

Berthoud History Primer

This Primer Belongs To:

A Publication of The Berthoud Historical Society

Special Edition

Introduction

In the time of one-room schoolhouses, students used primers which were small books that taught them to read or introduced a subject. This primer will introduce you to the town of Berthoud's history from before it was a town, to about the 1970s. Throughout, you will be asked to think deeply about past ideas, events, and people. You can scan the QR Codes with a smartphone to learn more about particular topics throughout the primer.

Scan Me!



Words to Know

settler	ailment	precious	government
artifact	community	scarce	migrant
irrigate	stagecoach	fertile	homestead
pioneer	founder	adapt	drafted
miner	railroad	bluff	harvest
dam	settlement	quarantine	contagious
crops	engineer	election	optimistic
reservoir	enlisted	recruit	construction



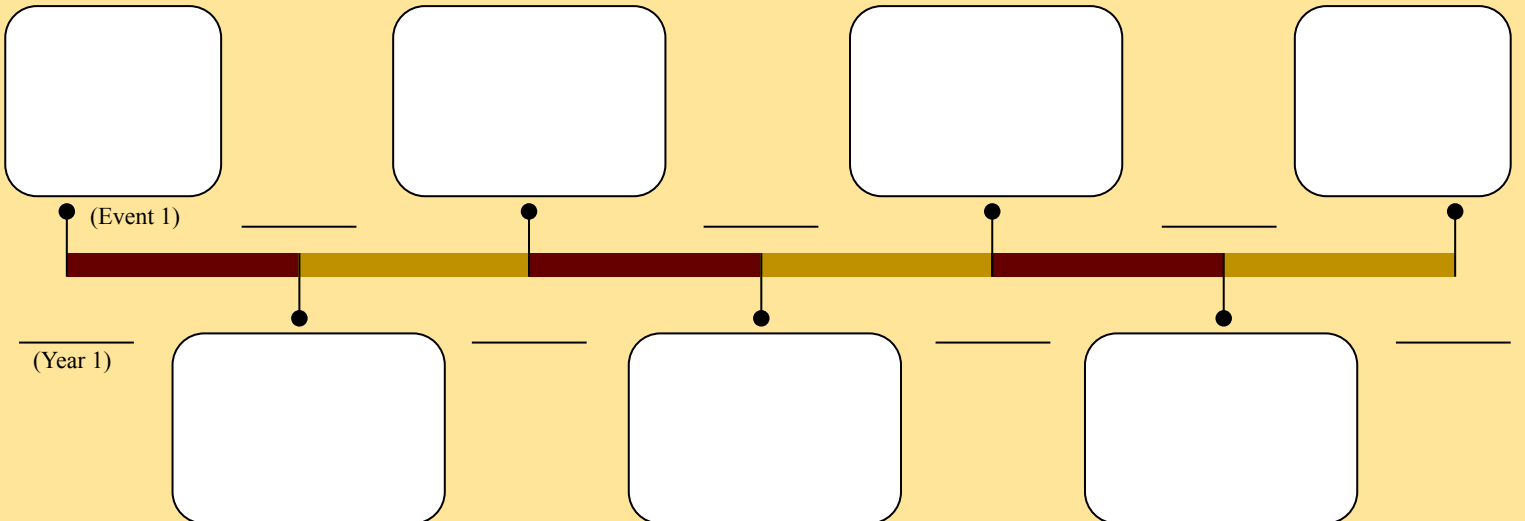
The Culver School
c. 1910.

(Lois Ownby
Mock Collection)

Think Like a Historian: Timeline

Directions: As you read through this primer and learn about Berthoud's history, add the events below to the timeline in the correct order with the year they happened. This will help you track the town's changes over time.

- Building of Carter Lake is finished
- Berthoud's residents vote to become an official town
- Berthoud moves from the river bottom to the bluff
- Berthoud and Loveland schools become the same school district
- The Little Thompson Station is opened
- Spanish Flu hits Berthoud
- The Colorado Central Railroad is built



Before Berthoud

Who Lived Here First?

Native Americans, such as the **Arapaho**, **Cheyenne**, and **Ute** peoples, lived in this valley for thousands of years before white settlers arrived. They lived in camps along the Little Thompson River where they could get water, hunt, and plant crops, like **corn**. They used **horses** to get around and hunted **bison** for much of their food. In the 1860s, the Native Americans moved away when white settlers pushed them off their land.

Unfortunately, we are missing a lot of information about the people who first lived here because most Native Americans save their history by *telling* stories, not writing them down. Most of what we know comes from their meetings with the early white settlers who wrote down *their own* understanding of what happened when they met.



Warshinun, taken 1873 by Alexander Gardner.
Photo from www.american-tribes.com

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Warshinun, also known as Teenokuhu or Chief Friday, was a well-known local Arapaho interpreter.

Think Like a Historian: Artifacts Left Behind



When white settlers began building their homes and farms, they found objects left behind by Native Americans. Many found stone **arrowheads** (“points”) but some people found objects like the ones you see here, which is a **mano** (the small stone) and a **metate** (the large bottom stone). These are the Spanish names for them.

What do you think these objects were used for? (Hint: “mano” means “hand”)

Why do you think so?

Why do you think the Native Americans left these objects behind when they left the valley?



Why Did People Move Here?

The first people, besides the Native Americans, to move to the Little Thompson Valley came here for several reasons starting in the 1850s. Many **miners** were on their way to Denver or California where they could mine **gold**. They traveled along what was called the **Cherokee Trail**, which went through the valley. Others used the trail to move their cattle from one place to another.

Some people decided to stay so that they could make money from the travelers when they stopped to rest. They opened the **Little Thompson Station** in 1862 where **stagecoaches**, carrying travelers and mail, could stop on their journey. Once the station was there, more people, called **homesteaders**, moved here to start farms and ranches because there was a lot of land that was close to the **railroad**.

The first people to move to Berthoud were often called **pioneers**.

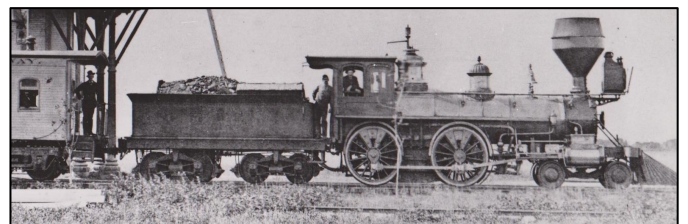
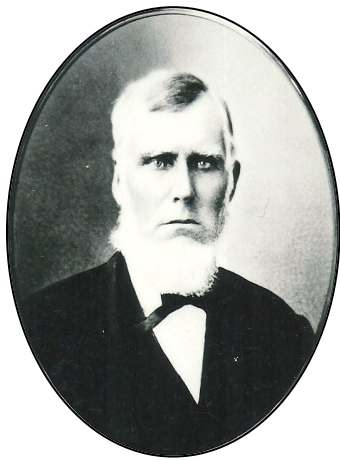


Photo of Engine No. 10 of the Colorado Central Railroad, circa 1870. (Mark French)

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Portrait of Lewis Cross, circa 1880 (Berthoud Historical Society). His beard style is sometimes called the "chin curtain" and was a common style then.

How did Water and the Railroad Shape Berthoud's History?

In 1873, one man named **Lewis Cross** helped unite the homesteaders' farms into a **community**. He founded the town "Little Thompson" that was renamed Berthoud in 1877.

The valley was very dry before the first settlers learned how to get water from the local rivers to **irrigate** their crops. The farmers built **dams** in rivers, dug ditches, and built lakes to get and store the **precious** water because it was **scarce**. Cross made his farm near the Little Thompson River because the land by the water was perfect for growing crops like wheat, corn, alfalfa, and potatoes. It also provided drinking water for people and animals.

Cross's homestead was also close to the **Colorado Central Railroad** which was built in 1877. That same year they changed the town's name to Berthoud after **Captain Edward Berthoud**, an **engineer** who helped plan the railroad.



The Handy Dam, part of the Handy Ditch system north of Berthoud, circa 1910. (Mark French Collection)

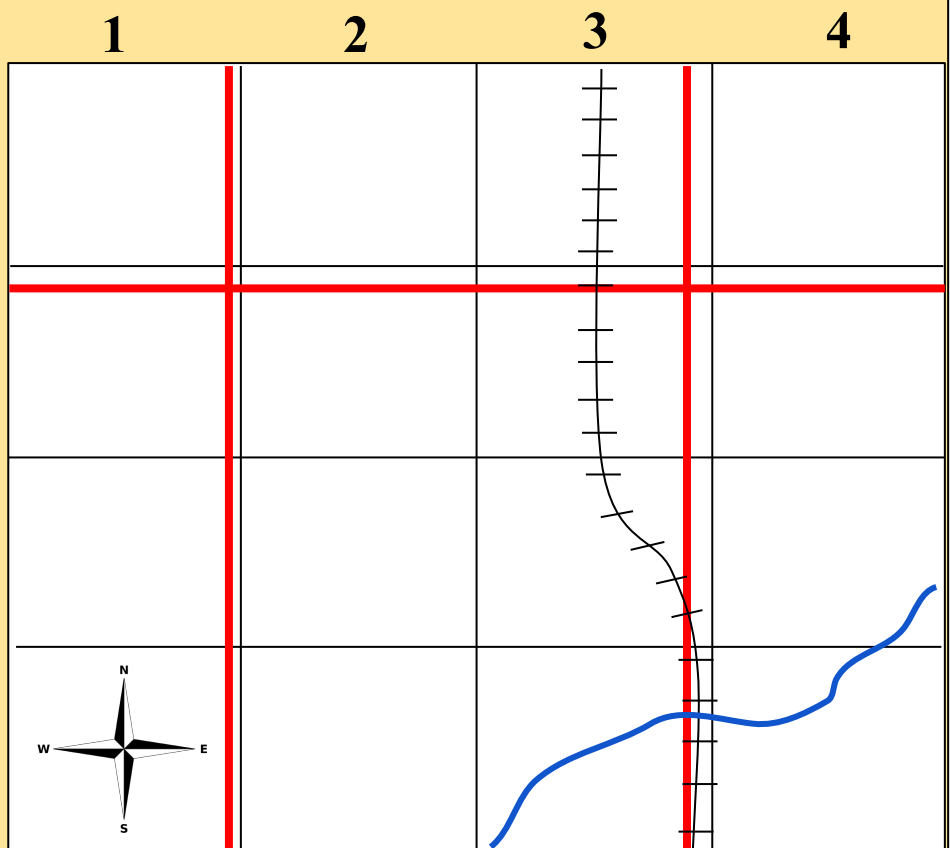
In 1883, the town moved from the river bottom to a **bluff**, or high ground, about a mile north to where it sits today because of the railroad. **Peter Turner** is considered the **founder** of Berthoud because he made a new place for the town on his farm. They finished moving the buildings in 1884. The first location of the town is now called Old Berthoud.

Why did they need to move the town? Let's create a map to figure it out.

Think Like a Historian: Mapping Change

Directions: Follow the steps below to make a map of Old and New Berthoud. You'll need 4 different colors to label and draw the rest of the map.

1. Label the red line that goes through B1 to B4 "Mountain Ave."
2. Label the red line that goes through A3 to D3 "County Road 15."
3. Label the red line that goes through A1 to D1 "County Road 17."
4. Label the squiggly blue line "Little Thompson River."
5. Draw a small house just south of the river and west of County Road 15 and the train tracks with one color. Label the house "Old Berthoud."
6. Draw a big across Mountain Ave from B2 to B3 with a new color. This represents a bluff, or hill.
7. With a different color, color in squares A2, A3, B2, and B3. Label this area "Berthoud Today."



Berthoud is Born (1884 - 1900)

Why did Berthoud Move and How Did it Start?

Berthoud's new location was good not only for the railroad company but also for the growth of the community. When the town was located at the river bottom, trains had a hard time getting enough speed to go up the hill once they stopped at the depot and loaded the train cars with the area's crops. On the bluff, the trains didn't have this problem and the settlement had more room for new people to start farms and build houses and stores.

With the change came new problems that Berthoud's residents had to work together to solve. Berthoud's residents worked together to make sure the new settlement had everything it needed for its people like clean water, a church, post office, school, bank, hose house (now called a fire station) and doctor's office.

In 1893, **Alfred Bimson** opened his **blacksmith** shop. He made all kinds of things out of iron for the townspeople, like horseshoes, **brands**, and other tools. Today his shop is the home of the **Berthoud Pioneer Museum**.

Think Like a Historian: Reproducing the Past

The people of Berthoud would put brands, or symbols special to them, on things they owned such as their cows and horses, or things they made out of wood or leather. The brands made sure that everyone knew who owned the animals or made the items.

Design your own brand here!

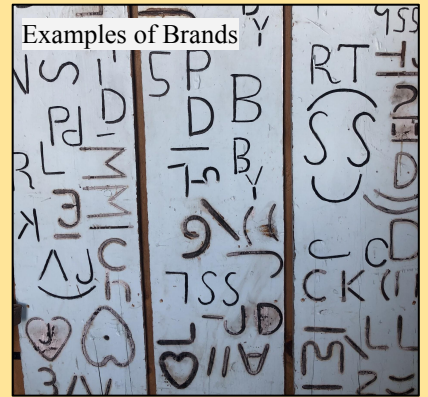
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Branding Irons in the Museum



Examples of Brands



In 1888, Berthoud's residents held their first **election**. They voted to make Berthoud an official town, then worked on creating their own **government**. At first, only adult men could vote and make decisions for the town. In 1893, women in Colorado won the right to vote in state and local elections as well. In 1894, two women - Debbie Kelly and Jennie Jefferes - were elected to help make the town's decisions for one year on the **town board**.

Newcomers (1900 - 1910)

How did Sugar Beets Change Berthoud?

Sugar beets quickly became the most important crop in Northern Colorado by the early 1900s. The area around Berthoud was perfect for growing sugar beets but farmers needed more people to grow and harvest the beets. They hired people from other places to come work, called **migrant** workers. Men, women, and children worked together on the beet fields to make money for their families.

The main migrant workers in Berthoud were **Germans who had lived in Russia**. Later, the Great Western Sugar company hired **Mexicans** from Mexico to work the fields. The groups brought their different cultures with them, changing Berthoud's culture too.



Men harvesting sugar beets, circa 1933-1955. The objects in the center are sugar beets. (James Miller Collection)

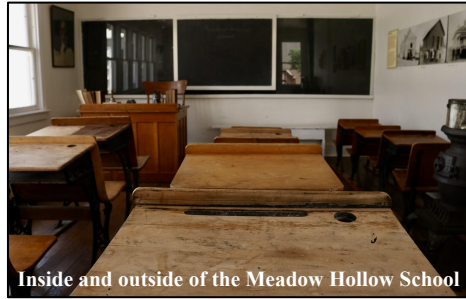
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As more people moved to Berthoud to work in the sugar beet fields, the town had to open more schools to educate the migrant and resident children. Most of the **schoolhouses** were only one room, like the **Meadow Hollow School** at the museum.

These one-room schoolhouses were also often used as a church on Sundays. One teacher, usually a woman, taught 10 to 20 students of different ages in that one room. Often the older students would help the younger ones, and the students would either walk to school, or ride their horses or bicycles.

Schools close to the farms might close down for three weeks in October to allow time for the children to help with harvesting the sugar beets. Many of the migrant workers' children could not speak English when they moved to Berthoud, so they learned English in school. Later, Berthoud would build schools with many rooms for the growing number of students.



Inside and outside of the Meadow Hollow School

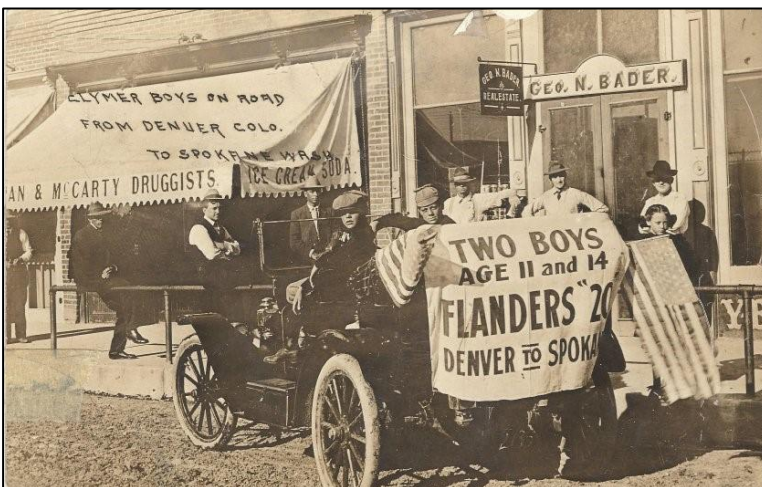


Teacher and students of the Sunnyside School, 1931. (Mrs. Merle Bradney Collection)

Think Like a Historian: Schools Then and Now

Read the description of schools in the early 1900s above. Then write down what school was like *then* on the left and what school is like *now* on the right. Why do you think things are different today? Circle anything that is the same from then to now.

School Then (1910s)	School Now (2020s)



Practicing Historical Empathy: What do you think the boys are thinking in this photo?

Who was Floyd Clymer?



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J. Floyd Clymer was born in 1895. When he was 11, he started selling cars and was called the “youngest **automobile agent** in the United States.” In two years he sold 13 cars. He even taught the new car owners how to drive the cars.

In 1910 at age 14, he and his 11-year-old brother, Elmer, decided to take a trip from Denver to Washington state. Their trip was all over the news because they were so young and were driving without adults. Unfortunately, the car got stuck in some sand in Wyoming and they could not finish the trip in the car.

LEFT: Photo of Elmer and Floyd Clymer, taken 1910 in Berthoud. (Berthoud Public Library)

War and Flu (1914 - 1920)

How did Berthoud Adapt to World War I and the Spanish Flu?

In 1914, the Great War (later called **World War I**) started in Europe. In 1917, the United States joined the war and sent American soldiers to fight in Europe. Many men from Berthoud served in the war, but not all made it home. Often they would send letters home that were put in the local newspaper, the *Berthoud Bulletin* so the community knew how they were doing.



Laurence and Mae Everitt, circa 1917. Laurence was Mae's brother and also served in the war. (Mark French Collection)

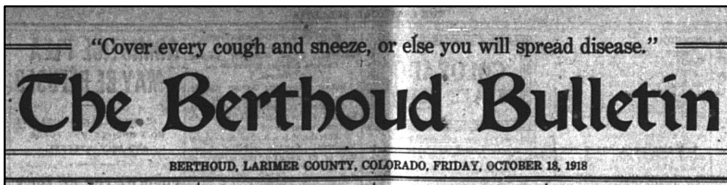
Women also played an important role in helping the war effort. Two women - **Mae Everitt** and **Willa Berry** - served as army nurses elsewhere in the country to take care of wounded soldiers.

Women who stayed in town supported the soldiers in other ways. Some, like **Jennie McCarty**, alongside her husband, taught first aid to the town's women through the Red Cross. The Red Cross ladies also met to sew and knit clothing and bandages for the soldiers overseas.



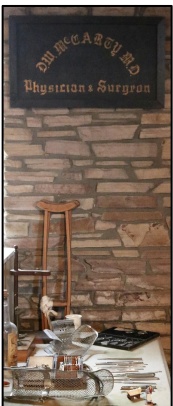
Jennie Fagan McCarty graduating from State Normal School (now UNC), taken in 1900. (Bruce and Helen Fickel Collection)

At the same time from 1918 to 1919, the **Spanish Flu** swept across the world and United States. It made its way to Berthoud in October of 1918 and many people caught it and became sick. Some died. The town closed its schools for a couple months and did not allow big groups of people to slow the spread of the deadly flu.



Front page of the *Berthoud Bulletin* on October 18, 1918. The top caption refers to stopping the spread of Spanish Influenza. (Loveland Public Library)

Berthoud's doctors, like **Dr. McCarty** (husband to Jennie McCarty), had a hard time keeping up with the growing number of sick people while also still taking care of their other patients. Dr. McCarty would put **quarantine** signs on the homes of sick people to keep other people from getting sick.



Dr. McCarty's office exhibit in the Pioneer Museum. He was a doctor until the 1930s.

Notice the quarantine signs on the wall.

Think Like a Historian: Analyzing Written Sources

Mae Everitt served as an army nurse in California during World War I. She wrote letters home to Berthoud and a couple were put in the local newspaper, the *Berthoud Bulletin*. Here is one of her letters from 1918:

"It will soon be a year since I **enlisted** and it has been a year full of wonderful experiences and new scenes and faces. I am very fond of San Francisco, and I like this climate very much. Colorado is still in the lead, though, for wonderful, clear days and sunshine. Just now we are getting some much-needed rain, with a clear day tucked in now and then to keep us in a good humor.

Fort McDowell is a **recruiting** station... A great many recruits - volunteers and **drafted** men - pass through... Most of the **ailments** are those due to the change of climate and altitude, and also the common **contagious** diseases. The hospital has been enlarged... in order to better care for the sick. Very few cases are lost. I thank you for sending me the *Bulletin*, and I wish to thank again the Red Cross for the sweater and scarf."

Why do you think Mae talks about the weather so much?

What questions do you have after reading this letter?

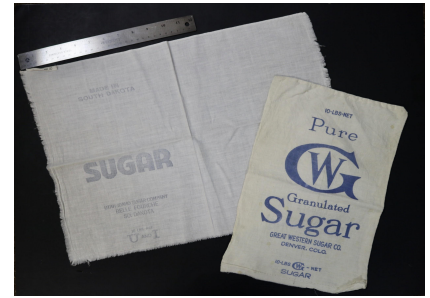
Question 1: _____

Question 2: _____

How did Berthoud Adapt to Scarcity?

The 1920s and 1930s were hard decades for Berthoud and forced them to adapt to **scarcity**. The nation's economy was struggling and there simply wasn't enough money to go around. These decades were also very dry with many dust storms, which made farming difficult.

People across the United States struggled to make enough money and had to make do with very little for many years. Many people lost their jobs and became extremely poor. We call this time period the **Great Depression**.



Sugar used to come in cloth sacks (right). Farming families would reuse the sacks as kitchen towels (left) to save money. (Berthoud Historical Society)

Since Berthoud is a small farming community, the Great Depression impacted the town differently than other places. Many of the residents grew their own food in gardens so they didn't have to worry about their next meal as much as people in big cities. Some men even hunted in order to feed their families. While some stores closed and the bank had to take farms from farmers who could not pay, Berthoud's residents helped each other out whenever they could.



German POWs in Berthoud, circa 1943. (James Miller Collection)



Dr. Helen McCarty Fickel, circa 1940. (Jack Olinger Collection)



Berthoud Baseball team, circa 1935. (Berthoud Historical Society)

Then, in 1939, **World War II** started in Europe. The United States joined the fight once again and many of Berthoud's men left to fight overseas. Because so many men left, women took their places where they could. **Dr. Helen McCarty Fickel**, like her mother Jennie, supported the town's troops overseas. The Red Cross Ladies sent items to the soldiers. As in WWI, some women served as army nurses.



Students helped collect old newspapers, magazines, and cartons for a "waste paper drive" that helped the war effort. Even local **German prisoners of war** (POWs) worked on the sugar beet fields because so many men were gone. Some people were happy to have the help while others didn't like it because the US was fighting against Germany in the war. Even though these decades brought many challenges, the people of Berthoud stayed strong and **optimistic**. They played sports like baseball and football, celebrated holidays, and had fun when they could.

Think Like a Historian: Learning from the Past

During these difficult times, Berthoud's residents came together to make sure everyone had what they needed, whether that meant providing goods and services to people in town or helping soldiers overseas during WWII. **What are things you can do to help your community during difficult times? Write down 3 ideas.**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Becoming Berthoud as We Know It (1950 - 1980)



LEFT: Filling Carter Lake with water for the first time, 1954. BELOW: Carter Lake in the 21st century. (Northern Colorado Water Conservancy)

Scan Me!



How did Berthoud Become the Town We Know Today?

In 1952, the building of **Carter Lake** finished, part of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. It took two years to build and over 500 workers. This was very important for Berthoud because it brought much-needed water and money to the town, as the workers and officials paid to live here during construction. It also gave residents a place to have fun once they filled the reservoir with water.

The lake is really a **reservoir** and was created by building dams to hold in the water and pumping water from another larger reservoir through a big tunnel. From Carter Lake, another tunnel brings water to towns around Berthoud and even to Denver. The reservoir helped Berthoud grow into the town it is today.

In 1960, Berthoud and Loveland schools became part of the same school district. The people of Berthoud took pride in their own school district and didn't want to join Loveland's, but they lost the vote.

In 1963, the elementary school located in present-day Fickel Park was closed and **Berthoud Elementary** was built. Twelve years later, **Ivy Stockwell Elementary** opened because Berthoud Elementary was running out of space for the many new people and their children who were moving to "the Garden Spot of Colorado."

In 1900, Berthoud only had 300 residents. Today, over 9,000 people live in Berthoud. What are some things about Berthoud that have changed over the years? What has stayed the same?

Visit the Berthoud Historical Society's museums to learn more about Berthoud's history!



Ivy Stockwell (right) and her friend (left, unknown) circa 1925. (Mark French Collection)

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