

William Blackmore

Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects

(London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1869)

Description of Colorado

From Bacon's "Handbook of America."

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Colorado was organised as a territory in 1861, from parts of Kansas, Nebraska, and Utah, and applied for admission as a State in 1866. Area, 106,475 square miles. Population, 80,000 besides Indians. State capital, Golden City.

It is intersected north and south by the Rocky Mountains. The eastern half is one vast plain, destitute of timber, with a fertile soil, and divided by many streams. The plains are covered with rich nourishing grass, capable of sustaining millions of cattle. The western half is high tableland, timber being abundant on the slopes of the mountains. "The scenery," says a recent writer, "is the grandest that can be conceived. Two noted mountains, Pike's Peak and Long's Peak, rising to the height of three miles, lift their snowy heads into the heavens; and a circular range of snow-covered mountains reaches from one of these vast spurs to the other; the whole forming a natural amphitheatre, the diameter of which is 150 miles. Strawberries and raspberries flourish at an altitude of two miles; and as I was assured again and again, strawberries can be taken with one hand and snow with the other. Many of the most delicate and beautiful flowers come right up through the snow."

The mineral resources of Colorado are opening up very advantageously to operative capital. The Colorado metals run in beds, mixed with quartz and pyrites, necessitating all the appliances of underground mining, crushing-mills, &c., to render the ores available. This will deter adventurers, to some extent, from settling, but it will call in heavy capital, will raise up large communities, will compel large cultivation of the rich valleys, and thus render the territory, with its magnificent climate, one of the best of regions for the enterprising settler. The mineral deposits are principally of silver, gold, copper, lead, and

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iron. There are also vast limestone quarries, and an extensive bed of marble. Immense beds of coal have been discovered at the foot of the mountains. Gypsum-beds, also, exist; and mineral springs--alkaline, sulphurous, and chalybeate--most of them so highly charged with carbonic acid as to be designated "boiling" springs. Governor Gilpin, in his report of August 8, 1863, says, "Gold exists in Colorado in inexhaustible quantities. Undoubtedly the State is unequalled in capability of realising mineral wealth." The United States Commissioner thus speaks of the mines:--"Quartz that yields \$12 per ton will pay in favourable localities; but there are veins now worked that yield from \$20 to \$500 per ton. Mines that barely paid at the surface are yielding enormous profits at a depth of 150 and 200 feet." The returns of the Philadelphia Mint show that Colorado is at present second only to California in the amount of gold coined there, the State having furnished for coinage nearly four times as much gold as any other one of the new States or Territories. The receipts up to 1865 amounted to \$80,000,000. Works are erecting at Golden City for the manufacture of railway bars. Extensive mines of iron ore have been discovered there, which will be worked by eastern capitalists, and promise to yield great wealth.

The climate of this elevated country is remarkably healthy and invigorating, while the soil is rich and productive; being capable of producing, by the aid of irrigation, corn, wheat, barley, potatoes, oats, turnips, and every kind of vegetable, and of most superior quality. Agriculture and grazing receive some attention in the valleys. The pasturage in many sections is unsurpassed; the grass being exceedingly nutritious, and the dryness of the climate causing it to cure, or become hay, while standing in the field--so that the out-door supply of fodder is abundant through nearly the whole winter.

The chief towns are:--

	Pop. in 1860	Characteristics
Denver City5000.....	Metropolis of Colorado; extensive commerce with the mining regions; various manufactures.
Colorado City1500.....	Centre of mining region.

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