

Old Photos of Yuma



6201 WELD STREET LOOKING SOUTH, YUMA, COLO
From the Yuma Museum Collection
Original donated by Beatrice Hooker

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This page is maintained by [Lee Zion](#).

Introduction for 1st Yuma Historical Preservation Walking Tour

We would like to welcome you to our first walking/riding tour of the Yuma Historical Preservation Commission. Our purpose is to foster civic and community pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past and work to create eligibility for state and federal grant funds for the restoration, stabilization, and preservation of landmarks within the city of Yuma.

Let's take ourselves back to 1803. If you can imagine this huge territory was acquired from France for \$15 million (3 cents per acre) as part of the Great Louisiana Purchase. Yuma County became a part of the Colorado Territory in 1861. The north half of Yuma County was once part of Weld County. The north half of Yuma County was created in 1889 and the south half of Yuma County was annexed from Arapahoe County in 1903.

In 1882 the only thing in Yuma was a water tank and railroad siding. If you have noticed there is a town every 8 miles or so where at onetime there would be a water tank for the train to refill on water for its steam engine. A freight conductor by the name of Fred Weed on the Burlington Missouri Railroad loved the lay of the land, the prairies and the picture in general. He filed for a homestead on the south side of the track and talked his sweetheart Ida Albert to file for one on the north side of the tracks.

The village of Yuma began with a few flimsy shacks on the south side. There was a water tower, a very small depot, two small stores, a livery barn and a saloon. In 1886 the street turned the corner and mushroomed into three blocks south along the present Main Street but at that time known as Weld Avenue. It was a time of tremendous energy, bustle and excitement.

It was said that a child and a city must have a name. In the early 1880's with railroad track bed being built thru the territory Sam Raugh an uncle of Wilbur Chrismer had acquired thousands of horses from the Indians who were being moved to reservations in Oklahoma. Hired by the railroad Mr. Raugh was hiring teamsters to help him with the teams of horses working to lay the rail tracks and one of those teamsters was an Indian man named Yuma. Yuma became ill and died while working on the steep rise about three miles east of our town. The man was buried at this location and the switch or siding became known as Yuma and when the area was platted then the town was named Yuma. By 1886 the town had mushroomed into 3 whole blocks. Nothing seemed too big or impossible to achieve. The town of Yuma became incorporated in 1887.

Note: Now Move to the Schramm Building story

1. The Schramm Building now the Jim Powell Photography Building

The news about the lush green prairies of eastern Colorado were spreading eastward and drawing more settlers every week. In 1868 a wealthy German man by the name of Raimon von Horrum Schramm came to Yuma on the train from New York. He was believed to be the black sheep of his family in Germany, and they gave him a large dowry along with a large boot out of the country. Schramm had a big dream of building an empire for himself. He initially was going on the Milk Train to Hyde, Colorado. Yuma was not listed as a milk stop with the train. But the train stopped in Yuma and the conductor announced that this would be the only stop and Raimon von Horrum Schramm got off the train. Land agents at the time persuaded him to change his mind as to settling in Hyde. Unknown to him at the time here is where he would build. As time went by, he invested it is estimated around \$50,000 in improvements and erecting buildings with his own brand of bricks after building his own brick yard where our city park is now.

Tonight, we are highlighting two of his first buildings. The Jim Powell building as well as the Yuma Pioneer building.

On August 9, 1887, a fire broke out on the west side of Weld Avenue. It consumed at least ten buildings. More than half of the town was reduced to ashes, but new buildings were built within a few weeks. By 1888, Schramm was building large brick buildings on both the east and west side of Weld Avenue now our Main Street. One of these buildings was called the Schramm House which housed a bank, store, and the Yuma County offices which at the time contained the offices of various county officials and the county court rooms. (Which is a fascinating story all in its own). On the ground floor was the principal hotel of the town, The Schramm House.

The following years brought both bountiful harvests, then plagues of grasshoppers which destroyed everything in sight. A lot of settlers left the area in search of more lucrative lives and the ones that stayed here (a lot of our ancestors) were tough hard-core people.

Von Schramm would leave Yuma for a while only to returned to Yuma a couple of years later to rebuild the hotel damaged in the storm. In the early years there is not a lot of history of this building, but the assumption is that it remained a hotel. Raimon von Horrum Schramm had done his part, and though he controlled a large segment of Yuma business, citizens turned their backs when he ran for mayor. Heatedly he declared "Make me mayor, or I'll take my buildings and start another town of my own." The people of Yuma laughed. But shortly after, when Schramm began moving some of his frame buildings seven miles east of Yuma they were no longer laughing. He had already moved 5 buildings and was ready to begin tearing down the brick structures. So, the townspeople held an election and named Schramm as the new mayor of Yuma.

Schramm died in 1907, his wife a few years later. They are buried here in the Yuma Cemetery. Their home is the Roger Chrismer home at the SW corner of Yuma.

On May 20, 1916, Yuma was hit by a cyclone doing major damage to buildings and homes.

In 1932 the Yuma Hotel was ravaged by fire once again.

In 1941, A trust purchased the Yuma Hotel. The three owners were Glen Thompson, Roy Dedrick and Kenny Salzman. The trust continued to operate the building as the Yuma Hotel. On March 31, 1971, the trust sold the hotel to Carl Woody. Carl also was busy with his new drive in and hired Carol Dowell to manage the hotel. Jack and Carol Dowell moved to Yuma from Burlington when Jack became the brand inspector. They lived in the Yuma Hotel with their 3 small children, while Carol managed the hotel for the Woody family. Carol tells of two men getting in a fight upstairs one night and she proceeded to go up there grab one of the guys, haul him downstairs by the back of his collar and boot him out of the hotel. Ted and Joyce Wittlake also managed the hotel and lived there with their 3 girls. Kathy Murphy recalls having to help her mom Joyce do laundry for the hotel rooms down in the scary creepy basement. She also remembers a tunnel that ran from the basement of the hotel north, and you could come up in the old Duckwalls store.

Dick and Dave Hoch purchased the hotel from Carl Woody. The Hoch's converted the upstairs rooms into long term apartments and the downstairs area was used as a carpet center, then a video store for several years. The Hoch family turned the downstairs into a youth center and donated the center to the City of Yuma.

On July 29, 2003, Jim Powell purchased the building for his photography studio.

The balcony has recently been updated and is now available for musical entertainment if anyone is interested in playing or singing in the evenings or on the weekends.

2 Yuma Pioneer Story

The Yuma Pioneer was not the first newspaper here. With settlers headed west in search of new land and a promise of open territory many a printing press took up space in a covered wagon. FC Probst is believed to have founded the Yuma Sun and there were others like the Prairie Farmer, Republican Mail, and the Yuma County Times.

It's believed that the first issue of the Yuma Pioneer was printed in a woodshed on the alley of West Main Street (which was then called Weld Ave) behind what was once the Mans Store or Yuma Business Connection on Christmas Day Dec 25th, 1886. The Yuma Pioneer was in business 6 months before the Town of Yuma was incorporated 1887. FC Probst published the Pioneer for several years then the newspaper went thru a series of ownerships.

On May 16, 1916, the father-son team of H.J. and T.H. Woodbury bought the paper. A week later a tornado ripped through the town. The 5-column sheet printed a page at a time on the Chandler & Price press. The paper was moved to a frame shack on the lot now occupied by the Chrismer building. From there the move was made to 3rd Ave and Main and then to a basement in the Sheedy building (a wood framed building where Edward D Jones is now) and finally to the upstairs floor of the Yuma Pioneer building we see today. Note: The Chandler & Price press is now located and on display on the Old Threshers grounds. The Woodbury's always said if nothing else their paper "Got Around."

They nursed the handset days until 1918 when the Linotype was installed. The Lee Press was installed in 1924. For each letter and character was separate pieces to machines which molded entire lines from hot metal. After the death of H.J Woodbury in March of 1936 T.H. Woodbury continued the publication of the paper until August 3, 1944. T.H. Woodbury decided he had had enough and sold the paper to Leo and Vera Chance. Leo was a veteran newspaperman from Kansas and the Pioneer continued to prosper and grow in circulation.

The Yuma Pioneer continued in its upstairs location for 30 years with The Red and White Grocery located on the main floor. The Chances son Roger had graduated from Yuma Union High School and went on to college in Greeley. After college he returned to Yuma and joined his parents in the newspaper

business where he would become co-publisher with his father. In 1951 Roger married his high school sweetheart Margie Doron.

1954 it was decided to move the Pioneer downstairs to the main floor. Now Margie's dad Bruce Doron was a master carpenter and he along with friend Vaughn Campbell were trusted to do the job. Bruce prepared the building for moving operations by cutting a large hole in the floor through which all equipment was moved by Vaughn and his crew. Mr. Doron constructed the framework of four by six-inch lumber to which were attached four chain hoists to support the heavy platform. All machinery was moved to the platform and lowered to the main floor. Although many tons of heavy equipment were moved, the project was accomplished without serious difficulty or accident.

Many have inquired about the weight of the equipment. The Lee newspaper press weighs over 4,000 lbs. and the Linotype weighs approx. 3,500 lbs.

In a mass conversion among newspapers everywhere the Pioneer went from hot type to offset in 1973. It was the last big transition from the days when it overset the Linotype would dump hot lead into your shoes to a process of photo typesetting and cameras from carrying 100 lb page chases to the press to 2 oz paste ups and from top press speeds of 1400/hour to over 10 times that speed.

With changeover went much of the romance. No more all-night swings on press day sleeping the two hours on shavings from the paper folder before making the 5 am post office deadline. It was a great era in the history of newspapers which old timers liked to recount at press get togethers but admittedly wouldn't relive outside of conversation.

Before Twitter, Facebook, email etc. you could hear people say, "IS THE PAPER OUT YET"? If you wanted the latest in local news, sports, society columns and always a good editorial from Roger's good ole manual typewriter of which he never gave up locals hurried to the grocery stores and local news stands to buy up the Yuma Pioneer late Wednesday afternoons.

Many local citizens have worked at the Yuma Pioneer thru the years. In 2003 the Chances sold the Yuma Pioneer to their employees who continue to operate it today. Is The Paper Out Yet???

#3 The Sears and Roebuck House @ 320 South Ash House

Once known as the yellow house on Ash Street, this distinctive building was a “kit home” brought in on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad back in the early 1900’s.

Kit homes were extremely popular at the turn of the century. They were offered in 447 styles by the Sears, Roebuck and Company and between 1908 and 1939 more than 75,000 do-it-yourself kit homes were sold.

Although some believe 320 South Ash was an early Montgomery Ward home, the dates suggest otherwise. Montgomery Ward did not begin selling kit homes until 1931 during the Great Depression.

Interestingly the concept of kit homes was not invented by Sears and Roebuck but the well-known company copied the idea from Aladdin Homes, an idea pioneered by two brothers, Otto and William Sovereign, of Bay City, Michigan.

Many kit homes are still standing in small towns across the Midwest and Great Plains. In Yuma, most of them can be found on Ash and Birch Streets and are easily identified by their wrapped pillar porches, second-story dormers and distinctive roof lines.

Prices ranged anywhere from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for the most common models, although the sky was the limit if you had enough money. The top model sold by Sears was called “The Magnolia”, a spacious 10-room neo-Georgian home complete with two-story columned porticos and exterior balconies that resembled a plantation mansion on the Mississippi Delta. The Magnolia was available from 1913 to 1923 for just under \$7,000.

More than half of the kit homes were assembled by the homeowners who purchased them. Although some enterprising individuals began assembling the kit homes as show homes and offering to build or assemble the kits for new homeowners for a price of course.

According to an article in Popular Mechanics, the first wave of kit homes sold through Sears & Roebuck weighed 25 tons each and consisted of 30,000 pre-cut parts and also included plumbing and electrical fixtures, and up to 750 lbs. of nails.

Roy and Mable Shepherd purchased the original home in 1917 and lived there until 1945. Roy was one of the original founders and stockholders of the Farmers State Bank of Yuma.

The Shepherds then sold the house to Martin and Bessie Cannon. The Cannons had been living on their farmstead 7 miles north of Yuma since 1906 after coming to Yuma from Smith Center, Kansas.

In the early 1950's Bessie sold the home for \$7,000 to her granddaughter, Mildred Cannon Vincent and Mildred's new husband Jim Vincent. The Vincent's raised three daughters and one son over the 30 some years they owned this grand home. It was during this time in 1958 Jim built the Shop-All grocery store. Running the prosperous pharmacy and grocery business until the late 1980's when he sold to the employees.

As was common with many kit homes, the house at 320 South Ash underwent several renovations over the years. In the late 1960's, Jim and Millie removed the spacious front porch to provide extra room for their growing family of four children. The Vincent's sold the home in 1983 and moved to a different location in Yuma after retiring.

Several new families have occupied the historic home on Ash Street since then, and the house has undergone further remodeling and renovations both inside and out.

I have to tell that I thought this house was so cool when I would come home with Polly Vincent in the early 1970's and it was here that I had my ears pierced by two cubes of ice, a big ole darning needle and a cork.

#4 Yuma Hospital Story

We are here at one of Yuma's first hospitals. Although this is not the "first home" hospital in Yuma that hospital was the large two-story house at 708 North Main, On December 15, 1928, a group of men from the Lutheran Church met and decided that Yuma needed a "good" hospital. Under the leadership of the present Lutheran pastor, the pioneer Lutherans organized themselves into a hospital association for the purpose of establishing a good hospital in Yuma. It is chartered under the state laws and incorporated in Yuma County as the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital Association of Yuma. The "good" hospital located at 220 West Fourth Ave opened its doors on January 3, 1929 and remained the hospital for the next 20 years.

The matron, Miss Ester Schabacker RN has immediate charge of the management, operation and care for the hospital and patients. The hospital had the capacity of 12 beds and 4 basinetts. The babies were all kept upstairs in a room on the west side with a window in the nursery door so nurses could look in. The main floor was used for emergencies, births and patients. Can you imagine how much work it was to go up and down the steep narrow stairs with their long skirts carrying babies back and forth to their mothers that were down on the main floor. Those nurses had to be in great shape.

In April 1938 the Lutherans felt that they could no longer operate under the Association. Not wishing to lose the hospital, a group of Yuma businessmen took over the hospital as the Yuma Community Hospital sponsored by the people in and around Yuma. The board consisted of four doctors: Drs Bennett, Billsborrow, Ham and Flaten and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce. Each agreed to raise the \$975 to purchase the equipment. That hospital served the community adequately for almost a decade. But once again, a growing town and greater medical demands from the community clearly showed how substandard the building and the equipment really were. It is a tribute to the medical profession that the nursing and medical staff could accomplish so much and work so faithfully under such conditions.

In August 1945 the Board took on another major fund-raising effort, this time to build a new, modern hospital. Earl Harper recalled that at the time you could apply for Hill Burton Money. New hospitals were being built all over the state. This money was like a grant and covered a certain percentage of the cost of the new hospital, but you had to follow their specifications. When asked why they didn't go with them the treasurer at the time LE Fitzgerald said they were going to make us put in a \$600 potato peeler and Fitzgerald thought that was so asinine that he refused to go along with it, and they decided to go it alone. In July of 1948 the groundbreaking ceremonies were held and June 10, 1949, the new Yuma District Hospital was dedicated.

When Dave and Luann Hoch purchased the house and remodeled it, they replaced one of the doors with a door Dave had found that still had Dr Ham's name printed on the glass. Dave also said that when they started remodeling, they found that the insulation was old Yuma Pioneer newspapers that had been stuffed in the walls.

Many people thru the years have driven by and told the Hoch's as well as current owners Gary and Heidi Trute "I had my appendix taken out here or I had surgery in this house and even Gary's dad Glen Trute was born in this house".

This hospital served the community gallantly and well. The growth of the Yuma community and the greater medical demands proved that the building and equipment were not adequate. When one thinks back to the day of that hospital, it is understandable. The kitchen, drug room, operating room, sterilizing room, sanitation and other things so necessary were greatly below standard. Yet, the nursing staff worked faithfully and accomplished so much.

#5 Hoch Lumber Company

In 1893, The Hoch Lumber Company was established by Henry Hoch. He had great faith in the eastern plains of Colorado even though the times were challenging to the pioneers. Henry brought the first load of lumber to Yuma from Sterling with a team of oxen and wagon. The lumberyard was very instrumental in helping build the surrounding territory into a community that many referred to as the "Pride of the Plains".

The first office was situated in a grain elevator along the old Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad (now known as the Burlington Northern). A few years later, the office and lumber sheds were moved to its present location on Main Street. Henry along with his two sons Arnold and Carl incorporated the lumberyard in 1932. In 1937 Bill Robertson began working at the lumberyard right out of high school. The three Hoch's and Bill Robertson operated it together until Arnold's death in 1954. At that time Arnolds heirs took over and Carl managed their farm and other real estate.

In 1966, the Corporation was purchased by Bill Robertson, Jack Montgomery and Richard (Dick) Hoch and shortly Boyd Robertson joined the Hoch Lumber team. Jack and Dick later sold their interest to Gary Wright and Lynn Robertson (Bill's son).

On December 21, 1981, at high noon, the lumberyard burned to the ground. Nothing left but a pile of ashes! Dan Robertson joined the company in 1982 shortly after the fire working alongside Gary Wright. By October of 1982 new building and lumber and storages sheds were built and an open house was held.

When Bill Robertson retired, he had been working at Hoch Lumber for 65 years. In all his years working for the Hoch's he said he never received an unkind word from H.C., Arnold or Carl, a tribute that not many employees can say about their employers.

Dan Robertson and his wife Mary Kay purchased Gary Wrights share in 2009 and operate Hoch Lumber together today.

The logo of the lumberyard for many years has been "Home of the Square Deal".