Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Chronology

Beginning – The Utes were created by Sinawav (the Creator) and were placed in the mountains. The Sinawav told the people they would be few in number but, they would be strong warriors, and protectors of their lands.

There is no migration story, we were placed here in the mountains, we have always been here, we will always be here.

1 AD Shoshonean speaking peoples separate from other Ute-Aztecans

1150 During the 12th century, Yuman and pueblo type cultures began to be replaced by a Shoshonean pattern.

1580 The Utes (Mouache band) acquire horses from the Spanish, as related by tribal historians.

1598 New Mexico is settled by the Spanish. Early trade is established between the Ute people and the Spanish.

1626 Traditional Ute-Hopi conflicts began about this time and reached their pinnacle around 1680.

1626 Earliest written reference to the Utes by the Spanish

1637 First known conflict between Spanish and Utes occurs 1637-1641. Spaniards under Luis de Rosas captured about 80 Utacas (Utes) for forced labor in Santa Fe workshops.

1637 Utes acquire the horse, making the Utes the first Native Americans to introduce the horse into their culture. The Utes were part of the group who escaped from Santa Fe and captivity by Spanish troops led by Luis de Rosas.

1650 The seven Ute bands hold well defined territory.
1670 First Peace Treaty between Utes and Spaniards.

1692 Alliance between Paiutes, Apaches, and Hopis, to counter Spanish aggression and expansion.

1700 Beginnings of raids upon Pueblos and Spanish in New Mexico by Utes, Apaches, and Comanche who formed alliances to carry out raids.

1716 Spanish campaign against Utes and Comanche in preventing raids is not successful.

1730 Utes continue to raid New Mexico settlements from 1730 to 1750. In 1747, Ute attacks caused the abandonment of Abiquiu. (It was reoccupied in 1748 by the Spaniards).

1746 Spanish defeat a combination of Ute and Comanche forces near Abiquiu.

1747 Spanish carry on a campaign against the Caputa Utes.

1752 Ute leaders, Chiquito, don Tomas, and Barrigon meet with the governor of New Mexico. The Spanish petition the Utes for a trade agreement for deerskins, in the hopes of forestalling further conflicts with the Mouache, Caputa and Chaguaguas.

1754 Utes have driven out the Navajos from the upper San Juan drainage.

1754 Mouache Utes enter an alliance with the Jicarilla Apaches.

1760s Spanish-Ute relations progress to allow Spanish trading ventures into Ute territory as far north as the Gunnison River.

1770 Utes and Navajos at war with the Hopis.

1776 Dominguez-Escalante expedition through Ute territory with the help of a 12 year old Ute boy. Ute lands are mapped by Miera y Pacheco.
1778 Spanish law prohibits Spaniards and Christianized Indians from trading with the Utes. The ban was ineffective as traders continued to visit and trade with the Utes.

1779 Mouache Utes and Jicarilla Apaches joined New Mexico Governor Juan Bautista de Anza in a campaign against the Comanche. Comanche forces under Cuerno Verde were defeated.

1786 Utes represented by Chiefs Moara and Pinto protest the proposed peace treaty between the Comanche and Spanish. However, Spanish leader Juan Bautista de Anza prevails and a Peace Treaty was negotiated between the Mouache Band of Utes, Comanche and Spanish.

1789 Treaty of Peace between the Spanish and Utes and promise of Ute aid against the Comanche and Navajos. At this time, the Spanish took precautions against an alliance between the Mouache Utes and Lipan Apaches.

1801 Spanish use Mouache Utes as spies to gather intelligence on plains Indians.

1804 Utes and Jicarilla Apaches joined the Spanish in a campaign against the Navajos.

1806 Battle near Taos between about 400 Mouache Utes and an equal number of Comanche forces.

Lt. Zebulon Pike presents first Anglo-American intrusion into Ute territory.

Two Mouache Utes provide a safe passage to a surgeon under Pike’s to Santa Fe.

1806 Several Spanish and Mexican trading expeditions enter Ute lands from 1806 to 1826.

1809 About 600 Mouache Utes and some Jicarilla Apaches were attacked on the Arkansas River by the Comanche, Cuampe, and Kiowa. Delgaditio, Mouache chief was killed, along with other leaders Mano Mocha and El Albo.

1822 Lechat, a Ute leader, proposed treaty with the Americans but little was done immediately.

1829 Opening of the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to San Gabriel, California, partly through Ute territory.

1832 Bent’s Fort is established in southeastern Colorado.

1833 Ouray is born near Taos

1840s Constant attacks by the Utes on settlements in the Taos Valley and the area of New Mexico north of Espanola. Several land grants began to erode the Ute land base.

1844 Caputa attack on Rio Arriba settlements after an altercation between the Utes and the Governor of New Mexico in Santa Fe.

1845 Caputa Utes attack settlement of Ojo Calienta.

1846 Utes agree to remain peaceful after 60 Ute leaders were induced by William Gilpin to go to Santa Fe and confer with Col. Doniphan.

1849 First treaty between Utes and the United States at Abiquiu. Chief Quiziachigiate, a Caputa, signed as principal chief and 28 other Utes signed as subordinate chiefs.

1849 Yellow Nose (Moauche) is born
1850 The Utes began to obtain arms from the Mormons at Salt Lake.

1850 An agency was opened for the Utes at Taos. It was soon closed for lack of funds.

1851 Mouache Utes were attacked near Red River by Kiowas and Arapahos. The Utes retreated to Ojo Caliente.

1851 Settlements by former Mexican citizens were established in the San Luis Valley. This occurred through 1853. Livestock activities and farming began disrupting the Ute lifestyle.

1852 The U.S. Government established Fort Massachusetts near Mount Blanca to protect and control the Utes. Six years later the post was moved six miles and became Fort Garland.

1853 Agency reopened at Taos and Kit Carson was the agent from 1853-59.

1853 An Indian Agent reports war between Mouache Utes and other Indians along the Arkansas River caused by the scarcity of game. The agent requested the U.S. Government to prevent other Indians from encroaching on Mouache lands.

1853 Rations were being distributed to the Mouache at Arroyo Hondo and Red River and to the Caputa on the Chama River.

1854 Ute War started by an attack by Utes on Fort Pueblo. The Utes were mainly from the Mouache band under the leadership of Chief Tierra Blanca. Several skirmishes resulted in the Indians suing for peace.

1855 In early summer, a treaty was concluded with the Caputa band and one with the Mouache band in August. These were not ratified by the United States.

1856 Mouache Chief Cany Attle claims the San Luis Valley.

1857 Cany Attle claims the Conejos Valley.

1857 Officials recommend that the Caputa and Jicarilla Apache be removed to the San Juan River and assisted in becoming self-sufficient.

1858 Hostilities between the Utes and Navajos.

1859 Temuche, a Caputa Chief, took presents to Navajo camp (Kiatano’s) to maintain friendly relations.

1860 Utes join U.S. troops in campaigns against the Navajos.

1860 Tabeguache Utes placed under the Denver Agency; Mouache and Jicarilla attached to a sub-agency at Cimarron on Maxwell’s Ranch; Caputa Utes continue to be served at Abiquiu; Weeminuche were managed by Tierra Amarilla.

1861 Agency for the Tabeguache Utes established at Conejos; Lafayette Head was the first agent.

1863 Tabeguache cedes San Luis Valley to the U.S.

1868 Treaty with the Utes and a reservation created for them consisting of approximately the western one-third of Colorado. Ouray selected as principal chief.
1870 The Weeminuche object to removal to reservation in Colorado. Cabeza Blanca was one of the principal leaders of the Weeminuche at the time.

1870 Army's census of 1870 shows 365 Caputa Utes under the leadership of Sobotar.

1871 Denver's Indian Agency is established and maintained for Utes who continue to hunt buffalo on the plains.

1873 Mouache conclude treaty at Cimarron.

1873 The Utes cede the San Juan Mountain mining area by terms of the Brunot Agreement.
1874 President U.S. Grant signs the Brunot Agreement and thousands of Ute lands are now appropriated by the U.S. government.

1874 U.S. takes more Ute lands, granting hunting rights as long the Utes are at peace with the white people. U.S. sets aside a perpetual trust of $50,000 per year in money or bonds which shall be sufficient to produce the sum of twenty five thousand dollars per annum. Which sum of twenty five thousand dollars per annum shall be disbursed or invested at the discretion of the president or as he may direct, for the use and benefit of the Ute Indians annually forever. For said services Ouray Head Chief of the Ute nation shall receive a salary of one thousand dollars per annum for the term of ten years or so long as he shall remain head Chief of the Utes and at peace with the people of the United States. Approved April 29, 1874.

1876 Yellow Nose kills General George Armstrong Custer.

1877 Establishment of the Southern Ute Agency at Ignacio to serve the Caputa, Mouache, and Weeminuche Ute bands.

1878 Caputa and Weeminuche cede rights to the 1868 reservation.

1878 Fort Lewis established at Pagosa Springs to protect and control the Southern Utes.

1878 Nathan Meeker named Ute agent at White River.

1879 En route to White River agency at the request of Nathan Meeker, Major Thornburgh and 13 men are killed in Ute Attack for violating an agreement with the Utes.

1879 Meeker’s attempt to change the lifestyle of the Utes failed. Resulting in the demise of Meeker and 11 others. Meeker’s destruction of the Utes valued racetrack and killing of their horses was the final injustice that spurred the attack. The Meeker incident resulted in cries for the removal of all Utes from Colorado.

1880 Fort Lewis moved to the site near Hesperus, Colorado, on the Southern Ute Reservation.

1880 Ouray goes to Washington DC for treaty negotiations.
1880  Ute Agreement signed, resulting the loss of more acres of Ute land.
1880  Chief Ouray Dies.
1881  Tabeguache and White River Utes removed to the Uintah Reservation in Utah.
1881  Denver and Rio Grande Railroad goes through Southern Ute land.
1886  Consolidation of the Uintah and Ouray Reservations for the Northern Utes.
1888  Utes agree to move to San Juan County, Utah, but Congress fails to ratify agreement.
1891  Fort Lewis deactivated as a military post and becomes an Indian school.
1894  Ute allotment bill presented to Congress.
1895  Ignacio led most of the Weeminuche to the western part of the Southern Ute Reservation in protest against the government’s policy of land allotment.
1895  Utes agree to the allotment bill.
1896  New agency set up at Navajo Springs to serve the Weeminuche who did want to accept land in severalty.
1896  Allotments are distributed to Southern Utes.
1905  Buckskin Charley and Antonio Buck (son) travel to Washington, DC, to meet with President Roosevelt.
1905  Buckskin Charley and five other Native Sovereign leaders in Theodore Roosevelt’s Inaugural Parade.
1912  Buckskin Charley dedicates the ancient Ute Trail near Manitou Springs in a celebration known as Shan Kive.
1918  Consolidated Ute Indian Reservation established.
1920  First Southern Ute Tribal Fair held.
1924  American Indians become United States citizens.
1925  Reburial of Ouray. Chief Ouray reinterred in Chieftain’s Memorial Cemetery, Ignacio, CO.
1931  Distribution of rations from Federal Government stopped.
1934  Passage of the Indian Reorganization Act by Congress (commonly called the Wheeler-Howard Act).
1936  Death of Buckskin Charlie at age of 96. He was succeeded by Antonio Buck.
1936  Establishment of a Tribal Council in accordance with the Wheeler-Howard or Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.
1936  Chief Antonio Buck becomes the first Tribal Chairman of the Southern Utes.
1937  Restoration Act returns 222,016 acres to the Southern Utes.

1939  Ute Chieftain's Memorial dedicated on the Last day of the 1939 Ute Fair. The Memorial honored Ouray, Severo, Buckskin Charley and Chief Ignacio.

1946  Southern Ute Tribe and rancher Raymond D. Farmer enter into a land exchange to provide land for La Plata County Municipal airport.

1950  Confederated Ute Tribes, consisting of the Northern Utes, Ute Mountain Utes and Southern Ute Tribes were awarded a $31,761,206 monetary judgment for lands taken illegally by the U.S. Government.

1950s  Returning WW II veterans assist in drafting Rehabilitation Plan utilizing land claims moneys to establish an economic plan for social welfare of the tribal membership.


1954  Ute Rehabilitation Program.

1961  Antonio Buck, Sr., last hereditary chief, dies.

1961  Southern Ute Tribal Council is comprised of two men and four women; Sunshine Smith, Anna Marie Scott, Euterpe Taylor, Martha Ruth Evensen, John Baker, Sr., and Anthony Burch.

1959  Southern Ute Police Department.

1966  Southern Ute Community Action Program started on reservation.

1970  Chimney Rock (located within the Southern Ute reservation) is declared as Archaeological Area and National Historic Site.

1972  Opening of Pino Nuche Purasa, the motel-restaurant-community building complex, by the Southern Ute at Ignacio.
1975   Southern Ute Tribe changes enrollment criteria, lowering the blood quantum requirement from one-half to one-quarter Southern Ute blood. Thus doubling Southern Ute Tribal enrollment.

1977   Buckskin Charley stained window glass dedication in Denver, Colorado. The stained glass depiction of Chief Buckskin Charley will be displayed in the Capitol building along with other notable historical figures in Colorado history.

1978   Southern Ute Health Center opens. The new facility replaced a clinic that was outdated and ill-equipped to deliver quality care to the increasing tribal populace.

1984   Tribal Council declares Education as a top priority of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. In Tribal Council Resolution No. 84-28, tribal leaders reaffirmed Education as a priority by establishing the Tribal Higher Education Scholarship Committee and Tribal Higher Education scholarship program.

1985   Elbert J. Floyd Scholarship established by descendants of Elbert J. Floyd, longtime friend of the Southern Ute people and past BIA Superintendent who assisted the Tribal Council.


1993   Southern Ute Tribe signs gaming compact with State of Colorado to open a Class III Casino on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.
1993  First Iron Horse Motorcycle Rally held at Sky Ute Downs, Ignacio, CO.

1994  Red Cedar Gathering Company established to process and transport tribal natural gas.


2000  Growth Fund Implementation Plan enacted by Tribal Council creating the Growth and Permanent Funds.

2000  Southern Ute Indian Academy opens to provide services to Southern Ute Children or children of Southern Utes, from infancy to twelve years old.

2001  On June 8, the Southern Ute Tribe was awarded a Triple AAA general-obligation bond rating, the highest credit rating possible. The Southern Ute Tribe is the first Native American tribe to earn the rating.

2001  SunUte Community Center opens its doors. The facility houses a gymnasium, adult and children’s swimming pools, classrooms, weight lifting and exercise equipment.

2003  Chairman Leonard C. Burch dies. Burch led the Southern Ute Tribe for over 40 years.

2003  On December 1, the Leonard C. Burch ribbon cutting ceremony for the Leonard C. Burch Tribal Administration Building was held.

2004  New Housing areas, Cedar Point East and West open.

2004  The U.S. Post Office in Ignacio, Colorado was officially designated by Congress as the “Leonard C. Burch Post Office Building.”

2005  Southern Ute Tribal Growth Fund Building opens.

2006  Mercy Medical Center Grand Opening held June 23. The land for the medical complex was donated by the Southern Ute Tribe.

2008  Southern Ute Alternative Energy established to manage alternative and renewable energy investments.

2008  New Sky Ute Casino and Resort Opens. The resort features 140 rooms complete with refined suites, four restaurants, and bowling alley.

2009  Southern Ute Indian Tribe approves hunting and fishing in the off-reservation Brunot area, including rare game species. Tribal hunters will participate in the special hunt with special permits.

2009  Southern Ute Indian Tribe takes over Operation of Southern Ute Health Center after successful litigation with the Indian Health Service.

2009  Lake Nighthorse is filled with water supplied from the Animas La Plata Project.

2009  Housing and Urban Development awards the Southern Ute Indian Tribe $1,233,976 in housing grants to improve tribal housing.

2009  Solix and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe Partner on Algae Plant, an alternative energy facility

2009  Southern Ute Indian Tribe hosts First Annual Tri-Ute Games.
2010 Annie Bettini Memorial Stone Dedication at the Southern Ute Academy. Ms. Bettini was an outstanding tribal elder, linguist, and educator who advocated for higher education, and her great belief in the Creator.

2010 Multi-Purpose building and Memorial Chapel open. The Multi-purpose building is a 16,350 square foot facility and the Memorial Chapel consists of 5,048 square feet. The facilities offer services to the tribal membership at no cost.

2011 Pearl Casias is elected Chairperson. Ms. Casias is the first woman Chairperson of the Southern Utes.

2011 February 18 declared by the State of Colorado as “Ute Recognition Day”.

2011 Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Durango Discovery Museum enter into five year agreement to provide science, technology, engineering, and math education that will serve tribal youth through high school.

2011 New Southern Ute Culture Center and Museum opens.

2012 President Barack Obama declares Chimney Rock the site of ancient Pueblo ruins (Located within the boundaries of the Southern Ute Indian reservation as a National Monument on September 12.

2012 In November, the National Christmas Tree is harvested from the White River National Forest. Ute Elders from all three Ute tribes participate in commemorating the event. In December, Elders from all three Ute domains travel to the Nation’s capital to witness first-hand Christmas tree dedications.

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https://www.southernute-nsn.gov/history/chronology/