

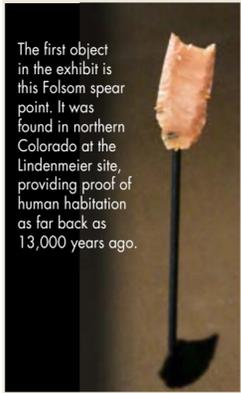


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“...a place where you can come and get the big sweep of Colorado history...” —Jason Hanson

By Melinda Pearson

In November, History Colorado opened a new exhibit in a 3,700-square-foot, brand-new gallery space. *Zoom In: The Centennial State in 100 Objects* showcases 100 unique objects that have shaped Colorado, providing a history from early Paleoindians, who lived along the Front Range 13,000 years ago, to the 21st century, represented



The first object in the exhibit is this Folsom spear point. It was found in northern Colorado at the Lindenmeier site, providing proof of human habitation as far back as 13,000 years ago.

by the story of Boulder’s Crocs shoes. *Zoom In* is presented by Colorado State University and explores the diverse history of Colorado’s people

and places through material artifacts and stories that go with them. The exhibit shares stories that are well known—like that of Margaret “Molly” Brown—alongside others that are less familiar—like a hammer from Dearfield, an early 20th century African-American settlement.

Jason Hanson, the chief creative officer for the exhibit, said the process for putting it together was much faster than usual. It began late last summer, inspired by similar “100 objects” exhibits by the British Museum and the Smithsonian. “We know that there are people looking for that overview



This ancestral Puebloan basketry tray, made of willow and yucca, may have been used by the people who lived at Mesa Verde from 900-1100 AD.

of Colorado history and we wanted to provide that,” said Hanson. “We thought this was a really good way to give you a place where you can come and get the big sweep of Colorado history in one spot.”

The exhibit will be a great fit for local fourth-graders, who study the history of Colorado, as it very intentionally aligns with state standards, said Hanson.

History Colorado’s collection contains over 15 million items, said Julie Peterson, the exhibit developer, so sifting through them to arrive at 100 was no small feat in such short time. “We wanted to pull some of the most striking and illuminating objects within our collections and give folks the chance to see them in a really impressive setting,” said Peterson.

It was a team effort, with curator James Peterson making a list of some of his favorite objects in the collection, and

Above: An electrician installs lighting for the new exhibit. History Colorado used their space creatively to convert offices and a board room on the third floor to create a gallery for the new core exhibit.

Below: Sean Sausett, exhibit technician, consults the plans for the layout and display of the new exhibit.



then consulting with historians and other stakeholders across the state to shape the final product over months. Staff consulted



Spanish coins in the exhibit tell the story of the Spanish conquistadors and settlers whose arrival in Colorado had a lasting impact on the Southwest region.



Left: Kimberly Kronwall, exhibits registrar, checks to be sure Gen. Dwight Eisenhower’s jacket is ready for the exhibit. Clothing, stored in the design and production studio, illustrate the fashion, function, and culture of Colorado’s history.

This hammer belonged to Charles Rothwell, one of the original founders of Dearfield, an African American agricultural colony near Greeley, where African-Americans escaped the racism and



segregation they often encountered in white majority Western communities.



During the Great Depression and the dust bowl conditions that followed it, farmers like Pete Einspahr, Jr. were hit hard. With no money for a Christmas present for his three young sons in 1935, Einspahr salvaged parts to construct this toy tractor and combine. It became a beloved toy and family heirloom.

do astronaut Jack Swigert’s space suit, sweat-stained around the collar in testament to the nerve-wracking experience of space flight. Visitors will be asked to ponder what they would add as the 101st object. “Everyone is part of this story,” said Hanson. “Not always the famous people that you’ve heard of. We’re all part of this ongoing story ... The things in our lives will one day end up in exhibits like this.”

The exhibit runs in chronological order, and as a visitor follows the path, themes of Colorado’s history of boom-and-bust cycles, resilience and violence emerge. Each object tells a story, from what Hanson calls “showstoppers,” like John Denver’s special edition Yamaha guitar, to Color-



License plate number 2 was fashioned by one of Denver’s first drivers around the turn of the century, before the state began officially issuing licenses in 1913.



Jason Hanson, chief creative officer, directs Abby Krause, design and production manager, to assume the position of the 10th Mountain Division soldier in



the exhibit. The soldiers, who wore white uniforms in winter for camouflage, trained in Colorado. *Zoom In* had a much shorter installation timeline than most similar-sized exhibits that the center has assembled.

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