

Post offices historically nucleus of town's communication



The first Grand Junction Post Office in 1882. The post office and the Russell Bros. & Company, a general merchandise store, shared the space. Kathy Jordan photo collection



Postal workers standing in front of the second post office that was located on the south side of the alley in back of the Canon Building, now Wells Fargo parking lot. The picture was taken in 1912. Photo courtesy of the National Association of Letter Carriers.



Postal workers in front of the new federal building located at the north east corner of Fourth and Rood. The building is now the Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building. The pictures was taken in March 1918 shortly after moving into the new building. Photo courtesy of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

By Kathy Jordan

The demise of the United States Postal Service is a sad thought. I look forward to our daily mail delivery, especially this time of year when Christmas cards arrive.

The post office use to be a sort of gathering place. For many years there was no home delivery so everyone went to the post office to pick up their letters.

Richard D. Mobley, who built the cabin, was named the first post master.

The first post office, at about 433 Main St., was built by brothers, Owen D. Russell and J.M. Russell and opened May 9, 1882. The new post office shared the space with the Russell Bros. & Company, a general merchandise store. Owen was the second post master.

The new post office didn't have boxes to put the mail in nor was there home delivery, that didn't happen until 1902. Instead the postmaster would run a "letter list" in the newspaper notifying people they had a letter at the post office.

Other postmasters were Edwin Price, who served two terms, Thomas Brown Crawford, John W. Bridges, William G. Connely, Marcus M. Shores.

Edwin Price served as postmaster twice, first time from 1884 to 1885, second term was from 1897 to 1914. During his first he established three post roads.

During Price's second term as postmaster the second post office was built. It was located on the south side of the alley in back of the Canon Building, now Wells Fargo parking lot.

By 1915 the post office in Grand Junction was raised to a first class facility. When the new federal building was completed in 1918 the post office occupied the main floor for years until a new facility was about across Fourth Street in 1965 where it is today. The building built in 1918 is now known as the Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building.

Mary Louise Giblin Henderson, a former Daily Sentinel reporter, said that for many years there was twice-a-day home delivery.

The mail was the only way aside from telegrams and the phone to disseminate information from friends to friends or relative to relative.

People chose the phone or telegram in only the direst circumstances as they were expensive. If you got a long-distance phone call, you were really on edge until you found out what it was about.

She said that a telegram was another thing. She said you knew before you opened it if the telegram was a notification of death because the telegrams had a black bar if it was a death notification.

Today there is talk of closing some of the smaller post offices and doing away with Saturday delivery. It would be sad to lose the post office.