



Good Days on the Trail, 1938-1942: Film Footage of the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, Version 1

USER GUIDE

How to Cite These Data

As a condition of using these data, you must include a citation:

National Snow and Ice Data Center. 2007. *Good Days on the Trail, 1938-1942: Film Footage of the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, Version 1*. [Indicate subset used]. Boulder, Colorado USA. NSIDC:

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FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE DATA, CONTACT NSIDC@NSIDC.ORG

FOR CURRENT INFORMATION, VISIT <https://nsidc.org/data/G02175>



National Snow and Ice Data Center

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1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The film provides a unique record of what the Rocky Mountain area looked like in the late 1930s and early 1940s and may provide visual information on the extent of the glaciers in the region. The film was created by the University of Colorado Department of Mountain Recreation. The original film consists of four reels, in 16mm Kodachrome format. The film was restored and digitized with support from the NOAA National Geophysical Data Center, Boulder, and the NOAA Climate Database Modernization Program. The film is available for download from [FTP](#) and is 1.2 GB in size.

Evidence suggests that this film was created by the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU) Department of Mountain Recreation (DMR) between 1938 and 1942 to promote the University and its summer program. The film contains rare historical footage of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, west of Boulder, including several glaciers. The film provides a unique record of what those areas looked like at that time, including the extent of the glaciers. The film was discovered in 2006 in the University archives, and restored with support from the NOAA National Geophysical Data Center, Boulder and the NOAA Climate Database Modernization Program. Unfortunately, Reel One is missing from the four-reel film.

The DMR was not part of the CU Hiking Club, the regular school catalog, or the Extension Center, but was actually a prominent part of the CU Summer Session. The Summer Session featured visiting professors from around the world, a Writer's Conference, and many speakers and luminaries. Although the DMR was part of the University, it received its backing largely from the Colorado Mountain Club. The Department of Mountain Recreation was a selling point of CU's summer offerings, and carried a catalogue of its own before World War II interrupted its activities. The DMR was originally started by the Boulder Chapter of the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC); the CMC was founded in Denver 1912, and is still in existence.

Details on the creation of the film are limited. It is believed to be the work of Prof. A. Gayle Waldrop, who served as director of the DMR during this period. A 29 September 1929 copy of the Colorado Mountain Club magazine, *Trail and Timberline*, makes clear Mr. Waldrop's keen involvement in CU's eventual Department of Mountain Recreation. Later, he became its official director. Waldrop's "Boulder Notes" article in this issue of the magazine offers the "Good Days on the Trail" line and indicates the source for the line as Hamlin Garland's poem, "A Daughter of the Middle Border." Additionally, the summer 1937 "Mountain Recreation" supplement to the University of Colorado Bulletin includes a photo captioned, "Recreation Director Takes Movies," showing Waldrop working with a movie camera on tripod. A copy of this bulletin is available from NSIDC; see "References and Related Resources," below.

The film is mentioned again in University archives; on page 19 of the University of Colorado Bulletin, Summer Quarter, 1946, there is a reference to the film:

"Courses" in Mountain Recreation which were necessarily discontinued during the war due to rationing and manpower shortages will again be offered by the University during the Summer Quarter, through its Department of Mountain Recreation.

A wide variety of "courses" is planned so that there may be something for everyone. Open to all in the Mary Rippon Theater at 8:00 p.m. each Monday is a series of lectures with color motion pictures or slides on Colorado wild flowers, wild animals, birds, and geology, by authorities in these fields. On June 14 and 15, "Good Days on the Trail," an edition of the best pictures made on Mountain Recreation trips taken during the period 1938 to 1942, will be shown, to give all a fore-taste of what the summer can hold for them.

2 DETAILED DATA DESCRIPTION

2.1 Geographical Coverage

The footage was filmed in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, USA, in an area west of Boulder, including Rocky Mountain National Park, Indian Peaks Wilderness, and Roosevelt National Forest. The geographic area covered in the film footage is approximately as follows:

Southernmost latitude: 40.00° N
Northernmost latitude: 40.54° N
Easternmost longitude: 105.50° W
Westernmost longitude: 105.90° W

These locations are referred to in the film narrative (see "References and Related Publications" below). The date and the author of the narrative are unknown; it was with the film when it was discovered in 2006. Note, Reel One is missing, so all of the locations mentioned in the narrative may not be visible in the restored film.

Type of Geographical Feature	Place Names
Mountain peaks	Apache Peak Lone Eagle Peak Longs Peak McHenrys Peak Mount Audubon Mount Chapin Mount Chiquita Mount Meeker Mount Toll Navajo Peak North Arapaho Peak Old Baldy South Arapaho Peak South Peak Sundance Mountain Twin Sisters Peaks Ypsilon Peak
Other geographical features	Continental Divide Fall River Pass Fourth of July Valley Glacier Gorge Indian Peaks Mummy Range Rocky Mountain National Park
Lakes, rivers, streams	Alberta Falls Chasm Lake Crater Lake Devil's Thumb Lake Fall River Isabelle Lake Lake Dorothy Red Rock Lake Silver Lake
Glaciers	Arapaho Glacier Fair Glacier
Man-made features	Audubon Trail Rocky Mountain National Park Trail Ridge Road University Camp

2.2 File Format

The original silent film is on four reels and was made in 16mm Kodachrome format. The first reel of the film is missing. Please contact [NSIDC User Services](#) if you know of its location. The film was originally digitized in Beta SP format, on DVD media. An MP4 version has since been created and

is available for download from [FTP](#). There is a narrative that accompanies the film that is in PDF format: "[Good Days on the Trail Narrative](#)" (PDF, 274 KB).

3 REFERENCES AND RELATED PUBLICATIONS

"[Good Days on the Trail Narrative](#)" (PDF, 274 KB)

University of Colorado. 1937. *University of Colorado Bulletin: Mountain Recreation*. Supplement to the University of Colorado Bulletin, Vol. 37, No. 2. (PDF, 2.41 MB).

3.1 Related NSIDC Data Collections

[Glacier Photograph Collection](#)

4 CONTACTS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Pablo Kjolseth, CU International Film Series director, discovered the film and brought it to NSIDC's attention. The following team researched the film and contributed to its publication as a data product: Lisa Ballagh, Jane Beitler, Florence Fetterer, Terry Haran, Allaina Howard, Molly McAllister, Laura Naranjo, Stephanie Renfrow, Betsy Sheffield, Ron Weaver, all of NSIDC, and Tad Pfeffer, INSTAAR.

5 DOCUMENT INFORMATION

5.1 Document Authors

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5.2 Publication Date

11 April 2007

5.3 Date Last Updated

July 2017: A. Windnagel added details about how to obtain the movie via FTP.

July 2008: A. Windnagel added details about how to obtain the DVD per A. Wallace's email.