

Homestead and Hope  
Keota, Colorado  
1888 - Present



# **Homesteading and Hope: Keota, Colorado, 1888- Present**

What was “homesteading” and why did the United States government encourage it?  
What kind of people does it take to build a community on the dry plains?  
Why did the people of Keota move away, and how do they keep the memories of their town alive?

**By Jennifer Goodland\***  
**Standards and Teaching Strategies by:**  
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## Standards Addressed

A quick-glance overview of social studies standards that teachers might address in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and high school using the resources in this set.

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### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### History:

- *Standard 1.1:* Organize and sequence events to understand the concepts of chronology and cause and effect in the history of Colorado
- *Standard 1.2:* The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes in Colorado history and their relationships to key events in the United States

#### Geography:

- *Standard 2.1:* Use several types of geographic tools to answer questions about the geography of Colorado
- *Standard 2.2:* Connections within and across human systems are developed

#### Economics

- *Standard 3.1:* People respond to positive and negative incentives.
  - *Standard 3.2:* The relationship between choice and opportunity cost (PFL)
- 

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### History:

- *Standard 1.1:* Formulate appropriate hypotheses about United States history based on variety of historical sources and perspectives

#### Geography:

- *Standard 2.1:* Use geographic tools to analyze patterns in human and physical systems
- *Standard 2.2:* Examine places and regions and the connections among them.

#### Economics:

- *Standard 3.1:* Economic freedom, including free trade, is important for economic growth

#### Civics:

- *Standard 4.1:* Analyze elements of continuity and change in the United States government and the role of citizens over time
- 

### High School

#### History:

- *Standard 1.1:* Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence

#### Geography:

- *Standard 2.1:* Use different types of maps and geographic tools to analyze features on Earth to investigate and solve geographic questions.
- *Standard 2.2:* Explain and interpret geographic variables that influence the interactions of people, places and environments

**Economics:**

- *Standard 3.1:* Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy

## Overview Essay

*"I do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course, uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence..."*  
-Edwin James, Stephen Long Expedition, 1823

The explorers and settlers who pushed their way West from the Mississippi River long regarded the arid Colorado plains as a useless void of space. While numerous tribes, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa, lived and hunted in Eastern Colorado, the Stephen Long Expedition along the Platte River dismissed what they called "The Great American Desert." However, as better farmland in Iowa and Nebraska filled with hopeful settlers, the second generation of homesteaders eyed the developing land of the dry plains.

Until the 1870s, most experts believed the High Plains covering the eastern half of Colorado and much of Kansas and Nebraska were desolate and unproductive because they did not resemble the grassy forests east of the Mississippi River. The West's first explorers contrasted the erratic rainfall and small creeks of the plains with the steadier eastern climates and large rivers and determined that the nation's center was unfit for agriculture. Even President Thomas Jefferson thought the area west of the 98<sup>th</sup> meridian was filled with "immense and trackless deserts."

But by the 1870s, the America's attitude towards the "Great American Desert" had changed. Spurred by advances in well drilling and developments in dryland cultivation techniques, a wide range of Americans looked West and, with the help of the U.S. government, saw the region as a place rich with agricultural possibilities.

The Homestead Act of 1862 and the notorious western booster's promise that the rain would follow the plow drew migrant and immigrant farmers to the Great Plains. These men and woman came from many different economic backgrounds. Some were wealthy investors looking to cash in on the land rush, and some were small family farmers who wanted to carve out their own piece of the American dream. What united all of them was a shared desire to transform Colorado's prairie landscapes into cold hard cash.

Luckily for these would-be farmers, the later part of the nineteenth century was a peculiarly wet period of time in Colorado's environmental history. Early homesteaders found success growing wheat, barley, rye, and other grains in addition to beans and vegetables. But as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, rain came less frequently to Colorado's eastern plains and most farmers had to learn about dry farming the hard way - through repeated crop failure and soil erosion.

The practice of dry farming depends on a farmer's ecological knowledge and his or her understanding of a plant's lifecycle, and it is the only way homesteaders were able to eke out a living in Colorado. Farmers skilled in dry farming choose to plant particular crops based on their knowledge of seasonal rainfall and of their crops' ability to withstand short periods of dry weather. When farmers had access to supplemental water drawn from a well, dryland agriculture could sustain a family and even become profitable. But as the residents of Keota would discover, year after year of heedless plowing and planting on the plains quickly degrades the quality of the soil and depletes the landscape of the nutrients it needs to keep growing food. By the 1930s, prolonged drought, unbridled agriculture, and the introduction of gasoline powered tractors used for rapidly plowing huge tracts of land undermined

the landscape's ability to sustain plant life. Farmers in Keota during the 1930s watched helplessly as windstorms took their once-fertile soil and carried it high into the atmosphere.

But the nightmare scenario that so many farmers found themselves facing during the Dust Bowl was far in the future for siblings Mary Hattie, Eva Ann, and Herbert Beardsley when they left their parents' homestead claim in Nebraska for three dry parcels of land in northern Colorado around 1888. Around 1888, siblings Mary Hattie, Eva Ann, and Herbert Beardsley left their parents' homestead claim in Nebraska for three dry parcels of land in northern Colorado. They would become homesteaders on their own, just as their parents had done when the children were young. They knew how to improve land and claim title to it. Their parents taught them independence and toughness, and they all experienced the hardships common to their generation.

Their father, John S. Beardsley, served as a private in Company D of the 13<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry during the Civil War. The family had just started a life in Keokuk in the southeastern corner of Iowa when the war started. The soldiers who mustered for Keokuk perhaps more urgently fought for their homes along what was now a border between two warring governments. As Mariam Nox Beardsley expected their second son Herbert, John fought in the Battle of Shiloh in Georgia. As Mary was born in 1864 back in Iowa, John's company was burning Atlanta in Sherman's March to the Sea. Union soldiers streamed through Keokuk on their way to the southern fronts and came back on furlough, or as casualties. The Beardsley family was lucky enough to be reunited and whole by the end of the war. In 1866, Eva Ann became the first Beardsley child to grow up without being steeped in the reality of war.

Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law in 1862 for people like the Beardsleys. The act allowed any head of household and anyone over 21 could apply to own a piece of unclaimed land. By 1868, freed slaves joined what would become millions of veterans, single women, bachelor farmers, and immigrants. For eighteen dollars and the promise to make the land suitable for living, farming, or ranching, they could claim their own plots. After the Civil War ended, the Beardsleys left Keokuk for a homestead claim in Liberty, Nebraska. The area in southeast Nebraska was the first to be settled by the postwar homesteaders; the Beardsley homestead was about 30 miles away from the home of Daniel and Agnes Freeman, the very first homesteaders in the United States to fulfill their claims. Today the Freeman land houses the Homestead National Monument in Beatrice, Nebraska.

Mary, Eva, and Herbert went on to play their own part in the history of the American West: they would become dry farmers in an area of the United States once thought totally unfit for people. Until the 1870s, most experts believed the High Plains covering the eastern half of Colorado and much of Kansas and Nebraska were desolate and unproductive. Since the Government first ordered exploration in this area in 1803, explorers contrasted the erratic rainfall and small creeks of the plains with the steadier eastern climates they were used to. President Thomas Jefferson called them "immense and trackless deserts;" explorer Zebulon Pike believed they would "become in time equally celebrated as the sandy deserts of Africa."

By the 1860s, the United States' attitude toward the "Great American Desert" had changed. Travelers on the Oregon and California Trails sped through the land as quickly as possible, but farmers had realized two things: One, they could compensate for the plains' lack of water with advances in well-drilling and cultivation; and two, a massive influx of immigrants and the children of eastern farmers needed cheap land. Here, in the arid plains of northern Colorado, the government could give them opportunity.

Gradually, those people would number enough to make a town. Then another, and another. The Lincoln Land and Cattle Company built a string of towns in support of the new homesteaders. While a “town” in this sense might be no more than a post office and a couple of storefronts, farmers and ranchers spread out among the Pawnee Buttes grasslands wanted places to buy goods, educate their children, and market their produce and livestock. Few people might live in a place like Keota, especially in the early days; but the hundreds of homesteaders who surrounded these sites considered themselves part of the community just the same.

The first settlement boom on Colorado’s Eastern Plains was short-lived. A depression in 1893 slowed the number of people who had the money to start a dry farming operation. The Beardsley siblings sold their remaining claims. Eva and Herbert went back to Nebraska, where farmers were more established and businesses were more stable. Mary Beardsley moved to Wray in eastern Colorado and became known as Mrs. Hattie Churchill while the town of Keota sat on her first claim waiting for its luck to change. Most of the early homesteaders found it easier to sell their claims than wait for the weather and the economy to improve.

The United States Government introduced two adaptations of the Homestead Act in the 1900s. Both encouraged dry farming. The Kinkaid Act in 1904 pushed people into western Nebraska by acknowledging that a successful dry farming operation required much more land than the original Homestead Act allowed. The Kinkaid Act was restricted to western Nebraska, but in 1909 the Enlarged Homestead Act expanded the incentives for dry farming beyond the state’s borders. Now, any homesteader who wanted an unirrigated plot could have it for the cost of the filing fee and “prove up” as much as 320 acres, twice the amount granted in the original Homestead Act. New cultivation techniques and increased rainfall on the plains convinced hundreds of people that the Keota area and the towns along the railroad spur could be the heart of a stable, successful society.

Keota was a vibrant, bustling place during the first decades of the twentieth century. Livestock and crop yields seemed only to increase. The town had enough children to build a separate high school. When the United States entered World War I, Keota sent 29 men to fight. Twenty-seven of them returned, and many of these young men stayed to raise families and businesses. Though the area teetered on the edge of drought and flood during the war, the community’s optimism attracted hopeful farmers and laborers. In 1919, Keota had enough people and economy to officially incorporate as a town.

In the 1920s a short economic slump dimmed Keota’s optimism. The town’s newspaper closed. But Weld County had experienced harsh times before, and the rain always came back. Farmers were willing to wait out low crop payments and slight droughts. Much of the country believed that a permanent state of prosperity was just around the corner.

But this time rain stayed away as a severe drought took hold of the region. The tilled earth dried out and wind whipped the powdery soil into giant black clouds that rolled across the plains. The Dust Bowl covered most of the American Midwest and extended into eastern Colorado. It was one of America’s worst environmental and economic disasters. The Dust Bowl ruined businesses, pushed millions of settlers and commercial farmers off of their lands, and forced residents out of the small towns dotting the plains. Residents of Keota were no exception. The people of Keota moved out of town and abandoned their farms, beginning a slow decline that would eventually consign the town to an existence primarily in the remembered stories of the people who once called it home.

## Events that Shaped Keota

May 20, 1862	Abraham Lincoln signs the Homestead Act into law.
January 1, 1863	Daniel Freeman is the first to register his homestead at Beatrice, Nebraska.
1875	Paleontologists find a fossilized horse and a camel at Pawnee Buttes. The Buttes are first known as “The Big Rocks” and fossil hunters take frequent trips to dig for artifacts.
September 11, 1889	Anticipating a large influx of settlers under the Homestead Act, Postmaster Alva C. Hamilton opens the Keota Post Office.
June 6, 1889	Mary “Hattie” Beardsley proves her homestead claim on what is now Keota, Colorado. Her sister Eva Beardsley proves her neighboring claim on the same day.
January 8, 1890	The Keota Post Office is discontinued under Postmaster Hamilton, ending the first phase of sparse settlement in the area. The Post Office was not even open for 4 months.
1891	The Keota area experiences its first peak period of settlement. Sixty-four homesteaders prove up their claims: 51 men and 13 women.
April 28, 1904	The Kinkaid Act expanded homesteads in Western Nebraska to 640 acres.
February 19, 1909	The Enlarged Homestead Act increased dry farming homesteads to 320 acres throughout the United States.
April 22, 1909	The Post Office re-establishes a branch in Keota with William D. Holmes as its new postmaster.
1910	Clyde Leslie Stanley moves to Keota to homestead.
September 12, 1910	Sisters Nellie B. and Amy Calhoun prove up individual claims northeast of Keota. They start one of the first stores in Sligo, one of the towns closest to Keota.
January 20, 1911	Laborer George William Garey dies while digging a well in Keota. The dry conditions require deep drilling to access water, so well drillers risked greater exposure to toxic gases. Garey becomes the first burial in the Keota Cemetery.
May 26, 1911	The first issue of the Keota News rolls off the presses.
1912	The railroad builds a new depot in Keota.
1915	Keota residents J. A. Rumsey and R. A. Martinson organize the Farmers State Bank.
1914	Keota’s second and last peak year of homesteading under the Enlarged Homestead Act. One hundred and seventy-seven homesteaders, including 28 women, take advantage of an unusually rainy decade.
April 17, 1917	The United States officially enters World War I.
May 28, 1917	The World War I draft starts. Eventually, 1 out of 4 young men will serve in the war.
October 4, 1917	Harry Lee Black enlists in the United States Army as a corporal in the 115 <sup>th</sup> Engineers, 40 <sup>th</sup> Division, otherwise known as the 1 <sup>st</sup> Colorado Engineers or the “Sunshine Division.” Clyde Harry Snyder enlists as a private in the 30 <sup>th</sup> Infantry.
July 14, 1918	Clyde Harry Snyder’s unit, the 30 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, earns distinction as “The Rock of the Marne” in France for withstanding what would be the last major German offensive.
November 11, 1918	World War I officially ends, but it would take months for troops to return home.
April 17, 1919	Keota is formally incorporated as a town.
February 24, 1921	Harry E. Greene proves up his Keota-area homestead claim.

1923	The Keota News shuts down, but publisher Clyde Stanley continues various magazines and the Wayside Press.
March 28, 1930	The <i>Greeley Daily-Tribune</i> calls reports of a national drought “pessimistic,” but still issues caution to those dry-farming winter wheat crops.
May 10, 1930	May and June normally mean water available from snowmelt, but the Colorado government releases a report that the entire state is at least 50 percent below their usual snowmelt levels. In some areas, like the high plains of Weld County, the snowmelt is gone entirely.
May 29, 1931	A heavy prolonged rainstorm causes optimism among Weld County farmers. Some places like the Greeley sugar factory express the hope that the drought is over.
April 22, 1932	Prolonged drought continues as county farm leaders announce that the wheat, alfalfa, and beet crops have been killed by dust and lack of water.
February 3, 1933	A major dust storm covers Weld County.
May 25, 1933	The <i>Greeley Daily-Tribune</i> reports that longtime Weld County resident Ralph Cable was severely injured in a dust storm west of the Keota area. Static electricity built up by the dry air and dust caused 150 cars to stall along the highway, some of which collided due to low visibility.
April 14, 1935	The southern U.S. plains are covered in a massive dust storm known as “Black Sunday.” Planes crash and highways come to a halt in southern Colorado. Keota is somewhat spared at the edge of the storm and reports only a “light” dusting.
January 2, 1936	Simon Fishman, one of the first Weld County dry farmers, asserts that the drought will end and the rains will come back. He bases this on the uncharacteristically wet years of the 1910s.
1937	The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act authorizes the United States government to buy back “sub-marginal” farm land, including the entirety of the Keota area. Over the next decade most of the area farmers and ranchers take the buyout, which eventually leads to the creation of the Pawnee National Grassland. Meanwhile, the ranchers left in the area form the Crow Valley Grazing Association so they can monitor soil and water conditions and keep from overgrazing the land.
1958	According to the Colorado Yearbook, Keota’s population falls to just 15 people.
1960	The United States Forest Service forms the Pawnee National Grassland out of reclaimed old homesteading lands.
1970s	James Michener stays in the Stanley place in Keota while writing portions of his Colorado opus <i>Centennial</i> . Several characters and places in the book (and eventual miniseries) are based directly on the Stanleys and the town.
1974	The Keota Post Office is discontinued, with Ruth E. Stanley as its last postmaster.
January 8, 1976	Clyde Leslie Stanley dies in Greeley, Colorado, one of the last guardians of Keota’s legacy.
Present Day	Descendants of Keota homestead families such as the Stanleys still hold reunions in the town, and those who still live in the area maintain the cemetery and some of the buildings. The energy boom has brought new traffic and even a few new residents.

HR 125

  
 Congress of the United States  
 At the Second Session  
 BEGUN AND HELD AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
 in the District of Columbia  
 on Monday the 26th day of December one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one

**ANY ACT** to secure homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain.

*Be It Enacted* by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That any person who is the head of a family, or who has attained to the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States, and who has never borne arms against the United States government or given aid and comfort to its enemies, shall from and after the first January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three be entitled to enter one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands, upon which said person may have filed a pre-emption claim, or which may, at the time an application is made, be subject to pre-emption at one dollar and twenty-five cents, or per acre, or eighty acres or less of such unappropriated lands, at two dollars and fifty cents per acre, to be located in a body, in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, and after the same shall have been surveyed: Provided, That any person owning and residing on land may, under the provisions of this act, enter other land lying contiguous to his or her said lands, which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate, one hundred and sixty acres.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the person applying

## 1 / Primary Source

# The Homestead Act of 1862

### Citation

Act of May 20, 1862 (Homestead Act), Public Law 37-64, 05/20/1862; Record Group 11; General Records of the United States Government; National Archives.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=31>

### Text

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States, and who has never borne arms against the United States Government or given aid and comfort to its enemies, shall, from and after the first January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, be entitled to enter one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands, upon which said person may have filed a preemption claim, or which may, at the time the application is made, be subject to preemption at one dollar and twenty-five cents, or less, per acre; or eighty acres or less of such unappropriated lands, at two dollars and fifty cents per acre, to be located in a body, in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, and after the same shall have been surveyed: Provided, That any person owning and residing on land may, under the provisions of this act, enter other land lying contiguous to his or her said land, which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate one hundred and sixty acres.

### Annotation

In 1862 the Homestead Act opened the door for generations of citizens to head west and farm the United States' prairies. With only a few requirements, the young men who fought in the Civil War knew they had opportunity waiting for them after their service. Those who wanted to escape the war could also take advantage of what seemed to be a relatively peaceful West.

While homesteading might appear to be hard but peaceful work, Native American tribes like the Cheyenne and the Arapaho still roamed the land. Some bands interpreted the Homestead Act as an act of war – not a Civil War, but part of an ongoing battle between the United States Government, independent Native nations, and the homesteaders who sometimes unwittingly found themselves in the middle of conflict. The Homestead Act either represented opportunity or a loss of it, depending on the perspective.

<p>“My Western Home” (1873) Dr. Brewster M. Higley</p> <p>Oh, give me a home where the Buffalo roam Where the Deer and the Antelope play; Where seldom is heard a discouraging word, And the sky is not cloudy all day.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A home! A home! Where the Deer and the Antelope play, Where seldom is heard a discouraging word, And the sky is not cloudy all day.</p> <p>Oh! give me a land where the bright diamond sand Throws its light from the glittering streams, Where glideth along the graceful white swan, Like the maid in her heavenly dreams.</p> <p>Oh! give me a gale of the Solomon vale, Where the life streams with buoyancy flow; On the banks of the Beaver, where seldom if ever, Any poisonous herbage doth grow.</p> <p>How often at night, when the heavens were bright, With the light of the twinkling stars Have I stood here amazed, and asked as I gazed, If their glory exceed that of ours.</p> <p>I love the wild flowers in this bright land of ours, I love the wild curlew’s shrill scream, The bluffs and white rocks, and the antelope flocks That graze on the mountains so green.</p> <p>The air is so pure and the breezes so fine, The zephyrs so balmy and light, That I would not exchange my home here to range Forever in azures so bright.</p>	<p>“Home on the Range” (1910) John A. Lomax</p> <p>Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam, Where the deer and the antelope play, Where seldom is heard a discouraging word And the skies are not cloudy all day.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Home, home on the range, Where the deer and the antelope play; Where seldom is heard a discouraging word And the sky is not cloudy all day.</p> <p>Where the air is so pure, the zephyrs so free, The breezes so balmy and light, That I would not exchange my home on the range For all of the cities so bright.</p> <p>The red man was pressed from this part of the West He’s likely no more to return, To the banks of Red River where seldom if ever, Their flickering campfires burn.</p> <p>How often at night when the heavens are bright With the light from the glittering stars Have I stood here amazed and asked as I gazed If their glory exceeds that of ours.</p> <p>Oh, I love these wild prairies where I roam The curlew I love to hear scream, And I love the white rocks and the antelope flocks That graze on the mountain-tops green.</p> <p>Oh, give me a land where the bright diamond sand Flows leisurely down the stream; Where the graceful white swan goes gliding along Like a maid in a heavenly dream.</p>
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## 2 / Primary Source

### “Home on the Range”

#### Citation

Higley, Dr. Brewster M. “My Western Home.” 1873.

Lomax, John A. “Home on the Range.” 1910.

#### Annotation

Dr. Brewster M. Higley wrote the first version of what would become “Home on the Range” in 1873 inspired by the beauty and freedom of his own homestead in Smith County, Kansas. He called his poem “My Western Home” and “Oh, Give Me a Home Where the Buffalo Roam.”

Western songs like “Home on the Range” were traditionally adopted by cowboys, farmers, and miners who added and subtracted lyrics and verses according to what they saw and what they wanted out of the Western lifestyle. One 1904 version by William and Mary Goodwin is about the freedom of sluice and gold panning in the Rocky Mountains. The most popular version by John A. Lomax was written in 1910 and emphasizes wildlife and nostalgia for the loss of the Native American from the prairie.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

CERTIFICATE )

No. 9382 ) Whereas Mary H Beardsley of Weld County Colorado

has deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Denver Colorado whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said Mary H Beardsley

according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An Act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," and the acts supplemental thereto, for the South east quarter of Section thirty four in township nine North of range sixty west of the Sixth Principal Meridian in Colorado containing one hundred and sixty acres

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General, which said Tract has been purchased by the said Mary H Beardsley

Now know ye, That the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the several Acts of Congress in such case made and provided, have given and granted, and by these presents do give and grant unto the said Mary H Beardsley

and to her heirs, the said Tract above described: To have and to hold the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances, of whatsoever nature, thereto belonging, unto the said Mary H Beardsley

and to her heirs and assigns forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subject to the right of the proprietor of a vein or lode to extract and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law.

In testimony whereof J. Benjamin Harrison President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the sixth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty nine, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirtieth

LS

By the President: Benjamin Harrison

By M. McKean, Secretary.

Recorder of the General Land Office.

D. Tyler ad interim

### 3 / Primary Source

## Mary Beardsley's Homestead Claim

### Citation

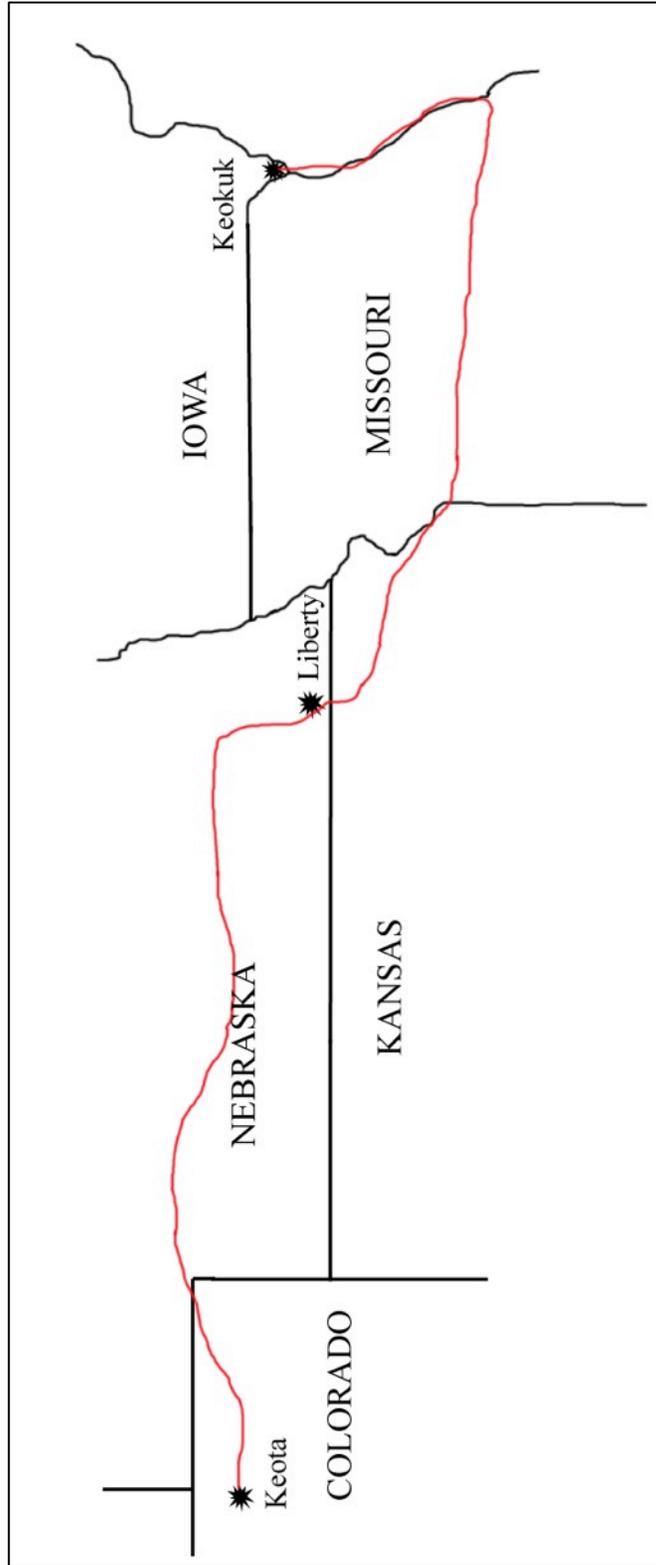
United States Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office. *Homestead Claim of Mary H. Beardsley*. 1889.

[http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=CO0290\\_\\_.027&docClass=STA&sid=xlmcoyez.ykq#patentDetailsTabIndex=1](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=CO0290__.027&docClass=STA&sid=xlmcoyez.ykq#patentDetailsTabIndex=1)

### Annotation

While the romantic image of the homesteader is typically that of a bachelor farmer, single women also sought opportunity in the homesteads of the high plains. Mary Beardsley proved her claim on June 6, 1889, sharing the honor of being the first in her section. The other person to prove a claim on the same day was her sister Eva, who farmed the neighboring plot. They beat their northwestern neighbor George A. Burrows by 8 days. The Beardsley sisters sold their claim to the land company that would later develop Keota and moved one section north to prove up a second set of claims together on December 12, 1890, while their brother Herbert proved up his claim south of Keota in May of 1891.

Other homesteaders, both male and female, would follow in the first wave of settlement. Most sections had single-digit populations until a big land boom in the 1910s would push hundreds of people into dry farming on a land that was not capable of supporting them.



## 4 / Map

### Beardsley Family Homestead Route, 1860s - 1889

#### Citation

Big Year Colorado. "Beardsley Family Homestead Route." Map. 2014.

#### Annotation

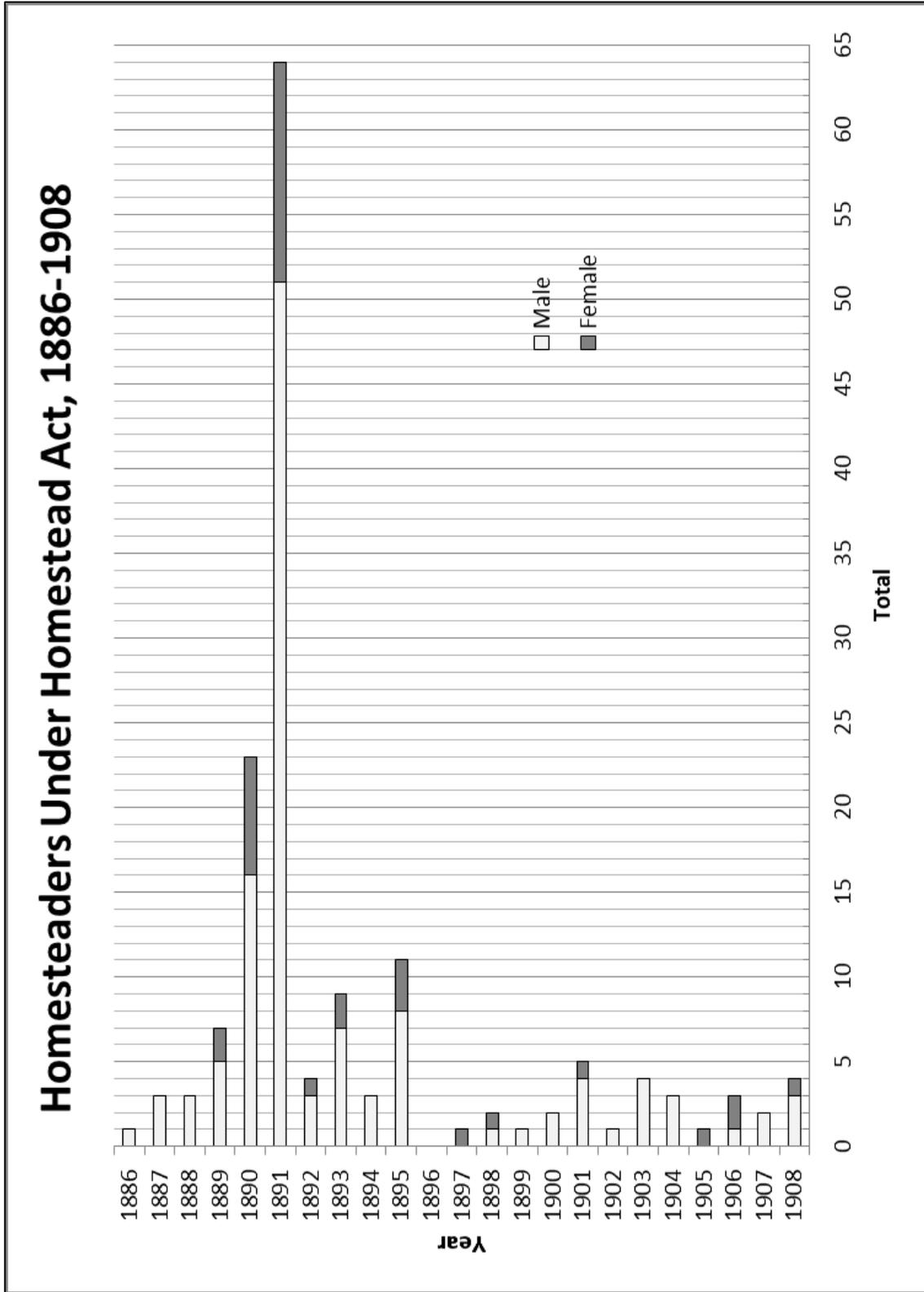
The three Beardsley siblings, Mary, Eva, and Herbert, were in many ways typical of the homesteaders that would come to populate the area surrounding Keota. The Beardsley family migrated west in stages. John Strother Beardsley and Miriam Nox started their family in Keokuk, Iowa, in the midst of the Civil War. In 1870, the Beardsleys left Iowa to file an early Homestead Act claim in Liberty, Nebraska, near the very first homestead site in Beatrice.

Once Eva turned 21 in 1888, the three children headed to Keota, Colorado. Mary and Eva filed the first claims in the Keota area in 1889, sold to the Lincoln Land & Cattle Company, and moved to claims a little north of Keota in 1890. Herbert proved up one claim just south of Keota in 1891. This map assumes that the Beardsleys used the well-traveled routes of their day to migrate West in stages.

Optimistic about the wave of homesteaders surely to follow after the Beardsleys, Alva C. Hamilton started the first Keota post office on September 11, 1889. At the time Keota was little more than the post office itself surrounded by dry shortgrass prairie.

The post office was a sign of ambition, but ultimately the rainfall and the acreage limitations of the original Homestead Act proved too daunting for all but the most hopeful of dry farmers. The post office closed in less than six months. All three Beardsley children left Keota before the Enlarged Homestead Act in 1908. Eva went back to Nebraska and married Frank Folts, a real estate broker in Lincoln, Nebraska. Herbert moved back to his birthplace near Keokuk, Iowa, shortly after proving up his Colorado claim in 1891.

Mary moved to Yuma County on the eastern edge of Colorado where she met fellow homesteader Addison Churchill. They ranched near Vernon until Mary fell ill from blood poisoning, today known as sepsis. Mary went back to Liberty with her younger sister Jennie, a nurse. The *Wray Rattler* reported that painful new shoes had caused the infection. Blood poisoning was a common cause of illness and death until the discovery of penicillin and modern antibiotics starting in 1928. In 1917, however, Jennie Beardsley could only do her best to make her sister well. In October, Mary took a turn for the worse and died, with her connection to Keota history unmentioned until recently. Through nursing Mary, the Beardsley family came to welcome Addison Churchill as one of their own, and he abandoned the Churchill ranch in Colorado to live in Lincoln. Addison remarried to Jennie, the sister who had been so loyal to Mary during her long illness.



## 5 / Data

### Homesteaders by Year/Sex, 1886-1908

#### Citation

Keota-area Homesteaders by Year/Sex. 2014, Big Year Colorado, Lochbuie, Colo.

#### Data

Year	Male	Female	Year	Male	Female
1886	1	0	1898	1	1
1887	3	0	1899	1	0
1888	3	0	1900	2	0
1889	5	2	1901	4	1
1890	16	7	1902	1	0
1891	51	13	1903	4	0
1892	3	1	1904	3	0
1893	7	2	1905	0	1
1894	3	0	1906	1	2
1895	8	3	1907	2	0
1896	0	0	1908	3	1
1897	0	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>35</b>

#### Annotation

This graph groups homesteaders by the year they proved their claims and whether they were male or female. Some women embraced homesteading as a symbol of independence, and most female homesteaders in the Keota area proved up their claims alone. A minority shared claims with male relatives or husbands. Mary Beardsley proved up her claim on what is now Keota in 1889, but a few scattered homesteaders preceded her to the south, near what is now Briggsdale, and to the north, near the site of Sligo, a small farming community between Keota and Grover.

The peak of this first phase of settlement occurs in 1891. The late 1880s meant above-average rainfall for the dry plains, but in 1890, the rain stopped. Colorado began collecting rainfall data later in the decade, but we do know that a severe drought bankrupted farms all across Colorado's plains as well as Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico. This, coupled with the acreage restrictions on homesteads, prevented many potential homesteaders from starting their claims. Most of the original homesteaders in the Keota area sold out at any price or went bust and left.



## 6 / Primary Source

### Outside the Store

#### Citation

Image from a Printing Plate, Clyde Stanley's Store, Keota (with Model A or Model T cars in front). Clyde Stanley, *Keota News*, 1913-1925. 2010.78.41.4, History Colorado Center.  
[http://5008.sydneyplus.com/HistoryColorado\\_ArgusNet\\_Final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US](http://5008.sydneyplus.com/HistoryColorado_ArgusNet_Final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US)

#### Annotation

This image was taken from a negative printing plate using Photoshop. The printing plate is visible on the borders of the image. Before digital publishing, newspapers like the *Keota News* used metal plates to quickly reproduce images. When this photo was taken, photographers were transitioning from using fragile and easily-broken glass plates to film.

The cars in the image are either Ford Model A or Model T. While some farming communities balked at transitioning from the horse to the automobile, Keota embraced the car. Dry farming required the ability to cover large tracts of farmland to get the same yield as a smaller plot, so Keotans were more likely to embrace any machinery that sped up plowing and harvesting. While Keota initially had a livery stable to keep, feed, and trade horses as farmers came into town, it soon gave way to a garage and automobile dealership.

Clyde Stanley, the photographer, preserved much of what we know about daily life in Keota. Stanley ran the *Keota News* and other small papers in Colorado, including the *Fairplay Flume*. Most people in Keota worked many different jobs at the same time to make the town run; Stanley built and ran the general store, the Wayside Press, served as the land commissioner issuing homestead claims, had a garage, and later became the entire town government as people moved out. He was one of the last residents who still remembered Keota's time as a boomtown.

# KEOTA

## Iowa Day--August 10, 1912

### PROGRAM

Tug of War by Women, 10 on a side,

Iowa against the World . . . . .	Ice Cream
Egg Race, Women under 80 . . . . .	China Plate
Foot Race, Girls under 15 . . . . .	Box Candy
Foot Race, Women . . . . .	Fancy Apron
Foot Race, Men . . . . .	Pocket Knife
Foot Race, Fat Men . . . . .	Pair Gloves
Putting Shot . . . . .	25c worth Cigars
High Jump . . . . .	Necktie
Broad Jump . . . . .	Pair Suspenders
Horse Race, 1-4 mile . . . . .	\$2.50 to Winner

### DINNER

Short talks by Iowa People led by Rev. Markham.

Music by Keota Peerless Band.

Ball Game, Grover vs. Keota, Admission 15c.

### BIG DANCE AT NIGHT

S. W. FOX, President of the Day

GRANT DAVIS, Marshal

*8/8/12 100/11.00*

## **7 / Primary Source**

### **Iowa Day**

#### **Citation**

Iowa Day. Flyer. August 10, 1912. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

#### **Annotation**

Thousands of the homesteaders who populated Nebraska and Colorado came from Iowa. The wave of people coming in the wake of the Enlarged Homestead Act did not totally break from their former state; Keota itself was likely named after Keota, Iowa. Keota, Colorado specialized in dry crops like sugar beets and raising cattle, while Keota, Iowa had no shortage of irrigated farmland. In the 1890s, Iowa horse breeders Slingmaster & Sons gained some national fame with draft horse lines like the Clydesdale sire "Keota Champion," and a reputation for excellent workhorse bloodlines that would continue until mechanized tractors replaced the plowhorse.

Keota families from both Iowa and Colorado gathered in 1912 to celebrate the new opportunities the settlers found on the Colorado plains. They honored recent arrival Simon Fox, who migrated to Keota with his family. While they homesteaded, he opened one of the first grocery stores.

# BOX SUPPER

AND

# DANCE

Dodder Implement Shed

Keota, Colorado

Saturday

April 25

Benefit Keota Peerless

Brass Band

Base Ball Game

in the Afternoon

EVERYBODY COME

4/15/1914 1.00/1.00

## 8 / Primary Source

### Box Supper

#### Citation

Box Supper and Dance. April 15, 1914. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

#### Annotation

Homesteaders generally viewed going into town as an all-day affair, and families got the most out of their time away from the demands of crops and livestock. Charles O. Dodder ran the Keota lumber mill and opened up his “implement shed” for a box supper and dance. Everyone brought their own food and spent the day playing sports and listening to the brass band.

July Fourth, Decoration Day (which later became Memorial Day), and any other holiday served as a good reason to gather in town. From the 1910s to the 1940s, the friendships forged at these social events led to clubs, business partnerships, civic organizations, marriages, and soon after Charles Dodder’s box supper invitation, Keota had a competitive baseball team.

# Farmers' Elevator MEETING KEOTA, COLORADO Saturday, March 3

Commencing at 1 p. m.

---

**A**T REQUEST of the farmers around Keota we have called this meeting to consider the advisability of building at Keota. If you believe that the farmers here need an elevator,

**COME, and BRING Your Neighbor.**

---

Some of the state officers of the State Association of Farmers' Cooperative Companies will be present.

C. V. JAMES, State Organizer,  
F. E. C. U.

2/28/17 200/1.25 Pd.

## 9 / Primary Source

### Farmers' Elevator Meeting

#### Citation

Farmers' Elevator Meeting. February 28, 1917. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

#### Annotation

A successful agricultural town in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had two major landmarks: The water tower and the grain elevator. A grain elevator let farmers take their crops to market on a more flexible schedule. Prior to the grain elevator, the farmers had to meet freight trains directly. The elevator acted as storage for multiple harvests which could then be unloaded onto train cars, which in turn had become more powerful and able to transport more and more crops across the country.

Once the farmers had a go-between to store, unload, and even negotiate rates for their harvests, the market worked around the needs of the farm, rather than the other way around. The town attracted the railroad stop and all of its economic benefits, and the railroad worked with a more centralized freight system. Keota residents M. E. Hayworth, C. E. Andrews, J. A. Rumsey, George Berner, and Henry Wells issued shares in the elevator, and by the end of March, 1917, they started construction.

**BY-LAWS**

OF

**Keota Grange**

**No. 247**

**PATRONS**

OF

**HUSBANDRY**

KEOTA, COLORADO,

1916.

2

Sec. 2. Special meetings may be called at any time by the master and secretary, at which meetings no business shall be transacted except such as is mentioned in the call.

**ARTICLE III.**

**Quorum.**

Seven members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**ARTICLE IV.**

**Membership.**

Any person engaged in agricultural pursuits and having no interests in conflict with the purposes of the Grange, of the age of fourteen years, is entitled to membership in accordance with the rules and regulations of the order.

**ARTICLE V.**

**Officers.**

Section 1. The officers of this Grange and their respective duties, shall be as prescribed by the Grange Digest and by the Constitution and By-Laws of the National Grange, and of the Colorado State Grange.

3

Sec. 2. The officers of the Grange shall be elected annually by ballot at the first regular meeting in December; and they shall be installed at the first regular meeting in January, or as soon thereafter as is practicable.

Sec. 3. The absence from the meetings of this Grange by any officer for four successive meetings, unless excused by the Grange, shall constitute a vacancy in that office.

**ARTICLE VI.**

**Dues and Fees.**

Section 1. The membership, or initiation fee, in this Grange shall be \$1.00 for men and 50 cents for women.

Sec. 2. The dues of this Grange shall be \$1.20 per year, payable quarterly.

Sec. 3. The fee for reinstatement of a member dropped for nonpayment of dues shall be the amount of one year's dues.

Sec. 4. Upon the death of a member of this Grange there shall be levied an assessment of fifty cents per member, the total amount of which assessment up to

## 10 / Primary Source

### Patrons of Husbandry

#### Citation

Patrons of Husbandry. 1916. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

#### Annotation

Whatever illusions a homesteader had about being a solitary farmer, the market for livestock and crops in the twentieth century rapidly became too complex for most small farmers to navigate on their own. The Granger Movement started in 1867, and by the 1880s most agricultural towns had some kind of organization devoted to the needs of the farmer. The practice of breeding better livestock able to tolerate harsher weather conditions is called *husbandry*, after the old Middle English word for farmer: husband.

Grange chapters formed the center of more than just economic life and power for agricultural communities. Chapters put on dances, fairs, exhibitions, and political debates. Farmers informed each other on the news of the day, and families found excuses to break up the social routine of the prairie. While the Granger Movement has declined, chapters still connect those who live on spread-out farmland miles away from any neighbor.

**Program**

**FRIDAY MORNING**

Registration.

**FRIDAY AFTERNOON**

1 o'clock

Invocation, Rev. Beryl D. McKowan.

Address by President, Harry E. Greene.

Address, Rev. Griffin, New Raymer.

Address, "Teachers' Associations and Their Value," Hon. C. R. Graves.

Primary Exercises.

Address, Supt. A. B. Copeland.

Round Table Discussion and Question Box, led by Supt. Copeland.

Business Meeting.

**FRIDAY EVENING**

7:30 o'clock

Piano Solo, Miss Marie Allen, New Raymer.

Address, "Consolidation of Rural Schools," Prof. J. H. Schriber, Greeley.

Round Table Discussion.

**SATURDAY MORNING**

9 o'clock

Piano Solo, Miss Marie Allen.

Elementary and Mechanical Drawing in the Grades and High School, Harry E. Greene.

General Discussion.

**SATURDAY MORNING**

9:30 o'clock

**ROUND TABLE DIVISION**

High School and Upper Grade Division, Supt. P. G. Hewitt, New Raymer, presiding.

**Program**

High School Athletics and Playground Apparatus, J. D. McMillen, Grover.

Practical Arithmetic in the Upper Grades and High School, Miss B. Reynolds, Stoneham.

General Discussion, Miss Ruby Northup, New Raymer.

How Can We Improve the English of Grade and High School Pupils? John Smathers, New Raymer.

General Discussion, Miss Mary Hodge, Sligo.

Manual Training in the Grades and High School, W. W. Dehoney, New Raymer.

Question Box on Problems of Methods and Discipline.

Lower Grade Division, Miss Verdie Milburn, Grover, presiding.

Public School Music as an Ethical Subject, Miss Fae Stanley, Grover.

Cooperation of School and Home in Child Development, Mrs. Kennedy, Briggsdale.

Early Training of the Child for Citizenship.

Self Expression, How the School can Encourage it, Miss Sarah Wallace, Keota.

How to Effect Control Without the Use of Corporal Punishment, Ethel Ashbaugh, Buckingham.

Reading of Books as an Educational Factor, Miss Frances Dardis, Grover.

History as a Character Building Subject, Mildred Coonrad, Grover.

## **11 / Primary Source Education**

### **Citation**

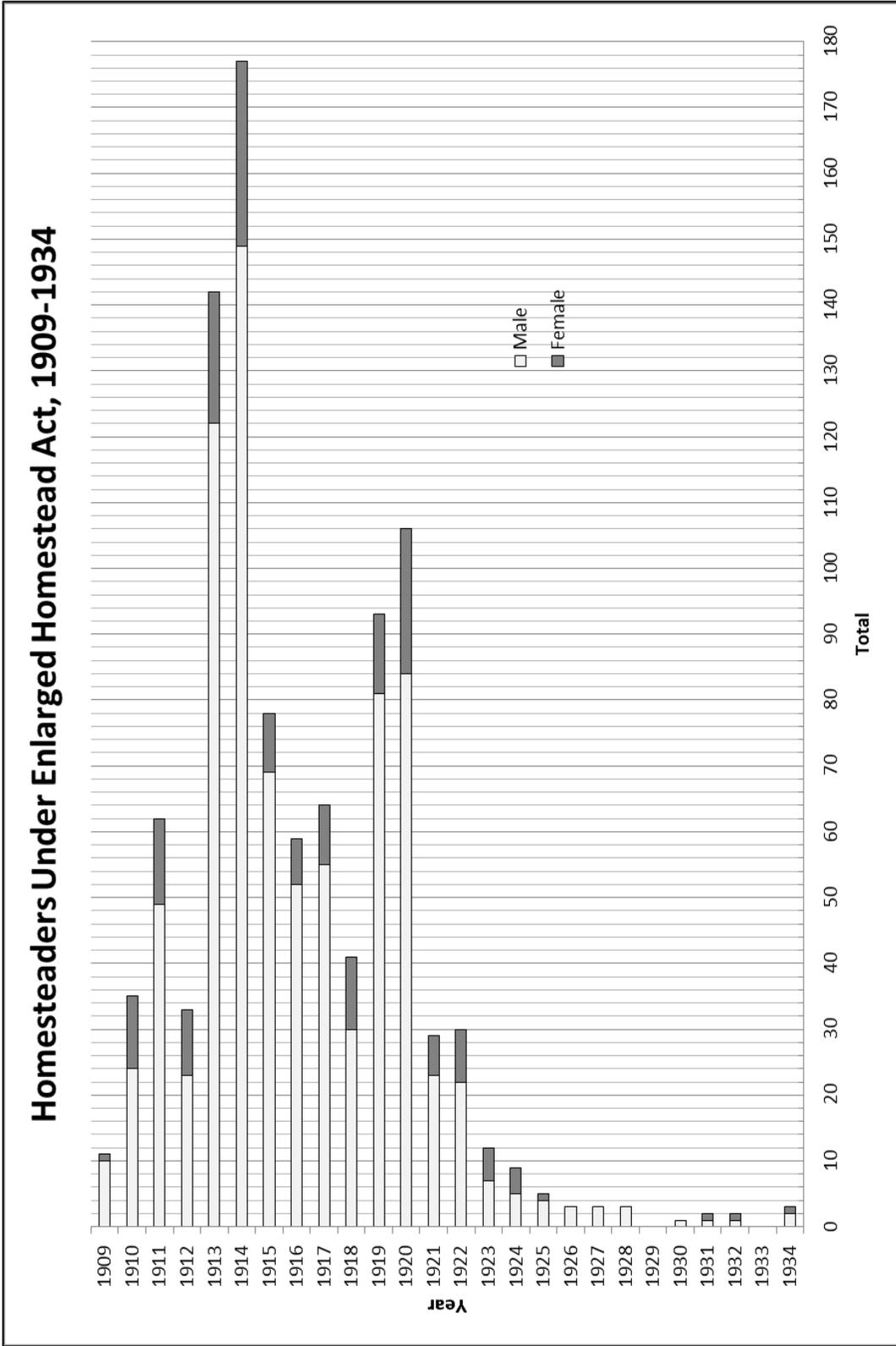
Program of the Northeastern Weld County Teachers' Convention. March 9-10, 1917. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

### **Annotation**

In 1917, the growing town of Keota addressed school management problems with educators from other area towns. Most of the questions of the day are still the subject of discussion among teachers: school discipline, raising test scores, the effects of home life on a student's ability to learn.

While Keota's combined elementary through high school attracted plenty of children, the country schoolhouse program in the United States built several smaller schools on the Keota area. When parceling out land to dry farmers, the General Land Office reserved one out of every 13 sections of land for schools and other community buildings.

The country school in the 1910s served to encourage good citizenship and discipline unruly students. Teachers needed to prepare students for an increasingly complex world—children would need to know something of global economics, weather, science, and critical thinking. Globalization came to Keota's doorstep rapidly; just a month after this conference, the United States formally entered World War I. Harry E. Greene, the president of the Briggsdale and Keota school systems, left Keota in October to fight as a Private First Class in the Medical Detachment.



## 12 / Data

### Homesteaders Under the Enlarged Homestead Act, 1909-1934

#### Citation

Homesteaders Under Enlarged Homestead Act, 1909-1934. 2014, Big Year Colorado, Lochbuie, Colo.

#### Data

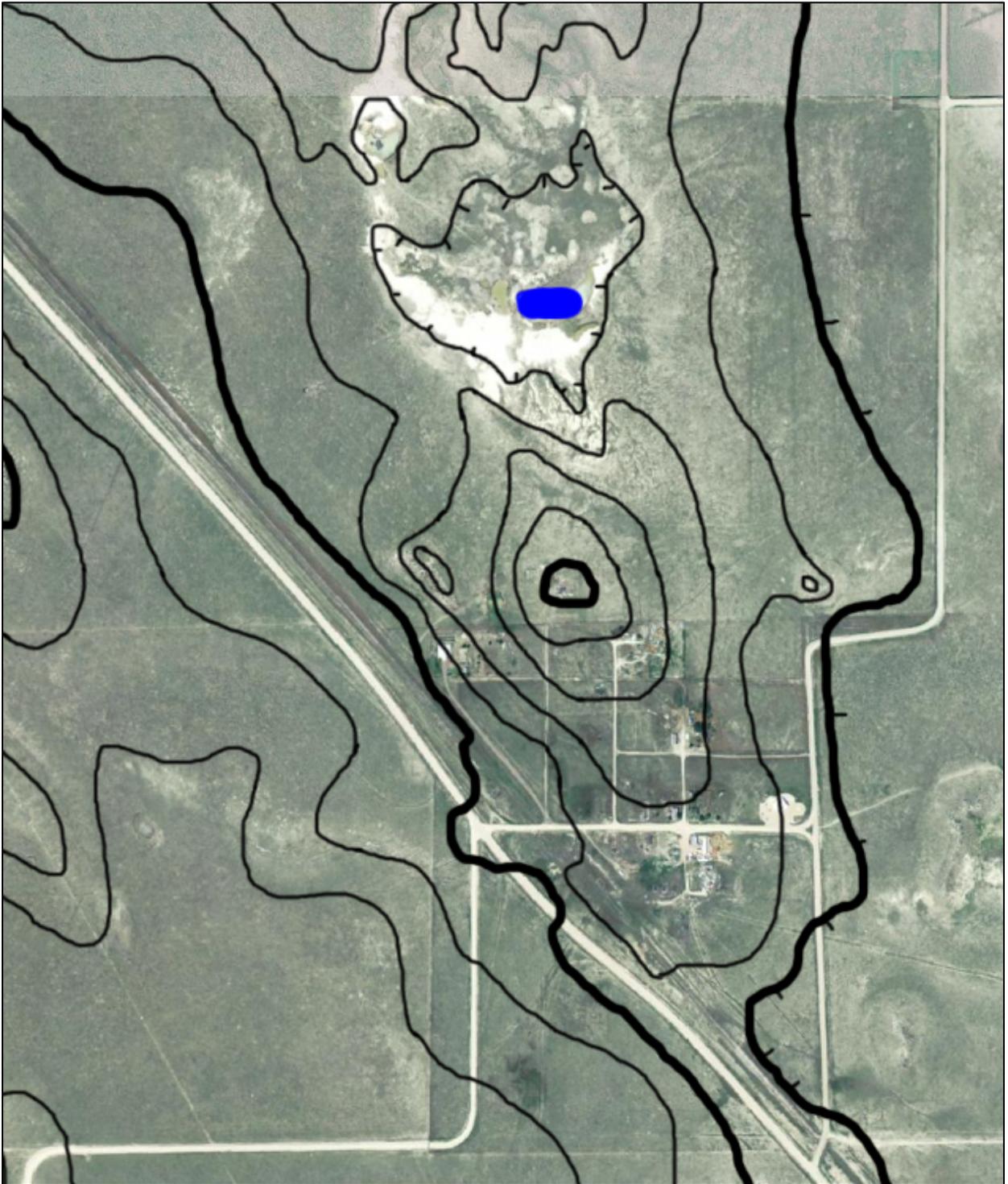
Year	Male	Female
1909	10	1
1910	24	11
1911	49	13
1912	23	10
1913	122	20
1914	149	28
1915	69	9
1916	52	7
1917	55	9
1918	30	11
1919	81	12
1920	84	22
1921	23	6
1922	22	8
1923	7	5
1924	5	4
1925	4	1
1926	3	0
1927	3	0
1928	3	0
1929	0	0
1930	1	0
1931	1	1
1932	1	1
1933	0	0
1934	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>180</b>

#### Annotation

The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1908 acknowledged that dry farming required many more acres to make a living vs. areas with irrigation and ready water sources. The Keota area was entirely a dry farming region with low rainfall. Keota's major water sources came from sparse rainfall, snowmelt, and wells, which the farmers had to drill deep into the ground to access the aquifer underneath.

The Act may have acknowledged a key economic reality, but it failed to anticipate a more dire environmental reality: This prairie was meant to support itself, not increasing yields of beets and winter wheat, nor large herds of cattle. Greeley, the Weld County seat, only existed as the result of a complex irrigation system. Those homesteaders who were successful with their claims in the Keota area failed to recognize that the land held limited resources, and even those were the result of temporarily abundant rainfall.

Their luck would soon run out, reducing homesteading to a slow trickle, as many of the ranchers and farmers took government buyouts and abandoned their claims.



## 13 / Map

### Keota: Topography

#### Citation

Topographical overlay of Keota. 2014, Big Year Colorado, Lochbuie, Colo.

#### Annotation

This map shows the topographical features of Keota on top of a satellite image of the town as it appears today. Keota's highest point, indicated by the bold circle in the middle, is at 4300 feet above sea level. The bold line on either side of town is at 4950 feet, and each smaller line indicates an interval of 10 feet. North of the highest point in Keota, you can see a bowl or depression with a blue spring in the middle.

The main geographical features surrounding Keota are chalk and sandstone bluffs. Rainwater had to be carefully managed, so farmers needed to know where the water would run off from high elevations during a storm. They could use irrigation ditches, small retaining ponds, and rain barrels to catch the water. Looking at this map, where would you try to gather water?

# NAMES OF WELD COUNTY MEN IN YESTERDAY'S DRAFT QUOTA

The men included in the draft quota which left Greeley yesterday for Camp Funston are as follows:

Ralston A. Adams, Platteville.  
Walter I. Adams, Brighton.  
John Milton Akers, Longmont.  
Wynian H. Ames, Hardin.  
Le H. Alden, Greeley.  
Earl D. Allied.  
Ross J. Arlesco, Fort Lupton.  
Léo Asmussen, Longmont.  
Arthur Arvidson, Greeley.  
George E. Apostolides.  
Nell A. Ballinger, Fort Lupton.  
Ray G. Bbers, Greeley.  
George W. Bennett, Gilcrest.  
Jesse J. Beltz, Iona.  
Davié Bergen, Broomfield.  
Joseph Bernak, Keenesburg.  
George W. Elias, Greeley.  
Sylvester Boho, Hardin.  
Athol M. Bright, Peckham.  
Paul J. Briscoe, Greeley.  
Lester P. Brown, Wiggins.  
V. S. Bruce, Platteville.  
Alfred Budeller, Hudson.  
Charles C. Budeller, Hudson.  
James P. Carey, Kersey.  
Oliver N. Chapman, Gill.  
Albert Clamp, La Salle.  
William Cook, Berthoud.  
Henry F. Crayep, La Salle.  
Walter E. Davis, La Salle.  
Zenna F. DeCamp, Greeley.  
Emile C. Denny, Keenesburg.  
William C. Doko, Greeley.  
Jes E. Dunham, Platteville.  
Charles E. Ellis, Johnstown.  
George Eskro, Frederick.  
Charles Fitzmorris, Barnosville.  
Guy K. Finton, Platteville.  
Clyde G. Gilmore, Fort Lupton.  
James Graham, Mead.  
John Hafelfinger, Kuerer.  
Archie L. Harsh, Greeley.  
A. F. Harrington, Longmont.  
Russel J. Hill, Greeley.  
Clarence F. Hume, Fort Lupton.  
George W. Humphrey, Greeley.  
Herman A. Jack, Johnstown.  
Walter B. Jennings, Fort Lupton.  
Otto Jilek, Roggen.  
Edward F. Johnson, Fort Lupton.

Eaton, Oct 6—Following is a list of the 77 men included in the quota which left here today for Camp Funston:

James Alexander, Eaton.  
James Riverday Allender, Eaton.  
Charles Gail Allerbach, Hereford.  
J. Lewis Aicher, Grover.  
Lee Amy, Willard.  
John Arthur Brubaker, Windsor.  
Bernut John Berg, Ault.  
William L. Burtch, Buckingham.  
John Barton Sperber, Nunn.  
George J. Burback, Ault.  
Harry Lee Black, Keota.  
Albert Christian, Coleman.  
Earl Cox, New Raymer.  
Henry Claus, Greeley R. F. D. 2.  
John Henry Carter, Windsor.  
Lawrence E. Davis, Buckingham.  
Harvey Piper Eldridge, Greeley, R. F. D. 2.  
Carl Emil Erickson, Evans.  
Charles E. S. Farington, Grover.  
Wills Earl Graham, Stoneham.  
James Howard Groom, Purcell.  
Arthur G. Gregg, New Raymer.  
James Milton Gibson, Briggsdale.  
Robert Guñson, Eaton.  
Dolores Garcia, Las Vegas, N. M.  
Carl Otto Gebhardt, Stoneham.  
Walter James Hendersch, Eaton.  
John J. Hart, Briggsdale.  
Mark Jones, Briggsdale.  
Grant Veitin Klopp, Fosston.  
Adam Kuhler, Eaton.  
Harry Roy Koefnes, Purcell.  
William Smith Knowles, Windsor.  
Joseph W. Keeran, Ault.  
Herbert Hugh Kleffer, Buckingham.  
Alfred Christian Koenig, Windsor.  
Louis Charles Lang, Grove.  
Loren Dudley Lovell, Gilford, Neb.  
Valentine Lohr, Purcell.  
Cayler P. Lund, Hereford.  
Hugh W. Lamb.  
John Elmer Lamb, Ault.  
Andrew N. Matheny, New Raymer.  
Ora F. Mitchell, Graylin.  
Reuben A. Martinson, Keota.  
Edward James Milno, Eaton.  
John Ernest Maggard, Stoneham.  
William Edward Neff, Greeley R.  
Charles B. Norton.  
F. D. 2.  
Hushell Otto, Evans.  
Harry Allen Puckett, Briggsdale.  
Harry Pospisal, Kalous.  
Frederick Charles Pfeill, Osgood.  
Albert Pittman, Eaton.  
August Peterson, Ault.  
Lowrie Clark Patterson, Eaton.  
Floyd Roberts, Hushnell, Neb.  
Howard Roberts, Bushnell, Neb.  
Orgle W. Rector, Eaton.  
Truman G. Reef, Lucerna.  
William Earl Rowe, Greeley.  
James A. Smathers, New Raymer.  
John Speaker, Jr., Briggsdale.  
Datus Arthur Sutherland, Coleman.  
Elmer H. Sears, Keota.  
Clyde Harry Snyder, Keota.  
Carl H. E. Selberg, Stoneham.  
Walter W. Swanson, Ault.



## 14 / Primary Source

### Keota Goes to War

#### Citation

“Names of Weld County Men...” *Greeley Daily Tribune-Republican* October 6, 1917. P. 12. Newspapers.com. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/25021169/>  
Inset: Elmer H. Sears. Photograph. In Haulsee, William Mitchell, et. al. *Soldiers of the Great War*. Vol. 1. Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920. P. 151. Google Books. [http://books.google.com/books?id=dswMAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=dswMAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

#### Annotation

The United States' entry into World War I on April 6, 1917, demanded a lot from agricultural areas like Keota. In addition to the increased labor needed to ramp up agricultural production for the war effort, twenty-nine young men from the town either volunteered or were drafted into the military. Fourteen of them headed to the infantry. The *Greeley Daily Tribune* published lists of recent draftees. This list includes four new Keota soldiers: Harry Lee Black, Reuben A. Martinson, Clyde Harry Snyder, and Elmer H. Sears.

The United States Army assigned Sears and Snyder to the Infantry, while Black and Martinson both joined the Engineering Division. A fire consumed most of the veterans' records from World War I in 1973, but a few traces exist. Colorado's WWI soldier records indicate that of the 29 soldiers from Keota, only two of them were killed in the course of the war and another two (including Sears) were wounded. Overall, World War I soldiers experienced a casualty (wounded, killed, prisoners, and missing) rate of 7.1%. Keota's rate is about 14%, twice that of the U.S. armed forces. However, the infantry experienced higher casualty rates than the armed forces overall, and all four of Keota's wounded or killed soldiers were infantry privates.

Elmer Harrison Sears is pictured here in *Soldiers of the Great War*, one of the most comprehensive lists of World War I casualties available. After the war, his family – parents, siblings, in-laws, nephews, and nieces – left Colorado to start a dairy farm on the western edge of Wisconsin.

World War I meant disruption for a lot of Keota's soldiers. An agricultural town needed people to start families of their own and carry on the next generation of farmers. However, the experiences of traveling the world and seeing different parts of the United States through military service meant that these young adults now felt free to scatter across the country. Sears went to Wisconsin, though he never married or had children of his own. Black settled in Arizona after the war. Snyder and Martinson stayed within Colorado, but neither of them resumed farming: Clyde Snyder became a trucker with Gates Rubber Company out of Denver, while Reuben Martinson was elected the Cheyenne County Assessor, closer to the Kansas border.

Of the 27 Keotans who came back from their service, nine of them still lived in the town as of 1920. PFC Harry E Greene was already well-established in the town prior to the war and would resume his role as

the principal of the Keota school system. A few veterans did come to the town to farm, bringing in fresh life; but the 1920s spelled the beginning of the end for the town. The 1910s, as it turned out, were uncharacteristically rainy years for the prairie. As the population as a whole became more mobile, it was easier for young families to seek opportunity elsewhere once the farms dried up.



# FOLEY'S CASH GROCERY

C. H. FOLEY, PROPRIETOR

MERCHANDISE OF QUALITY

FARM PRODUCE

KEOTA, COLORADO.

## WHEAT PRINCIPAL CROP NEAR KEOTA

By M. L. Haworth

Keota, Nov. 23.—The principal crop in the Keota district is wheat, which averages from 12 to 15 bushels to the acre. Some farmers get as much as 25 to 30 bushels an acre.

The 1917 bean crop was 10 times more than the crop of 1916, the yield being from eight to 12 bushels an acre. The crop is probably the best adapted to a "dry land" country as a cultivated crop, requiring little moisture, and serving as a summer tilling and leaving the ground in fine shape for wheat.

Potatoes yield well in the district but farmers are not yet equipped to raise and handle them on a large scale. Barley, rye and oats are grown for feed, often running as much as 50 bushels to the acre for oats and barley.

Corn is a fair crop to feed hogs and some farmers are making money raising corn and fattening out hogs. Amos Erickson, a neighbor of mine, has already sold \$3,000 worth of hogs this fall.

Dairying is practiced by most farmers but not only in connection with farming and feeding from pastures. There are small herds on most farms. Farmers are now building good barns for the protection of their growing herds. Holsteins and Shorthorns are the prevailing milchers.

Land values have increased rapidly. In 1912 it was almost impossible to secure a loan on a farm, but now one can obtain \$500 to \$1,000 for a quarter section. Choice tracts are changing hands for as high as \$20 to \$25 an acre.

Schools in the district run eight months. The high school at Keota is a fine building costing \$7,000.

The Red Cross is getting support, but being a new country most people are borrowing to enlarge their cultivated acreages.

### WAYNE WILLIAMS TO PLANT 50 ACRES DRY LAND BEANS

Keota, April 30—Wayne C. Williams, Denver, former head of the state industrial commission, will do his bit to keep the United States from starvation. Williams recently purchased a dry land ranch in this district and will plant 50 acres of beans on the property. W. E. Parsons of Keota will have charge of the work.

## 15 / Primary Source

### Foley's Cash Grocery

#### Citation

"Foley's Cash Grocery." May 1921. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

Greeley Daily Tribune-Republican. "Wayne Williams to Plant 50 Acres Dry Land Beans." Greeley, Colorado. April 30, 1917. p. 1. Newspapers.com. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/25018890/>

Haworth, M. L. "Wheat Principal Crop Near Keota." Greeley Daily Tribune-Republican. Greeley, Colorado. November 23, 1917. P. 32. Newspapers.com. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/25022447/>

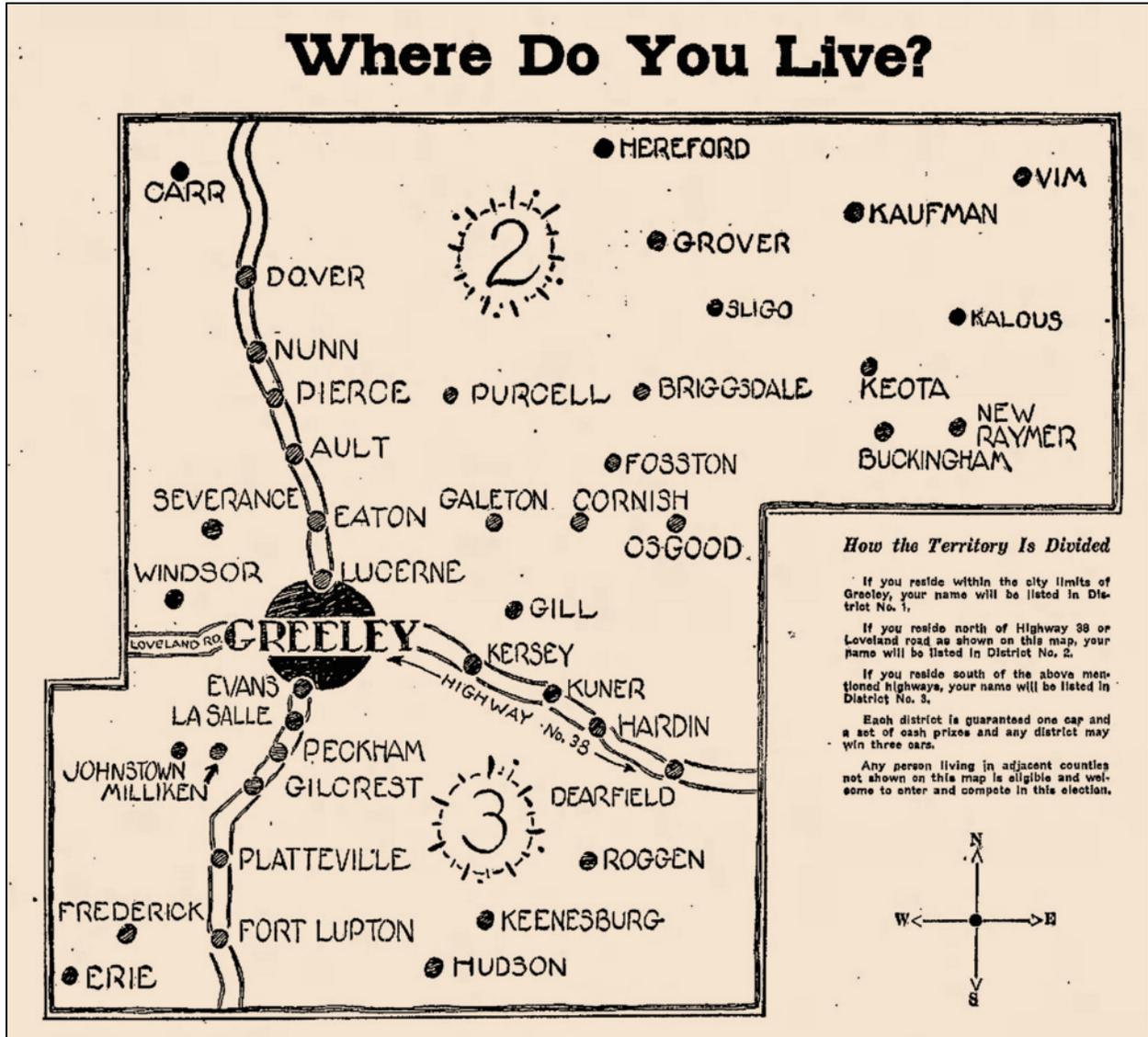
#### Annotation

Dry farmers and homesteaders hoped to make their living from the plains. Merchants and townspeople in turn hoped to make their living from the farmers. Different kinds of businesses could thrive in a town like Keota. Farmers needed lumber to build houses and set fence posts, so the presence of a lumber company like the one Charles O. Dodder established in the early 1910s would indicate a young, booming town.

Once enough farmers settled in the area, a seed and general goods store could draw a nice living. In the 1910s, farmers needed to buy their first years' seed, cloth, livestock feed, and other goods on credit until the harvest. Decades before credit cards were invented, a credit grocer was like an investor in the town's future. He or she hoped that crop yields would be good enough for each account to pay in full. Without cash in hand until the harvest, farmers could also pay down their accounts in trade: eggs, chickens, butter, sewing work, almost anything that could be resold was a benefit to the credit merchant and to the farmer's hopes for a successful year.

Finally, a cash-only business meant that Keota had enough economic stability that the merchant could expect successful paying customers. Curtis Foley started his cash grocery soon after arriving at his homestead claim in 1920 and ordered this letterhead stationery from Clyde L. Stanley's print shop.

# Where Do You Live?



## Keota (and Surroundings) in the 1920s

### Citation

Greeley Tribune-Republican. "Where do You Live?" Greeley, Colorado. April 13, 1931. P. 7. Newspapers.com. <http://www.newspapers.com/image/27259575/>

### Annotation

Like most dry farming towns on the plains, from the 1910s until the 1930s Dust Bowl, Keota thrived because of a network of nearby towns. This map shows the concentration of towns in April, 1931, at the beginning of the Great Depression. Residents from Sligo, Keota, Kalous, New Raymer, Grover, Briggsdale, and Buckingham shared schools and railroads. Keota homesteader Harry E. Greene was the superintendent and principal of Briggsdale schools for many years and taught at the Keota high school.

Sligo is a ghost town now, with only a cemetery to remember it by, but in the 1910s the town boasted stores and its own post office. Kalous, named after the Kalous homesteading family, started in the 1910s but only lasted for a few years. Thousands of Boulder-area miners went on a prolonged strike and a few of them decided to take advantage of liberal homesteading laws. Lacking the expertise and the resources to make money from dry farming or ranching, most of the miners abandoned Kalous when the strike was over. Kalous had a school and a post office, but not much else.

Grover, New Raymer, and Briggsdale provided much of Keota's social life. Keotans also made frequent trips to Greeley, the seat of Weld County and home to the Colorado State Teachers' College (now known as the University of Northern Colorado).



## 17/ Primary Source Dry Farming

### Citation

Rothstein, Arthur. Farm Security Administration borrower Fred Schmeckle drilling wheat on his dry-land farm, Weld County, Colorado. October 1939. Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photograph Collection. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000009811/pp/>

### Annotation

Without consistent rainfall, farmers and ranchers faced a seemingly insurmountable problem on the High Plains: how would the land provide enough water to produce a crop of corn or a healthy herd of cattle?

For a time, farmers believed that “rain followed the plow.” A settlement booster named Charles Dana Wilber popularized the idea in an effort to encourage more farmers to buy land – and coincidentally boost profits for his land speculation company. Theoretically, land turned over by plows would absorb existing rainfall better than undisturbed prairie. Planting crops in plowed land would then cool the atmosphere and encourage moisture in the wind, which would create enough rainstorms to support agriculture. Wilber was just one of the many prominent people of the High Plains who believed this theory; William Gilpin, Colorado’s first territorial governor, tried to attract people by promising increased rainfall to all settlers if only they would start the process with their furrows.

The theory seemed to be proven when the Plains experienced more rainfall in the early homesteading years than is usual for the area. In fact, the Plains tend to experience alternating rainy years and drought years regardless of agricultural activity, and the rain follows the plow theory was discredited. However, farmers discovered vast aquifers under the soil. The Keota area lay atop the border between the High Plains and Dakota-Cheyenne aquifers. Even in the absence of streams and rivers, farmers hoped that advances in well technology and drilling could extract enough water from below, that when combined with natural rainfall, they would be able to grow crops and sustain herds. This type of farming without irrigation is called “dry farming.”

In 1939, the Farm Security Administration sent photographer Arthur Rothstein to capture what remained of the dry farmers in northern Weld County. This farm near Keota demonstrated the harm dry farming ultimately did to the environment: unbridled farming leached nutrients out of delicate soil. Tilling and plowing stirred up dust and increased wind erosion, ironically making the dry conditions worse. Farmers and ranchers would need coordination to keep from overtaxing the land.



**18 / Primary Source**  
**Keota Abandoned**

**Citation**

Rothstein, Arthur. Keota, Colorado, abandoned during the Dust Bowl, Weld County, Colorado. October 1939. Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photograph Collection. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000009786/pp/>

**Annotation**

Photographer Arthur Rothstein photographed a section of Keota as it appeared in October 1939. Once an area of a few hundred people – shopkeepers, farmers, ranchers, printers, journalists, teachers, and bankers – Keota fell victim to the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl like so many towns in eastern Colorado. “Abandoned” is a misnomer: Keota currently has a few residents and the descendants of the homesteaders visit frequently.

State Colorado Incorporated place Keota Ward of city \_\_\_\_\_ Unincorporated place \_\_\_\_\_  
 County Weld Township or other division of county Precinct 36 Block Nos. \_\_\_\_\_ Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Line No.	LOCATION		HOUSEHOLD DATA			NAME	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION				EDUCATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	CITY OF BIRTH			
	Street, avenue, road, etc.	Room number (in cities and towns)	Number of household in order of maintenance	Home owned (O) or rented (R)	Value of home, if owned, or monthly rental, if rented			From this household live on a farm? (Yes or No)	Color (Leave blank)	Sex—Male (M), Female (F)	Color or race				Age at last birthday	Marital status—Single (S), Married (M), Widowed (W), Divorced (D)	Highest grade of school completed
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
1			1	R	5	No	Burkley Vincent O	Head	0	M	W	51	M	Na H-4	30	Colorado	91
2							Mary J.	Wife	1	F	W	49	M	Na 8	9	Nebraska	69
3							Lillian R.	Daughter	2	F	W	17	S	Na H-1	8	Colorado	91
4			2	O	1000	No	Stanley Clyde L. O	Head	0	M	W	52	S	Na C-1	40	Missouri	66
5			3	O	250	No	Thompson Perry	Head	0	M	W	42	M	Na 8	9	Nebraska	69
6							Lorena O	Wife	1	F	W	33	M	Na H-4	20	Nebraska	69
7							Arthur Bruce	Son	2	M	W	13	S	Na 7	7	Colorado	91
8			4	R	250	No	Randall Bertha O	Head	0	F	W	50	S	Na C-2	60	Idaho	59
9			5	O	500	No	Morse Allan	Head	0	M	W	42	M	Na H-4	30	Iowa	65
10							Ruby O	Wife	1	F	W	39	M	Na H-4	30	Missouri	66
11			6	R	free	No	Stanley D. V.	Head	0	M	W	42	M	Na 8	8	Missouri	66
12							Ruth O	Wife	1	F	W	34	M	Na H-4	30	Nebraska	69
13							Margaret	Daughter	2	F	W	12	S	Na 6	6	Colorado	91
14							Ruth Joan	Daughter	2	F	W	6	S	Na 0		Colorado	91
15							Donald	Son	2	M	W	4	S	Na 0		Colorado	91
16							Victor	Son	2	M	W	3 1/2	S	Na 0		Colorado	91
17			7	R	8	No	Hutfulden Rosetta O	Head	0	F	W	20	S	Na C-2	50	Colorado	91
18			8	R	5	No	Fate Robert	Head	0	M	W	23	M	Na C-2	50	Colorado	91
19							Thurline O	Wife	1	F	W	22	M	Na C-1	40	Colorado	91
20							James	Son	2	M	W	2	S	Na 0		Colorado	91
21							William	Son	2	M	W	1	S	Na 0		Colorado	91
22			9	R	5	No	Kearling James R O	Head	0	M	W	68	M	Na 8	8	Iowa	65
23							Gertrude	Wife	1	F	W	49	M	Na H-4	30	Ohio	59
24			10	R	5	No	Kearling R. L. O	Head	0	M	W	47	W	Na 8	8	Iowa	65
25							Minnie	Daughter	2	F	W	17	S	Na H-4	10	Colorado	91
26							Virginia	Daughter	2	F	W	15	S	Na 7	7	Colorado	91
27			11	O	1000	No	Butler Malissa O	Head	0	F	W	50	W	Na C-2	60	Illinois	61
28			12	O	300	No	Method Eliza O	Head	0	M	W	56	M	Na 8	8	Nebraska	69
29							Lena	Wife	1	F	W	37	M	Na H-4	30	Nebraska	69
30			13	O	400	No	Buckley Thos. O	Head	0	M	W	53	M	Na 8	8	Iowa	65
31							Sadie	Wife	1	F	W	46	M	Na 8	8	Iowa	65
32							L. D.	Son	2	M	W	23	S	Na H-4	30	Colorado	91
33							Estie	Son	2	M	W	19	S	Na H-2	14	Colorado	91
34			14	R	5	No	McKinley Wm G.	Head	0	M	W	64	S	Na 4	4	Illinois	61

April 22.

Do not check if household head or next of kin

## 19 / Primary Source

### A Change in the Census

#### Citation

Precinct 36, Keota, Colorado. Federal Census. 1940. National Archives.

[http://www.archives.com/GA.aspx?\\_act=ImageViewCensus1940&Uniqueld=444309&type=census&folderImageSeq=222](http://www.archives.com/GA.aspx?_act=ImageViewCensus1940&Uniqueld=444309&type=census&folderImageSeq=222)

#### Annotation

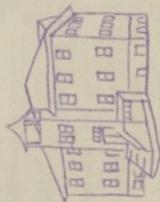
While it was large enough to appear on the map, Keota had not gathered enough people to count as a separate place for the 1910 federal census. By 1920, 129 residents lived in the town itself. Keota's greatest strength in numbers, however, lay in the 612 farmers, ranchers, their families, and their employees who lived in the dry prairie and the chalk bluffs. Those people came to town to shop and to market their vegetables. This boom in population and in reputation started strong, but in fact would be the peak of Keota's influence. The decade ended at the beginning of the depression, environmental disaster, and drought. Once the farmers started giving up on the plains, or Colorado, or farming altogether, Keota would shrink along with them. In 1930, 108 people lived in the town of Keota. By 1940, the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression had driven out many of even the most determined dry farmers. The United States Census recorded only 34 people living in or close to Keota. Of those who remained, 22 of them were either Keota homesteaders or the children of homesteaders.

The homestead families are highlighted on this portion of the 1940 Census sheet. Burkey, Stanley, Moore, Keasling, Butler, Bucher. These families still hoped to make Keota work, but they acknowledged reality. Even those who remained were an aging population; only two families had young children. In just one year, the United States' entry into World War II would take the remaining young adults and send them into war, to fight, to marry soldiers, to volunteer for the war effort in a bigger city like Greeley, or simply move on from a big prairie that now seemed so small.

Census data can tell us not only how many people lived in a place, but what the country felt was important in a cultural and economic sense. In 1910, the Census Bureau recorded whether or not households had radio sets. In 1930, increased demands for veterans' benefits and services led to records of whether or not a respondent fought in World War I. In 1940, the United States had endured a decade of Depression, and the census taker recorded whether or not a respondent was still out of work, what kind of employment they sought, and the length of their period of unemployment.

THE

VOICE



KEOTA SCHOOL

SERVING OUR COUNTRY



SMILE AWHILE

We are all very happy to know that many of our boys are returning home again.

Daniel Kinnison, previously stationed in Texas, has been discharged and is at home.

Robert Hart has been discharged. Both he and Mrs. Hart are still in Norfolk, Virginia.

Harold has also been discharged from the army and is home with his folks.

Verie and Joe Hilterbran have both been discharged.

Both Everett Butler and John Owens are attending Colorado University at Boulder.

L. D. Bucher has been recently discharged from the army.

Walter Weiss, of the army, has also recently been discharged.

Robert Oram, Ortis Bucher and Junior Krieger are still in the Pacific.

Mrs. Bucher: Kenneth, can you type?  
Kenneth: Yes, I use the Col-umbus System.  
Mrs. Bucher: What's that?  
Kenneth: I discover a key and then land on it.

\*\*\*\*\*

LaVern: Have you ever studied a blotter?  
Winona: No, Why?  
LaVern: You should; it's a very absorbing subject.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs. Bucher: "My baby has been walking since she was ten months old."  
Mr. Bucher: "My! She must be awfully tired."

\*\*\*\*\*

Mrs. Bucher: Do you realize that you missed that same problem yesterday?

Winona: Yes!  
Mrs. Bucher: Then why didn't you look it up?  
Winona: Well, I was hoping you would find the answer without asking me again.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Strive rather for character than reputation. Reputation is what others think we are --Character is what we know ourselves to be."

## **20 / Primary Source**

### **The Voice**

#### **Citation**

The Voice. 1945. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection, Denver, Colorado.

#### **Annotation**

Keota schoolchildren produced their own newspapers starting in the 1910s and ending when the Keota school closed in 1951. At the town's peak, the high school and the elementary school had separate buildings. As families moved away during the Great Depression, the schools were once again combined in the same building.

The student newspaper mostly kept to light topics, jokes, and social topics. The children were not insulated from serious matters, however. One edition of the school paper from 1915 mentions a measles outbreak that ripped through the student body. Children stayed home for extended periods, recovering from the virus, and a few either died or became permanently disabled. Doctors would not develop a measles vaccine until 1963.

In 1917, the newspaper wished the best for graduated students drafted into the army, fighting overseas in World War I. This edition of The Voice in 1945 is more celebratory: World War II was ending. The paper happily spread the news that former classmates had been discharged from service, some to return home, some to go to college, others to leave Colorado and start new lives all across the country.



## 21 / Photograph Homecoming

### Citation

Big Year Colorado. *Keota*. 4 pictures, 2012-2014. Lochbuie, Colorado.

### Annotation

Among the people soon to come home from World War II was Robert Stanley Oram. The Orams and Stanleys settled in the center of town. As a boy, Oram wrote his name in the concrete sidewalk outside his house. A caretaker prevents the house, cemetery, and some other buildings in town from complete destruction, so the sidewalk remained until Oram's death in 2013.

Keota

Dec. 1973

Dear Friends;

Time for Greetings again. We've been spared for another year on the ranch. George keeps busy most of the time. He doesn't <sup>know</sup> how he used to accomplish so much, but then I was able to help him a lot. I am not able to do much now. I can boss things yet. We had broiled steak, potatoes boiled with the jackets on and string beans for lunch. George fixed it all on his own. The wind still rages at 1:15. Many things have happened this year.

On April 9th my sister, Mabel Marshall passed away very quietly. I miss her so much. My brother and wife of Rantoul, Ill. went to Alaska on the vacation trip. We had a card from the North Pole P.O. Our son John and wife, Faye, came to visit us August 15th. Their boys were working so were not along. Elizabeth and daughter Janet came from Overland Park, Kansas on Aug. 17th and Janet went on to Laramie to help her roommate get their apartment ready for the school year.

On the 18th we all met in Cheyenne and had a casserole dinner with my sister Alice Owens. Later John and Faye left to go to Wells, Nevada and then on home. Elizabeth was here a week and then Jim came. We visited Ken and Joyce in Denver and in a week they moved into a brand new home in Aurora, suburb. Janet spent Thanksgiving with us and helped get the turkey in the oven. It was deliciously done. Elizabeth and Jim flew to Miami Nov. 24 and were to fly to Lima, Peru at 3 a.m. Nov. 25th. They were to spend 4 days there, 4 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and 4 days in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Jim had two weeks vacation to spend ere Jan. 1st and they were celebrating their 30th anniversary ahead of time. No Christmas plans yet.

Our Post Office at Keota is to close soon, we are told and we will be on a route out of Grover.

Love to all... Lorraine & George Owens

A sample of the letter we sent our friends in far away places.

**22 / Primary Source**  
**“Dear Friends...”**

**Citation**

Owens, Lorraine and George. Letter dated December 1973. Clyde L. Stanley Collection. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Collection.

**Annotation**

One of the last residents to leave Keota, George Owens grew up on his father’s homestead. He and Lorraine Shultis Owens moved to Greeley not long after Lorraine wrote this family newsletter.

When the businesses in Keota closed, only a few Keotans could earn a living without the benefit of other townspeople. The Owens ran a ranch, while in the town itself, Clyde Stanley ran his print shop and magazine. Children moved away to Grover, Greeley, and beyond, looking for steady work. In the 1970s, even the deepest affection for their homes could not overcome the reality of a town with a scattered, aging population. Within three years of Owens and Stanley moving to Greeley, all had passed away, taking a piece of the Keota legacy with them.



## 23 / Photographs

### Keota Today

#### Citation

Big Year Colorado. *Keota*. 4 photos. Lochbuie, Colorado.

#### Annotation

Most of the land around Keota is part of the Pawnee National Grassland. The United States once pushed homesteaders to farm the prairie, but after the Dust Bowl, the government started buying back acres too unreliable for farming and allowing them to revert back to prairie. Today the Grassland preserves a piece of the delicate ecosystem and is a popular hiking and camping destination in eastern Colorado.

## Additional Resources

### Keota

Rocky Mountain PBS. *Colorado Experience: Keota*. March 2013.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B46WOV2Gzck>

### Weld County

*Greeley Daily Tribune*, Greeley, Colo.

Mehls, Carol Drake, and Steven F. Mehls. *Weld County, Colorado: Historic Agricultural Context*. 1988, Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, Colo. Revised 2006. [http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/OAHP/crforms\\_edumat/pdfs/612.pdf](http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/OAHP/crforms_edumat/pdfs/612.pdf)  
Timm, Verl. *Anecdotes: A lifetime collection*. Morris Publishing, Kearney, Nebr. 2013.

### Other Non-Fiction

Kings, John. *In Search of Centennial: A Journey with James A. Michener*. New York, N.Y.: Visual Books, Inc., 1978.

Horner, Ken. *A Tale Of Two Buttes: History Of Pawnee National Grassland*. Seattle: CreateSpace Publishing, 2008.

West, Elliott. *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

Gallagher, Jolie A. *A Wild West History of Frontier Colorado: Pioneers, Gunslingers & Cattle Kings on the Eastern Plains*. Charleston: The History Press, 2011.

Stewart, Elinore Pruitt. *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*. Boston: The Atlantic Monthly, 1914.

Landau, Elaine. *The Homestead Act*. New York: Scholastic Library Publishing, 2006.

### Historical Fiction

*James Michener's Centennial*. Miniseries. Universal Studios. 1978.

Michener, James A. *Centennial*. Random House, N.Y., 1974.

*Ken Burns' The West*. Miniseries. Public Broadcasting Service. 1996.

Cather, Willa. *O Pioneers!* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1913.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House in the Big Woods*. New York: HarperCollins, 1932.

### Archives

Clyde L. Stanley Papers. Denver Public Library Western History & Genealogy Department, Denver, Colo.  
United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. *General Land Office Records Search*. 2014. <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/>

### Reference

Kraker, Dean. *South Platte Country: A History of Weld County*. Laramie, Wyo.: Powder River Publishers, 1954.

Shwayder, Carol Rein. *Weld County Old & New*. Vol. 1. Greeley, Colo.: Unicorn Ventures, 1983.

*Weld County, Colorado, Tombstone Inscriptions*. Vol. 1. Greeley, Colo.: Genealogical Society of Weld County, Colorado, 1982.



## Teaching Strategies

General Instructional Strategies for using primary sources in classrooms followed by grade-level-targeted suggestions for essential questions, inquiry questions (including writing prompts and discussion starters), activities, and assessments aligned to specific state academic standards for 4th grade, 8th grade, and high school.

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### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### Essential Questions:

- How do the state’s geography, climate, and natural resources affect the way people live and work? How have these factors affected life in the past?
- What makes people leave a place and go to another? What do they take with them? What do they leave? Why do people continue to come to Colorado?
- How does scarcity influence decisions?
- How are events in U.S. and world history connected to events in Colorado?

#### Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):

- How did economic incentives influence the migration and lifestyle of farmers?
- What can the government do to support economic growth?
- What were the environmental impacts of dry farming?
- How did the physical geography of Colorado affect the Homesteaders?

#### Activities:

##### *Warm up/quick activities*

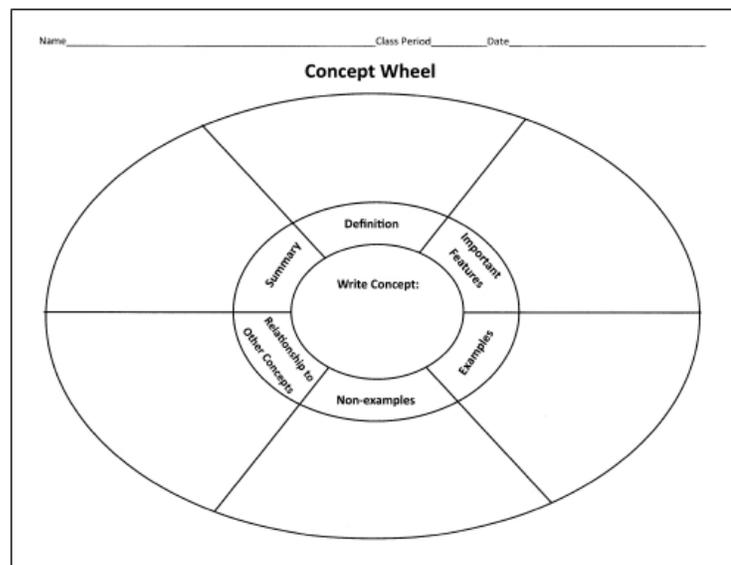
- Choose a random primary source from the set to analyze using the Crop It Method. <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/25697>
- Students can do a quick primary source investigation. Ideally, one primary source would be “investigated” at the beginning of each lesson to provide for a quick introduction to the lessons listed below.

##### *Lesson activities*

- [Video: Colorado Experience - Keota](#)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B46WOV2Gzck&feature=share&list=PLd1csdWoPwT6Jx9H1F1QOQEHKEVLTXEq4>)(27:10) - Created by History Colorado and Rocky Mountain PBS, this video explains how Keota began with a homestead claim in 1880, and became a place for settlers to begin their dreams.
- Utilize the Library of Congress’ recommendations for analyzing primary sources [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Primary\\_Sources.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf)  
To do this, students should either each receive a copy of a primary source that they will be analyzing, or a copy can be projected to the entire class. Each student should have three post-it notes where they can write one or multiple observations, reflections, or questions. After they have done this, they can post their notes on three designated places (i.e.: a bulletin board, white board, charts paper, etc.) The teacher can go through each step of analyzing with students and discuss commonalities. Following the observation stage, the teacher may want to provide

students with more background knowledge about the source. A follow up activity may involve having students research their questions in more depth.

- As a class, students can create a primary source timeline. This process can start with dates of national importance which may include the dates of the Civil War and World War I. Then students can go through the primary sources, and add them to the timeline in either the order they think it goes in, or the actual order, (teachers may have the students do what they think first, then go back and fix. This could be an informal assessment of how well students are analyzing sources, if they understand chronological order, etc...). Students can put the actual documents on the timeline and then write a caption in their own words to summarize.
- Students can participate in a data analysis activity using sources five and twelve. They should first analyze the graphs individually, noting things like outliers, the difference between male and female population, the years being discussed, events that were occurring nationwide and internationally. Ask students to explain why the data changes. Then, students should compare the graphs simultaneously to look for trends in the way Keota's population changes over time. Ask students to discuss why the second graph shows a greater population boom than the first. As a quick assessment, students could write a paragraph summarizing their population analysis.
- Students may be unfamiliar with some of the terms associated with this topic. Create a circle map for important vocabulary terms to help students understand what life was like in Colorado during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Students can look at the following primary sources to determine the definitions of the following terms:
  - Dry farming (source #17)
  - Homestead (source #1)
  - Proving a claim (source #3)
  - Abandoned (sources #18 & #19)



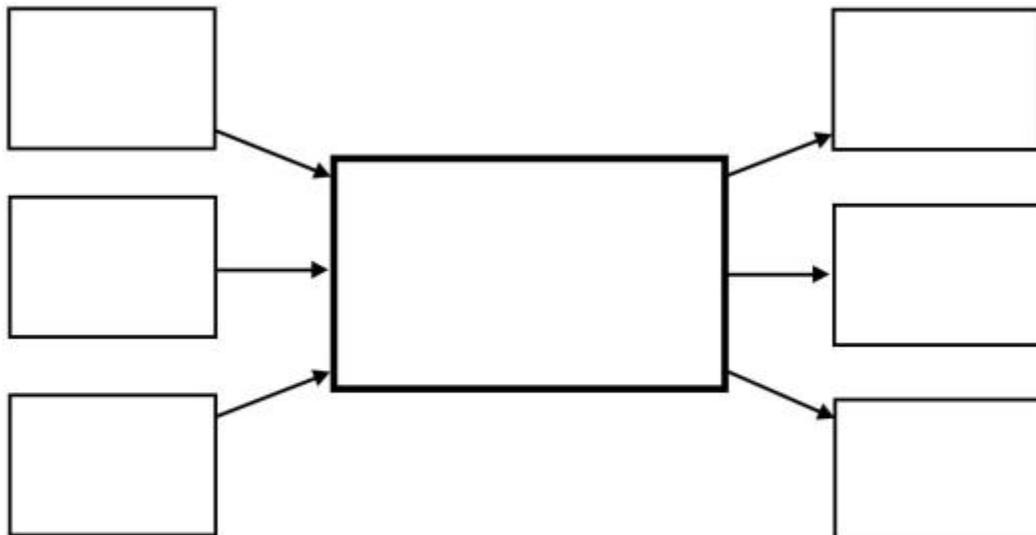
- Using primary source number two, students can illustrate the different stanzas of each song. They should focus on how the song applies to Colorado specifically by considering the physical geography, native animals and plants, and the unique characteristics of the region. Once students have illustrated their stanza, they can present them to the class in the correct sequence. As a technology extension, students could create a Power Point

presentation to illustrate the same ideas. Ask students to explain how songs and music can be used to describe and tell us more about a specific period in history.

- An activity to explore how a community is established could begin with looking through a series of Keota’s events including primary sources numbers seven through nine. Students should read each source to get an idea of what life was like during that time period. They could also use sources numbers three through four to look at the experience of a specific homesteader. Once they have discussed each of these sources, students can write a [post card](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/postcard/) (<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/postcard/>) pretending to be a homesteader who is writing home to a relative or friend in the east. They should describe their journey through neighboring states, what their life was like in Colorado, and what was happening in the Keota community at the time.

**Assessments (aligned to specific state academic standards for your grade level):**

- To assess history standard one and two students could complete a cause and effect assessment where they would be expected to utilize the primary source documents to identify specific causes and effects of a main event. A graphic organizer could be used to assess a variety of concepts (see below). The main event could be adjusted according to desired concept to assess, including:
  - The Homestead Act was passed in 1862.
  - The Enlarged Homestead Act was passed in 1909.
  - World War I began and men from many agricultural regions joined the war effort.
  - The Dust Bowl covered most of the American Midwest and extended into eastern Colorado.



- To assess geography standards one and two, students could analyze the map primary resources numbers four, thirteen, and sixteen. They should answer the following essay questions using these sources to support their thinking.
  - Why did Keota develop at its specific location in Colorado?
  - How did Colorado’s physical geography impact the creation of homesteads and communities like Keota?
  - How does the physical environment affect human activity?
  - How does human activity affect the environment?
- To provide students with more current data about Colorado’s geography, students could use [Google Earth](#) to locate Keota and explore its physical geography today.
- To assess economics standards one and two, students could first list the different goods and services that Keota offered as they were building their community and economy. Once they have listed these ideas, the teacher should ask students to discuss how the citizens of Keota created these goods and offered these services. To continue this formative assessment, students can also discuss:
  - What incentives were homesteaders given by the federal government to produce these goods and services? Why does the government do this?
  - What kind of choices do you think the citizens of Keota had to make in order to be economically successful? What were some of their opportunity costs?
  - What long term effects did the choices of dry farmers have on the environment?
- To assess civics standard one, students should look at the problem and proposed solutions made by the federal government in the early twentieth century to promote westward expansion and develop the western state’s economies and settlements.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Essential Questions:

- What social, political, and economic factors encouraged westward expansion in the United States?
- How did culture, geography, politics and economics dictate who moved to Keota, CO and the success or failure they would experience once they arrived?
- Make the connection between Manifest Destiny and westward expansion.
- How is the West defined today? What defining characteristics of the West are relevant in today's society/culture?
- What was the overall impact of westward expansion on the history of the U.S.? Who was the most impacted (pioneers, women, Native Americans, etc.)?
- Explain the connection between geography and human settlement in the American West.

### Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):

- What push/pull factors encouraged people to move west?
- What makes the West, the West? How is the West defined? Has that definition changed over time?
- Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law in 1862 as an incentive to get people to move west. What is an example of something in your life where an incentive caused you to do something or to take action?
- If you could pick up and move to anywhere in the United States where would you go? Why? What factors would you consider in making your decision?
- Pick the two documents that resonated most with you. Why did you choose those?

### Activities

- Watch Ken Burns, [The West, The Grandest Enterprise Under God](#)- specifically watch the section "How do you like Nebraska." As a class discuss the segment. What was one thing that stuck out to you? What made you go "whoa"? What resonated with you in another way? Conduct a quick research assignment relating to Keota, CO and how it was established.
- Define the following terms: Manifest Destiny, arid, topography, geology, weather, climate, migration, pull factors, and push factors.
- Prior understanding and key events activity - Arrange the following events in American History in chronological order: Manifest Destiny, Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark Expedition, Indian Removal Act, Compromise of 1850 and the Homestead Act. Identify in 3-5 sentences the significance of each event and how each "paints the picture" of westward expansion.
- Field trip to the History Colorado museum and check out the Keota collection. For more information on the History Colorado museum click [here](http://www.historycolorado.org/adult-visitors/sansteadkeota-collection) (<http://www.historycolorado.org/adult-visitors/sansteadkeota-collection>). Students could explore the collection and see the exhibit and the primary source documents first hand.

- Westward Expansion simulation (map analysis)- Working in groups of two or three, organize a traveling party to settle in Keota, CO. Your group or family is leaving S. Louis, MO and making the trip to Colorado. Using the [map](http://www.eprintablecalendars.com/maps/blank-map-of-the-united-states/) (<http://www.eprintablecalendars.com/maps/blank-map-of-the-united-states/>) provided plot and plan your trip including how long it will take, what you will be taking with you (keeping in mind the actual dimensions of a covered wagon), operating on a set budget, and how you will survive once you arrive in CO. For the assignment, think of the game Oregon Trail.
- Guest Speaker- Invite a guest speaker to come in and speak about the Colorado and the West. A representative from the University of Colorado's [Center of the American West](http://centerwest.org) (Centerwest.org) be a fine choice. Other possibilities could include having a rancher or farmer from the community come in and talk to students. Students would be responsible for writing and submitting questions for the speaker before class.
- Music/Song lyric analysis- Read the document with the song lyrics, "My Western Home" and "Home on the Range" what do these songs say about life in the west? Colorado? Westward Expansion? Option 1: Using these lyrics as a model, re-write the song based on perhaps a more accurate depiction of life in the West, specifically life in Keota, CO based on the documents provided. Option 2: Select a "western" or "country" song of your choice and analyze the lyrics and their value to depicting life in the American West. Songs and analysis will be shared with the class. In addition, songs may be recorded using the website [vocaroo.com](http://vocaroo.com).

**Assessments (aligned to specific state academic standards for your grade level):**

- Analyze the graphs (rainfall, census, population) and discuss the population and growth trends in Keota, CO. What do the graphs tell you about life in Keota? What can they tell you about life in the West? Find similar graphs/documents for the town where you live and compare what you find and analyze the similarities or differences.
- Locate Keota, CO on a map and discuss the geography, topography and climate of Eastern Colorado. Complete the [map](http://www.waterproofpaper.com/printable-maps/colorado.shtml) (<http://www.waterproofpaper.com/printable-maps/colorado.shtml>) by including major landforms, rivers, mountain ranges, etc. What geographic factors impacted the people who settled there most, for good or bad? What geographic features made Keota an ideal place to live? What geographic features made Keota a difficult place to live?
- Imagine that the year is 1891 and you and your family have recently left your home on the East Coast for a homestead near Keota. Write three to five authentic diary entries depicting and describing your experience. These entries should recall your travels, your life in Keota, and a description of the geography/environment. Furthermore, the entries should be written in authentic grammar and vocabulary as would be expected of someone your age in 1891. Be creative!
- Using the documents provided, create an authentic advertisement to be printed in a newspaper on the East Coast advertising Keota, CO. Include in your advertisement reasons people should consider moving to Keota.

- Town Hall Forum/Think Tank--Ultimately, people living in Keota in the late 1800s and early 1900s were forced to move. The town shrank to only 15 people in 1958. Knowing what you know now, you and a team of two to three others must come up with a sustainable plan to remake Keota into a thriving town. What things will the people need to survive? What will the economy look like? What will people grow? Be sure to identify the social, political, economic, and environmental issues that contributed to the downfall of Keota and how you, a twenty-first-century scholar will overcome those issues. Give specific examples.

## High School

### Essential Questions:

- What was “homesteading” and why did the United States government encourage it?
- What kind of people does it take to build a community on the dry plains of Eastern Colorado? What kinds of skills are required?
- Why did the people of Keota move away, and how do they keep the memories of their town alive?

### Inquiry Questions (writing prompts or discussion starters):

- Using your knowledge of westward expansion, why was homesteading encouraged by the U.S. government?
- If you were going to start a community, what would be the essential things to have? Try to list cultural, social, economic, and political examples.
- What kind of person would succeed starting a life from scratch on the prairie? Do the traits of a homesteader differ than someone trying to get ahead today? Why or why not?
- How do you keep alive the memories of people who are no longer in your life or places you have visited? Why do we do these things?
- Where is the next area for humans to settle? What are the similarities and differences with the settlement at Keota?

### Activities:

#### *For U.S. History:*

- Homestead Act of 1862 (document one): Have students read the contents of document 1 (using the provided typed text since the document is unreadable) and highlight/write key words, main ideas, questions, and unfamiliar words.
  - Writing prompt: Using evidence from the text, explain the key details of the Homestead Act of 1862.
- Data Analysis (document five): Using the data charts provided and the annotated reading, have students write on the following prompt: What does the following data reveal about homesteading in the Keota area? What do you think contributed to the trends related to gender and number of claims during certain years?
- In groups, use documents six, seven, eight, nine, and eleven to create a booster’s brochure describing describe life in Keota to attract people to come live there.

#### *For Economics:*

- Based on your knowledge of life on the plains, discuss the economic life in Keota as it relates to the issues of scarcity, rational economic choices, opportunity costs and incentives. Give examples related to these terms using support from reading and documents.

#### *For Civics:*

- After reading Home on the Range (document two) create a poster that might have been used to sell people on moving out to Colorado/Keota.

- Hold a Socratic Seminar using the Homestead Act as a starting point. Ask students to think about whether they think the government or economic factors are more influential in encouraging individual actions.

*Things to create*

- Poster selling Keota or the western lifestyle that shows elements of at least four aspects from the song. Have students explain at least four quotes from the song and how they are incorporated into the poster.

**Assessments (aligned with specific state academic standards for your grade level):**

*Connection to activity number one:*

- Explain how the Homestead Act of 1862 demonstrates the US Government’s attempt to help the economy. Where in the Constitution does it give the government this authority?

*Connection to activity two:*

- Explain using data from document five why the population varied over the years. Name at least three parts of the background essay or timeline and link them to changes in the population of Keota

*Connection to activity three:*

- Keota Obituary: Have students write an obituary on Keota that describes the “life of Keota” using evidence from primary source documents.