

APRIL 12, 1904



MEEKER'S FIRST AUTOMOBILE

“THE FIRST AUTOMOBILE TO MAKE ITS APPEARANCE IN THIS VALLEY ARRIVED TUESDAY EVENING, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN RIFLE AND MEEKER HAVING BEEN COVERED IN THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, INCLUDING STOPS AND ONE SLIGHT BREAKDOWN. MR. W.W. PRICE AND DR. C.E. SMITH WERE THE PASSENGERS THE MACHINE WAS GIVEN A BOX STALL AT SIMP HARP'S LIVERY, AND 'SALTY' WAS ON HAND WITH A NEW FIFTY-FOOT ROPE AND A PAIR OF HOBBLER TO SECURE THE THING. ALL THE HORSES IN THE BARN TALKED IT OVER THAT NIGHT, AND CONCLUDED THAT WHEN THE ROADS WERE BAD IT WOULD BE THE SAME OLD THING- DOUBLE UP AND GET UP IN THE COLLAR. IT WILL NOT PROVE AS DESTRUCTIBLE ON THE RANGE 'AS SHEEP'.

MEEKER IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CATTLE MARKETS OF THIS SECTION OF THE WEST AND COWBOYS ARE ALWAYS RIDING ABOUT ITS STREET. WHEN THE AUTO AND ITS PASSENGERS CAME DOWN THE MAIN STREET SEVERAL OF THE BOYS GOT OUT THEIR LASSOES AND TRIED TO PUT THE ROPE AROUND ONE OF ITS WHEELS. AFTER MR. PRICE HAD PUT IT UP AT SIMP HARP'S, A PARTY OF THE RANGE-RIDERS ENTERED THE STABLE AND WENT THROUGH THE CEREMONY OF BRANDING IT AS A MAVERICK. THE MOTOR WAS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO GO THROUGH THE GRAND RIVER CANYON, AND FOR MANY MILES PASSED OVER A HIGHWAY, WHICH HAS BEEN BLASTED OUT OF THE SOLID ROCK BY THE STATE. THE ROAD IS ONLY WIDE ENOUGH TO ALLOW ONE VEHICLE TO PASS, AND ON EITHER SIDE THE WALLS IN SOME PLACES REACH A HEIGHT OF A THOUSAND FEET.” *COMPLIMENTS OF THE HERALD TIMES.*

THE TOWN OF MEEKER



AFTER THE MASSACRE OF NATHAN C. MEEKER, WHITE RIVER INDIAN AGENT, AND HIS AGENCY BY THE WHITE RIVER UTE INDIANS ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1879 THE ARMY MOVED UP RIVER TO THE PRESENT SITE OF MEEKER. HERE THEY ESTABLISHED A PERMANENT MILITARY CAMP BARRACKS, BARNs, OFFICERS' QUARTERS AND OTHER BUILDINGS. IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 1883, THE GOVERNMENT STARTED "PULLING UP STAKES" AND AUCTIONED OFF ALL THE

BUILDINGS TO SETTLERS EAGER TO HOMESTEAD. THE TOWN WAS INCORPORATED IN 1885 AND REMAINED THE ONLY INCORPORATED AREA IN NORTHWESTERN COLORADO FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS. J.W. HUGUS, JOHN C. DAVIS, NEWTON MAJOR AND DANA THAYER (J.W. HUGUS AND COMPANY) GEORGE S. ALLSEBROOK, WILLIAM H. CLARK, JAMES L. MCHATTON, FRANK E. SHERIDAN AND MRS. S.C. WRIGHT "THE MOTHER OF MEEKER" CAN ALL BE CREDITED TO FOUNDING THE HISTORICAL AND QUAIN TOWN THAT STILL CHARMS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TODAY.

EARLY 1900's



DOC BRUNER, HIS OFFICE OCCUPIED THE FIRST EAST WING OF THE HOTEL

ODD FELLOWS HALL, ANTLERS HOTEL,
HARTKE AND SHEETS HAND MADE HARNESS AND SADDLES,
SECOND HAND STORE, MEAT MARKET, DRUG STORE,

POST OFFICE, MEEKER HOTEL AND THE HUGUS BUILDING.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT COMES TO MEEKER TO HUNT LION

TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A US PRESIDENT COME TO MEEKER, BUT BACK IN 1900 THEODORE ROOSEVELT (WHILE THE GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT ELECT) CAME TO THIS AREA TO HUNT MOUNTAIN LION. HERE ARE A COUPLE OF STORIES DOCUMENTING MR. ROOSEVELT'S TRIP-

JANUARY 12, 1907

"GATES KEENESBURG LEFT TUESDAY AFTERNOON FOR RIFLE WITH A SWELL TALLYHO AND FOURS HANDLED BY THE PRINCE OF JEHUS ED WOLCOTT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MEETING A SELECT PARTY OF GENTLEMEN WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO ENJOY A FEW WEEKS' VACATION IN THIS OUT-OF-THE-WAY



PLACE. IT WAS NEARLY EIGHT O'CLOCK LAST EVENING WHEN THE RIG RETURNED TO MEEKER, AND ITS OCCUPANTS WERE NONE LESS THAN HON. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, OF OYSTER BAY, N.Y. DR. GERALD C. WEBB AND PHILLIP B. STEWART, BOTH OF COLORADO SPRINGS. THEY

WERE AT ONCE TAKEN TO ST. JAMES RECTORY, WHERE THE REV. H.A. HANDEL HAD AN ELEGANT SPREAD AWAITING THEM.

IN DEFERENCE TO THE VICE-PRESIDENT-ELECT'S WISHES IT WAS PRE-ARRANGED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION, BUT THERE WAS A GENERAL DESIRE TO MEET AND SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN. HOWEVER, IT WAS NEAR MIDNIGHT BEFORE THE PARTY PROCEEDED TO THE MEEKER HOTEL, WHERE ROOMS WERE RESERVED FOR THEM, AND BUT FEW HAD THE PLEASURE OF AN INTRODUCTION.



THE OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNOR IN VISITING THIS SECTION AT THIS TIME WAS SIMPLY TO TAKE A REST, HE HAVING RETIRED FROM ONE OFFICE ON JANUARY 1ST AND WILL ASSUME ANOTHER MARCH 4TH. WHILE TAKING THIS REST, HOWEVER, MR. ROOSEVELT, WANTING A LITTLE RECREATION, HAS CHOSEN TO HUNT MOUNTAIN LION FOR A PASTIME.

WITH JOHN GOFF AS GUIDE AND GENERAL MANAGER, THE PARTY LEFT THIS MORNING ABOUT NINE O'CLOCK, ALL ON HORSEBACK, FOR THE KEYSTONE RANCH IN COYOTE BASIN, WHICH, FOR THE PRESENT WILL BE THEIR HEADQUARTERS.

THAT THE FAMOUS "ROUGH RIDER" WILL FIND PLENTY OF SPORT IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS GOES WITHOUT SAYING." *COMPLIMENTS OF MEEKER HERALD.*



A LITTLE HISTORY ON OUR FAMOUS GUEST OF 1901...

WITH THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT MCKINLEY, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 42, BECAME THE YOUNGEST PRESIDENT IN THE NATION'S HISTORY. HE BROUGHT NEW EXCITEMENT AND POWER TO THE PRESIDENCY, AS HE VIGOROUSLY LED CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TOWARD PROGRESSIVE REFORMS AND A STRONG FOREIGN POLICY.

HE CRUSADED ENDLESSLY ON MATTERS BIG

AND SMALL, EXCITING AUDIENCES WITH HIS HIGH-PITCHED VOICE, JUTTING JAW, AND POUNDING FIST. "THE LIFE OF STRENUOUS ENDEAVOR" WAS A MUST FOR THOSE AROUND HIM,

LEAVING THE PRESIDENCY IN 1909, ROOSEVELT WENT ON AN AFRICAN SAFARI, THAN JUMPED BACK INTO POLITICS. IN 1912 WHILE CAMPAIGNING HE WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST BY A FANATIC. ROOSEVELT SOON RECOVERED, BUT HIS WORDS AT THAT TIME WOULD HAVE BEEN APPLICABLE AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH IN 1919: "NO MAN HAS HAD A HAPPIER LIFE THAN I HAVE LED; A HAPPIER LIFE IN EVERY WAY."



CREDITS

OUR WHOLE-HEARTED GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION GO OUT TO THE FOLLOWING, THE RIO BLANCO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, THE COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY, THE DENVER LIBRARY, THE MEEKER HERALD AND THE STAFF AT THE WHITE RIVER MUSEUM. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO OVER THE YEARS HAVE TAKEN THE TIME TO PHOTOGRAPH AND RECORD STORIES AND EVENTS- ESPECIALLY THE MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR TEAM TO SAFEGUARD THE STORIES OF THE PAST. WE FEEL INDEBTED TO THEM. IT IS THAT LOVE OF HISTORY AND ESPECIALLY A LOVE OF THE HOTEL AND CAFÉ'S HISTORY THAT MAKES OUR JOB SPECIAL. WE INVITE YOU- FOR AN HOUR, A DAY OR A WEEK TO SHARE IN THE UNIQUE NORTHWESTERN COLORADO HISTORY THAT MAKES THIS ESTABLISHMENT AND TOWN SO SPECIAL. THANK YOU FOR YOUR VISIT.

FEBRUARY 22, 1913

“AWAY BACK IN THE LAST CENTURY WHEN CIVILIZATION WAS YET IN ITS CRADLE. AND BEAUTY AND MEEKER WERE BOTH YOUNG AND BOTH PERMANENTLY LOCATED ON THE WHITE RIVER, THERE WAS BUT ONE HOTEL.



IT WAS A LOW ADOBE ERECTED AS A BARRACKS SOON AFTER THE MASSACRE AND ORIGINALLY OCCUPIED BY COMPANY C, 14TH INFANTRY. IN THE FRONT ROOM WERE TWO WINDOWS OF SMALL PANES GLASS, COATED ON THE INSIDE WITH WHITING TO KEEP THE DAYLIGHT FROM ESCAPING.

THE FRONT ROOM WAS A VERY LARGE ONE, DIMLY LIGHTED BY DAY WHILE AT NIGHT TWO HANGING KEROSENE LAMPS FRIGHTENED AWAY SOME OF THE DARKNESS. IN THIS ROOM GAMBLING TABLES WERE RUNNING DAY AND NIGHT; BEER AND LIQUORS WERE SOLD AT 25 CENTS PER GLASS, THE BAR ITSELF BEING THE HOTEL OFFICE” *COMPLIMENTS OF THE MEEKER HERALD.*



THE MEEKER HOTEL'S FRONT DESK ALSO SERVED AS ITS BAR! WELL, THAT PRETTY MUCH SAYS IT ALL... SALOONS PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN ALL OLD WEST TOWNS AND MEEKER WAS NO EXCEPTION. BELOW ARE PICTURES OF A FEW SUCH SALOONS.

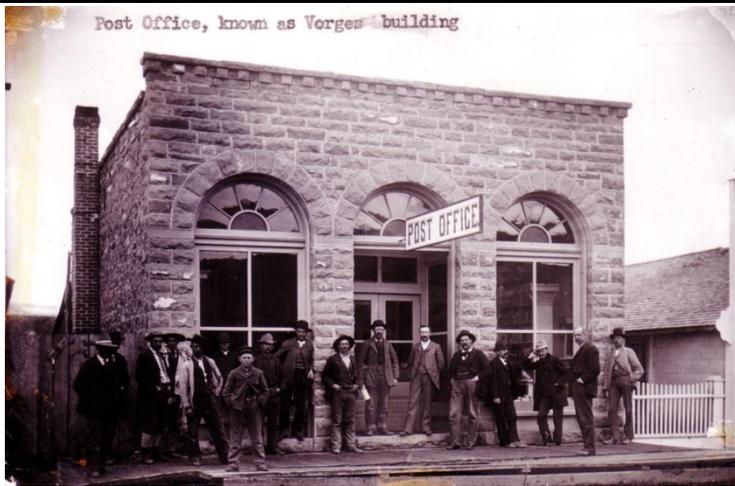


JULY 5, 1899. FROM THE LOOKS ON THE BARTENDERS' FACES, IT APPEARS JULY 4TH WAS A ROUGH ONE.



JULY 4, 1913

THE MEEKER RANGE CALL RODEO BEGAN IN 1885, MAKING IT THE OLDEST ANNUAL RODEO IN COLORADO.



MAY 9, 1891

THE MEEKER POST OFFICE OPENS IN THE VORGES BLDG. IN 1904, IT BECAME THE 1ST NATIONAL BANK AND FINALLY THE HOME TO THE MEEKER CAFÉ IN 1918.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1889

HUGUS AND COMPANY BUILT A THREE STORY BRICK BUILDING. 200,000 BRICKS WERE CONTRACTED FOR FROM MR. GRANT. THIS PICTURE IS PRIOR TO THE HUGUS CO. FIRE OF 1911. PICTURE FROM 1906.



1920

ON THE LEFT IS THE CRAIG HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL TEAM. ON THE RIGHT IS THE MEEKER HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL TEAM.



1887

MEEKER MAIN STREET

BILLY THE KID REGISTERS AT THE MEEKER HOTEL JULY 6, 1889

FOR THOSE OF YOU UNFAMILIAR WITH THE MYSTERY OF BILLY THE KID- LET US PROVIDE YOU WITH A LITTLE BACKGROUND AND MORE IMPORTANTLY HOW THE MEEKER HOTEL CAME TO BE A PART OF THE MYSTERY.

BILLY THE KID WAS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS OUTLAWS IN THE HISTORY OF THE OLD WEST. HOWEVER, MOST OF HIS YEARS REMAIN MYSTERIOUS. HE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS BOTH A COLD-BLOODED KILLER AND AS A ROMANTIC ROBIN HOOD. HE WAS EXTREMELY LOYAL TO HIS MANY FRIENDS, AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS TO ANYONE HE CONSIDERED AN ENEMY. HE WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED AS AN IMMORTAL FIGURE OF A LAWLESS ERA.

BILLY THE KID WAS BORN WILLIAM HENRY MCCARTY AROUND THE YEAR 1860. HIS BIRTHPLACE IS UNCERTAIN, BUT DURING HIS CHILDHOOD HE LIVED IN INDIANA, KANSAS AND COLORADO BEFORE HIS FAMILY SETTLED IN SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO. AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, CATHERINE, BILLY THE KID WAS LEFT PARENTLESS AND TURNED TO A LIFE OF CRIME AS EARLY AS AGE THIRTEEN.



HE BECAME INVOLVED IN NEW MEXICO'S INFAMOUS LINCOLN COUNTY WAR WHERE HE WAS ACCUSED OF KILLING SHERIFF BRADY. HE WAS ARRESTED IN 1880 FOR THAT MURDER, BUT ESCAPED JAIL. BILLY THE KID WAS THAN HUNTED DOWN BY PAT GARRETT AND IS BELIEVED BY MANY TO HAVE BEEN SHOT ON JULY 14, 1881. TO CONFUSE MATTERS, NUMEROUS BILLY THE KID SIGHTINGS WERE MADE IN NEW MEXICO, ARIZONA AND COLORADO AFTER THIS DATE- LEADING MANY TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF THE KID'S DEATH. CLAIMS WERE MADE THAT HE LIVED UNDER HIS MANY ALIASES (BILLY MCCARTY, WILLIAM H. BONNEY) AND MISCHIEVOUSLY FLAUNTED HIS IDENTITY. ALWAYS A FEW STEPS AHEAD OF THE LAW!

THE PLOT THICKENS IN 1950, WHEN NINETY YEAR OLD BRUSHY BILL ROBERTS (PICTURED ON RIGHT SIDE) CLAIMS TO BE BILLY THE KID AND SEEKS A PARDON FROM THE GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO. BRUSHY BILL'S ATTORNEY HAD REQUESTED A PRIVATE MEETING DUE TO HIS CLIENT'S POOR HEALTH, BUT THE GOVERNOR IGNORED THE REQUEST AND INVITED DOZENS OF GUESTS INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND REPORTERS. BRUSHY BILL SUFFERED A STROKE DURING THE INTERVIEW AND ANSWERED MANY QUESTIONS INCORRECTLY. UNFORTUNATELY, BEFORE THE MATTER COULD BE FURTHER EXPLORED BRUSHY BILL ROBERTS DIED OF A SECOND HEART ATTACK ONLY A FEW WEEKS LATER. LEAVING THE MATTER UNRESOLVED.

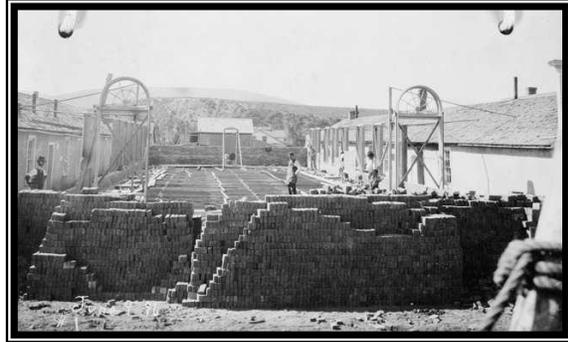


BILLY THE KID HISTORIANS ARE SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE ON WHETHER BRUSHY BILL ROBERTS WAS THE REAL THING, BUT NONETHELESS THE MEEKER HOTEL IS LEFT WITH THE FADED SIGNATURE OF WILLIAM H. BONNEY LINGERING IN THE DUSTY HOTEL REGISTRY FROM THE SUMMER OF 1889.

BUILDING THE MEEKER HOTEL

JUNE 9, 1896

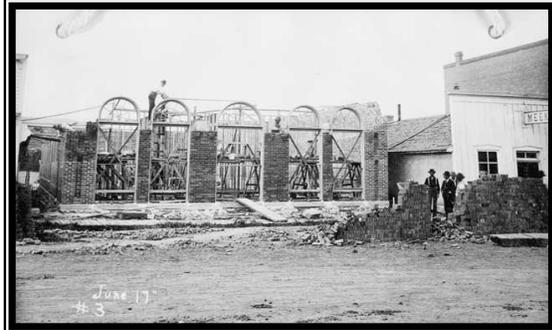
THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS INVOLVED IN ERECTING THE TWO-STORY CENTER OF THE BUILDING YOU SEE TODAY LENDS NEW MEANING TO THE TERM "SPEEDY CONSTRUCTION". HERE YOU WILL SEE FIVE WEEKS OF PROGRESS USING MATERIALS THAT WERE BEING SHIPPED BY FREIGHT WAGON FROM RIFLE. PHOTOS: H.A. WILDHACK.



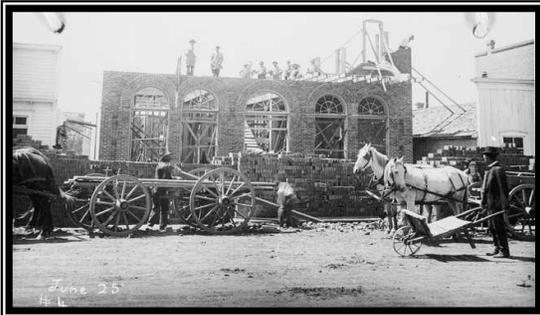
JUNE 13, 1896



JUNE 17, 1896



JUNE 25, 1896



JUNE 27, 1896



JULY 7, 1896



JULY 15, 1896



THE ORIGINS OF THE MEEKER CAFÉ

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, THE COMMUNITY CAFÉ HAS SERVED WESTERN TOWNS AS THE GATHERING SPOT FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND TRAVELERS. BUSINESS DEALS ARE CLOSED, ROMANCES ARE STRUCK, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES ARE FORMED AND CELEBRATIONS TAKE PLACE AT THE LOCAL CAFÉ.

OUR MEEKER CAFÉ HAS BEEN FULFILLING THIS IMPORTANT ROLE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS SINCE 1883. INITIALLY, THE HOTEL AND CAFÉ WERE HOUSED IN AN ADOBE BUILDING, WHICH HAD BEEN USED AS A MILITARY BARRACKS. CHARLIE DUNBAR AND SUSAN WRIGHT WERE THE ORIGINAL PARTNERS. A PROFESSIONAL GAMBLER, CHARLIE WAS SHOT AND KILLED DURING AN ARGUMENT ABOUT A CARD GAME JUST A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE HOTEL AND CAFÉ OPENED FOR BUSINESS. IN 1884, MISS WRIGHT AND SIMP HARP BECAME PARTNERS IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS. THE JULY 3, 1886 ISSUE OF THE MEEKER HERALD REPORTS "THE FRENCH GLASS RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM DENVER, AND HAS BEEN PLACED BEHIND THE BAR AND ADDS GREATLY TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE SALOON."

SUSAN'S BROTHER, RUEBEN SANFORD BALL, WENT TO WORK FOR AND WITH HIS SISTER IN 1891. SUSAN C. WRIGHT DIED IN MARCH OF 1893 AFTER AILING FOR ABOUT A YEAR.

SHE WILLED HER REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TO HER BROTHER. UNDER BALL'S OWNERSHIP THE NEW MEEKER HOTEL AND CAFÉ WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1896 AT THE LOCATION OF THE PRESENT HISTORIC MEEKER HOTEL. EIGHT YEARS LATER, IN 1904, THE EAST AND WEST WINGS WERE ADDED. AT ONE TIME, THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE EAST WING HOUSED STREHLKE BROS. DRUG STORE, DR. BRUNER'S OFFICE AND THE COLORADO TELEPHONE CO. TODAY, THE DINING ROOM OF THE CAFÉ IS THERE.



THE STONE BUILDING, WHICH CURRENTLY HOUSES THE MEEKER CAFÉ, WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED THE VORGES BLDG AND OPENED FOR BUSINESS ON MAY 9, 1891 AS MEEKER'S NEW POST OFFICE BUILDING. IN 1904, IT BECAME THE 1ST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING AND IN 1918, RUEBEN S. BALL MOVED THE CAFÉ OUT OF THE HOTEL TO ITS PRESENT LOCATION. IN THE SPRING OF 1923, THE BALL FAMILY TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP TO CLARENCE P. AND LUCILLE MATHIS, AND IT HAS BEEN EVOLVING EVER SINCE.

PHIL JENSEN, LONG-TIME RESIDENT OF MEEKER, RELATED A STORY OF HOW BACK IN THE EARLY 1930'S HE SAT IN THE CAFÉ'S ANTIQUE BOOTHS WHEN THEY WERE LOCATED IN THE MIDWEST CAFÉ IN CRAIG, COLO. SOMETIME IN THE MID 30'S THE ART DECO STYLE BOOTHS, COUNTER TOP AND BAR BACK WERE MOVED TO THE MEEKER CAFÉ. A FEW OF THE CELEBRITIES TO HAVE VISITED THE MEEKER HOTEL AND CAFÉ ARE TOM HORN, BILLY THE KID, TEDDY ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN AND ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, GARY COOPER, DICK CHENEY WITH HIS SECRET SERVICE, AND BUDDY ROOSEVELT, A SILENT MOVIE STAR IN THE 20'S AND 30'S WHO WAS BORN AND RAISED IN MEEKER.



THE MEEKER HOTEL LOBBY



1897,
1903

ABOVE AND BELOW: RUEBEN SANFORD BALL IN THE MEEKER HOTEL LOBBY.



MEEKER HOT SPRINGS HOSTS A BATHING BEAUTY CONTEST JULY 10, 1926

THE FOURTH OF JULY SPIRIT STILL PREVAILED ON SUNDAY, MANY OF THE OUT OF TOWN PEOPLE STAYING FOR THE LION'S BATHING BEAUTY CONTEST AND A SWIM IN OUR BIG OUTDOOR POOL. AT THE ANNOUNCED TIME SUNDAY AFTERNOON NOT LESS THAN THREE HUNDRED CAR LOADS OF PEOPLE WERE PRESENT. DESPITE



THREATENING CLOUDS WHICH HUNG OVERHEAD MOST OF THE AFTERNOON, THE SPIRIT OF THE CROWD WAS NOT DAMPENED IN THE LEAST. A PORTION OF THE EAST BANK WAS RESERVED FOR THE BATHING BEAUTY CONTESTANTS. THE BACKGROUND BEING FORMED BY A DISPLAY OF THE AMERICAN FLAGS WHICH MADE A MOST PLEASING

PICTURE. ELEVEN GIRLS ENTERED THE CONTEST ALL OF THEM REPRESENTING SOME LOCAL BUSINESS HOUSE. A PRETTIER GROUP OF GIRLS WITH THEIR BATHING SUITS, HIGH HEELED SHOES AND ROLLED HOSE WILL NOT BE SEEN ANY WHERE EXCEPT IT BE ATLANTIC CITY ITSELF.

SEVERAL PICTURES WERE TAKEN OF THE GIRLS AS WELL AS SOME OF THE CROWD AND THE POOL. THESE WILL BE USED IN ADVERTISING OUR BIG FREE SWIMMING POOL TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. AFTER THE PICTURES WERE TAKEN, THE GIRLS RETURNED TO THE GIRLS DRESSING ROOM WHERE THEY WERE MEASURED UNDER THE



DIRECTION OF MRS. ANDY LOWE ACCORDING TO THE ATLANTIC CITY REQUIREMENTS. AFTER ALL THE GIRLS WERE MEASURED A COMMITTEE OF THREE TOOK THE MEASUREMENTS AND AFTER CONSIDERABLE FIGURING ADJUDGED MRS. ANNABELLE ROBERTSON OF RIFLE THE WINNER OF THE CONTEST.

THE BATHING BEAUTY CONTEST WAS A DECIDED SUCCESS. IT NOT ONLY DREW THE LARGEST CROWD THAT HAS EVER VISITED OUR POOL BUT BY THEIR BEING THERE, MEEKER WILL DESERVE SOME VERY FAVORABLE ADVERTISING. THE PICTURES WILL BE SENT FAR AND WIDE AND BEFORE ANOTHER YEAR MEEKER'S HOT WATER POOL WILL BE NEARLY AS WELL ADVERTISED AS GLENWOOD'S AND LOTS CHEAPER.

THE BEGINNING OF MEEKER: THE EVENTS AND CHARACTERS



NATHAN MEEKER WAS BORN IN OHIO IN 1817. HE WORKED AS A NEWSPAPER REPORTER FOR THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE, BUT HIS FASCINATION WITH THE WEST LED HIM TO WRITE A BOOK CALLED, LIFE IN THE WEST. IN 1869, AT 52 YEARS OLD, HE AND HIS FAMILY MOVED TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION WHERE HE CONTINUED TO WORK FOR THE TRIBUNE. EVENTUALLY, HIS EDITOR HORACE GREELEY FINANCED MEEKER'S DREAM TO CREATE AN AGRICULTURAL UTOPIAN COMMUNITY. HE ADVERTISED FOR APPLICANTS TO MOVE TO THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN, WHERE MEEKER ENVISIONED CREATING A COOPERATIVE VENTURE FOR PEOPLE OF "HIGH MORAL STANDARDS."

IN 1878, EIGHT YEARS AFTER FOUNDING OF THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER COLONY, MEEKER WAS APPOINTED AN INDIAN AGENT AT THE WHITE RIVER UTE INDIAN RESERVATION DESPITE HIS LACK OF EXPERIENCE WITH NATIVE AMERICANS. IT IS SAID THAT MEEKER ACCEPTED THE POSITION IN ORDER TO REPAY A LARGE DEBT HE OWED HORACE GREELEY. ONCE ARRIVING AT THE WHITE RIVER VALLEY, MEEKER IMMEDIATELY ATTEMPTED TO IMPLEMENT HIS POLICY OF RELIGIOUS AND FARMING REFORMS.

THE OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR MEEKER'S POLITICAL APPOINTMENT WAS THE RECENTLY ELECTED GOVERNOR OF COLORADO, FREDERICK WALKER PITKIN. PITKIN'S TWO TERMS IN OFFICE EXTENDED FROM 1879 TO 1883. IT WAS A TIME OF TURMOIL AND CHANGE IN THE NEWLY FORMED STATE OF COLORADO, BUT ONE DIVISIVE ISSUE DURING PITKIN'S FIRST TERM WAS THE INDIAN RESERVATION SYSTEM. THIS SYSTEM WAS CREATED AS A METHOD TO REMOVE INDIANS FROM THEIR NATIVE LANDS SO THAT NON-INDIAN EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT COULD TAKE PLACE. HE HAD CAMPAIGNED ON A THEME OF "THE UTES MUST GO!" AND SIDED WITH LOCAL POLITICIANS AND SETTLERS WHEN EXAGGERATED CLAIMS WERE MADE AGAINST THE UTES DESPITE THE TRIBE HAVING A HISTORY OF PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH THE NEW SETTLERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. IT IS NOW BELIEVED THAT PITKIN AND OTHERS WERE AFTER THE RICH LAND OCCUPIED BY THE UTES



UNDER THE TREATY OF 1867. ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC AND ILLUSTRATIVE EVENTS WAS THE MEEKER MASSACRE IN PRESENT DAY RIO BLANCO COUNTY. IT SET INTO MOTION A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT WOULD FOREVER CHANGE THE LIVES OF THE UTE PEOPLE. THE UTES HAD MAINTAINED A LONG HISTORY OF PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH THE



WHITE MAN, ESPECIALLY WITH JOHN WESLEY POWELL WHO LIVED AMONG THEM IN 1868 AND 1869. THIS CHANGED WHEN NATHAN C. MEEKER ACCEPTED THE POSITION AS INDIAN AGENT TO THE WHITE RIVER UTES IN 1878. MEEKER ATTEMPTED TO MAKE THE WHITE RIVER UTE SETTLEMENT INTO A CHRISTIAN FARMING COMMUNE. AFTER A YEAR OF MEEKER PURSUING THIS AGENDA, THE UTES REVOLTED IN FRUSTRATION. TENSIONS CAME TO A HEAD WHEN MEEKER FORBID THE UTES TO RACE THEIR PONIES AND INSISTED ON PLOWING UP THEIR RACE TRACK AND HORSE PASTURES TO MAKE ROOM FOR FARMING. HORSES WERE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE UTE'S HERITAGE AND HELD A SPECIAL POSITION IN THEIR SOCIETY. RACING THEM WAS AN ACTIVITY THE UTES ENJOYED IMMENSELY,

BUT ONE THAT MEEKER CONSIDERED TO BE GAMBLING. AFTER THE CONFRONTATION REGARDING THE PONIES, THE UTE TRIBE DISCOVERED THAT MEEKER HAD CALLED FOR MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS TO HELP QUELL THE UNREST. ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1879 THE UTES KILLED MEEKER AND THE REST OF HIS COMPANY. THEY ALSO TOOK A SMALL GROUP OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN CAPTIVE AS ADDED SECURITY. THE PRISONERS WERE LATER RELEASED DUE PRIMARILY TO THE EFFORTS OF

UTE CHIEF OURAY, HIS WIFE CHIPETA AND FORMER UTE INDIAN AGENT GENERAL CHARLES ADAMS.

MAJOR T.T. THORNBURGH AND THREE TROOPS OF CAVALRY ARRIVED TO AID NATHAN MEEKER. AT MILK CREEK, ON THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE RESERVATION, UTE WARRIORS ATTACKED THORNBURGH'S TROOPS AFTER THEIR REQUEST THAT THE SOLDIERS NOT ENTER THE RESERVATION WAS IGNORED. INTIALLY

THE UTES HAD REQUESTED THAT THORNBURGH AND FIVE SOLDIERS ENTER THE RESERVATION IN ORDER TO FACILITATE PEACE TALKS, BUT WHEN THIS REQUEST WAS IGNORED THE UTE WARRIORS ATTACKED. THORNBURGH AND



ALL OF HIS OFFICERS ABOVE CAPTAIN WERE KILLED. THE TROOPS WERE PUT ON THE DEFENSIVE FOR SIX DAYS UNTIL OCTOBER 5TH, WHEN COLONEL WESLEY MERRITT, WITH OVER THREE HUNDRED SOLDIERS, ENDED THE UTE REVOLT AT THE BATTLE OF MILK CREEK. COLONEL MERRITT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BARRACKS AND STABLES THAT WOULD HOUSE HIS GARRISON AT WHAT WAS INITIALLY CALLED 'CAMP ON THE WHITE RIVER'. THE ARMY WOULD LEAVE IN 1883 AND THE SETTLEMENT WOULD LATER BE NAMED MEEKER, IN HONOR OF NATHAN MEEKER. THE FOLLOWING YEAR CONGRESS HELD HEARINGS INTO THE MASSACRE AND IN RETALIATION FOR THE KILLINGS, THEY PASSED THE UTE REMOVAL ACT, WHICH DENIED THE UTE TRIBE THE 1.2 MILLION ACRES OF LAND THAT HAD BEEN GUARANTEED TO THEM IN PERPETUITY. CONGRESS DIRECTED FOR THE UTES TO BE FORCIBLY REMOVED AND RELOCATED TO EASTERN UTAH. SADLY, THE RESULT OF NATHAN MEEKER'S MISGUIDED LEADERSHIP AND THE MASSACRE THAT FOLLOWED WAS FOR THE UTES TO BE MOVED TO THE UNITAH RESERVATION WHERE THEY STILL RESIDE TODAY.



THIS IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY, BUT A QUICK SYNOPSIS. THE BEST PLACE TO GO FOR MORE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ON THE AREA IS ACROSS THE STREET, BEHIND THE COURTHOUSE, TO THE WHITE RIVER MUSEUM. IT IS HOUSED IN SOME OF THE ORIGINAL MILITARY STRUCTURES BUILT IN 1879. THE RIO BLANCO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS PUBLISHED BOOKS ENTITLED 'THIS IS WHAT I REMEMBER'. THERE ARE MULTIPLE VOLUMES AND THEY ARE FILLED WITH FIRST-ACCOUNTS OF MANY HISTORICAL EVENTS. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NATHAN MEEKER, THERE IS A MUSEUM IN HIS ORIGINAL HOME IN GREELEY, COLORADO. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF THE UTE INDIAN TRIBE THERE IS A MUSEUM IN MONTROSE, COLORADO. IT IS BUILT ON THE GROUNDS OF CHIEF OURAY AND CHIPETA'S HOMESTEAD. MORE INFORMATION ON NATHAN MEEKER, FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, FOLLOWS.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN PICTURES ABOVE DEPICT VISITS THE UTE CHIEFS (NORTH, SOUTH AND CENTRAL) MADE TO WASHINGTON D.C. CHIEF OURAY WAS KNOWN FOR HIS DIPLOMACY AND INTELLIGENCE. HE IS SECOND FROM THE RIGHT IN BOTH GROUP PHOTOS.

COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE 2 OCTOBER 1879

Nathan Meeker was struggling with his job as Indian Agent at White River. Many of the Utes in his charge rebelled against his plans to change their way of life. Some of them fled the Agency to raid nearby farms. After the raids increased, Meeker sent out a plea for military help. His request was answered.



Major Thomas T. Thornburgh, a West Pointer, Civil War veteran from Tennessee, and a professor of military strategy, had been based at Fort Steele in Wyoming on scouting duty for more than a year. He led a command of 153 soldiers and 25 civilians toward the Ute Reservation, and agreed to ride alone to meet Meeker and two of the complaining Indian leaders. But when he reached Milk Creek, 25 miles north of White River, he found the creek dry. He ordered his troops to move some miles into the reservation where there was available water. Indian eyes were watching. Suddenly a gun was fired, then all the guns blazed. Within minutes, Major Thornburgh, and at least 11 of his troopers and teamsters lay dead, another 28 were wounded, and three-quarters of the horses and mules were killed. The trapped Army survivors found refuge behind wagons and piled up bodies of dead horses, and managed to hold off the warriors until relief troops arrived six days later.

*"He was young, ardent, ambitious, of good judgment and no man could have done better in life nor met death with more heroism"
General Sherman's Report on Major Thomas Tipton Thornburgh*

Who was Nathan Meeker?

Nathan C. Meeker, idealistic founder of the city of Greeley, who later died a martyr's death as an Indian agent. Born in 1817 in Euclid, Ohio, he became a wanderer around the East. Changing vocations often, he worked as a journalist, author, social reformer, teacher, and businessman. In 1865 he joined Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*,



eventually becoming its agricultural editor. Like Greeley, Meeker had a deep interest in the West, expressed in his book *Life in the West* (1866). While on a newspaper trip to the Rocky Mountain region in 1869, he evolved a plan to organize an agricultural colony there. On his return to the East later that year, supported by Greeley, he launched his Union Colony of Colorado and recruited 200 colonists.

The next year Meeker set out to found Greeley, an experimental cooperative community, in northeastern Colorado. After several false starts, it succeeded. Despite his wanderlust, Meeker stayed there for 8 years. To repay debts he had incurred and to confirm his belief that agriculture could bring self-sufficiency and prosperity to the Indians, as well as a better

adjustment to the ways of the whites, at the age of 60 he enthusiastically obtained a position as Indian agent at the White River Agency, Colo. But the next year his Ute charges murdered him, and his family returned to their home in Greeley.

The two-story home, completed in the year 1871 and a city-operated museum since 1929, is still essentially in its original condition, except for the addition of a kitchen. In 1959 extensive restoration took place. At that time the house was equipped with furnishings, some of them dating to the 1870's and belonging to the Meeker family.

Article courtesy of the National Park Service. Photographs courtesy of the Denver Public Library and the Greeley Municipals Museum Dept.



A BARRACK BUSINESS STILL IN OPERATION 125 YEARS
LATER.....



MEEKER HAS ALMOST ALWAYS HAD A NEWSPAPER.

THE TOWN HAD ITS BEGINNING AFTER THE TROOPS LEFT THE ENCAMPMENT ON THE WHITE RIVER IN 1883 AND THE FIRST MEEKER PAPER WAS ESTABLISHED ON AUG. 15, 1885. JAMES LYTTLE, WHO HAD WORKED ON A NEWSPAPER IN LEADVILLE, PURCHASED BASIC NEWSPAPER EQUIPMENT IN 1883 FROM THE DEFUNCT PAPER IN KOKOMO (WHICH IS NEAR LEADVILLE) AND THEN LOOKED FOR A PLACE TO SET UP SHOP.

JAMES LYTTLE HEARD THE TOWN OF MEEKER WAS GETTING STARTED AND MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN HAVING A NEWSPAPER. HE TOOK THE TRAIN FROM LEADVILLE TO REDCLIFF WHICH WAS AS FAR AS THE RAILROAD WENT AT THAT TIME. HE THEN RENTED A SADDLE HORSE AND RODE TO WHERE DOTSERO IS NOW AND CAME OVER THE FLAT TOPS IN 1884.

DECIDING THAT MEEKER WAS A VIABLE PLACE FOR A NEWSPAPER, LYTTLE AND JACK HOUSTON RETURNED TO MEEKER WITH THE PRINTING EQUIPMENT AND PUT OUT THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE HERALD. THE WASHINGTON HAND PRESS AND SOME OF THE TYPE AND TYPE CASES THAT WERE USED IN PUBLISHING THAT FIRST ISSUE ARE ON DISPLAY IN THE LOCAL MUSEUM.

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A VERY TIME CONSUMING JOB TO HAND SET ALL OF THE ITEMS THAT WERE PUT IN THE PAPER, THERE WASN'T ENOUGH REVENUE TO

SUPPORT TWO INDIVIDUALS AND SO JACK HOUSTON BECAME MEEKER'S POSTMASTER.

JIM RILAND HAD PLANNED TO COME WITH LYTTLE AND HOUSTON TO MEEKER BUT TOOK A JOB IN ASPEN AT THAT TIME. RILAND DID LATER COME TO MEEKER IN 1900 AND ESTABLISHED A RIVAL NEWSPAPER, THE WHITE RIVER REVIEW, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED UNTIL APRIL 1934 IN A FRAME BUILDING WHERE THE BLUE SPRUCE INN NOW STANDS.

THE MEEKER HERALD WAS A HAND SET PAPER, LETTER BY LETTER, LINE BY LINE, AND WAS PRINTED ON THE HAND PRESS TWO PAGES AT A TIME. THE TYPE WAS ASSEMBLED IN TYPE FRAMES AND PLACED ON THE BED OF THE PRESS, INKED WITH A TWO PAGE SHEET OF NEWSPRINT PLACED UPON THE INKED FORMS. PRESSURE WAS APPLIED TO THE PAPER AND TWO PAGES OF THE PAPER WERE PRINTED AT A TIME. THIS TIME CONSUMING PROCESS LASTED UNTIL THE 1920S WHEN A LINOTYPE WAS INSTALLED AND A MUCH FASTER PROCESS TOOK PLACE.

THE HAND PRESS GAVE WAY TO A HOE PRINTING PRESS. A UNIQUE THING ABOUT THE HOE PRESS WAS THAT DURING THE SPRING OF THE YEAR IT WAS OPERATED BY WATER POWER FROM SULPHUR CREEK. THIS COULD BRING ABOUT A QUESTION OF PROXIMITY. THE MEEKER HERALD BUILDING WAS ORIGINALLY LOCATED IN AN ADOBE (FORMERLY USED BY THE MILITARY ENCAMPMENT) BUILDING LOCATED WHERE THE I.O.O.F. HALL BUILDING IS TODAY FOR TWO YEARS. THE HERALD WAS THEN MOVED TO 4TH AND MAIN STREETS AND SULPHUR CREEK FLOWED SOUTHWEST BEHIND THE HERALD BUILDING.



WHEN THE CREEK WAS DRY, A CRANK WAS ATTACHED TO THE FLYWHEEL THAT RAN THE HOE AND IT WAS TURNED BY MANPOWER. WHEN THE MEEKER LIGHT PLANT WAS BUILT AND POWER WAS AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE TOWN, THE HOE PRESS WAS RUN BY ELECTRICITY.

THIS TWO-PAGE PRESS WAS THE PRINTING FACTOR UNTIL A FOUR-PAGE PRESS WAS PURCHASED AND SHIPPED FROM JUNEAU, ALASKA. TO ACCOMMODATE THIS NEW PRESS, AN ADDITION WAS PUT ON THE EXISTING FRAME BUILDING. THE HERALD WAS PRINTED ON THIS "NEW" PRESS UNTIL THE COOK FAMILY, WHO PURCHASED THE NEWSPAPER FROM THE LYTTLES IN MAY 1964.

IN THE 1970S THE COOKS DID A MAJOR REMODELING JOB ON THE BUILDING AND CONVERTED THE COLD TYPE PROCESS TO A MORE MODERN OFFSET METHOD. THIS ALLOWED FOR A LOT MORE FLEXIBILITY IN PRODUCTION AND LATER, WITH THE USE OF COMPUTERS, A MORE ATTRACTIVE PRODUCT WAS THE RESULT.

THERE WERE REALLY ONLY THREE OWNERS OF THE HERALD UNTIL ABOUT A DECADE AGO. JAMES LYTTLE RAN THE PAPER UNTIL HIS PASSING IN 1925. HIS SON, R.G. LYTTLE, SR., PUBLISHED THE NEWSPAPER UNTIL SELLING IT TO THE JAMES COOK FAMILY IN 1964 WHO SOLD IT TO SEREVA TOWLER IN THE EARLY 1990S.

TOWLER PUBLISHED THE HERALD FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, MIKE COOK HAD IT FOR A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR BEFORE IT WAS SOLD TO GLENN AND DONNA TROESTER. THE TROESTERS MOVED THE LOCATION TO THE FORMER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND RAN THE PAPER FOR ABOUT FIVE YEARS.

IT WAS THEN SOLD TO KERRY AND JOY MURDOCK AND MOVED TO THE HUGUS BUILDING. THE MURDOCKS HAD IT ABOUT A YEAR WHEN IT WAS AGAIN SOLD TO MITCH AND MEG BETTIS IN MARCH OF 2001.

WHILE THE TROESTERS HAD THE PAPER, IT WAS COMBINED WITH THE RANGELY TIMES WITH AN EDITION FOR RANGELY AND ONE FOR MEEKER WITH BASICALLY JUST THE FRONT PAGES BEING CHANGED.

ANOTHER INNOVATION HAS COME ABOUT WITH THE CHANGE OF NAME AND THE PAPER COVERING RIO BLANCO COUNTY NEWS – THE RIO BLANCO HERALD TIMES.

MOST OF THE CHANGES IN FORMAT HAVE COME IN THE PAST 25 YEARS AND MOST OF THE CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP HAVE COME IN THE PAST 10 YEARS, BUT MEEKER HAS HAD A NEWSPAPER FOR 125 YEARS.

– BY RICH LYTTLE

ARTICLE COURTESY OF THE HERALD TIMES



AN EXCELLENT SIDE VIEW OF AN ORIGINAL MILITARY BARRACK. THIS ONE HOUSED THE MEEKER HERALD BEGINNING IN 1885. IT WAS LATER TORN DOWN TO BUILD THE ODD FELLOWS LODGE, WHICH IS NOW THE BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED MOUNTAIN VALLEY BANK.

THE ANTLER HOTEL

THE ANTLER HOTEL IS THE WHITE, TWO-STORY BUILDING WITH THE UNIQUE FRONT. BESIDE IT IS A BUILDING WHOSE SIGN READS THE RANCH HOTEL AND BAR. THIS PICTURE TO THE RIGHT WAS TAKEN CIRCA 1915. THE ANTLER HOTEL WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT IN 1884-85 BY E.S.R. SANDERSON WITH THE INTENTION OF IT BEING AN OPERA HOUSE. SANDERSON'S WIFE WAS A SOPRANO.



WHEN OPERA DIDN'T CATCH ON HE TRADED IT IN 1887, SO THE LAND COULD BE USED TO BUILD THE RIO BLANCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE. IT WAS USED UNTIL 1935 WHEN THE NATIVE RED STONE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET WAS BUILT TO HOUSE THE COURTHOUSE. THE PICTURE BELOW WAS TAKEN CIRCA 1885 WHEN THE HOTEL WAS FIRST BUILT.



SLOWLY THE WOODEN BARRACKS WERE REPLACED BY SOME OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE BRICK STRUCTURES IN WESTERN COLORADO. MEEKER WAS KNOWN FOR HAVING AN ILLUSTRIOUS 'BRICK BLOCK'. THE PICTURE BELOW DEPICTS THE BRICK J.W. HUGUS BUILDING AND THE MEEKER HOTEL. THERE IS AN ORIGINAL BARRACK SANDWICHED BETWEEN THEM. EVENTUALLY IT WOULD BE TORN DOWN TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE MEEKER HOTEL'S WINGS. THIS PICTURE WOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN BETWEEN 1896 WHEN THE CENTER OF THE HOTEL WAS CONSTRUCTED, BUT BEFORE 1904 WHEN THE WINGS WERE ADDED.



SEPTEMBER 1897. THE MEEKER HOTEL WAS BARELY A YEAR OLD. WHAT WOULD BECOME THE 'BRICK BLOCK' AND STRETCH FROM 6TH STREET ALL THE WAY TO 4TH STREET IS IN ITS INFANCY.





A VIEW OF **MAIN STREET** FROM EACH SIDE.
ABOVE PRIOR TO 1911. BELOW CIRCA 1925.



BORN IN A BARRACKS

NO THIS ISN'T A SCHOOL YARD TAUNT AND NO IT'S NOT REFERRING TO WHAT YOUR MOTHER WOULD SCREAM AFTER YOU WHEN YOU LEFT THE DOOR OPEN. IT REFERS TO WHAT WE MIGHT CALL *GOVERNMENT STIMULUS* OR AT LEAST IT WORKED OUT THAT FOR A LITTLE OUTPOST KNOWN AS 'CAMP ON THE WHITE RIVER'. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MEEKER MASSACRE IN 1879, THE WHITE RIVER INDIAN AGENCY RELOCATED TO MEEKER'S CURRENT LOCATION. BARRACKS, CORRALS AND STABLES WERE BUILT, BUT WHEN THE ARMY MOVED OUT IN 1883 IT AUCTIONED OFF THE BUILDINGS TO SETTLERS EAGER TO BUILD A TOWN. FOUR OF THESE BUILDINGS STILL STAND ON THEIR ORIGINAL LOCATION. BELOW ARE PICTURES OF BUSINESSES THAT WERE 'BORN IN BARRACKS'. THE MEEKER HERALD NOW RESIDES IN THE HUGUS BUILDING, BUT HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS OPERATION SINCE ITS' FOUNDING IN 1885. THE MEEKER HOTEL REMAINS STANDING IN THE SAME SPOT THE ORIGINAL BARRACK STOOD IN 1883. IT IS A POIGNANT REMINDER OF PIONEER TENACITY AND THE GRIT IT TOOK TO MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF PRETTY MUCH NOTHING.



PHOTO BY: H.A. WILDHACK

THE FIRST QUARTERS OF THE J. W. HUGUS AND COMPANY. HUGUS WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE US'S FIRST MILLIONAIRES. THE WOOD FALSE FRONT BUILDING WAS A BARRACKS FOR THE GARRISON UNDER GENERAL WESLEY MERRITT, HUGUS SUPPLIED MANY OF THE ARMY POSTS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.



SOME 'BARRACK-BORN' BUSINESSES NO LONGER IN OPERATION: RECTOR & DAVIS SALOON, WISEMAN'S RESTAURANT AND MEEKER LIVERY. THE MEEKER LIVERY WAS OWNED BY SIMP HARP WHO OPERATED THE MEEKER-RIFLE STAGECOACH AND WAS ONE OF SUSAN C. WRIGHT'S EARLY PARTNERS IN THE MEEKER HOTEL.



ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE EARLY HUGUS BUILDING. CIRCA 1889.

MEEKER HOTEL'S EARLY BARRACK CIRCA 1885.



BELOW IS A VIEW OF AN ORIGINAL ARMY GARRISON BARRACK WITHOUT A FANCY WOODEN FALSE FRONT ON IT. THIS BARRACK WAS THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE MEEKER HERALD IN 1885. IT WAS LATER TORN DOWN TO BUILD THE ODD FELLOWS HALL WHICH IS NOW THE BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED MOUNTAIN VALLEY BANK BUILDING.



FIRE DESTROYS THE J.W. HUGUS AND CO. BUILDING

IN EITHER 1910 OR 1911, WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE R.S. BALL'S ANXIETY AS ONE OF HIS WORSE FEARS UNFOLDED. AFTER LOSING HIS SALOON IN CREEDE, COLORADO, TO A FIRE THAT RAVAGED THE TOWN, R.S. MOVED TO MEEKER TO HELP HIS SISTER RUN HER HOTEL. AT HER PASSING, HE INHERITED THE BUSINESS AND MADE THE MOMENTOUS DECISION TO BUILD THE LARGE BRICK STRUCTURE STANDING TODAY. R.S. WAS SO AFRAID OF ANOTHER FIRE THAT HE MADE SOME OF THE WALLS OF THE HOTEL SIX BRICKS THICK. YET SIX SHORT YEARS AFTER FINISHING THE LAST STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION- FIRE STRIKES AGAIN! THE J.W. HUGUS BUILDING, WHICH ABUTS THE HOTEL, IS CONSUMED BY A FIRE TOO HOT TO EXTINGUISH. THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT OF MEEKER WORKED TIRELESSLY THROUGH THE NIGHT, POURING WATER DOWN THE WALL OF THE MEEKER HOTEL, TO SAVE IT AND THE REST OF MEEKER'S 'BRICK BLOCK'. THE PICTURE BELOW DEPICTS THE HUGUS BUILDING AFTER THE FIRE. J.W. HUGUS IMMEDIATELY REBUILT THE BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURE STANDING BESIDE THE HOTEL TODAY.



THE MEEKER HOTEL AND CAFE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS DEBT TO THOSE VALIANT FIREFIGHTERS BY HONORING ALL FIREFIGHTERS (WITH PROPER I.D.) PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE A FIREFIGHTER. WE THANK ALL OF YOU FOR PLACING YOURSELVES IN HARMS WAY TO KEEP US SAFE.

GENERAL WESLEY MERRITT'S 'CAMP ON THE WHITE RIVER' BECOMES MEEKER, COLORADO.



A SOUTHERN VIEW OF THE MEEKER SHOWS MANY OF THE BUILDINGS BUILT BY GENERAL MERRITT'S ARMY GARRISON. THE PURPOSE OF THE 'CAMP ON THE WHITE RIVER' WAS TO ENFORCE THE BANISHMENT OF THE NORTHERN UTE INDIANS TO THE UNITAH RESERVATION IN UTAH FOLLOWING THE MEEKER MASSACRE. THE WHITE FLAG POLE IN THE CENTER OF THE PHOTO MARKS WHERE THE ORIGINAL PARADE GROUND STOOD. CIRCA 1890.



LOOKING NORTH. THE BRICK BUILDING ABOVE THE TOWN IS THE SCHOOL HOUSE, WHITE CHURCH TO LEFT IS THE METHODIST CHURCH AND THE CLUSTER OF BRICK BUILDINGS TO THE LEFT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESTIGIOUS 'BRICK BLOCK' THAT DEFINED MEEKER'S DOWNTOWN.

MORE BARRACKS...



ABOVE PHOTO BY H.A. WILDHACK



THE TWO-STORY WHITE BUILDING IS THE ANTLERS HOTEL, THE ORIGINAL HERALD BUILDING SITS ONE BUILDING OVER. THIS AREA IS NOW MTN VALLEY BANK AND FURTHER DOWN THE LIBRARY. CIRCA 1887.



A STUNNING PICTURE OF MEEKER, COLORADO AND THE WHITE RIVER VALLEY TAKEN IN 1906. THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, THE HUGUS BUILDING, THE ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE MEEKER HOTEL CAN BE VIEWED FROM ABOVE.



THE MEEKER HOTEL IS THE BRICK STRUCTURE IN THE CENTER OF THE PHOTO. YOU CAN SEE THE BACK STAIRCASES. CIRCA 1900.

THE BARRACK BELOW IS UNDERGOING THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING A FALSEFRONT-A TRADEMARK OF THE OLD WEST!



THE POST OFFICE WAS IN A BARRACKS TOO! TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK AT THE PATRONS. EVENTUALLY THE POST OFFICE WOULD LEAVE ITS BARRACK AND MOVE INTO A UNIQUE STONE BUILDING CALLED THE VORGES BUILDING. THIS BUILDING SAT NEXT TO THE MEEKER HOTEL AND SINCE 1917 HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY THE MEEKER CAFÉ.