



COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY/COLORADO HISTORY MUSEUM

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Aug. 8, 2005

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Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection provides community with a free, searchable online database of historic Colorado newspapers from 1859-1923

Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection replaces microfilm as an easy-access resource for educators, students and history buffs

DENVER — Researchers of Colorado history rejoice—the era of tedious searches through microfilm has finally come to a close. The Stephen H. Hart Library at the Colorado History Museum, which houses one of the most comprehensive historic periodical collection in the state, now offers more than one-third of its historic newspaper collection from 1859–1923 through a fast, convenient, searchable, online resource—Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection (CHNC).

CHNC is a collaboration of the Collaborative Digitization Program (CDP), the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Historical Society, and is a useful tool for genealogists, educators and other researchers. The website, www.cdpheritage.org/newspapers, is accessible 24 hours a day and eliminates the arduous, time-consuming searches of microfilm.

Access to 79 newspapers from 20 cities and 25 counties is currently available, and CHNC's ultimate goal is to digitize more than 2 million pages of Colorado newspapers. Approximately 10,000 pages are digitized for the collection each month and grant-funded titles are being added chronologically, beginning with the oldest issues. Approximately 200,000 pages have been digitized since the project's 2003 inception.

The digitization process involves obtaining the negatives of the newspapers—several hundred newspaper titles are available to digitize—from the Colorado Historical Society and the State

Archives, duplicating and scanning the negatives, performing quality control, using optical character recognition to make the text of the newspapers keyword searchable and loading the images and data into the Olive software.

Searches can be performed by keyword, title, publications or topics—genealogists can easily locate obituaries and educators can quickly find articles pertaining to a particular subject. Even newspapers written in German, Spanish and Swedish are available for browsing. CHNC provides free, printable primary source material for the classroom, accessible by both faculty and students at any time.

“We want to provide the access to information about the people and stories that made Colorado what it is today within a few clicks of a mouse,” commented Rebecca Lintz, librarian at the Colorado Historical Society. “Because of this project, genealogists, educators and historians can find what they’re looking for within seconds rather than hours.”

The CDP was originally developed in 1998 when representatives from state museums, libraries and historical societies discussed how to properly digitize their collections. Small grants ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000 were awarded to various CDP projects around the state.

Recognizing the massive effort the CDP had undertaken, in 2003, CHNC, a product of CDP, received funding through the Library Services and Technology Act and the National Leadership Grants for Libraries from the Institute for Museum and Library Services to digitize and create a searchable database of Colorado newspapers that do not fall under current copyright laws. Copyright laws apply to works published after January 1, 1923.

Digitization costs approximately \$1 per page and much of CHNC’s continued funding come from Colorado communities interested in the project. Public libraries across the state have also contributed to the project. Donations can be made to CHNC by visiting the website, www.cdpheritage.org/newspapers. Information for how to get a particular newspaper on the CHNC website is also available.

Background

The Colorado Historical Society, now more than 125 years old, was established in 1879 and is headquartered at the Colorado History Museum in Denver. The Colorado Historical Society is a statewide organization with 12 museums and historic sites across the state. The Colorado Historical Society is dedicated to collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of Colorado and the American West. This educational institution also contains the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, as well as the Stephen H. Hart Research Library, and administers the State Historical Fund, a preservation-based grants program funded by limited-stakes gaming tax revenues. For more information call (303) 866-3682 or visit www.coloradohistory.org.