

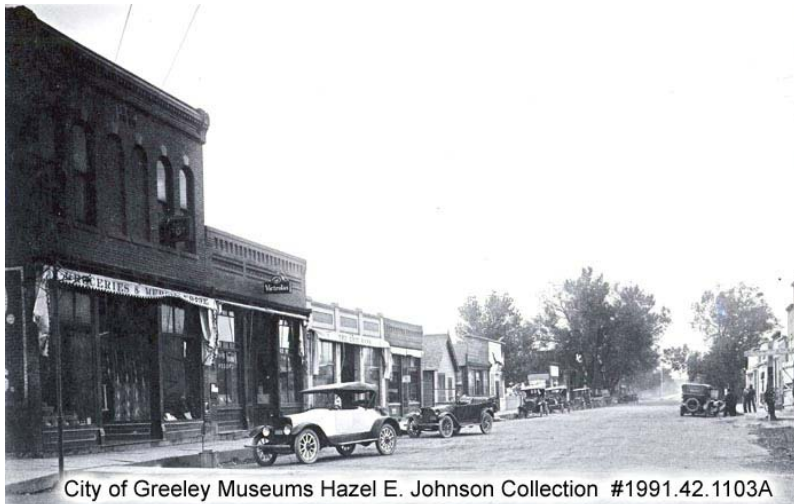


HISTORY OF WELD COUNTY TOWNS

ERIE

Incorporated Weld County Town - 1874

In the late 1860s, the Erie location was a stage stop along the route between Laramie and Denver. A mining camp was built at that same location in 1870 next to Weld County's first commercial coal mine. The camp was named Erie by Reverend Van



1914 – Downtown Erie Looking north on Briggs Street; City of Greeley Museums Hazel E. Johnson Collection #1991.42.0013A

Valkenburg after his home town of Erie, Pennsylvania. The Denver Pacific Railroad built a rail line spur to Erie for coal and settlers. People and freight in Denver that were going to Longmont or Boulder could take the train to Erie then a wagon could be hired to go the rest of the way.

Cave-ins, poisonous gasses, loose rocks, flooding, and the risk of falling into a shaft made coal mining a dangerous and too often fatal job. The first miners' strike in Erie was in 1871 to improve conditions in the mines. In 1935, many Erie streets caved in due to mine shafts that were cut too close to the surface.

In the early 1900s, Kuner Empson built a pickle factory with a salting station next to the railroad tracks at the south end of Erie.

Though Erie became an incorporated town in 1874, the streets were not marked and residents literally did not know their addresses until street signs were installed in the 1940s.

“When you got big enough to carry a dinner bucket without it bouncin’ along the ground, you were big enough to go down in the mine.” Joe “Cotton” Fletcher, Erie miner.

*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.*