

With All I See Around Me, I Celebrate Being an American & a Coloradan

Every 4th of July, believe it or not, I think of Jacob Riis, a Danish-American who immigrated to America in 1870, settled in New York City and became a prominent figure in the rise of municipal reform.

He wrote a book, *How the Other Half Lives*, which woke up America (and me) to the social iniquities of urban poverty. It also awakened New York's then-police commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt, who coined the term "muckraker" to describe Riis, but at the same time called him "the best American I ever knew."

Jacob Riis was a journalist and photographer for several New York newspapers, introducing flash photography to bring to light, literally, life in the tenements, and by doing so created more change for its residents than any politician before or since.

Writing a high school term paper

on "Jacob Riis and the Rise of Municipal Reform" changed my life forever and propelled me, I'm sure, into journalism and social change.

For all his criticism of society's injustices, Riis was a great patriot, and what I think of on July 4th is how Riis described his own soul-filled exuberance during the first fireworks display he witnessed in New York City. He truly loved what America stood for — what we like to call the American dream.

I am a product of the 1960's. I created an "alternative" student newspaper in college which "raised consciousness" about the Vietnam War, but my internship at the Washington Post in 1968 taught me the power of objective reporting over partisan ranting, and I have honored that training in the various newspapers which I have published over the years, long

before becoming a Realtor.

I love America, but it is not a blind love. "My country, right or wrong" is a fine slogan, but it needs to encompass a passion for righting the wrongs that any country commits, sometimes collectively, but usually by individuals.

Nowadays, with other countries' travails and injustices so much closer to our consciousness than in the past, it's even easier to be grateful that we are Americans. And with the natural disasters we continue to observe in other parts of our country, not just the world, we can certainly be grateful that we live in Colorado.

The American dream is very real for me and for the people I come in touch with daily as a Realtor. I love that I can play a part in creating a better life for those I touch, and that I do so with the integrity of a NAR member who subscribes to the Realtor Code of Ethics. Happy birthday, America!

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing:

This Modern Home Was Built in 1875

This historic downtown Golden home at 717 Arapahoe Street was built by one of Golden's earliest judges. Today, it is a modern home with all the features today's homebuyers want —granite countertops and new appliances, three updated bathrooms, hardwood floors, and more. It is a 1½-story home with a 620-sq.-ft. second floor apartment that is accessed by an exterior staircase. Rent it out, or use it as a home office/retreat. Or, since the property is zoned commercial, you could have a business on the main floor (with exterior signage, etc.) and live upstairs. It's your choice! From this home, you can walk to everything that makes the City of Golden a great place to live— Clear Creek, the Golden Community Center, open space trailheads, museums & galleries, public library, and so much more! Visit the website, then come to an open house, Sat. 1-4 p.m.



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