

- 1860 - Prospectors discovered gold in a tributary of the Arkansas river that they named California Gulch. A gold camp, Oro City, grew up around the claims. The population rose from about 500 to 8,000.
- 1861 - The road over Mosquito Pass from Fairplay (east of Leadville) to Oro City was constructed.
- The Colorado territorial Legislature established Lake County, with Granite as the county seat.
- 1860s - 1870s - The Twin Lakes summer resort was developed
- 1870 - Supplies of placer gold near Leadville were exhausted
- 1876 - Lead carbonate in the soils was found to hold silver. The silver boom began.
- 1880 - The silver boom peaked. Leadville, with a population of over 20,000 became the second-largest community in Colorado.
- The Denver and Rio Grande (DRG) Railway Company extended its line from Pueblo to Leadville. Also, The Denver, South Park, and Pacific (DSPP) railroad arrived in Leadville using the DRG tracks.
- 1884 - The DSPP began running on its own track from Breckenridge and Fremont Pass.
- 1887 - The Colorado Midland railroad, coming from the Arkansas River Valley, continued through Leadville to Basalt and Aspen via tunnels.
- 1893 - A collapse in silver prices followed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.
- early 1900s - Production of copper, lead, and zinc supplemented the waning gold and silver operations.
- after WWI - Metals prices fell.
- 1929 - The Climax Molybdenum Company recorded its first profits from producing molybdenite ore.
- Korean War years - Mining of gold, silver, lead, copper, and zinc resumed in the Leadville Mining District but tapered off again by 1960.
- 1960 - The last smelter closed.
- early 1960s - The community of Climax, originally at Fremont Pass, relocated to the Leadville area.
- Work began on the Homestake Water Diversion Project and the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project.
- 1963 - Lake County gained a new airport south of Leadville.
- through 1980 - Molybdenite production continued at the Climax site (owned by AMAX) and was joined by ASARCO's Black Cloud Mine and Day Mine Inc.'s operations on Mt. Sherman.
- 1980 - Molybdenum prices fell due to world oversupply and new, subsidized foreign sources.
- 1982 - The Climax mine closed and mining employment dropped from 3,180 to 200 by 1988.
- 1999 - The Black Cloud mine was closed by ASARCO.