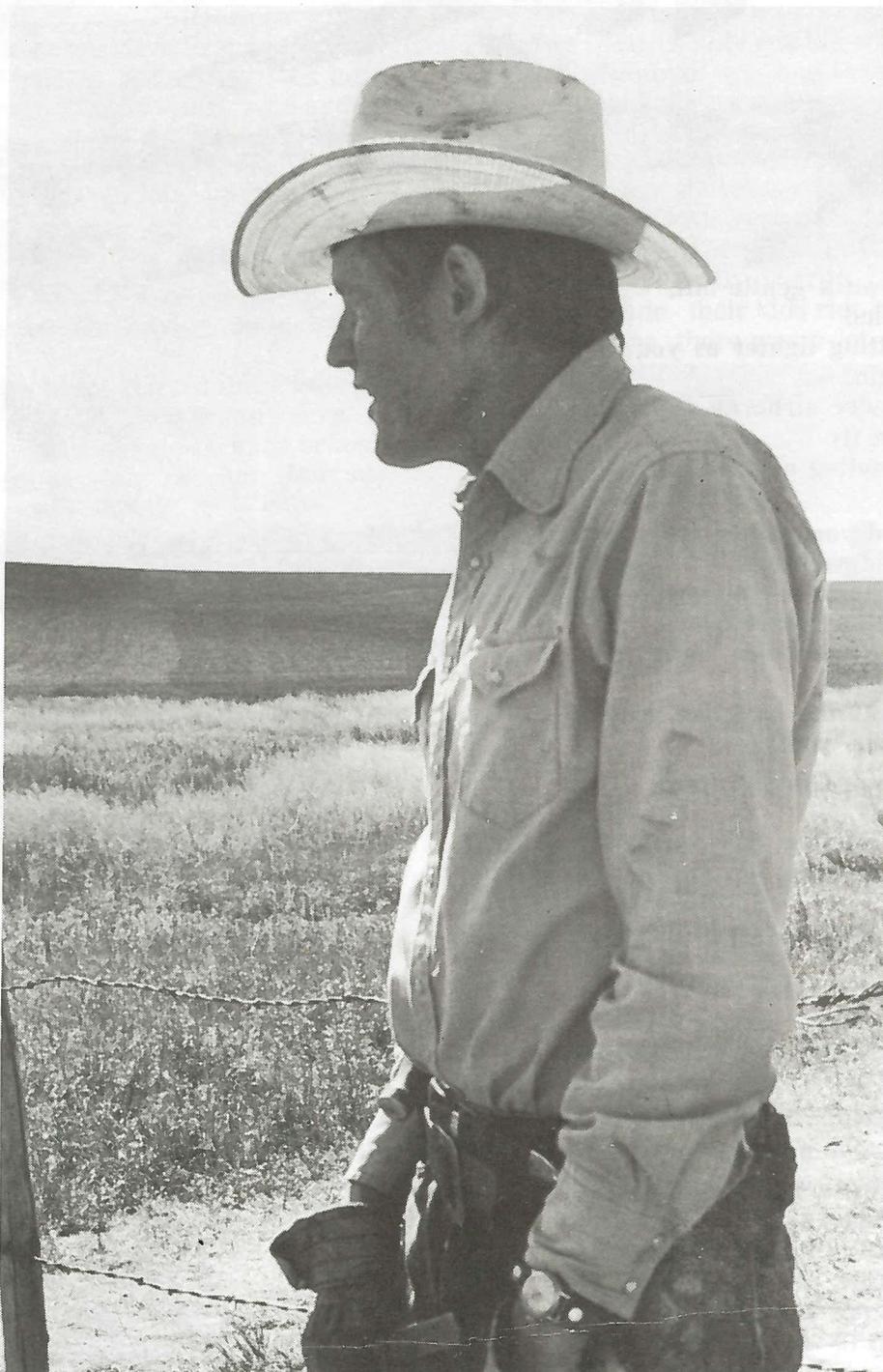


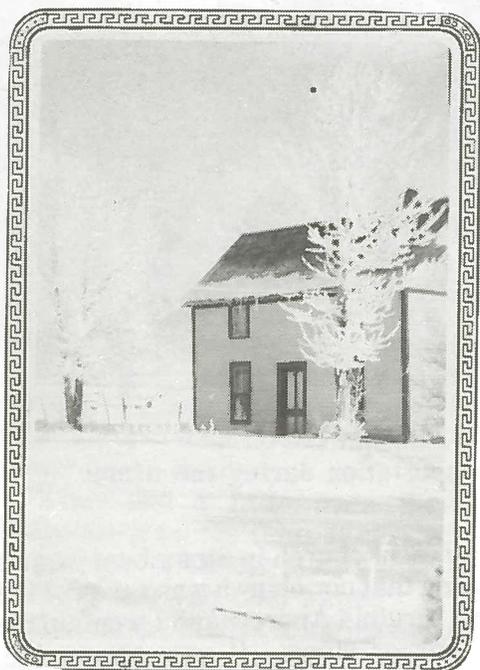
**"WHY GO ANYWHERE WHEN  
YOU'RE ALREADY THERE?"**



Vernon Summer

**BY AMY UPHAM AND TERRY GROBLEBE**

“I’ve lived in this house, on this place since 1927. It belonged to my grandfather. He brought his twelve children from Georgetown and built the first house on this property in 1889. I was born in 1917 and I’m the third generation. I had an older sister, my mom and my dad. My folks bought the property from my granddad in 1938 with a two story house. After my father died in 1955 my wife, Edyth, and I had the new house built in 1962.



Vernon Summer’s first house

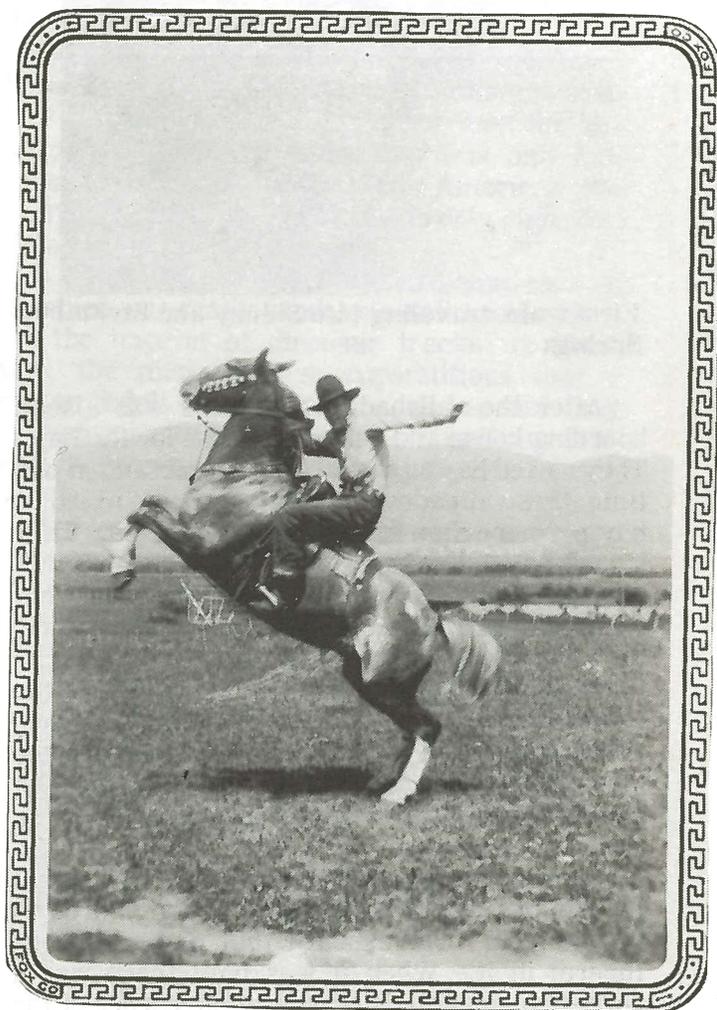
“When I was a boy just like all kids we helped milk the cows, put up the hay, and when the chores were done we would fish and swim in the creek. I also rode horseback and used to rope in the rodeos. I rode in the wild cow riding contest before they went to bucking bulls. In the winter I skied quite a bit. There was a train you could ride into Steamboat; it would go in every night and come back in the morning. The ride cost 50 cents.

“I’ve never done any other job besides ranching, but for extra money I trapped animals and sold the pelts. With six hundred acres of land there is a lot to hunt on. This whole country was the hunting ground for the Indians for years through the summer months.”

Vernon Summers, a friendly easy going rancher in this area spent several afternoons telling us about the long gone town of Sidney, Colorado. Not only did he give us factual information, but he took the time to tromp around the old foundations of the forgotten town with Three Wire Winter staff members.

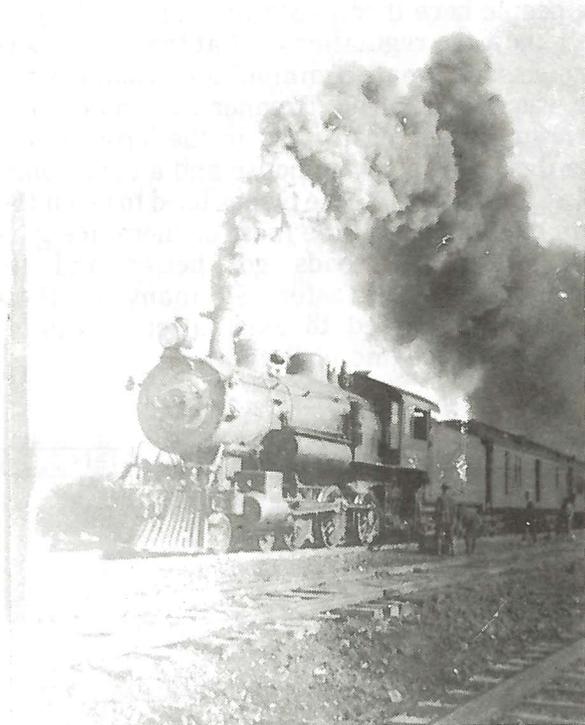
“Sidney didn’t amount to very much till after the railroad came. But before it was Sidney there was a Major Knott who camped here in the early days and this whole area before the railraod was known as Knott Bottom. This is what I’ve heard, but it was before my time. Of course, having lived here, I have heard quite a few things.

The word of the rich soil passed around and people settled on small farms and ranches. They decided they needed a Post Office, so they wrote the government and were sent a list of names. The people here then chose the name Sidney. I don’t know the regulations, but at that time there were several small communities around here. One was where Harold Brenner lives now called Harrison. Over east of us in the Trout Creek area there was a school house and a community called Eddy. All of these places used to be on the early day maps, and the most of them are gone now. Then the roads got better and the transportation got faster, so many of these communities ceased to exist after a while. That’s what became of Sidney.



Vernon on his horse, Frisky.

“The first settler here, I heard, was a Mister Lyons, Jarred Lyons. The Reager place was as where he lived. They had a store ther, the Lyons Brother’s Store. I assume it was there long before the railroad. There were other families followed by the Lyons who were merchants and had property. At one time a neighbor farmer bought milk and made cheese. My grandfather sold milk to him and the neighbor would drive to Craig and on the way there sell the cheese. He was known as the old Austrian cheese seller then.



**First train traveling into Sidney and Steamboat Springs**

“After the railroad came, there was also a boarding house and a storage house for the hay. They raised hay on these bottom lands and at one time these meadows produced more meadow hay per acre than any in North America. They stored baled hay here. The store location was also a creamery and right across the road what we used to call ‘The Black Building’ in the early days was the blacksmith shop.

“There were probably about ten people in the immediate community and we had a school house. Right across from the railroad was the community church. It sat there till the early 30’s. and the Methodists sponsored it, then it was so close to Steamboat and was unused so the conference rules required it be sold. I don’t believe there was ever anybody in that church on the hill, but I have heard that there was one funeral in it. When it was built there was a corner stone and a Bible put in the corner of the church.



**Transportation during the winter**

“The present church in Steamboat was built in 1960. Being that our church was a part of the new one then, Virginia Andrew and I went up there to get the corner stone. It now sits in the new church in Steamboat. We in Sidney went to Sunday School at the community church during the twenties. Later if we went to church at all, we went to Steamboat. The Methodist minister from Steamboat would come out on Sundays and conduct services. There were very few in the congregation, only about twenty, but at times there were quite a few visitors. Sometimes the minister would come out in the winter when the church was snowed in and would have services in the Sidney school house.

“In the upstairs of the early store there was a pool hall. Long before down the road there used to be a saloon, the Old Gus Durbin saloon; it was a stopping place. There were people with horses who would ride to it. And the Sarvis Timber Company men during World War I, and possibly in the twenties, would stop there. I remember floated logs down the river and I’ve heard tales of those timber workers who would come over to the saloon and buy whiskey. They were going up and down the rivers to keep the logs moving down to the Sarvis Timber Sawmill near Steamboat. It was quite a logging operation with seven miles of flume made out of wood. The lumber was shipped to the sawmills. You can still see remains of the flume there on Service Creek.

"A big shipment of cattle would go out of here in the fall, sometime in October. It was a going thing. Sometimes the corrals wouldn't hold all the cattle and you could see herds of cattle being held up the lane there till the brand inspector could brand them and load them on the cars to haul them away. The cattle came from Trout Creek area, Pleasant Valley and the Mesa, just clear around.

"That was the common practice, shipping cattle in the fall. It was something to look forward to, there were as many as twelve car loads a day that would go out on the weekend in the falltime. There would be over a thousand head shipped out. If there was a car full of cattle going to Denver then you could get a pass and ride to Denver on the caboose and come back on the passenger train. A group would get together, if you had any amount of cattle going, get a pass to Denver, go to the stockyards and see the cows sold. They did this every year. I only rode the cattle drive once, in the fifties. We left here in the afternoon and reached Denver about daybreak. The trip was free if you had cattle, it was the depression during the thirties and the far cost five to ten dollars each way. It was pretty expensive.



Sidney General Store

"I wasn't around when the railroad hit Steamboat in 1908. There were long freights and huge locomotives that they called Mallis and some of them Mikes. Three huge steamers

would be the most you would ever see, they made a lot of pollution. It isn't the steam but the coal burning. There had to be a fire in the tender just like a fire from a stove and also the steam would come out, but they were also very efficient. They had to have either a V or a turn table to turn the locomotive around, and they didn't have one in Sidney. There was one in Steamboat where they turned it around, and another one in Craig so the train only passed through Sidney.

"A group of local people organized a store there and called it the Valley Mercantile. It was an impressive building with a high front and a pool hall upstairs. It didn't pan out because Steamboat was too close. People thought with a better road instead of trading at a country store they would go to Steamboat. Now, a town like Clark where they are twenty miles from town had a decided advantage. People won't go all the way into Steamboat but would shop at Clark. I remember the store keeper's wife said 'People just used our store as a place of convenience,' which was very true. The last people who owned it were the Iacovettos of Phippsburg. The old storekeeper who owned it was Tom Wismer. He got older and sold out and went to Denver. He sold it to the Iacovettos who used to own a store in Phippsburg. Ray was one of their boys. The old people are still living, but they are no longer in the store. They bought it in 1940 and closed it in 1941. It has been torn down since then.





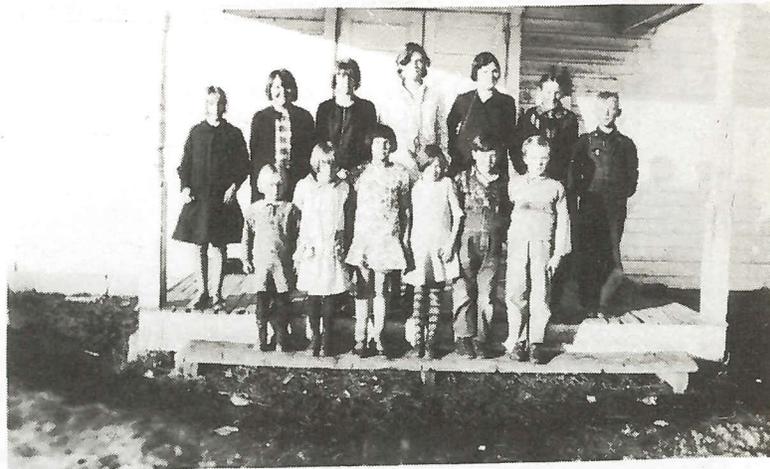
“There was also quite a bit of potatoes raised here up to 1940. Under the big store building and behind it there was a fair size potato storage cellar where people could bring their potatoes after digging them up in the fall. They would keep them there. In 1941, same year as the Yampa Valley Electric started, huge storage cellars were built, one in Steamboat, one in Sidney, and one in Yampa. People would rent bin space out because it was a growing thing, raising potatoes. And beyond the stock yard, there used to be a huge potato cellar, and there was an electrically operated potato grader in there. It was a growing thing, but by the 1950’s potato raising about came to an end. It wasn’t practical anymore to raise potatoes, not much of a profit without proper irrigation. Also every farm in that area had access to potato cellars. We rented three potato bins in the huge new cellar for something like twenty dollars a year. It was very convenient, and we planned to ship them out on the railroad. It didn’t amount to anything like they thought it would, even though they used to ship them out of here in refrigerated cars back in the thirties. You used to see four or five horse drawn sleighs come over the Cow Creek divide from those hills and you would see them load sacks of potatoes on refrigerated cars, so they wouldn’t freeze, then ship them out of here.

“Well, as I remember, Sidney was never a town. It was just a stopping place. There was a gas pump, and you could get oil. A bench was out in front of the store where people would come and sit and look over the valley, but it was never looked upon as a town; it only remained a farm community. A train stopped here until the sixties. Every morning the passenger train would come up from Craig and go through here; every afternoon about five it would return. It would come in at night and go out in the morning and would carry the passengers. They tried for years to keep it going, but people quit riding it, it cost the railroad money and it didn’t near pay for itself so finally they had to give up. There was a little depot here and it said Sidney on it and the elevation 6700 and some odd feet. Quite often we could ride the passengers train to Steamboat for 50¢ or come out on it. The people were just continually riding the train because it would stop. The post master who was also the storekeeper would meet the train with his bag of mail every night and morning. The people depended upon it to get to and from Denver.

“Even though Sidney was a small community much produce left the township for places unknown. Cream and cattle were in abundance when the train stopped to pick up a load. Every few days people could ship their cream. We, like all the neighbors would go there, and there might be twenty cans of cream, sitting by the little depot. The train would stop and load these twenty cans of cream and thus they were shipped to various creameries in Denver. The people would do this for part of their income.



“Sidney did have its own school building though. It was a log building. As long as I can remember that school was always the same. It was built in 1912, the log one, and it was a going thing till 1953. When I started the first grade there were at least thirty kids, but it didn’t last. It declined fast because this was a homestead, and in most of these places people were trying to make a living on one hundred and sixty acres of land back in the hills. It just couldn’t be done. When I finished school in the eighth grade down here I doubt if there were a dozen people. There was a horse barn to saddle the horses in at most of the schools, also there was a house close to the school where the teacher lived called a teachery. I went to three years of grade school in Steamboat and also three years at the Steamboat High School.



Front row-Jane Muirhead, Valene Cook Howe S.S. Edna Sampson, Peggy Neff, John Sampson, Wilbert Neff.

Back row - Helen Muirhead, Eula Becker, Ellenor Muirhead, Nadine Becker “Reager” Craig. Elaine Becker Gay, “Steamboat” Fletcher Muirhead, Vernon Cook.



**SIDNEY SCHOOL IN 1930**

“There were a lot of country and western dances held in the school house. In the winter practically every weekend there would be a dance. People got together through country dances more than any other way back in the Twenties. I do remember in the depression there was a range rider, Frank Officer, who gave a hard times dance people came in the worst worst clothes, because it was during the hard times. Frank came with a tie made out of a potato sack with a clothes pin on it.

“We would get musicians who wouldn’t charge much to play there. There would usually be a violin, a piano, maybe a guitar or banjo. Over in Cow Creek there were some awful good musicians. Elmer Dorr could play the piano fantastically and he had a neighbor Mike who could play the violin. They could really make music. They would go as far as Deep Creek in the winter with a team and play for dances.

In latter years the farmer’s union came in here in 1939 when I was out of high school. They’d meet every month at the Sidney school house and I got the job of making coffee for the dance. People used to say they had a better time at those hard times dances in the depression, even more than when the times got better.

“There weren’t just dances; they had a lot of social activities there. They would have a box supper if there was a needy family or if someone got sick, then one of us would engineer a box supper. They decorated a box with a lunch in it, and usually the guy who called the dances at square dances would auction off the box at midnight. People would bid quite high, and the money would go to a worthy cause.

“When I was pretty young, they did have a literary society that would meet at the Sidney school house. The Barber family lived here, well educated prominent and progressive people. They took quite an interest in the Literary Digest. They joined some group to help promote the plays. Mr. Barber was a teacher in the early days and he had a part in one which was a comedy type play. The plays were more on the intellectual order. The people in these parts were tired of all that old western stuff and were more progressive.

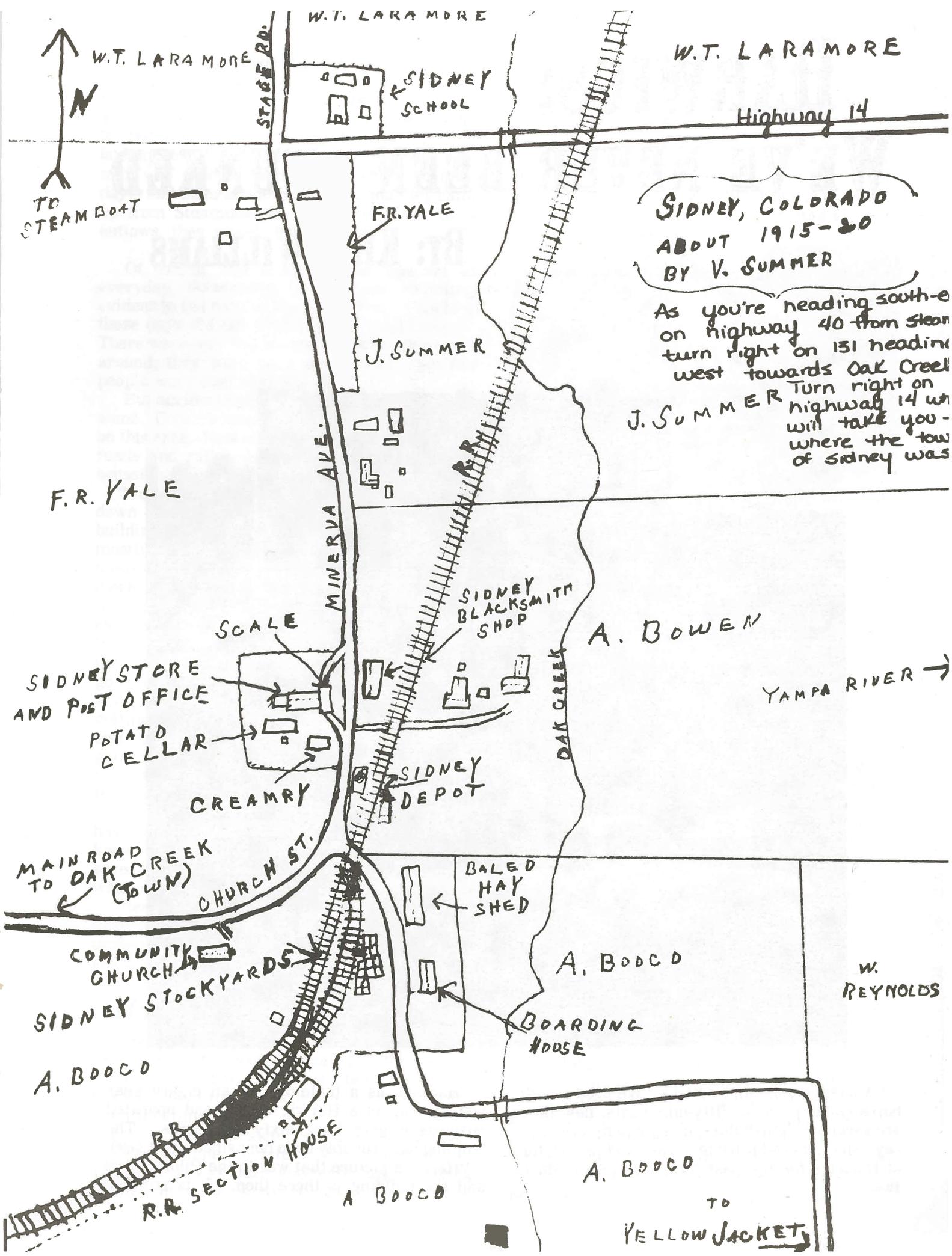


Slowly people started moving to larger towns like Steamboat Springs for the convenience, variety of stores and more available jobs. The town of Sidney was never a booming town, but it was productive enough to have its own store, railroad, church, post office and school. There is a sign still hanging next to the railroad track signifying Sidney, Colorado where it used to be. To an outsider the sign may not even be visible, but for those who lived there and for some who still do, Sidney, Colorado has vivid memories of days gone by.

“But these were hard times, during the depression, and people often suppressed their problems by drinking corn liquor which they made themselves. When I was riding up the road with my Dad one day, there laid a bottle in the road, a whiskey bottle. It held about a pint of whiskey which cost about five dollars. I couldn't believe it, because we paid a dime for a bottle of pop, and I wondered why anyone would pay five dollars for a pint of whiskey, ten dollars for a gallon. It was just a relief for a lot of old timers when it was legal to buy whiskey. There was an old character here who told my father, 'They can't call this a free country anymore if they take away our whiskey,' and he meant it. He looked upon it as an interference into people's individual lives. We looked at people who even handled liquor as being bootleggers, down right law-breakers. But it was sold, even to the prominent people. Still it was against the law to make it or handle it.



Special thanks to Winifred Cook, Irene Booco Crawford, Art Hudspeth, and Vernon Summer for helping us with photos and comments about Sidney.



SIDNEY, COLORADO  
 ABOUT 1915-20  
 BY V. SUMMER

As you're heading south-  
 on highway 40 from Steam  
 turn right on 151 heading  
 west towards Oak Creek  
 Turn right on  
 highway 14 wh  
 will take you -  
 where the town  
 of Sidney was

W.T. LARAMORE

W.T. LARAMORE

SIDNEY SCHOOL

Highway 14

TO STEAMBOAT

F.R. YALE

J. SUMMER

F.R. YALE

MINERVA AVE.

SIDNEY BLACKSMITH SHOP

A. BOWEN

SIDNEY STORE AND POST OFFICE

POTATO CELLAR

SCALE

CREAMRY

SIDNEY DEPOT

YAMPA RIVER

MAIN ROAD TO OAK CREEK (TOWN)

CHURCH ST.

BALED HAY SHED

COMMUNITY CHURCH

SIDNEY STOCKYARDS

A. BOGCO

W. REYNOLDS

BOARDING HOUSE

A. BOGCO

R.R. SECTION HOUSE

A. BOGCO

A. BOGCO

TO YELLOW JACKET