

A Stroll Through-Out Mead's Baby Years

By Erika Miller, Sixth Grade, 11 years old, 1,083 words

Mead, Colorado has a very intriguing and interesting past leading from one event to another. The main points were: The founding of Mead, Law and Government, Town Marshall's, Business's, The Post Office, The Newspaper, and Mead's School.

Mead, Colorado was originally founded in 1906 when the Great Western Railroad announced that they were bypassing the growing community of Highland lake (founded in 1871-72), and laid track one full mile east from the town instead. There was a promised beet dump that was to be located on the eastern border of Paul Mead's (the nephew of Highland lake's founder, L.C. Mead) farm. There were many variations of ways the Great Western Railroad had changes in the route of laying the tracks. Some say that the original route was too difficult. Others say that there was an election on where the rails should be laid. People say that there was a blizzard on the day of the election and the citizens of mead were un-able to vote. Finally, some say that it is interesting that Paul Mead benefited from the route change, that he had sold land for the beet dump and had the entire town laid out before even the first track was laid. By the change of the route, all the citizens of Mead were devastated by the news and worked for thirty years with other railroad companies trying to make them stop past Highland lake. The only solution that people could think of is that if the railroad tracks wouldn't come to the town, then the town would move to the railroad tracks. Paul Mead saw an opportunity to start laying new blocks and roads for the new town and donated land for a park. The town was platted on February nineteenth of 1906. The new town was chartered for the next few years and buildings started being moved to the new Mead town site.

Soon after, Mead had its first town board meeting. This meeting was held April 13th of 1908 at Dalgetty's/Daughety's (believed to be a dry goods store, while others thought it to be a local pool hall and barber shop). C.V. Holmes was elected Chairman Pro-Tem^a, while I.F. Hays was elected Clerk Pro-Tem^a. The current mayor was M.S. Adams (who had recently moved his general store from Highland lake to the new town site). Every first Tuesday of the month, there was a town board meeting. There was a two town board meetings in each month until all the town regulations and rules were set up. The meetings were

held at Dalgetty's, The Merchant Bank, The Mead Drug Store, and the McCormick General Store. One of the very first ordinances was pertaining to licensing the selling of drugs. You had to have a license to sell intoxicating, vinous, malt, spiring, and fermented liquor. The last example of the ordinances was pertaining to the meetings and procedures.

Then there was a new Town Marshall. His name was J.L. Ballinger was hired May 13th 1908 only one month later than the first town board meeting. Mr. Ballinger started off with a salary of \$26.00 a year. In 1910, the salary was changed to \$10.00 a month. One month later, the first Police Magistrate W.H. Wilson was appointed in June of 1908. The first jail was built soon after. The dimensions of this building were 12' x 10' x 7'. The jail was a wooden frame with a flat top. The first lumber bill was \$105.00, while the land the jail stood on was rented out for \$10.00 a year. At about the time of 1940, the original jail house was moved up onto Fourth Street and was sold in 1943 for \$35.00. The second jail was abandoned in the 1980's. All prisoners now are housed at the Weld County Jail in Greeley.

For nearly 30 years, Mead was a bustling community. At the town's peak, Mead had three general stores, a hotel, a combination grocery store, and a meat market. There were also two saloons, a butcher shop, a filling station, two auto garages, a farm implement company, two livery stables, a lumberyard, a blacksmith shop, a drug store with the post office in the back, a lunch room, a pool hall, a bowling alley, a hoe and harness repair shop, a bank, a newspaper, a Ford car dealership, a pickle factory, a hay mill, a pea hulling factory, Kunner's cucumber factory, a library, a movie theater, a fire department, and two doctors offices. The original main street was on third street now called Weld County Road Seven. Most of these businesses were located on the east side to be part in the "dry" clause in the property deeds that forbade selling alcohol beverages on the land of Paul Mead's town. To sell liquor, you needed a liquor license which expired after six months. Only three out of seven applicators received the license.

Later, the Mead Post Office was moved from Highland lake to Mead in March of 1907. Cecil V. Holmes became the new Post-Master. Mr. Holmes handled the Post Office for three years until Mrs. Marion S. Adams and Mrs. Holmes (who had owned a general store with her husband M.S. Holmes) took over in October of 1910.

Then, there were three different newspapers over the years. Others came up with other newsletters which only lasted a few months. There were three

different newspapers that each carried news about the growing town of Mead. These papers were: the Longmont paper, the Johnstown Breeze located in Johnstown, the Platteville newspaper, and the Berthoud newspaper. The Longmont Ledger carried Highland lake's and Mead's columns for years in the early part of this century. The Johnstown Breeze printed the Mead Messenger for years because the owner of the paper did not have a printing press.

Mead's first school was built north of the current town hall and fire station. The school was located on Weld County Road Seven. This school was a wood frame building. The school had only two rooms to school all grades.

In conclusion, I appreciate the town of Mead much more knowing more about the baby years of the town I spent my baby years in. I appreciate Mead knowing that we are "The Little Town That Could."

^a=Temporarily; for a short amount of time

Bibliography

*"Brief History of Mead." *Mead-co.gov*. Web. 1 Mar 2010

*"Mead History." *HistoricHighlandLake.org*. Web. 1 March 2010