

The 1904 Colorado Gubernatorial Election:

Election Fraud and Debate

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Individual Website

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Considering the overwhelming amount of debate in politics and my passion for the subject I knew I wanted to do a Colorado oriented political event as the focus of my topic. After learning about the day Colorado has three governors on History Colorado, I was intrigued by the 1904 Colorado gubernatorial election. With research, I found the election occurred in a very divided point in Colorado's history, was pivotal to how Coloradans view election fraud and led to election reforms. From understanding these basics of the 1904 Colorado gubernatorial election I decided to make it my topic.

Since my topic was focused on a local historical event, I found the collections of Pikes Peak Library District and Denver Public Library especially helpful in finding pictures and documents about my topic. The Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection was helpful in finding different perspectives about the election across the state and in response to the election over time. Eventually, I found the state archives which had a limited biography of each of the candidates and included that the speeches and official documents of Adams, Peabody, and McDonald were on the Colorado State Publication Library. On the Colorado State Publications Library, I was able to find documentation of the election fraud investigation, the argument of Peabody's lawyer to Colorado Congress in contesting the election results, and the inaugural speech of Adam's short governorship in 1905.

The 1904 Colorado's gubernatorial election was corrupted by the divisiveness of both Democrats and Republicans following union labor strikes and debate about women's increased participation in politics. The Colorado Labor Wars led miners and mining unions, assisted by women's organizations, to support the democratic candidate. The mining companies blackmailed their employees to vote Republican. Alva Adams, James Peabody, and Jesse McDonald were key players in the controversy. Coloradans, frustrated that the election was unfair, learned that both sides had contributed to considerable election fraud which led to the governorship changing several times in quick succession. Consequently, Colorado made voter fraud a more serious crime and reformed how ballots were counted. Election fraud continues to be a concern within democracies even with the advancements made in signature verification, voter registration, and ballot machines. Recently, many states switched to more absentee/mail-in ballots due to the pandemic sparking debate over the ways each state ensures the legitimacy of elections.

I found a website to be the best platform for my project despite having limited experience in website development because I found many images, documents, and newspaper quotes in my research. I based the colors used on my website off of the Colorado flag and included icons throughout my website to make the aesthetic seamless with my topic. In creating my website, I intentionally designed my website to create a good flow from what led up to the 1904 gubernatorial election to the continuing relevance of election security at large. On the individual pages I used columns to put differing perspectives side by side to make it easier to compare the two perspectives.