The story of the now-famous Kryptonics wheels began in secret. According to company lore, Jim Ford was a young employee for the plastics company Kryptonics in Boulder, which, in 1976, manufactured industrial parts. Ford, a passionate skateboarder, convinced his friend and coworker Chuck Demarest to help him use Kryptonics equipment for skateboarding wheels. They rigged the factory door so that it didn’t latch, then sneaked back in and experimented with variations of urethane to create wheels. One night, they ended up with a result that was so soft and bouncy, they almost threw it out. On a whim, Ford put the wheels on his skateboard and tested them in the parking lot. The other wheels they’d tried went about half the length of the lot on one push. This new formula took Ford clear across the parking lot and into the street.

Ford and Demarest decided to further test their wheels by convincing a teenager to use them in a local race. The teen crossed the finish line before the others had even made it halfway. The crowd, which included Kryptonics officials, was stunned. Afterward, the vice president of Kryptonics asked the winner where he’d gotten his wheels. Unaware of who he was talking to or the fact that he wasn’t supposed to reveal the wheels’ origin, the teen told the vice president about his Kryptonics wheels.

Ford went into the office the next day expecting to be fired. Instead, they promoted him, and pivoted to skateboard equipment. Their wheels, referred to as Kryptos, quickly became the most popular choice by skaters of all levels and their bright colors made them instantly recognizable. Kryptonics continues to be a beloved name, and they recently announced the revival of their original formula.
HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE
2003.030.001
C. 1890s

If you think traffic makes it hard to get somewhere now, imagine traveling around the area before cars were invented! City dwellers in the 19th century relied on walking, biking, and large stagecoaches, or omnibuses, which carried passengers along a set route. Only the wealthiest people were able to afford their own horses and carriages. In Boulder, the Clyncke family owned this Studebaker carriage and the team of horses to pull it. The Clyncke homestead is located along South Boulder Road near Cherryvale Road. Although their farmland is only about five miles from downtown Boulder, it could take over an hour to reach a destination on modern-day Pearl Street.

Once the Clynckes arrived in the city, they would have faced a familiar problem: Where could they park? Corrals acted as parking lots for single horses and small carriages. Pearl Street was lined with livery stables, which boarded and sometimes rented out horses.

It’s hard to overstate how important horses were to individuals and to the economy. In 1872, there was a disease outbreak in the Northeast that killed about five percent of urban horses, causing food prices to soar and travel to freeze. But cities full of horses also created problems. The biggest (and smelliest!) was manure. Between 1890 and 1910, the population of Boulder tripled, requiring more horses for travel and transport. Manure piled up on the streets, creating an unsavory atmosphere and allowing disease to spread. In addition, horses, unlike cars, come with a mind of their own, and their skittish nature resulted in more fatalities and injuries per capita than modern-day car accidents.

Kerr’s Corral in Boulder - an early version of a parking lot where farmers could leave carriages and horses to do business in town

Carnegie Library for Local History
Look at photos of a newborn today, and you’ll probably see the child lying on soft blankets and fluffy pillows. In the 19th century, however, common practice was to pose babies sitting upright. To accomplish this, photographers first turned to mothers, who would hide behind a curtain while holding their child still. In the early 1900s, mothers were replaced by posing stands like this one, given to the Museum of Boulder by Boulder-based photographer Jerry Stowall. Only later did photographers introduce the more natural—and more comfortable—means of posing babies that we still find in newborn portraits today.
While the U.S. gained eastern Colorado in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, it was not until the discovery of gold ten years later that the government turned itself in earnest to settling the Colorado Territory. The Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851 (shown in the map in yellow and green) guaranteed continued access to eastern Colorado for plains tribes, including the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Yet what this map actually documents is how those tribes lost eastern Colorado ten years later in the treaty of Fort Wise, which limited their land to the green section numbered “477.”

The locations of the forts give an idea of the scope of the loss: Fort Laramie was in east-central Wyoming; Fort Wise was in southwestern Colorado. Sand Creek, or “Big Sandy Cr.” as it appears on the map, forms the north-eastern border of section 477. Three years after Fort Wise, hundreds of peaceful Arapaho and Cheyenne were killed in the Sand Creek Massacre, addressed elsewhere in this exhibit.

The existence of the map itself speaks to the ongoing work that went into wresting land away from Indigenous peoples. White settlers already had a long history of breaking treaties with Native inhabitants. Yet the speed at which changes in land possession occurred in the late 19th century motivated the U.S. Congress to catalog the process, establishing the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1879 to conduct anthropological research and transfer records relating to Native tribes to the Smithsonian. John Wesley Powell, famous for his exploration of the Colorado River and for predicting water shortages in the West, directed the Bureau. The Bureau published this and other maps illustrating the process by which Native groups ‘gave up’— or ceded—their lands over the 110-year period between 1784 and 1894.
The distinctive, minimalist design of the Colorado flag was almost very different. The first version of a state flag was approved in 1907, but the only one in existence sat, unused, in a custodian’s closet at the State Capitol. In 1910, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution brought a new design to the state legislature. When it became apparent no one really cared for the design they proposed, they switched it for one by writer and poet Andrew Carlisle Carson. The final flag was approved in 1911.

At the time of its debut, no one thought to specify the measurements of Carson’s design. Without these details, flags like this one were created, which look a bit different from what modern Coloradans would recognize. It wasn’t until 1964 that the size of each element, including the “C” and its yellow interior, were specified, giving us the flag that can be seen all over the state today.

Though simple, each piece of the design carries meaning, as explained in the 1911 bill. The “C,” naturally, stands for Colorado, but also for centennial, as Colorado was given statehood on the 100th anniversary of American independence, and for columbine, the state flower. The gold center symbolizes the year-round sunshine as well as the gold metal that first brought pioneers. The blue stripes signify the “ever-smiling skies” of the region, while the white stripe represents the snowy peaks of the mountains, as well as the silver that was mined. Together, the blue and white represent the shades of the state flower, the columbine.