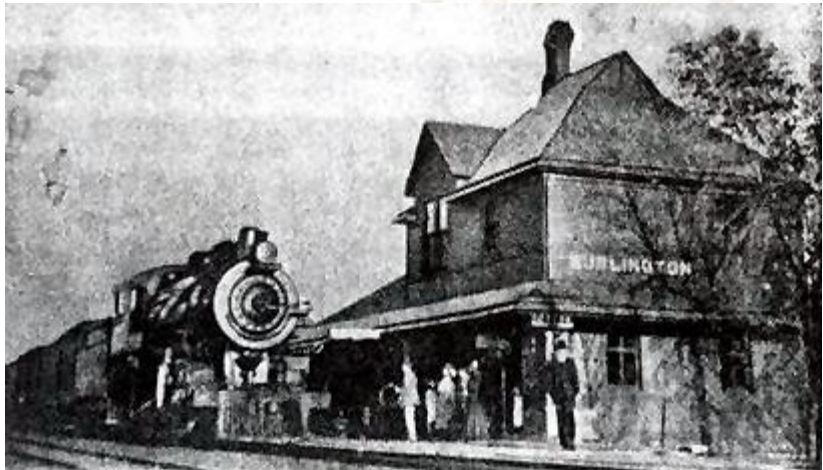


The Early Days of Burlington Colorado

In 1887 the original town of Burlington, Kit Carson County was platted one mile west of present day Burlington. It was platted by a man by the name of Lowell who thought he knew where the railroad and the Depot would be built through what was then Elbert County and on April 11th, 1889 was divided into the present day Kit Carson County. All the water for the town was hauled from Landsman Creek, a distance of ten miles, and the freighters charged 25 cents for a three gallon pail of water. Lowell had laid out streets and sold building lots, advising his buyers that the railroad would be built close by. What he did not tell them was that the town was laid out on homestead land that had not been proved up on and therefore he would be unable to provide deeds. The beguiled lot purchasers had built store buildings, brought in inventory and were waiting for the railroad. When the storeowners found out that they would not be receiving deeds, they decided to relocate, and the first town was a bust.

The railroad track was laid in 1887, but it was not until 1888 that the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company started running trains over the new track. With trains now coming into Burlington, Frank D Mann stopped his stage coach run from Cheyenne Wells to Burlington. The old stage route ran between Cheyenne Wells and Beloit



Post Office, to Columbia and then on to Tuttle Post Office at the Republican River. The stage trip took two days and was run twice a week. The freighters, like Ruben P. Brammeier and Virgineus Chandler, with their heavy wagons and stout horses that hauled supplies from Haigler, Nebraska, or Wray, Colorado, or Cheyenne Wells, Colorado were soon to see the railroad take over their business.

Track was still being laid in Kansas and had not yet reached Colorado when New Burlington was platted in March 1887 by A. Newell and C. F. Jilson, a railroad man who had some knowledge of where the Depot would be built. The railroad company erected the Depot, Burlington's first building, and then the rush was on to establish new businesses there. Some of the store buildings that were in Old Burlington were moved to a new location near the Depot. This site is present day Burlington. The largest of the buildings to be moved was the Montezuma Hotel owned by the Grey family. The hotel cook was Henry Hank, an ex-soldier with 18 years service. The hotel was moved on August 20, 1888 by using poles and skids with eighteen teams of horses pulling the building. Wilhelm Brammeier and his brother Ruben were some of the German farmers

who brought their teams of horses to help with the move. Maynard J. Cook set up a drug store, which was a tent with a piano box for a counter containing a few patent medicines and a keg of whiskey. Soon there were four livery barns, six saloons, two stores, the M. E. Church organization, a print shop, a bank, and several small cigar making places. Bruno F. Kaiser was the first blacksmith. A lumber yard was operated by the Neal Brothers and Daniel Kavanaugh opened the first hardware store. The telegraph line was built in 1888 to be ready for use when the first trains came through. It was not until May 15th, 1888 that Burlington was incorporated. At the first town election on August 10th, 1888 with 41 votes cast, T. F. Sutton became the first Mayor of Burlington.

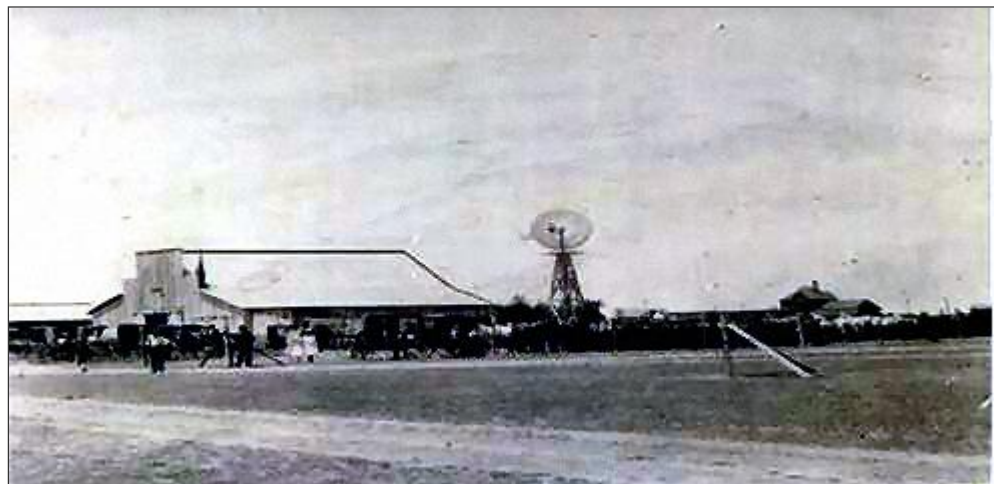


In the earliest town picture one looks south down Main Street (14th). It was apparently taken from the windmill platform of the city well. The wagon tracks in the street swing out on both sides to go around the well. Someone had written 1902 on the picture but since no telegraph poles appear, the picture may have been as early as 1887 or 1888 prior to the time that the telegraph was needed for the first trains. The large building on the left is the Montezuma Hotel with no other buildings between there and the depot until later when the Equity elevator was built next to the railroad. The last tall building on the right is the Winegar building. The Bank building is the large two-story building to the right, in the foreground. The windmill dealer has set up his wares on the wood boardwalk next to the bank. At this time Burlington was very much the typical old west cow town with a railroad. In the late 1880's and early 1890's German settlers from Hoffnungstal, South Russia and also Germans from other South Russia locations settled north and west of Burlington and other settlers also took up homesteads. The homestead activities brought an end to the large-scale cattle companies that had ran their cattle wherever there was grass. The town of Burlington then benefited from this influx of settlers. As early as July 1886, the railroad company put on "Land Excursions" to try to entice easterners and foreigners to this land of opportunity.



The second town picture looks north and was taken after 1888 when the telegraph line was built. The windmill for the city well can be seen at the end of the street. There are two stores on the near left that are out of the picture, the C.W. McCurdy Meat Market and the Wooster Newspaper Office. The first building showing on the left is the W.H. Harom General Merchandise and Post Office and next in the same building is the Bakery. The building with a half moon sign is the Burlington Hotel that Roscoe Yarnell's mother operated starting in 1894. The bank is just beyond the hotel. Behind these buildings was T. G. Price's cow corral. Across the street, the nearest building to the city well is the power plant with the Winegar building next. The largest building on the right is the Montezuma Hotel. The sign on the first building in the right foreground says "Groceries". Other stores on that side of the street were Frank Mann's butcher shop, Henry Stoll Hardware, Maynard Cooke drug store, J. W. Penfold grocery store, Charlie Lamb grocery store and John Hiller saloon. Behind these stores was a livery barn and Kaiser's blacksmith shop.

The third picture is of the livery barn with the depot in the background and was taken when quite a number of folks had come to town for the 4th of



July in 1900. The barn was built by Roscoe Yarnell in 1899, and he ran it until 1902 at which time he traded it for the Montezuma Hotel after Kit Carson County was organized on April 11, 1889, the County Assessor established the following values:

American horses ----\$30.00 per head

Half-breeds, bronchos and ponies----at \$15.00, \$20.00, and \$25.00 per head
246,560 acres----average of 27 cents per acre
The first Sheriff of Kit Carson County was Alvin N. Wilcox.

The first court case of record in the District Court of the County was a Grand Jury investigation of the murder of one Henry Hatch, a homesteader near Flagler. The murderer was never apprehended even with a large reward of \$500 being offered.

C.J. Eater was one of the early pioneers in the Burlington area. Prior to 1916 he moved to Iowa, from where he wrote the following letter to Burlington's local newspaper:

Editor of Kit Carson Co. Record
Dear Sir:

Your Prosperity Addition of 1916 and 1917 has found its way to my desk, and to the Baker Abstract Company, I am surely grateful for this copy.

While I have enjoyed this edition very much, I think perhaps a few reminiscences of early history might be of interest to your readers. I assure you that a bird's-eye-view of the town of Burlington when I first saw it would not show the beautifully little city that you show on the first page of your Prosperity Addition.

It was March 1887 when the town of new Burlington was first staked out. The old town was on a homestead and could not then be deeded. A party from Colby, Kansas, came and bought a quarter of land where the town of Burlington now stands, so when a tenderfoot came along, and had some cash, and if they could be induced to part with 30 cents, they would give him a small patch of buffalo grass and call it a lot.

The leading department store was carried on in a half dugout, and the stock consisted principally of beans, bacon, and canned goods. The first drug store came to Burlington in a spring wagon with a few pills, some patent medicine and a 30 gal. keg of moonshine whiskey together with a tent, some corn, 4 bales of hay, and two men made up the load. The corn and hay fed the mules that pulled the load. The tent was used for a store and residence, while the moonshine was reserved for the inhabitants to drink, as it took all the water for the stock, and for washing feet. A Mr. Brammeier had the only well and we took our turn drawing water. One day when the rope broke just as it came my turn to draw water. I refused to pay 25 cents for a common pail of water. "Why?" do you ask. Three men and six horses had to live on that pail of water until late the next day when a new rope was brought from Haigler, Nebraska.

I am really glad that Burlington is a temperance town, but in those days there were times when Saint Peter himself would have been glad to stick his nose into anything wet, even to lying down on the front side of his back and drinking out of a lagoon, after the range cattle and coyotes had taken their turn.

A Mr. Kaiser started the first blacksmith shop. One load of lumber was sufficient, the forge being made of sod.

There were no objections, if stopping at the hotel, if you turned your pillow so the grass side would be up, it would be a little softer, and it cost only 50 cents for half a bed, and there were only six beds, so it was considered OK.

The first icehouse was a whole in the ground. I hauled a load of ice from somewhere northwest of town. It took all day to make the trip and we got caught in a blizzard; one man was frozen nearly stiff, and another lost his feet.

Eugene Wooster started the first newspaper in the town.

I located on the claim south of town, afterwards leasing a portion of this claim to be used as a brickyard. The first brick house in Burlington was built from these bricks. The gentleman that built the schoolhouse took "French" leave and never paid his help. I have always felt that I had an interest in your school although I have never had the pleasure of seeing the building. I am wondering if the dugout is still there on Section 7-9-43.

Daniel Kavanaugh opened the first hardware store; afterwards he held the office of County Clerk and Recorder, doing the work for both offices.

While Colorado has a lovely climate, I stayed in my soddy for 24 hours, and through the windows witnessed the worst storm in my life. Three people were frozen to death trying to go to their homes and failed to get there. Many head of stock drifted away never to return.

Most of the freight was hauled from Cheyenne Wells, and the first road was started by Mr. Tom Reed, who took a spring wagon and three men and traveling by the camps he made the trip, throwing up sod with a spade at short intervals, made the trail that all followed.

Haigler, Nebraska was also a trading point. At one time while bringing a 4000 lb. load from Haigler and when about 20 miles out the rear wheel of my wagon broke and no house in sight. After going across country about 5 miles, I found a man, Mr. Angel, who loaned me a wagon and I then took my load to Burlington. Afterward I spent three days going back after my wagon and then three days more going to Gooding, Kansas to get it fixed. For hauling from Cheyenne Wells the price was 25 cents for 100 lbs. 4000 lbs. were usually hauled in a load and we made the trip in two days.

Range cattle were quite plentiful. At Crystal Springs, 40 mi. west and North of Burlington, there was a roundup of 40,000 head. Antelope were quite plentiful, and we had the pleasure of seeing one bunch of Buffalo.

People would drive all day to get to a neighbor's, dance all night on a dirt floor, go home the next day, and no prince in his palace showed his guests more of a welcome than did our prairie hosts. This letter is getting too lengthy, but let me say, I never lived in a country where the people were better, the water purer, the climate more healthful,

and the coyotes howled more sweetly than at Burlington, Colorado. The only objection that I had was that I could not raise watermelons in that fertile country. The vines grew so fast that it wore the melons out dragging them around over the ground. However, I learn that they now enclose them in woven wire fences and in that way the melon industry is proving quite profitable.

Signed by C. J. EATINGER