November 26, 1984

U. S. History

Early Years of

Louis William Meir

By: Debra A. Osborn

On July 31, 1918, with the family doctor there to assist in the delivery, a baby boy was born in a little house on West Flat Street in Rock Springs, Wyo. The excited parents proudly showed their second son to his older brother introducing him as Louis William Muir. With a family of four, their small but comfortable house was filled with the cries and coos of little Louis. The house was located in the downtown, or old part of Rock Springs and had no indoor bathroom, but little Louis hardly noticed the inconvenience. At the age of 7, Louis was taken to a new home at 35 First Street. The house was very delightful with all the modern facilities of the time, and was home for Louis throughout his youth.

Louis' mother, Emma Muir, was a small woman of 5'2" - 5'3". She weighed about 125 lb., and had brown hair. With a full face and big smile she welcomed all into her home. She was a good wife and understanding mother, but was not afraid to use her authority when Louis steped out of line. Before she married, Emma worked in some of the local stores as a clerk; one of the stores she worked at was the Golden Rule. After she married Louis' father she settled down to the family, but carried many outside interests. Emma was associated with many local lodges and at one time was matron for the Fraternal Order of Egles. At the age of 84 Emma Muir passed away and was laid to rest at Resthaven Cemetery, next to her husband, in Rock Springs.

Louis' father, Pete Muir, was born and raised in Rock Springs. Mr. Muir was a tall man of 6'4"-6'5" and weighed about 215 lb. With dark brown hair and in his usasl blue jeans and work shirt, normally covered with a sweater, he was very much a proud man. He started working for his dad, who owned a coal

mine, but soon he was made a stable boss for another mine. His duties were to take care of the mules and horses that were used in the mines. The mules and horses were used for pulling the heavy railroad cars filled with pea coal (small pieces of coal) or lump coal. Louis remembers his father as teaching him right from wrong and understanding Louis in his youth. Mr. Muir passed on in 1963 and was buried at Resthaven Cemetery where his wife joined him in 1980.

As a young boy Louis went to Roosevelt School here in Rock Springs. He still remembers walking to school and seeing the horse-pulled garbage wagons, express wagons, and the old fire engine with its team leading the way. In the fall on Saturdays, and sometimes after school, he and his friends would go down to the stock yards and watch all the live stock brought in for shipping. Farmers from as far north as Jackson and Pinedale, and as far south as Manila, would trail their sheep, cattle, and wild horses to Rock Springs. These were fun times for Louis and he thought it to be a big deal to watch as they loaded the animals in the stock cars.

In his high school years Louis went to Yellowstone High School, also located here. He was found to be quite the basketball player; his team even won the State Tournament one year. Later he would find his accomplishments in basketball to be very useful. During this time, however, Louis did not only go to school but would work at the coal mine with his father. There he would work on drop cars. This is where they dropped the coal cars down to what they called the Tiple and they would be placed on the proper tracks for loading. As a teenager he was already developing the skills needed for his future. He took responsibility to his family, school, and his job seriously. Louis learned understanding of human

nature from his mother and father, and his stayed with him thoughtout his life.

After graduating from high school Loui applied for Citizen Conservation Corps Department. This was a program designed by Presdent Roosevelt to give the young men some work and keep them off the streets and out of trouble. Louis found the camp to be lots of fun along with hard work. He and other members, as far away as New York, would help the park rangers in cutting wood and cleaning up the park area. Louis was stationed at Jenny Lake during his time in the C.C.C.D. program, and even though they worked hard, they still had time for a little baseball. At night they would sit around a campfire and listen to the ranger's lecture or just enjoy the conversation of that night. Then they would retire to their tents for a good night sleep. Louis made $30.00 a mouth working at the camp, but $25.00 was sent home and the other $5.00 was for his enjoyment. After leaving C.C.C.D. Louis went to work on a local ranch where he was a plunger man. He drove a team of hourses that had a big plunger on the end and they would push hay up a slide where it would drop, forming hay stacks. That was still in 1938, and most farm work was still done with horses. Louis received $50.00 a month and room and board for an 8 to 9 hour working day.

Louis then went back to work at the Blair Town Coal Mine and received $3.87 an hour on shift work. But there would be only three or four days a week worth of work in the summertime. Louis recalls that you could not support a family on that salary, but with his brother and him helping out at home, it was a comfortable life. after about a year at the mine a man by the name of Mr. Homes quite Lucas Wholesale and Louis was offered the job. He was somewhat hesitant but after some time took the job. Louis, in his 1938, Ford Van, would go to the

local stores delivering beer, coke, and candy.

Louis continued this for a year or so and in 1939, was offered a scholarship to play basketball at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The hightlight of his college years was when his team went to the N.C.A. in 1941. There his team played Crecyhton, Washington State, and the Razorbacks from Arkansas. Even though they did not pan out too well, it was an exciting time for Louis.

During the summer of 1941, Louis hired on at the railroad as a breakmen and worked the run between Rawlins and Green River. After a time he changed to working the mine runs. He would bring the coal from the mines to the railroad station for shipping. Louis' college was canceled for the next fall because war broke out. In June of 1942, he was drafted into the service.

Louis served on the Railroad Battalion over in Iran moving supplies from Iran to Tehran. Once the supplies reached Tehran, the Russians took them and delivered them throughout their country. From 1942, to 1945, over a million tons of supplies of all kinds were hauled by the railroad that Louis worked on.

Back home things were changing somewhat. More and more woman were being employed by the coal mines and production was fast and furious to support the war. Most of the young men were drafted and the older men stayed and tried to pull things together to help those who had to fight.

In June of 1945, Louis was sent back home. On returning he was given a 30-day leave to readjust and during that time he met his first wife, Catherine McGarver. Catherine was introduced to Louis by his cousin and after a period of

courtship, they were married in December of 1945. After the war ended, Louis was released from the army and returned to the coal mines. In 1946, he and his wife brought their first born into the world. Louis had a good job and Catherine was busy with their new baby girl; all was well at the Muir's residence.

In 1948, with the birth of their son, close friends of his were talking to him about taking a poition with the police department. With much thought he finally decided to try it out. He put in his application and passed the Civil Service exam and was accepted on patrol. With a makeshift uniform and a 38 special, one pair of handcuffs, and his flashlight, Louis started work. With the older officers as his teacher and his basic knowledge of human nature he set out to learn the profession. Louis found the change quite nice from the mines. He enjoyed the contact with the people and not having to be out in the cold all the time. At that time the police force numbered ten and that included the chief and two 1949 Fords, used as the patrol cars. With one cherry (red light) on top of the car and a side spot light he would patrol the streets of our fair city. At midnight all the dispatchers went home and they would switch to the red light system. There were five red lights placed around town and when Louis saw the light on he would go to the nearest phone and call in.

Atypical night for him would start at 8:00p.m. He would check on all the stores for possible problems from 8:00p.m. to 10:00p.m. Than from 10:00p.m. to 4:00a.m. he would patrol, take calls, and do what ever paper work had resulted from the shift. At that time Rock Springs was a fairly quiet town and most things were settled between the people. On some nights he would have a bar fight, or a drunk. Once in awhile there would be a family disturbance, but most of the time things were quiet

Louis enjoyed this new life as an officer and strived to be the best he could. In 1953, he suffered the tragic death of his wife, but be did not stop. With his son and daughter at his side he went on and in 1958, was appointed chief of police. With the town growing he knew the department must grow also. He started providing rank within the department. Louis opened up positions for sergeants, for lieutenants, and for detectives. In 1959, he was a chartered member of the Wyoming Law Enforcement Acadamey held at the University of Wyoming. Louis felt training is good and wanted to improve it for generations to come.

In 1958, Louis met his second wife, Isabel Lucas, when she came to work for him as a dispatcher. Isabel was born in Superior, which more or less is a ghost town now. After their marriage, in 1960, Isabel quit working as a dispatcher. At that time they had a policy that no married women could work in that position. They felt that it interfered with their family and would have problems with the hours they had to work. Isabel, however, still filled in whenever needed.

In 1963, LOuis, with little more than an idea in his head, started the first search and rescue team in Rock Springs. He was able to bring men and equipment together and help those who are stranded on a mountainside or find that lost hunter.

In 1977, Louis hired the first woman officer in the area. He found no problems with women on the force, but said it was harder to get men to apply because of the competition with the mines.

The hardest time for Louis, While chief, was during the scandal that hit Rock Springs in 1977. The department was put under investagation for possible pay offs recieved from the prostitute and gambling rings in town. There was also question as to the lack of records being keept by the police department. 60 Minutes, a Sunday night program on T.V, came in to do a report on the coruption. Louis agreed to an interview with them but his interview was never on the show. The Grand Jury was still investagating and no one was above suspicion. However, Louis managed to hold the department together during this tough time. The officers carried on and did their job the best they could.

Over the years, Louis did a lot for the community and the police department. When he started they had two cars and no uniforms and ten officers. Today, our men in blue have a fleet of cars and there are 30 to 40 officers to keep our streets safe. More training is offered then ever before and they have become more professional. However, Louis feels they have also become more impersonal. They do not spend the time with the drunk or runaway or mental person. Now they are all turned over to some department like, A.A.A.,welfare, and mental heath. This is not all bad though, as the professional have more time to spend with them and more knowledge in dealing with their special problems.

Louis retired from the police department after 21 years of service and is now working at Wester Wyoming College. There he works in the mail room, but his public assistance has not stopped. He helps coach the girl's basketball team and drives the bus for all the teams there. He is a life time member of the Wyoming Peace Officer's Association. He is also very active in the Seach and Rescue Team.

Louis William Muir has been a real asset to the community and continues to give his time and knowledge. He is a man of understanding and has an easy going personality. Louis says that in a couple of years, he will stop working and go to his house in Pinedale to do a little fishing. My personal feelings are that Louis William Muir will continue to serve and protect the citizens of Rock Springs as long as he can.

Debra A OSBORN

NAME: Louis W. Muir

PRESENT ADDRESS: 1924 Edgar St Rock Springs

1.-Present profession or occupation: Shipping, Receiving clerk
Bus Driver

2. Occupations followed in the past (give dates): Lawenforcement 1948-1978

3. Date of birth: July 31, 1918 Place of birth: Rock Springs

4. Date of moving to Wyoming:

5.-Full name of parents (give mother's maiden name) Peter S. Muir
Emma Wiggins Muir

6. Names of brothers and sisters (and to whom married):
Pete
David
Dorothy

7. Schools attended (give dates): Rock Springs School 1925 c 1936
U. of Wyo. 39 & 41

8. Places of residence in Wyoming (give dates):

9. Military service (dates, awards, area served, rank, etc.):
June 1942 to Feb 1945 served in Iran as Sgt.

10. Political offices held (give dates):/

11. Political affiliation:

12. Religious affiliation:

13. Marriage (spouse's name, date and place of marriage):
Isabell Lucas Muir Feb 14, 1960 Rock Springs

14. Children (names, dates of birth, grandchildren, etc.):
Raylon Muir Lightner aug 22, 1946 3 boys Glen, Paul, George
Louis P. Muir dec 1, 1948 3 girls Dawn, Trudi, Casey

15.-List of clubs and societies of which you are a member:
Wyo. Peace Officer
F.O. Eagles
American Legion
Sweetwater County Search & Rescue

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