

Josephine Meeker

Josephine Meeker was Nathan Meeker's daughter.

She was the youngest child. She was born in Ohio on June 28, 1857.

She was 13 when the family came to settle Greeley.

Her older brother, George, had died during the locating trip to found Greeley.

Ralph, the eldest, moved back to New York to work for the New York Herald as a reporter. The three daughters Rozene, Mary and Josephine stayed in Greeley with their parents.

Josephine was an independent girl and would get into trouble a little bit.

One day she rode her horse through town while racing, she fell and most likely had a concussion. The Greeley Tribune wrote an article saying, "Girls should be more careful racing their horses."

She was adventurous, as well.

She climbed Long's Peak in 1874. It is one of Colorado's highest peaks, and is a difficult peak to climb.

Josephine wanted a career.

Her brother Ralph sent her a Yost writing machine so she could learn to type. She used it for most of her letters and writing. Just before moving to the White River Indian Agency with her parents, she was attending a business school in Denver.

Josephine went to White River to be a teacher for the Ute children.

Only three children wanted to go to school, so Josephine spent most of her days getting to know the Ute families. Her father would remind her that she was supposed to teach the Utes; not learn from them.

The Utes liked her.

One woman made her a gift of moccasins. Josephine went fishing with Shetowitch (Shawsheen) on the plateau. They called her "Pa-chits" which meant Big Sister since she was there to teach the children. They taught her some of the language and included her in their healing ceremonies.

She was taken by the Utes after the White River uprising.

Josephine and her mother along with Flora Price and her two children were taken from the agency by the Utes. The Utes didn't make her work as hard as her mother or Flora Price because she had been kind to them before. She still had to work and traveled on horseback for many miles with out a proper saddle. The Utes kept them for two months.

During her time with the Utes, Josephine sewed a dress from blankets.

The blankets may have been given to her by She-towitch (Shawsheen). The women made themselves dresses from the blankets. Josephine also sewed clothes for the Ute children.

Josephine wrote a letter to try to get them rescued.

She sent a letter with another Ute to an agent in Utah. She got a pencil from She-towitch (Shawsheen) and wrote the note on the back of a billing notice. The Uintah agent got a letter to Mary to let her know that Josephine and their mother were well. He sent her letter to Washington D.C. to help get the women and children rescued. It arrived after the rescue happened. The agent, John Critchlow, also sent Utes and whites to try to free the hostages. They arrived three days after the women and children were free.

Shawsheen asked for the Utes to let Josephine and the others go free.

She also treated them kindly and all of the women said that she made their stay with the Utes easier.

When she was let go, she was a popular speaker and wrote a book with her brother, Ralph.

She did not show anger towards the Utes or ask for them to leave Colorado. Her sister, Rozene, spoke about the captivity of her mother and sister and called for the Utes to leave. However, Rozene's talks angered Josephine and they were not close afterwards.

Her brother Ralph helped her get a job in Washington D.C.

Josephine worked for the Department of the Interior until her death on September 29, 1879. She is buried in the family plot in Linn Grove Cemetery.