

October 19, 2000

Thomas B. Clark

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Town Of Sheridan  
Sheridan, Colorado

To Chief Of Police:

My name is Thom Clark and I used to be the Town Marshal of Sheridan, 1956-57.

I came to Sheridan as a crime investigator from the USAF to replace Charlie Huffman.

I was hired for the princely sum of \$325 per month. I had to design, and pay for my own uniforms, gun, leather, cuffs and ammo. The hours consisted of 24 hrs. a day on call, 7 days a week. Most work days averaged about 12 hrs a day, depending on traffic accidents, bar fights, domestic violence calls, manning the school crossings, etc. etc. etc.

Sheridan had one patrol car and when it was out of service I had to use my own vehicle. The patrol car was not equipped with a cage, and transporting prisoners was an experience as Sheridan had no jail and all the arrests had to be taken to Littleton for booking. Radio communication was through the Sheriffs Office.

Back-up firepower consisted of one sawed-off 12 gauge shot gun that was attached to the driver side door. The only back-up support that I had were deputies from the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office. The only problem was that at night the entire county was split in half, east and west, and only two deputies assigned. One east of Colo. Blvd. and one west. Most of the time they were either on call or so far away they didn't exist. Englewood would not send back-up for what ever reason as they had a city policy not to go out of their jurisdiction.

The Mayor at that time was Mr. Elkins, the Town Clerk was Ross Lakin, and I don't recall who the other council members were. My boss was the Police Commissioner on the Town Council, George Tullar.

I owned a house on Hamilton Ct. which was taken out by the big flood.

When I started on the job I asked Mr. Lakin for a copy of the Town Ordinances, and he gave me a small book about the size of half of a Readers Digest, dating back several decades. One interesting thing was and is still in effect, unless it was officially rescinded, was as follows: "If anyone drives an automobile through the Town, it will have a man proceeding it twenty yards swinging a red lantern." I saw no need for

enforcing this ordinance.

Another interesting note, there was an old house on Natches Court, north of the School house about a block. I don't know if it is still there or not. At that time Natches Ct. dead-ended and was not paved. The house in early Sheridan days was alleged to be a gambling house and of ill repute, consequently a tunnel was established under the house and it crossed west under Natches Ct. and went downhill and came out below near the Platte River, needless to say, it was hard for the sheriff to catch anyone ill reputing in the act. Kids used to play in it and I would receive calls to run them out of there. For some kind of reason the Town could not block it up. As Sheridan grew the road opened up to Santa Fe Dr. and the heavy cement trucks and traffic collapsed the tunnel under Natches Ct. that helped somewhat keep the kids out of that part of it.

Another incident occurred at the Town meeting (no names) One of the Town council members decided that 15 mph was too slow for the school crossing on Hampden Ave. as modern cars weren't designed to go that slow, and that the speed limit should be brought up to 25 mph. Needless to say George and I managed to put a stop to that brilliant idea, motion not passed.

Sheridan had it's share of strange people, but the most outstanding was a very tall, large man who lived upon the hill, and would get drunk and stagger up the street, lighting beer bottles full of gasoline, throwing them on peoples porches as he went home, needless to say this upset many of the townfolk on a quiet Saturday night. He was also capable of picking up a full size pin ball machine by one leg, and tossing it out of the bar into Hampden Ave. one handed. This also upset the bar owner quite a bit. Things were never very quiet in Sheridan, but it was sure interesting.

Another thing that made life interesting were boundaries and jurisdictions, some of the Towns intersections had three jurisdictions involved, the County, Englewood, Denver and Sheridan. (Who's accident report was it?)

The best thing that happened to me in Sheridan was when I was called to a terrible accident at Federal and Hampden, This is where I met a beautiful young lady who later became my wife of forty two years. She grew up in Sheridan with her folks Raleigh and Dora Lyons on Bryant St. They have passed on and it is a shame they are not here to reveal more in detail of living in Sheridan during the 40's, - 80's.

Incidentally I'm sure someone in town is aware that the V.F.W. Club on Hampden used to be a privately owned night club. It was called the Palomino Club, and they sponsored my midget race car at Englewood Speedway on Oxford.

After several attempts to get the Town to hire a relief deputy



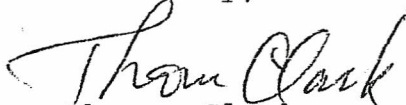
for one day a week, it was turned down. I then went to work for Englewood Police Dept. for seven years. Then to Scottsdale Az. Police Dept. from where I retired. I was replaced by an officer who stayed only a month because of the long hours. He was replaced by two officers to split up the hours.

In retrospect my tenure as Marshal of Sheridan Colorado helped kick-start my career in public law enforcement. It truly was a learning experience and was actually fun in many aspects. Sheridan and all of the great people I encountered gave me a wonderful thirty four years in law enforcement

I am also sending you a replica of the Town Marshal's badge as well as I can remember it.

I am hoping that this will be of some value in your search for information about Sheridan's past history of which I'm happy to have been a part of.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas Clark