

## **RESEARCHING NEW DEAL HISTORIC RESOURCES**

---

Unlike the research of properties from the 1800s, when researching New Deal era projects you will likely be able to find some documentation regarding the initial construction of the resource. Not only are New Deal projects from the more recent past, but they were also government-financed public projects – all features which make finding at least some data easier. Nonetheless, it can still be frustrating to search for New Deal material without some advance planning.

Before beginning any research project, conduct a file search at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at the Colorado Historical Society to see if the building/project has been previously surveyed or is already listed on the State or National Register. If this has occurred, use the sources cited and local contacts as a starting point for research. One of the best overviews of how the New Deal affected Colorado is James F. Wickens' Colorado in the Great Depression (1979).

**1. Determine the federal agency responsible for building the project.** While this may seem obvious, it is not at all uncommon to confuse the countless New Deal programs and agencies and all of the acronyms that made up Roosevelt's *Alphabet Army*. For example, the WPA and PWA are often confused simply because of the similarity of their names. Furthermore, some New Deal programs would initiate a project and another would finish it. For example, the CWA was the predecessor to the WPA, and the former program sometimes started a project while the latter finished it. For different reasons, projects initially approved by the PWA might later turn into WPA projects. Finally, some of the agencies worked together on some projects. The CCC and WPA sometimes cooperated on conservation projects in eastern Colorado; the WPA also built some power plants used by the REA. Examples of the confusion were discovered during this survey phase. One of the town wells in Flagler, for example, has historically been referred to as the "WPA" well when in reality it was constructed by the CWA. Willow Creek Park has a large sign at one entrance proclaiming it as the first WPA project in Colorado when it was actually the first CWA project in the state. It is critical to know the correct New Deal agency or program not only for research purposes, but to properly evaluate the significance of the property. A list of acronyms for the various New Deal programs associated with construction are found in Appendix A.

**2. Locate the source for the Federal program information.** Unfortunately, at the present time there is no single repository for statewide information on New Deal projects. Since these were federal programs, the state of Colorado did not retain many records for their own archives. Information is spotty at best at the other main research libraries in the state. At the conclusion of the various phases for this survey project, all material will be deposited in the Stephen H. Hart Library at the Colorado Historical Society, with copies of the reports also available at the Colorado State Archives and the Western History and Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library. Recommendations on sources for various New Deal programs follows.

### **Public Works Administration**

A master list of all non-federal PWA projects in Colorado are found in Appendix B. This list is organized alphabetically by city/county, and provides the name of the project and project number.

This list does not indicate whether or not a project was completed or provide any other additional information. It is necessary to research the project files at the National Archives or to review local sources such as historic newspapers for additional information. The project files are located at the College Park, Maryland branch of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). However, be aware that due to an illegal deposition in the 1940s, NARA only has the files for about a third of these projects on microfilm. The project files are fairly large with a lot of extraneous information on subcontractors and bids. A few of the files might contain copies of plans. There are also several national books about the PWA which have photos and occasionally plans of the projects. Some of the larger projects in Colorado are featured in these. One book is available only at the National Archives, but copies of others can be checked out through the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries' "Prospector" system. Finally, since PWA projects were large and professionally designed, it may also be possible to find plans from the original architect/engineer.

### **Works Progress (Projects) Administration**

Microfilm reels containing the index cards of all Colorado WPA projects, both construction and service projects, were purchased from NARA for this phase of the New Deal survey project. These represent the most complete listing of WPA projects in the state. At the completion of all phases of the New Deal survey project, these reels will be made available to the public through the Stephen Hart Library, Colorado Historical Society. The index cards are arranged by county and year, and contain a brief description of the project, application approval date, federal allotment of monies, the state WPA project number, and the Official Project (O.P.) number. Usually if a project was rescinded, or continued with another phase, a notation is handwritten on the card.

Further information about each individual WPA project can be found in the project files. All of the microfilm reels containing copies of the project files were also purchased for this project, and will eventually be made available through the Stephen Hart Library. However, there is presently no master index for the over 100 microfilm reels containing the project files. At this point, it is still necessary to contact NARA to determine which microfilm reel contains a particular project file. To do this, the Official Project (O.P.) number is critical; this number differs from the WPA project numbers that were typically referred to in newspapers of the period. Copies of microfilm reels can also be purchased from NARA by the general public, and usually arrive within four to six weeks.

The quality of information found in the project files varies, at least in terms of information that is useful for completing a historic architectural inventory form. The files generally contain an application which lists the project's sponsor, federal and local budgets, amount spent on materials vs. labor, project supervisor, and who was responsible for the plans. The latter may or may not be the actual designer. The project files sometimes include a reference card saying "see drawings folder" or "see plans." Unfortunately, the drawings no longer exist at the National Archives. In rare instances, plans or drawings are included only in a few projects that were undergoing modifications. Much of the rest of the data contained in construction project files is documentation of the man-hours and labor costs. Occasionally some information regarding construction specifications may be included. Geographical information which would aid in

locating projects is almost non-existent. As noted previously, for schools constructed in small towns, this does not generally pose a problem – one can usually find buildings such as these. However for roads, bridges, or conservation projects, the only geographical information might be a listing of the county.

Other factors which may hinder research of WPA projects is the fact that not all of the projects which are listed on index files have accompanying project files. Somewhere along the way, the project folders were lost before they were microfilmed. Furthermore, even though NARA states that all of the project files have corresponding index files, during the course of this project, this was not found to be the case. Without an index card, there is presently no way to track down a project file on the microfilm. It is hoped that future phases of this survey project will provide the manpower to completely index all of this information.

In addition to construction projects, the WPA sponsored service projects for various white collar professions. Included were jobs for photographers, who were often put to work photographing WPA construction projects. The Stephen Hart Library (CHS) and the Western Heritage and Genealogy Library at the Denver Public Library both contain some WPA project photos in their collections. They are mounted on cards and have additional information typed on them. CHS will not allow copies to be made of these photos, but DPL will. The National Archives (College Park) also has a collection of WPA photographs in their Still Photographs collection. These are arranged by project type (e.g., schools, park shelters, or airports) as well as by state. It appears that all of the photographs in the “Colorado” collection are duplicates of those found arranged by project type. The photos are mounted on cards with a negative number and location, and copies can be ordered of these prints. Most of these photographs were digitally copied for this project, and will be available through OAHF.

### **Civilian Conservation Corps**

The Colorado State Archives has a number of CCC files, most of which deal with personnel information. At the present time, there is a \$3.00 fee to pull each box in addition to copying expenses. Most of the boxes have an index that can be viewed prior to requesting the box pull, but not all of the indexes are accurate. In addition to the personnel records, there are a few annual reports and camp newsletters which provide some information specific to the work completed by each camp. A list of all of the CCC camps, their location, and federal supervising agency is in Appendix C.

At the National Archives, the CCC information is scattered at various branches. The Denver branch of the National Archives has most of the information of the CCC assigned to grazing division – the agency responsible for western Colorado. The archives has an index for this collection. Information about the camps in eastern Colorado, which were assigned to the Soil Conservation Service, are believed to be located at the Kansas City, Missouri branch of the National Archives. This collection will require additional research, as this branch was not visited during the first phase of this survey project. There are already a number of completed surveys about CCC work in the mountains, particularly for those camps assigned to the National Park Service and Forest Service. The federal agencies or the OAHF has copies of most of the inventory forms and survey reports.

### **Civil Works Administration**

CWA project files are available on microfilm from the National Archives in College Park. The ten reels, which are arranged by county, were also purchased for research purposes in this project and will be made available at the Stephen Hart Library. The information in the CWA project files are similar to the WPA files, and do not generally contain any plans. There is presently no main index for CWA projects.

### **Federal Art Project/Treasury Relief Art Project**

The art work of the New Deal was completed in buildings located primarily on the front range and western portion of Colorado. A masters thesis by Ronald Bruner, "New Deal Art Works in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska (1979), purports to list all of the works completed in Colorado, specifically building murals. It may not be a complete list for easel works, however.

**3. Local sources** Local sources include the building/resource itself, property owners, local newspapers, and local historical societies. The historic resource may have a plaque, cornerstone, or an inscribed date located somewhere on the project. The concrete coping on the bridge railings in Baca county, for example, often featured hand-scrawled writing stating the agency (WPA), date, and project number. Unfortunately, many of these are beginning to deteriorate. Many buildings feature a generic WPA plaque, which obviously identifies the agency but doesn't provide any project-specific information.

Local newspapers are generally good sources for information on relief construction projects. Since little other construction took place during the Depression era, New Deal projects were major news items in most places. However, media coverage could be partisan. If a newspaper was strongly Republican in its coverage, it might ignore a construction project associated with Roosevelt's New Deal. For example, the *Lamar Republican* rarely, if at all, covered any of the numerous WPA construction projects in Lamar, while the *Lamar Daily News* wrote numerous articles on the huge Willow Creek Park and flood control project, the tubercular clinic, the county welfare housing project, the new post office, the high school stadium, the addition to the Junior College, as well as other local projects. In general, New Deal projects were very important to small towns and were fairly well reported by newspapers.

Local historical societies are also important places to visit. Many have historical photos as well as local contacts for further information. Some smaller newspapers are only available through local sources. County histories published in the latter part of the twentieth century also generally cover the Depression years. There were many people that aided with the survey in the four target counties for this project, and their assistance was invaluable.

### **4. Contact Colorado Preservation Inc. and the OAHP**

Staff at both Colorado Preservation Inc., and the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, will be happy to give any assistance in your research of New Deal projects.

**Appendix A:**  
*New Deal Agencies/Programs Acronyms*

AAA	Agricultural Adjustment Administration
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CWA	Civil Works Administration
FAP	Federal Art Project
FERA	Federal Emergency Relief Administration
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FSA	Farm Security Administration
NRA	National Recovery Administration
NYA	National Youth Administration
PWA	Public Works Administration
REA	Rural Electrification Administration
SSA	Social Security Administration
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
TRAP	Treasury Relief Art Project
WPA	Work Projects (Progress) Administration

**Appendix B:  
Non-Federal PWA Projects in Eastern Colorado**

*[does not include projects in Front Range communities in Las Animas, Pueblo, El Paso, Arapahoe, or Adams counties]*

<b>County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Project</b>
Bent	Bent County	School addition
Bent	Bent County	School
Bent	Las Animas	Irrigation
Bent	Las Animas	Irrigation
Bent	Las Animas	School improvement
Bent	Las Animas	Irrigation
Cheyenne	Cheyenne Wells	Waterworks
Cheyenne	Cheyenne Wells	Sanitary sewer
Cheyenne	Cheyenne Wells	Sanitary sewer
Cheyenne	Kit Carson	Waterworks
Cheyenne	Kit Carson	Electric plant
Crowley	Olney Springs	Municipal improvement
Crowley	Olney Springs	Drainage
Crowley	Ordway	Waterworks
El Paso	Calhan (Callahan)	High school
El Paso	El Paso County	Bridge
El Paso	Falcon	School addition
Kiowa	Eads	Sanitary sewer
Kiowa	Eads	Disposal plant
Kit Carson	Burlington	Swimming pool
Kit Carson	Burlington	School
Kit Carson	Burlington	School improvement
Lincoln	Hugo	Reservoirs
Lincoln	Limon	Water tank
Logan	Fleming	School

<b>County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Project</b>
Logan	Sterling	Storm sewer
Logan	Sterling	Reservoir
Morgan	Fort Morgan	Power improvement
Morgan	Fort Morgan	Fire - police
Morgan	Fort Morgan	Courthouse
Morgan	Fort Morgan	Power improvement
Morgan	Morgan County	Auditorium - gymnasium
Otero	Fowler	Reservoir
Otero	La Junta	School addition
Otero	La Junta	Waterworks
Otero	Manzanola	Pump station
Otero	Swink	Waterworks
Otero	Swink	School improvement
Otero	Swink	Well pump
Phillips	Haxtun	Gymnasium
Phillips	Holyoke	Courthouse
Phillips	Holyoke	Town hall
Prowers	Granada	Sanitary sewer
Prowers	Lamar	Power improvement
Pueblo	Boone	Waterworks
Sedgwick	Julesburg	Waterworks
Sedgwick	Julesburg	Library
Washington	Akron	Auditorium - gymnasium
Washington	Akron	Courthouse addition
Weld	Brighton	School improvement
Weld	Brighton	Disposal plant
Weld	Brighton	Courthouse addition
Weld	Brighton	School

<b>County</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Project</b>
Weld	Dacono	Waterworks
Weld	Evans	Filter plant
Weld	Fort Lupton	Disposal plant
Weld	Frederick	Waterworks
Weld	Greeley	Housing
Weld	Greeley	Dorms
Weld	Greeley	Disposal plant
Weld	Greeley	School addition
Weld	Greeley	School
Weld	Greeley	Library
Weld	Greeley	Hospital addition
Weld	Greeley	Normal school
Weld	Greeley	University improvement
Weld	Greeley	University building
Weld	Greeley	Fire department
Weld	Greeley	University improvement
Weld	Greeley	School improvement
Weld	Grover	Power - waterworks
Weld	Johnstown	Pipe line
Weld	La Salle	Electric district
Weld	Platteville	Auditorium - gymnasium
Weld	Timnath	School repairs
Weld	Windsor	Watermains
Weld	Windsor	School improvement
Yuma	Yuma	Watermains
Yuma	Yuma	Power - waterworks

**Appendix C:**  
*Civilian Conservation Corps Camps in Colorado*

The following tables were taken from Robert Bruce Parham, “The Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado, 1933-1942,” (Masters Thesis, University of Colorado, 1981); in turn, that information was taken from U.S., Army, Eighth Corps Area, “Civilian Conservation Corps, Eighth Corps Area, Status Record of CCC Camps Authorized Since Inception of the Program Up To and Including December 31, 1941,” Compiled by Office of Liaison Officer, CCC, Eighth Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Container 111, Record Group 49, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver, Colorado.

**Camp Prefix Designation**

<b>Camp Designation</b>	<b>Land Ownership</b>	<b>Supervising Agency</b>
BR	Federal Reclamation Projects Bureau of Reclamation	
DG (G)	Public Domain	Division of Grazing
“Drought Relief Camps”		
DF	National Forest	U.S. Forest Service
DNP	National Park	National Park Service
DPE	Private Land	U.S. Forest Service
DSP	Municipal Park	National Park Service
F	National Forest	U.S. Forest Service
MA	Municipal Park	National Park Service
NM	National Monument	National Park Service
NP	National Park	National Park Service
P	Private Forest	U.S. Forest Service
PE	Unknown	National Park Service
SCS	Private Land	Soil Conservation Service
SP	Municipal Park	National Park Service

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Camp Name</b>	<b>Post Office</b>
BR-22	Grand Valley	Grand Junction
BR-23	Montrose	Montrose
BR-55	Palisade	Palisade
BR-59	Mesa	Palisade
BR-71	Uncompahgre	Montrose
BR-81	Vallecito (Pine River)	Bayfield
BR-93	Mancos	Mancos
BR-94	Mancos	Mancos
DF-46	San Isabel	Gardner
DF-48	Norwood	Norwood
DG-1	Massadona	Massadona
DG-2	Grand Junction	Grand Junction
DG-8	Meeker	Meeker
DG-9	Kline or Mad Mesa	Durango
DG-10	Montrose	Montrose
DG-11	Redvale	Redvale
DG-65	Massadona	Skull Creek
DG-79	Gunnison	Gunnison
DG-80	Walden	Walden
DG-81	Two Bar Ranch	Sunbeam
DG-107	Piceance Creek	Meeker
DG-125	Paradox	Paradox
DG-139	Saguache	Saguache
DG-140	Green	Baggs, Wyoming
DNP-5	Mesa Verde #1	Mesa Verde
DPE-201	Fountain	Colorado Springs
DPE-203	Franktown	Castle Rock
DSP-1	Greeley Park	Greeley
DSP-2	Durango	Durango
DSP-3	Palmer Park	Colorado Springs
F-1	Peaceful Valley	Peaceful Valley
F-2	Little South	Eggers
F-4(old site)	Michigan	Walden
F-4(new site)	Parkview	Granby
F-5	Elk River	Steamboat
F-6	Marvine	Marvine
F-7	Blue River	Dillon
F-8	Tabernash	Tabernash
F-10	Bailey	Bailey
F-11	Chicago Creek	Idaho Springs
F-13	Lake George	Lake George
F-14	Saylor Park	Woodland Park
F-15	Tigiwon	Minturn
F-16(old site)	Mesa	Skyway

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Camp Name</b>	<b>Post Office</b>
F-16(new site)	Trickle Park	Cedaredge
F-17	Lands End	Whitewater
F-19	Waunita	Pitkin
F-20	Pitkin	Pitkin
F-23	Tomichi	Sargents
F-24	Trout Creek	Buena Vista
F-26	Hardscrabble	Florence
F-27	Divide	Delta
F-28	Glade	Dolores
F-29	Blanco	Pagosa Springs
F-30	Conejos-Alamosa	Alamosa
F-31	Buffalo	Buffalo
F-32	Cascade	Cascade
F-33	Manitou	Manitou
F-35	Lenado	Woody Creek
F-38	Bear River	Yampa
F-40	Stunner	Alamosa
F-46	Huerfano	Huerfano
F-48	Norwood	Norwood
F-49	South Fork	South Fork
F-50	Red Feather	Red Feather Lakes
F-51	Norrie	Meredith
F-52	Canadian	Fort Collins
F-53	Lone Doma	Delores
F-54	Eagle	Eagle
F-55	St. Charles	Pueblo
F-56	Bayfield	Bayfield
F-57	Millwood	Mancos
F-58	Bear Creek	Golden
F-59	Isabel	Rye
F-60	Jackson	Monument
F-61	Poudre	Fort Collins
F-62	Boulder	Boulder
F-63	Idaho Springs	Idaho Springs
F-64	Woodland	Woodland Park
F-65	Glenwood	Glenwood Springs
F-66	Chambers Lake	Ft. Collins
F-67	Coon Creek	Mesa
F-68	Yeoman Park	Eagle
F-69	Taylor Park	Almont
F-71	Gunnison	Gunnison
G-2	Grand Junction	Grand Junction
G-11	Redvale	Redvale
G-65	Massadona	Skull Creek
G-79	Gunnison	Gunnison

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Camp Name</b>	<b>Post Office</b>
G-80	Walden	Walden
G-81	Two Bar Ranch	Sunbeam
G-107	Piceance Creek	Meeker
G-125	Paradox	Paradox
G-139	Saguache	Saguache
G-140	Green	Baggs, Wyoming
G-181	Parkdale	Parkdale
MA-1	Red Rocks Metro Park	Mt. Morrison
MA-2	Genessee Metro Park #1	Golden
NM-1-C-#1	Glade Park	Grand Junction
NM-1-C-#2	Grand Junction	Grand Junction
NM-2	Colorado National Monument Headquarters	Colorado Springs
NM-3-C-#1	Grand Junction	Grand Junction
NM-3-C-#2	Fruita	Grand Junction
NP-1	Horseshoe Park	Estes Park
NP-2	Maintenance	Mancos
NP-3	Grand Lake	Grand Lake
NP-4	Mill Creek	Estes Park
NP-5	Mesa Verde #1	Mesa Verde
NP-6	Mesa Verde #2	Mesa Verde
NP-7	Grand Lake	Grand Lake
NP-8	Colorado National Monument #1	Grand Junction
NP-9	Colorado National Monument #2	Grand Junction
NP-11	Rocky Mountain National Park (Mill Creek #1)	Estes Park
NP-12-#2	Grand Lake	Grand Lake
NP-13	Mancos	Mancos
P-204	Bear Creek	Golden
PE-204	Bear Creek	Golden
SCS-1	Trinidad	Trinidad
SCS-2	Burn't Mill	Pueblo
SCS-3	Hugo	Hugo
SCS-4	Cheyenne Wells	Cheyenne Wells
SCS-5	Springfield	Springfield
SCS-6	Templeton Gap or Fountain	Colorado Springs
SCS-7	Franktown	Castle Rock
SCS-8	Wellington or Buckeye	Wellington
SCS-9	Elbert	Elbert
SCS-10	Durango	Durango
SCS-11	Grand Junction	Grand Junction
SCS-12	Fruita	Grand Junction
SCS-13	Capulin or Monte Vista	La Jara
SCS-14	Cortez	Cortez
SCS-15	Sterling	Sterling
SCS-16	Horse Creek	Kutch
SCS-17	Colorado State Forest	Gould

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Camp Name</b>	<b>Post Office</b>
SCS-18	Huerfano	Gardner
SCS-19	Elkhead Creek	Craig
SP-1	Boulder Mountain Metro Park #1	Nederland
SP-2	Boulder Mountain Metro Park #2	Boulder
SP-3	Denver Mountain Metro Park #1	Fort Logan
SP-4	Denver Mountain Metro Park #2	Fort Logan
SP-5	Boulder Mountain Metro Park #3	Boulder
SP-6	Pueblo Mountain Metro Park	Pueblo
SP-7	Rifle Mountain Metro Park	Rifle
SP-8	American Legion County Park	Trinidad
SP-9	Loveland Mountain Metro Park	Loveland
SP-10	Lookout Mountain Metro Park	Glenwood Springs
SP-11	Monument Lake Metro Park	Trinidad
SP-12	Palmer Metro Park	Colorado Springs
SP-13	Denver Mountain Metro Park #3	Mt. Morrison
SP-14	Denver Mountain Metro Park #4	Golden
SP-15	Fort Collins Mountain Metro Park	Fort Collins
SP-16	Durango Metro Park	Durango
SP-17	Cub Creek Metro Park	Evergreen
SP-18	Genessee Metro Park #2	Genessee