July: Colorado becomes a state.
1882	The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad begins service to Denver. May: The Akron area is surveyed by A.B. Smith of the Lincoln Land Company, a subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy.
1886	The first addition to Akron is platted.
1887	The First United Presbyterian Church of Akron is established. Washington County, Colorado is created from part of Weld County, and Akron is established as the county seat. September: Akron is incorporated.
1930	The population of Akron is 1,135.
1989	The population of Akron is 1,670 and that of Washington County is 5,479.

Scope and Contents note

This collection, which spans the years 1867 to 1896, contains blueprints and land sale register pages from around the town of Akron.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

Provenance

The Provenance of the collection is unknown.

Processing Information note

Reprocessed by Jillian Rittersbacher, 2013.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Because Akron is the seat of Washington County, most other official town and county records will be found in the Washington County Courthouse and with the Colorado Division of State Archives.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Blueprints.
- Registers

Geographic Name(s)

- Akron (Colo.)
- Washington County (Colo.)

Subject(s)

- Real property--Colorado--Akron.

Collection Inventory

FF 1 Blueprint: Townships Nos. 5 & 5½, south range no. 45, west of the 6th principal meridian, two copies, Oct 20 1891 October 20, 1891 2.0 Item(s) two copies

FF 2 Land Register, Log of land sales around Akron, Colorado, 1867-1896 1867-1896 1.0 Item(s)