

# Territorial Incorporations 1861 - 1874

During the Territorial Period of Colorado's existence, 1861 to 1876, the Colorado Legislature encouraged capital investment for the development of the region's natural resources. While frontier Coloradans desired to be independent entrepreneurs, there was also a necessary dependence on outside investors in order to make the territory flourish. The large number of investors in the territory resulted in a profusion of corporations being formed during the early stages of Colorado's development.

The three largest industrial sectors in Colorado at the time; metal mining, transportation/communications, and water/irrigation, were often given special privileges to spur industrial development. Furthermore, these corporations existed in a territory that had vague incorporation laws, weak enforcement powers, and a pro-industry legislature. This receptive corporate environment made "Colorado in proportion to its population...more largely dominated by corporation influences than any other state."

The first general incorporation law, passed on August 15, 1862 by the Second Session of the Territorial Assembly, required only that a company seeking a charter inform the state of its name, its capital stock, the type of business to be conducted, and the route it took if it was a transportation business. This was amended two years later to include the company's name and purpose, the term of its existence (20 yr.), the names and number of its trustees, the number of shares of its stock, and the location (county) of its business operations.

Articles of Incorporation were filed through the Secretary of State's Office and through the Territorial Legislature. Records can thus be found in the Secretary of State's Incorporation Books and in the Legislative Session Laws.

1. If a corporation is filed with the Secretary of State's Office, the location entry will show the year of the business' incorporation, the book letter (A through F), and the page number.
2. If the corporation's charter was filed in the Legislative Session Laws then the location is listed by the year of incorporation and page number (pp) in that year's Session Laws.