

# WEATHER OBSERVING

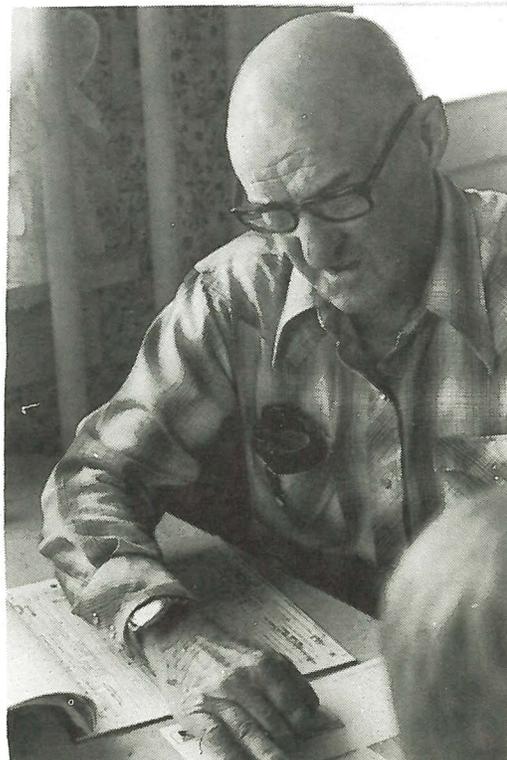
Wayne Light, the local weather observer since September 1945, is still going strong. Born in Hicksville, Ohio, and raised in Steamboat Springs, he has lived in the same white house on the hill for 70 years.



On a blustery day in October when Letha Mack, Jan Gilroy and Becky Mosher set out to interview Mr. Light and gather information about weather observing, Mr. Light related his tale:

## WAYNE

## LIGHT

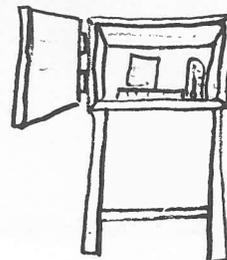
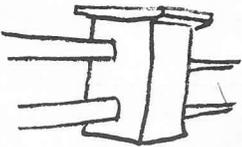
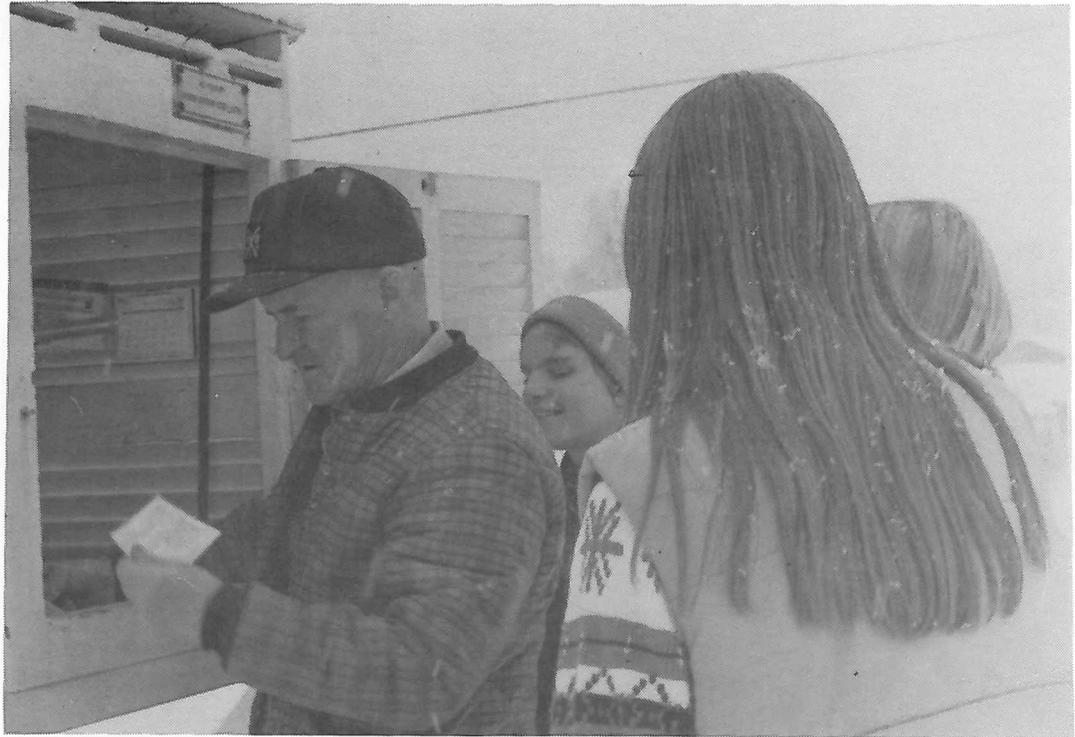


"I heard that weather observers in Denver were paid five dollars a month for their services. I was hard up for money, and I thought I would like to be a weather observer, so I wrote the weather bureau in Denver to ask them for a job. They wrote back and said they were well satisfied with the one they had."

A few years later when the former observer, Henry Noyce, quit, the bureau asked Mr. Light if he still wanted to be weather observer. He said he did and that was the beginning of Mr. Light's career. He believes that it "gets more interesting as it goes along."

He also informed us that since that time President Ford has raised his monthly salary from \$5.00 a month to \$7.20.

Being a weather observer means taking care of the high and low temperature and the amount of snow that falls. Not only does he record temperatures and amounts, but he also melts the snow to measure how much moisture is in it. All this he records on paper. He says, "the only tools I use are a pencil and ruler", but below in the picture are some of the instruments which make up his weather station.





This station was started in 1892 and since then some records are incomplete. Mr. Noyce and Preston King are two of the past weather observers. Mr. Light was unaware if there were others in between.



Some interesting records have been recorded in the past in this area. From 1909 through 1934 this area only had 96 inches average snowfall. The record snowfall occurred two years ago when Steamboat Springs received 266 inches.

The record for the most snow accumulated in one day was in 1924 when there was 27 inches of heavy packed snow already on the ground. That night 30 more inches fell, making a total of 57 inches on the ground.

The most it ever snowed in one month was in December 1951, when 84 inches of snow fell. And in January 1957 70 inches of snow collected.

The coldest ever was 54 below zero in January 1913. "I drove the school bus for 17 years and one morning when I went out on Elk River in 1963 it was 50 below zero. The next morning it was 46 below. It was hard to keep the bus warm then," Mr. Light reflected. "This record stood for 40 or 50 years."



"And then it got down to 60 below zero, over by Gunnison. I was glad that we didn't establish that new record here."

"In March, 1964, we had 47 inches and that was the most of any March. April had 30 inches of snow that year."

"I don't remember any snow here in July. I have pictures where it snowed on the tops (of the mountains) when people have been camping and fishing on the 4th of July, but there is no reported snow in June or July in town."

DATE \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_ DAY OF WEEK \_\_\_\_\_

TEMPERATURE °F			PRECIPITATION																													
24 Hrs. ending at Observation		AT OBSN.	DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE (—) THROUGH HOURS PRECIPITATION WAS OBSERVED, AND A WAVED LINE (∞) THROUGH HOURS PRECIPITATION PROBABLY OCCURRED BUT WAS NOT OBSERVED.																													
MAX.	MIN.		A. M.												P. M.										Midnight							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Noon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11						
PRECIPITATION			WEATHER					REMARKS AND NOTES																								
24-Hr. Amounts AT OBSN.			Mark "X" for all types that occur during the calendar day																													
RAIN, MELTED SNOW, Etc. (Inches and Hundredths)	SNOW, ICE PELLETS, HAIL (Inches and Tenths)	SNOW, ICE PELLETS, HAIL on ground at Obsn. (Inches)	Fog	Ice Pellets	Glass	Thunder	Hail	Damaging Wind																								

ENTER ADDITIONAL NOTES ON REVERSE SIDE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
LOWER COLORADO REGION  
BOULDER CITY, NEVADA

Station Steamboat Springs Nov. 23, 1975  
Precipitation for week ending \_\_\_\_\_

Sun 17	Mon	Tues 19	Wed	Thurs 21	Fri	Sat 23
0	0	0	.13	.09	0	0

Send more forms

6PO 979987

Observer P Wayne Light

Besides record keeping Mr. Light has some other interesting tales about weather problems in this area.

"The records show all the snowfall plus the amount of precipitation for every month. This year's precipitation

was really low. October had 1.64 hundredths per month. In September we had .23 hundredths and the average is 1.87 hundredths. October had 1.64 hundredths, that is why it was so very dry for those two months and what caused all those forest fires."

All of the snowfall and precipitation records are displayed in the lobby of the post office in a glass case.



SPECIAL REPORT FOR WATER SUPPLY  
FORECAST. PLEASE MAIL PROMPTLY AFTER  
END OF MONTH. THANK YOU.

TOTAL PRECIPITATION FOR  
MONTH OF October 75:

1.72 INCHES (water equivalent)

10.7 TOTAL SNOWFALL

MR. R. WAYNE LIGHT  
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS , COLO  
80477

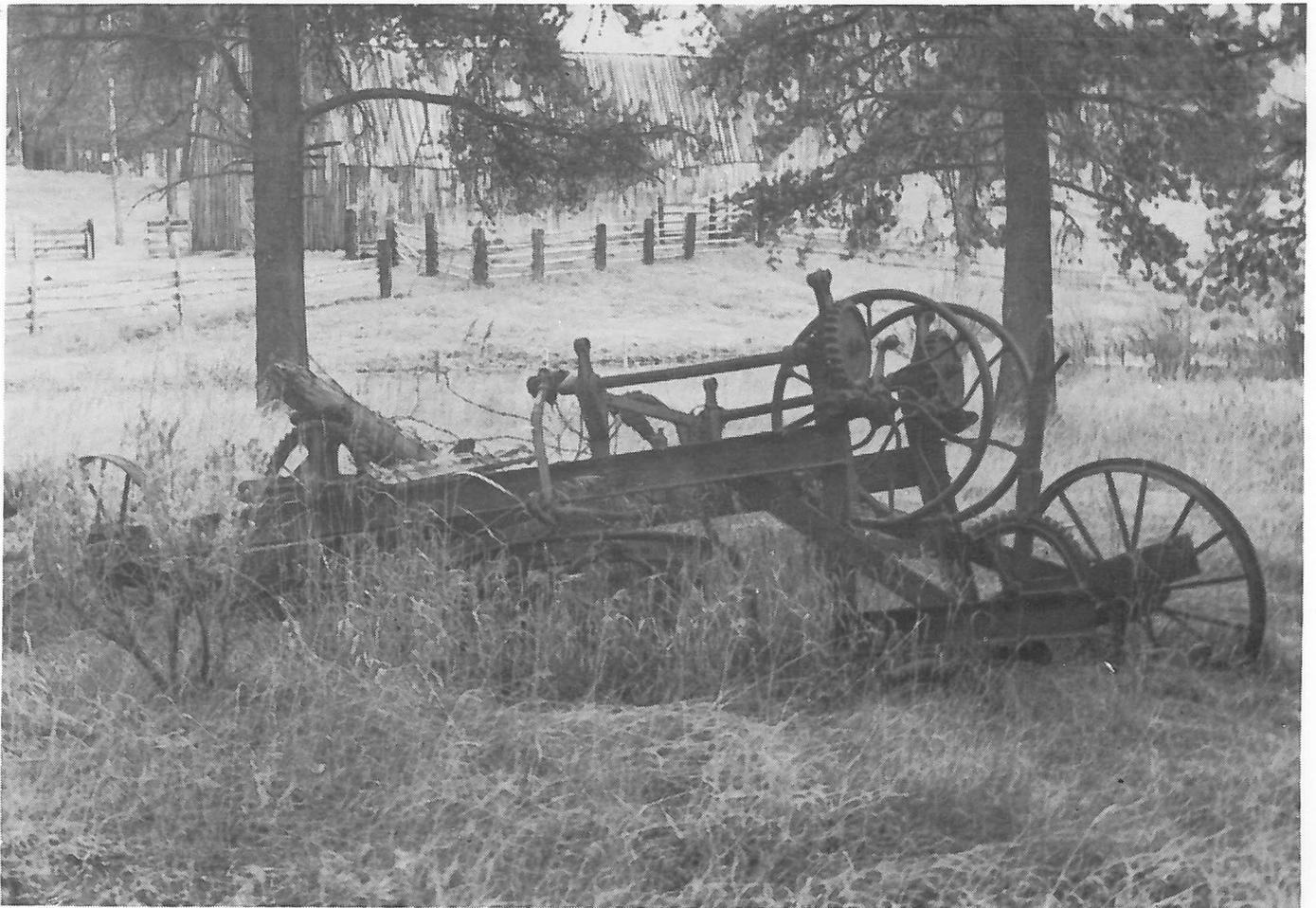
GSA-KC-73-05595

"Up until 1930 they hadn't cleaned any of the streets or highways around the country. Fall and winter would come and everyone would raise their cars up on blocks of wood so the tires would not touch the ground. It was hard on the tires to set on the same spot for 6 months or so."

"Before they started plowing the street they used one or two teams of horses to pull a V shaped plank to plow the sidewalks for the people to walk on. It wasn't a good walk like we have nowadays, but it was better than if you didn't have one at all."

Then Forest Hull (automobile salesman then) had the idea that if they made the sled runners as wide as the wagon tracks it would be as wide as the car tracks, then the automobile could travel on the snow roads in winter after the sleds packed them down. "But I never did figure out what they would do if they met another car coming the opposite direction."

The town bought a little catapillar tractor, a really tiny one with a cab on top and tried to plow the sidewalks and the streets. They ran it about 18 hours a day and that was the start of the plowing of the streets in town. At that time they didn't plow the country roads at all."



Early road grader used for street plowing.

Mr. Light has never been gone more than 3 weeks at any one time. When asked about the weather for the upcoming year he replied, "That is hard to tell. I've only live here 70 years. Been weather observer for 30 years, so I can't tell you what's going to happen. We had a number of heavy winters. And so I expect a light one as far as snowfall goes, I predicted a lot of snow the last two winters and it didn't work out that way."

