

West Rail Line History



Construction of the Federal Bridge- 1922

The Corridor:

- The West Rail Line is one of the most diverse and historic areas in the metro region.
- The West Rail largely follows the path of the original Denver, Lakewood & Golden Railway. This line opened with steam locomotives and operated from 1893 to 1904. In 1909 it was acquired by Denver Intermountain Railway and was electrified and ran as an interurban trolley until 1950. In 1988 RTD purchased the corridor for future transit use.
- In 1941, the federal government bought 2,040 acres for a munitions plant, now known as the Federal Center. Operated by Remington Arms, they built a branch off the railroad near Oak Street to serve the plant south of 6th Avenue. That branch is being used for the West Rail Line.
- The right bank of the South Platte River was laced with tracks of the Santa Fe, Denver, Rio Grande, Colorado, and Southern railroads.

The Community:

- The lake that gave the City of Lakewood its name was located between 10th and 12th Avenues and between Pierce and Reed Streets along Dry Gulch, north of the Lakewood Country Club.
- Prior to rail placement, Lakewood was covered with orchards, farms, and dairies. There was even a ranch where foxes were raised where Holland Street crosses the tracks.
- William Loveland, a railroad tycoon, previous owner of the *Rocky Mountain News*, built the Denver, Lakewood, and Golden Railway in 1890. He also built and lived in his home in the 1400 block of Harlan
- The first woman prime minister of Israel, Golda Meir, lived in Denver with her sister and brother-in-law in a duplex in the 1600 block of Julian Street. She attended North High School. The house has been preserved and relocated to the Ninth Street Historic Park on the Auraria campus.
- The great heavyweight champ, Manassa Mauler Jack Dempsey frequently stayed at the Pig'n' Whistle Motel on Colfax Avenue near Wolff Street.



The interurban trolley running west of Federal

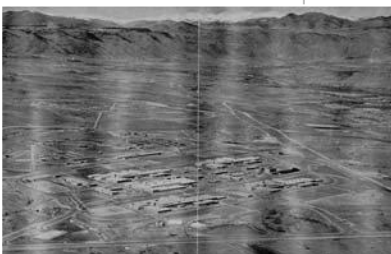


Prime Minister Golda
Meir

- Lakewood has one of the most philanthropic medical institutions and one of the most respected rehabilitation hospitals in the nation, located at Colfax Avenue and Pierce Street. In the early 20th century it was called the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society (JCRS); better known today as the American Medical Center for Cancer Research.
- The Golden Hill Cemetery, bought in 1904 by the Jewish Benevolent Society, served as the burial ground for the many Jewish tuberculosis patients treated at JCRS.
 - The Denver Ordnance Plant, which was the most prolific ammunition production facility in America during World War II, was located at the current Federal Center. At the height of production in 1943, they had more than 22,000 workers in three shifts and produced six million bullets a day.
- In 1949, beat author Jack Kerouac wrote *The Town and the City* as he traveled through Denver and Lakewood.



Dry Gulch at 10th
Avenue & Pierce



Denver Ordnance Plant- under
construction 1941