



HISTORY OF WELD COUNTY TOWNS

KEOTA – 1888

Unincorporated Communities and Populated Place in Current Weld County

Tradition has it that Keota is a native word meaning either "gone to visit" or "fire has gone out," and was the name of the homestead established in 1880 by two sisters, Mary and Eva Beardsley. In 1888 they sold Keota to the Lincoln Land Company who filed a plat for the town of Keota.

Located in the center of the present-day Pawnee National Grasslands, Keota became a station stop on what was affectionately called the "Old Prairie Dog Express" on the Colorado-Wyoming Division of the Burlington-Missouri Railroad. The town had a hotel, restaurant and other railroad crew services. The depression of the late 1800s caused Keota's population to fall from 300 to 77, and the post office closed in 1890.

A second wave of homesteaders began coming from the Midwest in 1908 and the Keota Post Office reopened in 1909. The rains of 1911 increased land prices for both farming and raising cattle. Residents dug wells and established a hotel, newspaper - *The Keota News*, lumberyard, church and schools.

The remote location and lack of a continuous water source were two contributing factors in Keota's decline. The school closed in 1951 and the Keota Post Office in 1974. The railroad was abandoned, and the tracks removed in 1975.

*"...--all town business had folded with the Depression, the drouth, and the dust-bowl days. But Wayside Press and the Stanleys continued on for almost another 35 years, to 1974." 1997 – Dr. Walter H. & Elma M. Stewart, *Northeast Colorado Newspaperdom*.*

*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.*