

Bessie Smith

Bessie Smith was a Greeley native.

On June 14, 1882, Bessie Smith was born in Greeley to Franklin and Mary Smith, and she spent most of her early life here. She went to Greeley High School where she graduated in 1899. Her family may have moved to the Cripple Creek area during the Gold Rush days in 1900.

She planned buildings.

Her father was a carpenter. His work may have inspired her to want to design buildings. She took classes from a correspondence school (She took classes by mail.) to become an architect. (A person who plans or designs buildings.) She was the only female architect in Denver from 1901-1903. She came back to Greeley in 1903 to work. Bessie was known to climb on her buildings to be sure they were built the way she wanted. She was unique in not many women were in professional careers back then.

She designed the Plumb Farm House.

The house was built in 1907 with a cost of \$2500. Bessie included several modern conveniences such as a downstairs bathroom, furnace and the house was wired for electricity.

The Coronado Building was another of her designs.

This building is still standing. It is located on the corner of 9 Avenue and 9 Street. It cost \$40,000 to build. Completed in 1906, it was the largest building downtown.

No one knows much of what happened to her after 1910.

She moved to San Diego, California with her father. She married Benjamin Wellington Bryant on October 19, 1912. They had one daughter named Barbara. Bessie died at age 39 on December 12, 1921 in San Diego. There aren't any records of her being in Greeley after 1910.