

Stev Allen

### U S History

In 1927 a gentleman with his wife and five children moved from Thayer Junction to Superior Wyoming. This gentleman, by profession was a depot agent . One of the five children was named Betty June Richardson . This is her recollection of life in Superior from 1927-1942 .

The town was laid out like a patch work quilt. The streets were not named , but the town was sectioned off , each section having it's own name . Some sections that she recalled were South Superior , B hill , 2nd B hill , and White City and Copenhagen . Copenhagen was separate because it didn't belong to Union Pacific . In South Superior people owned their own homes and that section was also where most of the businesses were . The other sections belonged to U.P. and provided company housing . Betty's home was in the Union Pacific Depot and she called the street she lived on Park Avenue because there were no surrounding homes .

Half of the Depot occupied North Superior and the other half was in South Superior . South Superior had ethnic groups where North Superior didn't .

The people used cars and bikes for transportation around town . For transportation to Rock Springs they traveled on the Superior Stage which delivered mail in Superior twice a day . There was also one train daily to Rock Springs , but they didn't provide a return trip .

The train was frequently used during the winter months and the people would remain in Rock Springs overnight .

Communication was rather limited with only three or four phones in the town . The depot had one of these phones , but people couldn't call out . Occasionally messages were left at the depot , but the local shoe repairman took responsibility for getting messages to the people . It was his phone that the majority of the people used .

The water supply was brought in by big tankers from Green River . Everyone bathed in wash tubs . There was electricity in all homes at a very cheap rate . A few homes located by the creek had indoor plumbing and the sewage drained into the creek . Paper and catalogs were used in place of toilet tissue .

Sanitary conditions were not the best so one might think that many health hazards might exist , but Betty could only recall Scarlet Fever and Spinalmengitis that broke out in epidemic form . During an epidemic schools were closed and no one was allowed outside . Once when a couple of members in her family had Scarlet Fever her dad had to stay with friends in order to go to and from work . Superior had two company doctors and a small hospital where injured and ill patients could be taken for care . One doctor lived in the hospital , his home was located at one end and the hospital at the other end . Doctors were paid well because miners would have a certain amount of pay checked off at the end of the month to be paid to the doctor for their medical care . There home was also furnished . It was said that it was a good profession and the people had very good medical care .

Floods and storms were not uncommon . One flood in particular happened at White City where the bridge located as such that there was no damage to them .

During the boom days there were 2,500 people

in the 20's and it grew to 3,500 by the 40's . This was due to a market for coal production and the war . At this time many people used coal for cooking and heating . People were brought in from the south and put up in box cars . for living quarters . Behind each box car was an outhouse . If you go to Superior today you will find that the cemetery has tomb stones dated not much later than 1918 or 1919 . Right after the big flu epidemic the cemetery was closed . Funerals and burial were then held in Rock Springs .

South Superior had many businesses . Among them were Workingmen's commercial , the Union Pacific company store , a meat market , Union Mercantile , and Bertagnolli's Bakery . The bakery still exists today . Milk delivery to the home is not just a modern day convenience for the Superiorites enjoyed that luxury even then . Most shopping was done through charging and children looked forward to pay day when mothers would pay their bills and receive a bag of free cookies or candy

This small town was not without its bars , brothels , and burlesque shows . There were at least ten bars located in the business district . Brothels were located upstairs from an adjoining bar and barber shop . Betty rexalls delivering telegrams to the barber who in turn gave them to the bartender and he would take them upstairs to the girls . One might think that such a small town with so many bars might get a name for being wild , but it was not without its churches and religious followers . There was an LDS Church , Catholic Church , and a Union Hall Sunday School . The Catholic priest arrived in Superior once a month to conduct services in a home converted into a church . Union Hall was shared by the LDS and the Protestants . The Baptist

minister would come from Rock Springs to Superior for services once a month .

Life was simple and holidays were big events that the entire town celebrated together . Labor Day was one such event . there were parades ,games , and prizes for the children . April 1 was known as eight hour day and there would be more celebrating with parades and games . Christmas then as today was probably the biggest celebration of the year . There was a community Santa Claus who went to every house to give bahs of candy and an orange to every child . Since oranges weren't plentiful , Betty recalls that was one of their bigger treats . Christmas was probably as much for Santa as for the children . Most families made home made wine and Santa received a sample at nearly every home . Since the depot was the last stop on Santa's Christmas Eve journey , Betty remembers some very jolley Santa's . New Years Eve was anther biggie . Everyone including children gatherered at the Union Hall for a big dance. It lasted most of the night and when children got tired, they would go to the back room and make a bed out of the coats.

Due to wine making, grapes were a big issue in Superior. They were transported in box cars and everyone made sure he had his share for wine making.

The main occupation was coalmining. The miners worked hard and the work was dangerous. They seemed to have what they needed, but times were hard when they would strike. The miners worked on an hourly scale whereas Betty's father was on a monthly salary. They drove new cars and seemed to have all the accessories. Danger lurked with the coalminer because of mine cave-ins. When this happened, a whistle would blow to alert the townspeople that an accident had happened. Children would run home to see if tragedy had struck their family.

There were two halls located in Superior. Town Hall was used for meetings and Union Hall was used mainly for dances. An opera house was built by Union Pacific. It was special because it had a stage. On special occasions Union Pacific would pay for entertainers to perform. Such occasions include performers, speakers, and singing groups. The Opera House was also used for other non Union Pacific sponsored performances. The Community Club House was an establishment that anyone could rent for one dollar and fifty cents. Furnishings included dishes, utensils, cooking pots, tables, etc. One only needed to furnish the food and drinks to entertain.

The Pick and Shovel was Superior's only weekly paper. People had access to the Rock Springs newspaper, Denver Post, and Salt Lake Tribune. It was possible to keep up with current events.

Radios were also a major source for getting news. However a good many of the shows were for pleasure. Some of these were Little Orphan Annie, Amos and Andy, The Shadow and The Whistler.

Another source of entertainment was the movie theatre. People gathered weekly to watch the serials. The serials were shown in addition to the main attraction and could continue for weeks. A newsreel would also be shown so people could keep up with weekly events. Another reason so many people gathered at the theatre was prizes were given in a number of ways. For instance one would receive a number when purchasing a ticket and a bicycle race would come on the screen. Each contestant had a number and if you held the number of the winning contestant you would receive a prize. There was a money bank where you had a chance to win cash and one might even collect a set of dishes by getting a dish each time you attended the movies.

Some types of games played by children were hide and seek, kick the can, run sheepie run, and punch the ice man. To play punch the iceman one would face a wall and another child would draw a round circle with his or her finger and sign it with a dot while everyone else would run and hide. Betty's home took on the reputation of being the recreation center during the winter months. In the depot waitingroom they had ping pong tables and phonographs were moved in for dancing.

There was also an outdoor swimming pool which got its water from the coal mine. By the time the sun had heated the water for pleasant swimming the pool would be dirty and would be drained. The cold water didn't discourage swimmers for the pool was filled every day. Tennis courts were located to one side of the pool.

Superior being divided into two parts--north and south-- constituted two school districts. Betty lived closer to South Superior but had to attend the B Hill School in North Superior. In the third grade she transferred to South Superior School. There was one high school where both junior high and high school students attended. Approximately half of the children didn't speak English so one teacher kept those students while another teacher took those that spoke English. If a child had difficulty speaking English he or she would be held back. There were two classes in each grade and the schools had a very up-dated system. The Superintendent came from Iowa and when he moved he brought many teachers with him. In grade school Betty remembers having an intercom system, movie projectors and movies films. Discipline didn't seem to be any different then than it is today.

Children had certain chores to be done in the home. They carried in the coal, chopped the firewood and brought in the water. The wood used was from ties and old crates.

The color of the two story Union Pacific Depot was brown and yellow. From the top half way down it was painted yellow and from there to the bottom it was brown. Even the interior was done in these two striking colors. There were four rooms on the main floor and one big room with a big closet on the top floor. One room was used to hold freight and express.

Many old home remedies were used for illnesses. Betty's mother treated an earache by putting pepper on a piece of cotton. She then placed the cotton in hot water to heat and placed it into the ear. She always made sure she had sulfur and molasses on hand in the spring. Another remedy used every two or three weeks was mineral oil which gave the same effect as laxative.

The depression was felt in 1932. This was the year it seemed to hit all families hard. Bread lines were formed and bare necessities were all that people could get.

The most famous person to visit Superior during these years was John L. Lewis. He probably will remain in history as the most important man in the labor movement. A big man in a small town, JOHN L. LEWIS IN SUPERIOR, WYOMING. Even the smallest of towns has walls of history. Each person telling his or her story adds to the pages.