

Prowers County, Colorado

During the last four centuries, the land that now makes up Prowers County (population 13,974) has been claimed twice each by France and Spain, once each by Mexico and Texas, was part of a United States Territory, and has been part of the state of Colorado since 1876. The Kiowa, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Arapahoe Plains Indian tribes migrated through the area, and many wintered along the Arkansas River.

Prowers County was formed in 1889 and named after the first rancher in the area, John Wesley Prowers. His wife was a Cheyenne princess, Amache Ochinee, after whom a World War II era Japanese internment camp was later named.

Prowers County is home to the Big Timbers Museum, with a collection of artifacts from early settlement days and the Dust Bowl era. It features a collection of extremely rare World War II posters and items relating to the Fleagle Gang bank robbery in 1928, a case notable for resulting in the first conviction solely based on a fingerprint of one of the accused.

The county has recently focused its citizen volunteer efforts on Camp Amache, the Granada Relocation Center that was one of 10 relocation camps authorized by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1942, Colorado's newest National Historic Landmark. The Amache Preservation Society, comprised of students at Granada High School who are enrolled in a special class that focuses on the preservation and interpretation of the site, maintain the cemetery grounds, provide guided tours, give presentations to other groups, work on restoration, and volunteer in the museum.

The camp is open to the public, and visitation has increased between 5 and 10 percent annually, with the largest boost coming in 2006 with the National Historic Landmark designation.

Prowers County has also surveyed its numerous New Deal-era historic resources including Pike's Tower in Lamar, and a vintage locomotive adjacent to the Colorado Welcome Center in Lamar is another local attraction.