

MILLIKEN, "CAPITOL" OF THE DENVER, LARAMIE AND NORTHWESTERN REALM

The Milliken Plan

Farmers in the Hillsboro area were able to produce large quantities of crops thanks to the vital water supply provided by the Hillsboro and the Thompson, Platte and BeeLine Ditch Companies. However, lack of transportation restricted their profits. The farmers in the area were overjoyed with the announcement that the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern Railway would build a line from Denver, Colorado, to Laramie, Wyoming, through Hillsboro. The agents of the railroad found that Hillsboro was not the most convenient place for a station on the rail line, so a new townsite was chosen on the edge of the old village, near enough to give residents advantages of the coming railroad.

On a cold day in early March of 1909, several members of the Board of Directors of the Realty Company visited the present site of Milliken. The site consisted of three farms with the customary farm buildings and fences. Part of this land was in alfalfa, part in wheat, and some had been in sugar beets the previous season. Two dwellings and the Hillsboro School House were also in the site of the proposed new town.

Orders were issued for the purchase of the three farms, and as soon as this was accomplished surveyors were sent to the townsite, arriving March 15, 1909. On April 1, 1909, the town site agent, Raymond A. Eaton, aided in laying out the unnamed town that was alluded to as Hillsboro. The area for the town was one mile from east to west and one-half mile from north to south, comprising three hundred twenty acres that included the platted area called Hillsboro.

According to town folklore, the agent and chief engineer were only told to "give us a town we'll be proud of and a town that will reflect credit on our stockholders." This townsite became known as Milliken. Judge John D. Milliken as General Counsel for the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern earlier had named some of the towns along the line. Later after returning from a trip to the East he is rumored to have remarked, "Somebody named the town of Milliken behind my back."

A fairly standard town plan was developed and is still evident today. Broad Street runs through the center of town from east to west and is the main thoroughfare. It was originally designed to be eighty feet in width and graded to fifty-six feet from curb to curb, affording sidewalks of twelve feet. Next to Broad Street, the alleys are east and west. Telephone poles were put in these alleys to relieve obstruction on Broad Street. Streets were determined by plowing furrows on each side. Six miles were nicely graded before winter stopped the work. The expense of plowing, grading, and spreading gravel was nearly three thousand dollars.

Irene Avenue, in the center of town, north to south and eighty feet in width, terminates in Lola Park on Milliken's southern boundary. This park comprises two blocks and was named for the daughter of Judge Milliken, Lola Vida.

Two avenues which measured forty feet from curb to curb were on the east and west sides of Irene Avenue. All other thoroughfares were sixty feet in width. This system

allowed for sidewalks of four feet in width, with a parking of five and one-half feet in width on both sides.

The plan of the town may have been fairly typical, but the naming of the streets was anything but common. The main street was named Broad Street and streets running north and south were called avenues and given the names of girls in alphabetical order from Alice to Quentine: Alice, Buelah, Cora, Dorothy, Ethel, Frances, Grace, Harriett, Irene, Josephine, Katheleen, Laura, Marjorie, Norma, Olive, Pauline and Quentine. One account stated that they were named for the wives of the officials of the Northwestern Land & Iron Company.

Thoroughfares extending east and west were designated as streets and named in alphabetical order for trees: Ash, Birch, Cherry, Broad, Elm, and Forest. Alleys were twenty feet wide. A larger park was platted in the northwest part of town, on the banks of the Little Thompson River.

Several months were spent platting the land and setting stakes defining the boundary of every lot in the townsite. Ninety-six squares were laid out into nearly three thousand lots selling at fifty dollars to six hundred dollars per lot. Adjoining tracts of land were made into truck farms of from one to twenty acres each.

All this had taken place before a lot had been offered for sale. The town plat was filed July 10, 1909 and late in the summer of 1909, the Land Company was ready to begin selling lots, and building started. Blocks 1 through 26 were reserved for the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern Railway Company. L.E. Stone purchased the first town lot on August 1, 1909.



L.E. Stone – Purchased
First Lot In Milliken -
from the Milliken Mail
Souvenir Edition
Dec. 28, 1909

Promotional Campaign

An aggressive promotional campaign began. In the brochure extolling the merits of the new town was the promise of water rights available for every lot for irrigation and for watering the park.

THE DENVER, LARAMIE & NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

The towns and lands of this company are in the center of the rush. Less than a year old, our towns show how rapid has been the growth of Colorado and the growth of the surrounding country caused by the building of the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern Railroad. Now is the time to make your land selection. In order to show you these lands that make the great wealth of Northern Colorado and Town of Milliken, as well as other hustling towns along the Denver, Laramie & Northwestern, we will run our SPECIAL EXCURSION, October 13, (next Thursday) leaving the Laramie (Moffat) Depot at 9:15 A.M. and returning at 4:20 P.M. The fare is \$1.50 for the round trip, including dinner at Milliken. This is your opportunity of reaching the independence of the farm, of