

Touring

By Pete Clark

In the summer of 1953 I was invited to travel to Wellington, Colorado to visit a friend who had been a classmate in the Third and Fourth Grades. During that time I attended the public school in Pavilion, Wyoming. The school in Pavilion had a lunchroom with long tables and benches, but no food. You had to provide your own food and drink. I carried a green lunchbox that was smaller than the one my dad carried when he had worked at the mine in Sunrise. My lunchbox held a thermos. Back then thermoses contained glass liners to maintain the temperature of the stored liquid. I have never been the most coordinated person, so the liner in my thermos had a very short life. Fortunately there was a water fountain in the lunchroom. In the fall of 1951 when I entered school at Shoshoni, I discovered they served hot lunches with cold milk. Shoshoni was more than three times the size of Pavilion, but had less than nine hundred residents.

I rode to Wellington with my friend and his family. It was a long ride to Colorado, even farther than my grandparent's home in the Pan Handle of Nebraska. Staying on the family's farm was great fun. While I was with them, we took a trip to Denver. I was excited because I would get to see the city where the KLZ Radio Station gave voice to the Sunday Morning Comics of the *Denver Post*. After hearing so much about tourists, I was finally going to be one.

Early one morning we left the farm for Denver. It took less than two hours to arrive in what was to me, a megapolis. The biggest place I had ever been was Casper which today has a population of 55,000. We stopped at 16th and Arapahoe and examined the tallest building in Denver, the Daniels and Fisher Tower. We went to the observation deck of the tower and I looked out on a metropolis that seemed to extend to infinity. Then we went to the west side of town to have lunch with some of my friend's extended family. After lunch we drove back across town on the red brick road, divided by the tramway tracks going along its middle. The street was called Alameda Avenue. We turned north and arrived at the entrance to the Denver Zoo. I particularly enjoyed the antics of the primates on Monkey Island and was awed to see leopards, lions, tigers and other assorted wild cats in the flesh. They were all gorgeous.

Time was running low so we made a quick sashay through the Museum of Natural History. The mounted dinosaur skeletons were fascinating. Years later I would visit the Como Bluffs Dinosaur Graveyard near Medicine Bow, Wyoming. The other museum display that caught my attention was the collection of Egyptian mummies. They gave me the creeps and it was dark when we arrived back at the farm.