



Garfield County is situated approximately 150 miles west of Denver, and 330 miles southeast of Salt Lake City, Utah. The county is bisected by a 70-mile stretch of Interstate 70, which parallels the Colorado River. The western portion of the county is a sparsely populated, high desert plateau, while the eastern portion includes the western foothills of the Rocky Mountains and most of the county's 56,000 residents. Garfield County covers 2,958 square miles, or 1,893,120 acres.

Approximately sixty percent of all Garfield County lands are federally managed by either the Bureau of Land Management (615,973 acres), the U.S. Forest Service (515,865 acres) or the Bureau of Reclamation (2,335 acres).

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Garfield County and its neighbors; Rio Blanco County to the north; Mesa County to the south; and Pitkin County to the southeast, form an integrated economic region. Mesa, Rio Blanco and Garfield counties share a common reliance on natural resource extraction, tourism and ranching. Mesa County's Grand Junction, the largest community in the region, is a shopping, health care and services destination for many residents of western Colorado, as well as for multiple Utah communities to the west.

Pitkin County, and the resort towns of Aspen and Snowmass Village, adjoin Garfield County on its southeastern boundary. During the winter, the only automobile access to these resorts is through the communities of Glenwood Springs and Carbondale along Highway 82 and through the Roaring Fork Valley.

As a result, many residents who work in Pitkin County reside within Garfield County.

Across the County's diverse mountain and desert topography, the climate is generally determined by elevation and aspect. Like any mountain climate, occasional seasonal extremes occur, but they are moderated by a majority of consistently pleasant weather. In the western and lower reaches of the County, where summer highs can hit 100 degrees, mild winters are often conducive to longer golf seasons than surrounding areas. In the high country at Ski Sunlight, or on the lofty plateaus of the Flat Tops, subzero temperatures and deep winter snowpacks yield in summer to cool breezes, lush wildflower meadows and perennial streams. The sun in the County delivers intense rays year-round, through clean, clear mountain air.

## CLIMATE

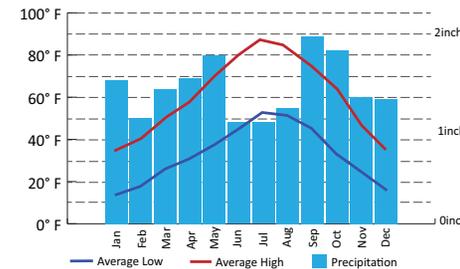


Figure 2: Glenwood Springs Climate Chart  
Source: U.S. Climate Data

During the day, the temperature can change quickly, which makes it advisable to be prepared for sudden weather changes. This is true particularly at higher elevations, where storms may arrive quickly. It is not unheard of to have measurable snowfalls above 11,000 feet during any summer month. Conversely, January thaws can make mid-winter feel like spring.

A sunshine index for Glenwood Springs shows the city is sunny 71 percent of the time. Average temperatures in January are in the low-to-mid 20s; while July temperatures are in the low-to-mid 70s. Annual average precipitation is about 18 inches, keeping things green in spring and summer, and covering areas of the county in snow during the winter months.

Garfield County was founded on February 10, 1883, eight years after Colorado statehood, and named in honor of President James A. Garfield.

## HISTORY

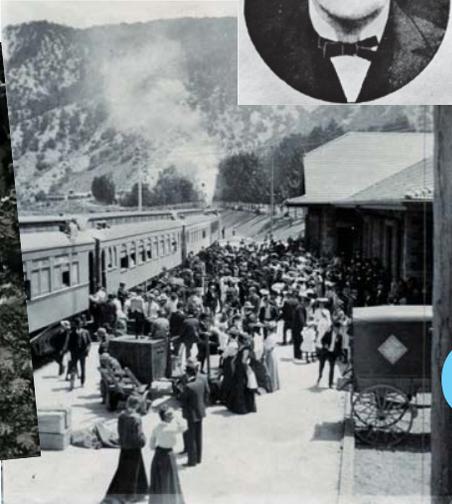
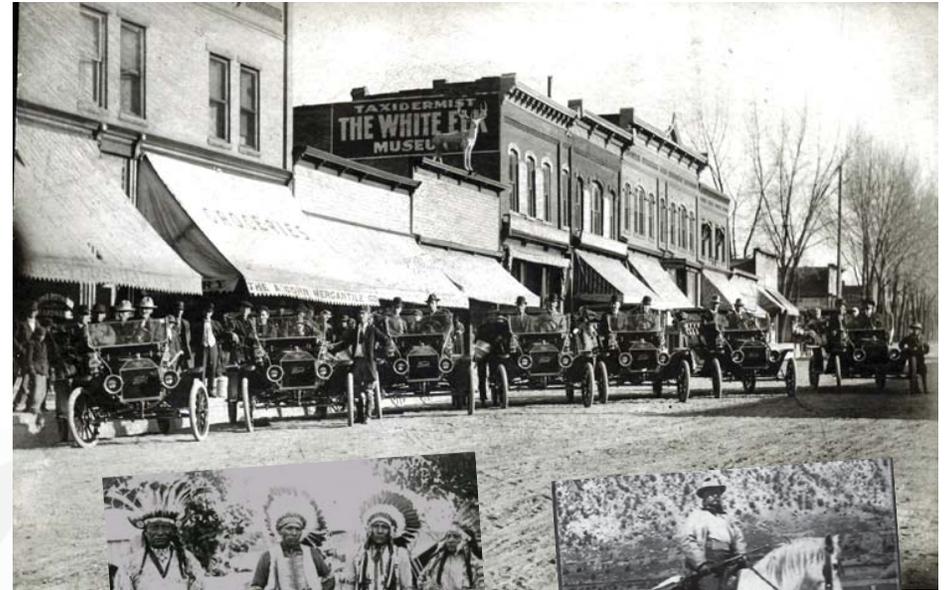
The oldest known human habitation in Garfield County was on Battlement Mesa, where an Indian pit house was discovered that dates back approximately 3,000 years. Along the Colorado River and especially along the Roaring Fork River, was the land of the Tabogauche Utes who enjoyed 7,000 square miles of prime hunting ground and the healing waters of the Glenwood Hot Springs. The first white men who visited Garfield County were two Spanish Franciscan Friars, Silvestre Escalante and Francisco Dominguez, who came to Colorado in 1776. The predominate nationalities that settled in Garfield County were German, Irish and English.

Prospectors from Leadville reported carbonate deposits in the area as early as 1870. Several parties entered the territory and built Fort Defiance, 3 1/2 miles east of today's Yampah Spa and vapor caves. Another camp was made on the Flat Tops and named Carbonate City, which later became the first county seat of Garfield County, and which was re-incorporated again in 2015. Carbonate City is now an abandoned mining camp, and has no permanent residents. In August of 1883, by resolution of the county commissioners, Glenwood Springs was named as the county seat. The

first election was held November 6, 1883.

Glenwood Springs, originally called Defiance, is located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Colorado rivers. In 1887, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad extended tracks through Glenwood Canyon and into Glenwood Springs, serving Aspen and surrounding mining towns, and connecting Garfield County with Denver and other eastern cities. Railroad service remains important economically to the local economy.

The Glenwood Hot Springs Pool was constructed in 1887, and remains a nationally recognized spa and recreation center. The hot springs and pool have been a major visitor attraction for over 120 years. Glenwood Springs and surrounding areas have entertained the likes of President Roosevelt, who dubbed the Hotel Colorado as the "White House of the West." The White River National Forest, the most visited national forest in the nation, is headquartered in Glenwood Springs. This forest, which is home to seven of the nation's largest and most recognized ski resorts, was formally instituted in 1905, and continues to be a major force influencing the local economy and defining urbanization patterns.



# GARFIELD COUNTY

COLORADO