

Brown Hotel and the Sarah Smith School House Condensed from the Oral History of Audrey Wilson

Sarah Smith was the wife of Joseph Smith the Lehi Blacksmith. The Wilsons purchased the Hotel and School House from the Browns. Audrey Wilson tells the following:

When we first moved in, there were three rooms and they were just in a row. There was our kitchen and our living room and our bedroom. Each of them in the back. There was a window in the front, and a window in the back.

When we remodeled our home in 1941 or 1940, we tore up the kitchen floor and Jess Fox came by one day and said, "I went to school in that home there." He said that Sarah Smith had taught school here. She had lived in part of the building and taught in the other room. There was just plain benches, and they had slates to work on, which they held in their laps.

He said that there was a dugout underneath their school room for the children to go in if they had an Indian attack or a scare. They had two or three Indian scares at the time. The Indians were around during the Black Hawk war. When we tore up the floor, we found a trap door that was used for the dugout.

They said later on that she built on the other room which was the third room. Then she lived in it. Then she used the other two rooms for the school. That's all I really know about it. The dugout was faced with just dirt. It was just like a root cellar. It was about five feet deep.

We bought this home from the Browns. It was the whole property when we bought it and that was in 1929. That is the year when we bought it, because I was fifteen years old at that time. We also bought the Brown Hotel at that time. We bought the whole section.

Right immediately to the west of my home is an old Hotel building which was built by the Smith's also. The only thing I know is that they used it a lot for

stopover. When the Denver and Rio Grande train came by, they had meals that they served to the workers on the Railroad. The Railroad was built and completed I think in 1881. The Hotel was built in 1880.

The Adobe for the hotel and for this place here was taken from ground right straight across south from us which was Grandmother Thomases place. They had made the adobe's from the mud over there. they made that for the three homes. So I thought that was quite interesting to know that the adobe came from right across the street.

Then when mother bought the hotel, she was a Thomas. She took in Roomers quite a bit; especially around the Rodeo days. She rented out rooms a lot because people didn't have too many places to stay. There was not too many in Lehi. She rented out rooms and cooked meals. There we used for our cooking. We served the meals in the kitchen that we have now. It was the dining room then. It was 18X18. It was this big so they could seat all of the people. It sure was a large room.

The lodging rooms were upstairs. There was six lodging room upstairs. There was three rooms on each side. Then there was four downstairs. There was also the dining room and the living room and two rooms on this side and the pantry. That is how the house was laid out.

I don't know if there was a barn or a livery station of any type in the back. There was a flowing well in the front of the house. An arteisian well that ran good. It was all rocked up. They told us there was one there, we used it as a sess pool. We ran water out of our kitchen sink right into the well through a hose. Then we had to have the well cleaned. Cal Winn cleaned it because it was rocked up since. It hasn't been used for so many years. When he got into them to clean them out, he could only have his hand in it for a minute because of how cold it was. The well still had water in it. It took him a long time before he finished.

But the people when they came in from Cedar Valley would fill their water barrels up and get their water to make their trip back. They had a field right next to the Railroad and they would tether their horse and wagons and leave them there.

Then they would come and visit and then come back.

There was just one building at the Denver Rio Grande. It was on the corner across from the Hunsakers now. It was a pretty big building-not too big though. They had their loading platforms on the back part there. When we first brought this platform here, our property ran to the railroad. Because of the Depot being up there, the people just would drive through on that blank piece of property to the Depot to load their merchandise or to get the baggage they had. It was finally a road. So after it had been used that long you just couldn't just shut it off and say, this is my property. It was public domain then.

The baggage area was on the back by the loading area.