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Essay

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Several Indian tribes were native to the land of what we call Colorado today. Indian tribes such as the Utes (that lived in the mountains), the Cheyenne and Arapaho (who resided on the Eastern plains), and the Ancestral Puebloans who are formerly called Anasazi (lived in southwestern Colorado) and whose cliff dwelling houses at Mesa Verde can still be seen today. The Spanish are the first Europeans to explore the land of Colorado. During the sixteenth century the Spanish were searching for gold. From here on, Hispanic Americans (the earliest non-Indians) would make their homes in San Luis Valley during the early 1840’s.

Earlier on, in 1806 a U.S. Army officer named Zebulon Pike was exploring the “Great American Dessert”. From his searching’s, Pike recorded the mountain that was later named in his honor, Pikes Peak. The exploring of mountains lead white settlers in 1859 to start pouring into the Rocky Mountains where gold was discovered having fortune-seekers traveling to the Rocky Mountain territories (where they specifically searched for gold in what was then mainly in part of Kansas territory). By 1861, the area quickly became popular as the population grew the area that was Kansas territory was claimed as Colorado Territory.

Just as white settlers moved in, Native American Tribes like the Little Raven and Chipeta tried to make peace between the white settlers and other tribes. All the while men and women such as William Byers, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Uncle Dick Wooton along with other influential personas came to the land to make a new life in Colorado that helped shape and evolve the territory so that by 1876, the land was officially the State of Colorado.

Resource Link:

http://coloradovirtuallibrary.org/colorados-beginnings

Spanish Settlers to Colorado?

Spanish invaded the frontiers of the Americas in the 16 century. The Spaniards were in quest for riches and upon successfully striping Mexico of their gold and silver across the Atlantic Ocean, they traveled northbound from Mexico in search for more. The Spanish explorers migrated far up north to New Mexico, were they met the Pueblo Indians and even traveled far north to Kansas territory. As the Spanish traveled through the lands north of Mexico, they did not find any gold, instead they encountered settlements of Native American villages. The Spanish moved northward into Santa Fe (1609) when the English had begun exploring the Eastside of the Americas.
The Spanish are the first explorers into Colorado territory as they continued their search for gold. Since the Spaniards arrival to Colorado, the territory has been distributed and changed owners for years. Spanish Missionary friars were hoping to spread Catholicism to the Pueblo tribes in the nearby lands. As the Spanish continued moving northward into the mountains, they met the Utes, a native group whom live nomadically in the Colorado region by hunting and warring. By 1680, the Spaniards travelled far north as Pueblo, CO. Spain after the year 1765 began exploring the Gunnison River Valley and the San Juan Mountains. In 1776 the Spanish traveled northeast looking for a route to California as the Atlantic Coast was fighting for independence against the English. At the time, the Spanish government wanted to conquer and connect the west coast colonies to the southern colonies now that England and Russia were closing in from the northwest. In 1803, the eastern part of Colorado was purchased from France under the Louisiana Purchase. Until 1819, there was no separation between Spanish Colorado territory and American Colorado territory, and the Mexican government assumed the same Colorado boundaries by 1821 for Mexico’s Independence. By the 19th century, the Mexican government promoted settlement into New Mexico and Part of Colorado by offering land grants to individuals who promised to build towns and develop through natural resources.


**Spanish Settlers Trails to Colorado?**

The Spanish traveling northbound from Mexico lead other groups to travel northbound as well. Along the way, explorers traveled through El Camino real, the Santa Fe Trail, and Bens Old Fort to reach Colorado territory. As the Mexican government offered land grants for the individuals to disperse and settle through New Mexico to Colorado. Bens Fort was established as a trading post for fur trappers in 1835, which connected to the Santa Fe Trail. Mexicans migrated further north into the southwestern part of present-day Colorado after the fort was established, which made the region more secure against Ute attacks. By 1851, San Luis Valley was settled by Mexicans, from New Mexico looking for new lands to farm and graze animals.

**El Camino Real** - has existed for more than 300 years. The trial begins in Natchitoches, Louisiana and runs from Piney Woods to Guerrero, Mexico. The Spaniards and the French that helped manifest the trail were proceed men such as Moses Austin and his son Stephen Fuller Austin (The Father of Texas), Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, and early missionaries of multiple faiths.

http://elcaminorealtx.com/

**Santa Fe Trail** – The Santa Fe Trail is known as a 19th-century transportation route through central North America that connected Franklin, Missouri with Santa Fe, New Mexico. However, the Santa Fe Trail goes back thousands of years and was originally used by the natives for trade.
In 1200A.D. - the natives( Utes, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Anasazi, Pueblo, and Hopewellian) lived along the Santa Fe trail.

**Bens Old Fort** – This fort was established in 1833 in Otero County, southeastern Colorado. William Bent, Charles Bent, and Ceran St. Vrain built the fort to trade with Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Plains Natives and trappers for buffalo robes. For much of its 16-year existence, the fort was the only major white American permanent settlement that lied on the Santa Fe Trail. It was between Missouri and the Mexican settlements. It was destroyed under mysterious circumstances in 1849.

[http://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm)

**Spanish Explorers**

During the 1500’s when the Spanish Conquistadors arrived, Southwest and Northeastern Colorado was inhabited by the Native American tribes the Cheyenne, Arapaho, who were allied against the Comanche and Kiowa. An exact date for Spanish entry into Colorado is unknown, but the earliest dated entry for travelers was for Spanish explorer Juan de Onate in 1601.

Spanish explorers named the state of Colorado. It can mean red, rosy or colorful. As the conquistadors rode into the wilderness of what is now Colorado, they saw many red rock formations. These were sandstone, erosion, cliffs or mountains of red. So Colorado got its name.

Explorers arrived in the 16th century of Colorado history. And since the horse was the mode of transportation for the Spaniards, when the Native Americans saw them for the first time, they were terrified. Little did they know that the horses the Spanish brought to the region would change the native's lives in a big way. The famous explorer Coronado, arrived in the southwest from Mexico City in 1540. He and his troops were in the Colorado territory for one thing, well two actually. To obtain the land for Spain and search for gold. Spanish troops were very well protected. The mounted troops wore shining armor and silver all over their horses. They carried colorful flags and banners, marching through the wilderness as on parade.

**Spanish Explorers Arrive in Search of Gold**

The gold they were searching for was told to be in present day Colorado at a mythical place called Quivira and its Seven Cities of Cibola. This story was just that. A rumor which found its way to Spain and so the explorers arrived in search of untold riches. However, upon questioning the natives about this city, they pointed Coronado further east, into present day Kansas. As the Spanish continued east, they came across "hump backed cattle" (buffalo).

Not able to find the mythical city, Coronado and his men returned to Mexico City in disgrace. Coronado’s Failure In the century that followed this expedition, the Spanish
influence was of no importance at that time. Although the Spanish were becoming entrenched in Mexico and the southwest U.S. (at the time), it was not until between 1664 and 1680 that another Spaniard ventured into Colorado. The Spanish had made slaves out of the Indians of New Mexico. A band of them fled to a place about 100 miles from present day Pueblo in Colorado. The governor sent a military expedition after the band of runaways. It was led by a military captain named Juan Archuleta, who captured the band and returned them to New Mexico. Throughout the years, the Spanish explorers oppressed and enslaved the Native Americans. Finally, in 1706, on a trek to round up more slaves for the Spanish government, a man named Juan de Ulibarri, claimed the Colorado territory for Spain. It didn't matter to them that the country being claimed rightfully belonged to the Indians. He stated: "The royal ensign Don Francisco de Valdez drew his sword, and I, after making a note of the events of the day and hour on which we arrived, said in a clear intelligible voice: 'Knights, Companions and Friends: Let the broad new province of San Luis and the great settlement of Santo Domingo of El Cuartelejo be pacified by the arms of us who are the vassals of our monarch, king and natural lord, Don Philip V-may he live forever. 'The royal ensign said: 'Is there any one to contradict?' All responded, 'No.' then he said: 'Long live the king! Long live the king! Long live the king!' and cutting the air in all four directions with his sword the ensign signaled for the discharge of the guns. After throwing up our hats and making other signs of rejoicing, the ceremony came to an end." (From "Colorful Colorado, Its Dramatic History" by Caroline Bancroft). The Spanish explorers were celebrating a new conquest, the Indians were rebelling the ownership of their land and while this was going on, a new fighter arrived in the arena. The French were moving down the Mississippi River from Canada to explore their new found land and began moving further west toward the Spanish territory.

http://www.explore-old-west-colorado.com/spanish-explorers.html

History Colorado: Colorado/ Latino Historical Overview- Timeline

**Activity**

1300 - Ancestral Puebloans
1492 - Colombus sails the Ocean blue
1519- Cortes
1528 - Alvar Nuñes Cabeza de Vaca
1598 – Juan de Oñate
1706 – Juan de Ulibarri
1776 – Dominguez - Escalante Expedition
1779 – Juan Bautista de Anza
1803 – Luisiana Purchase
1854 – Attack on Pueblo
1876 – Colorado became an Official State of the U.S.
1910 – Great Western Sugar
1936 – Martial Law
1960 – Chicano Rights
1978- Polly Baca
2005 – Brothers in the U.S. Senate and House

Resource Link:

http://www.historycolorado.org/educators/timeline-overview
Map of Traveled Land to Colorado

(El Camino Real, Santa Fe Trail, & Bens Old Fort)

http://www.legendsofamerica.com/photos-oldwest/SantaFeTrailMap.jpg
Spanish Settlers in Colorado Questions

Who were the first Europeans in contact with Colorado Territory?
The Spanish

Who were the Ancestral Puebloans?
Native Indian Tribe that lived in Colorado before Spanish Settlers arrived.

What were the Spanish Settlers in Search of in Colorado?
Land and gold.

What Were the Trails explores traveled through that lead North to Colorado Territory?
El Camino Real, Santa Fe Trail, and Bens Old Fort.

What year did Colorado become an official state of the U.S.?
1876

Under what treaty in 1803 was Colorado Purchased from France?
The Louisiana Purchase

What year did Mexico gain independence?
1821

What was Colorado named after?
The red rocks and formations.

What does “Colorado” translate to in English?
Red