

Henry Schnoor

Henry Schnoor was born in 1864 in Denmark. He studied drafting and architecture in Kiel, Germany, and at age 19 came to the United States. He lived for a time with an uncle in Davenport, Iowa, then in 1884 he came to Colorado where he was a cattleman in Elbert County.

He brought a herd of cattle with him when he came to Grand Lake and settled up the North Fork of the Grand River (now Colorado River) at the foot of the Never Summer Range and Bowen Mountain on what is now the Green Mountain Ranch named for the mountain opposite the ranch. The land had been homesteaded by Charles F. Hertel (Hartel) in 1888 and final proof was provided on August 20, 1894 with a patent issued on February 11, 1895. This property was transferred to Henry Schnoor on July 15, 1897.

Henry was a neighbor of the Andrew and Mary Harbison. They had two daughters Kitty and Annie and each homesteaded 160 acres about a mile northwest of Grand Lake. Henry worked often with Mr. Harbison and his son Rob, sharing equipment and horses. In anticipation of his marriage to Kitty Harbison and since Kitty raised geraniums, which required considerable sunlight, Henry built a two story cabin about 1898 with a bay window into the south end of the log cabin. The cabin was approximately 15' x 27'. This cabin is now part of the main lodge of Green Mountain ranch in Rocky Mountain National Park.

When the time of her marriage to Henry Schnoor approached, Kitty realized Annie would be unable to operate their ranch alone and Henry was jilted. Henry sold the Green Mountain Ranch September 6, 1906. He moved into Grand Lake and began doing carpenter work.

Henry married and built a cabin on land he owned near the outlet of the river leaving Grand Lake. It was to this little house that he brought his bride, where two little girls were born and lived. When Mrs. Schnoor left because she didn't like this isolated country, she left her girls in the care of Henry. At first Henry sent the children to an orphanage in Denver, but the smallest girl needed personal care so they were taken in by the Harbison sisters in 1910. At this time Beatrice Schnoor was about two years old and Mary (Mammie) was one. Rob Harbison recalled that little Mary was so weak she was unable to raise her head and had never walked when the girls were taken in by the Harbisons. Rob remembers his mother bringing her home and carrying her into the cabin from the wagon on a pillow.





Mr. Schnoor regularly came to the ranch to see the children and when he remarried in 1913 to Carrie Stowell Schuster (Mrs. Ezra (Belle) Kauffman's sister), he wanted his children back. Beatrice was willing to go but Mary wanted to remain in the only home she knew so was raised by the Harbisons. Mrs. Schnoor had two daughters, Florence and Helen.

Henry's gift for designing and building was soon discovered by the early home seekers in the region and the story of the last 40 years of his life can be traced in the architecture of the log houses circling Grand Lake.

Some of the homes that people point to and say "Henry Schnoor built that," are those of Thomas Patterson Campbell and Col Thomas N. Gimperling of Denver; J. C. Hall of Kansas City, Oscar Malo of Denver, Lt. Harvey P. Everest of Oklahoma City, George Peak of Des Moines, Iowa, John O'Connor of Denver, owner of the Charles Hanington home; J. M. Owen of Oklahoma City, Jim Furlong, Denver and S. N. Hicks, Denver.

Henry had a sawmill and employed as many as ten men in his construction business. He built a two-story house on the banks of the river south of town where his family lived for many years. This they called "Rippling Waters", because the Grand River was a swift rushing stream along this area of its course. Later Henry built another large two story house at the east end of Main Street where the Brownhurst cottages now stand. He added several cottages and he and Carrie built up quite a flourishing tourist business in this enterprise.

The Grand County Pioneers counted Henry Schnoor a valued member. He was a charter member of the Grand County Lions club and one of the charter members and organizers of the Grand Lake Community church for which he served on the building committee. As building supervisor, he took charge of the building of the new church, and though his health had begun to fail, he continued his work on the church until the main structure was erected and the roof completed.

Henry was stricken with arthritis, then with a swiftly spreading cancer. He passed away at Mercy Hospital in Denver in 1943 after an illness of more than a year.

Last Tuesday afternoon, in front of the great south window framing a Shadow Mountain landscape, he lay in quiet dignity as the Reverend Mr. William Hage conducted a beautifully funeral service, Mrs. Arthur Link accompanied by Mrs. John Holzwarth at the piano sang "Face to Face" and "Abide With Me". The pallbearers were Elmer Harsh, William Todd, Frank Huntington and Preston Hawkins. Brilliant winter sunshine flooded the hillside cemetery with the far view of the valley of the Colorado and Middle Park as Henry Schnoor was laid to rest. A simple prayer, mounds of spring flowers on the snow under the pines, friends turning back toward the highway – the farewell had been said.



His fairness, his leadership of men, his quiet humor, and his unfailing kindness will long remain in the memory of everyone who knew him.

*From the Middle Park Times February 25, 1943
Some comments from a book by Nell Pauly*