

GJ's First Newspaper Treasure Trove of Bits and Pieces

By Kathy Jordan

There is no better way to catch the excitement of the rapidly growing infant western town of Grand Junction than from its newspaper. And the Grand Junction News, the first newspaper in Grand Junction, is a treasure trove for insight into the time machine.

These news items also make it clear that Colorado Avenue, or the "Avenue" as it was referred to, was THE place where most of this development was taking place.

Looking through items in the Grand Junction News from Oct. 28, 1882, through Dec. 23, 1882, I discovered these "gems":.

Oct. 28, 1882

Grand Junction is on the boom. Two large hotels are under way, and about 15 new business houses nearly done.

The Randall House, the large two-story brick hotel, is approaching completion. Its size is 30x50 feet and will contain about 25 rooms.

Gov. Crawford has moved to the Town Company's new office, on the corner of Main and Seventh Streets.

The William Innes and Marty Hobbs saw mill is in operation 16 miles south town and is delivering lumber at \$40 per 1,000 ft.; shingles \$10 to \$12. Prices will cheapen with the coming of the (railroad) cars.

The Bank of Grand Junction is open and transacting a regular banking business.

Tents are being put up to be used as lodging houses. A great improvement on nothing.

Nov. 12, 1882

On Nov. 7 the work on the railroad bridge across the Grand River (Colorado) began.

Track-layers are laying track at the rate of three and a half and four miles per day and within 35 to 40 miles from town.

Nov. 18, 1882

Work on Holderby's new hotel has been temporarily suspended to let the brick masons "sober up."

Something has struck “the boys” about town, they are beginning to “spruce up,” wonderfully. Wonder if the report that some young ladies are coming to town has anything to do with it?

Mr. Al Randall moved into his new hotel.

Tuesday, (Nov. 14) at around 7 p.m. Grand Junction residents experienced an earthquake.

Nov. 25, 1882

Between twelve and fifteen new houses have been started during the past week.

Mr. J.H. Goodman will soon open up a restaurant, fruit and confectionery stand on the Avenue.

Bon Ton Restaurant will be opening their new quarters on Colorado Avenue.

Misses Anderson & Hamilton have opened a Dress Making and Millinery store on Colorado Avenue, two doors west of the drug store.

Yup Mow is the first Chinaman to locate in Grand Junction coming from Gunnison to engage in the laundry business on the Avenue. Sam Sing is going to open a Chinese Laundry on Main Street.

Gov George A. Crawford, president of the Town Company is completing arrangements for a large city hall. The building will be brick, and about 25 x 50 feet.

Saturday (Nov. 21) the first train arrives in Grand Junction.

Dec. 2, 1882

Yesterday (Dec. 2) Mr. C.F. Shanks, and J.N. McArthur, were taking the census of the town, the results follow: 524 permanent inhabitants; 161 houses; 31 tents and 5 corrals. This does not include our floating population, such as railroad men, teamsters, etc., of which we have about 250 to 300.

Grand Junction has three butcher shops, five grocery and merchandise stores, two bakeries, four clothing stores, two hotels, eight restaurants, 20 saloons, one hardware store, one drug store, one bank, four livery and transfer stables, two lumber yards, one furniture store, three blacksmiths shops, and one printing office, and a good representation of the professions, trades and laborers, and still they are coming.

Dec. 9, 1882

Colorado Avenue is the liveliest street in town.

Christmas night the Randall House will have its formal opening with a grand ball and supper.

The new corral of Taylor & Coghill has opened on the Avenue. They advertise a free corral.

A new boot and shoe store with a sample window has opened on the Avenue.

A tin shop and hardware store combined is the latest business venture in our town.

The Randall House sports a street lamp, a big improvement. Let others follow the example thus set.

The railroad company will run their first passenger train into Grand Junction next Sunday (Dec. 16).

Dec. 16, 1882

Five new buildings going up on Colorado Avenue this week, between Second and Third streets. She booms!

A benefit is to be given by Tim Ryan, at the Delta Theater on Colorado Avenue, Sunday night. The first performance ever had in Grand Junction.

The first sidewalk laid in town is that in front of the Holderby hotel. It is made of brick.

Dec. 23, 1882

Hereafter Mr. Holderby's new hotel near the corner of Fourth and Main streets will be known as the Crawford House.

Lumber is scarce. The yards have run entirely out of siding and flooring, and, in fact, nearly everything else.

NEWSPAPERS—THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO RESEARCH OUR HISTORY.