



HISTORY OF WELD COUNTY TOWNS

HIGHLAND LAKE – 1873

Ghost Towns In Weld County

For health reasons, L. C. Mead and his wife, Elizabeth, ventured west in 1871 by train to Erie, Colorado. Then they traveled by stagecoach to the recently established Chicago-Colorado Colony, later Longmont, and then on to Greeley. They were disappointed by high land prices in Greeley so got back on a stage bound for Longmont.

On their return trip, L. C. noticed a prairie lake about 20 feet deep and less than half a mile in diameter that intrigued him. The following spring he staked his claim there naming the lake Highland Lake after the body of water in Sir Walter Scott's poem, *The Lady of the Lake*.

A town named Highlandlake (all-one-word) was settled on the lake in 1873 to fulfill agreements with the Chicago-Colorado Colony. By the early 1880s Highlandlake boasted a baseball team, three bands, a singing school, Woman's Pleasure Club, and a chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. It became a well-known vacation spot for wealthy Denverites providing activities such as boating, bicycling, fishing, hunting, ice skating, dances, tennis, and concerts.

Disaster hit when the railroad bypassed Highlandlake. In 1908 Isabella Terry True, a Highlandlake resident, recorded in her diary, *"When I heard the bells ringing today for the new town of Mead, it was as if they were tolling the death knell of Highlandlake."* Nearly all of Highlandlake's public buildings were moved to Mead and in 1921 their school closed.

*The above information is gleaned from the upcoming book, **Weld County Towns: The First 150 Years**, researched by the City of Greeley Museums staff, Nancy Lourine Lynch head writer.*