

Why and how towns, streets and formations got their names intrigues me, and I thought others might also be curious.

So, for those who have wondered about names in the Grand Junction area, here are some brief histories.

Grand Junction was chosen for our city's name because of the junction of two rivers, the Gunnison and Colorado (at that time the Grand). It wasn't until 1921 that the Grand River became the Colorado River by an act of Congress. However, when the first post office was established before the town was named, it was called the Ute Post Office, probably because the Ute Indians were early-day settlers here.

In the beginning days Grand Junction was nicknamed "Belly-Ache Flats" because each summer many settlers suffered (and died) from dysentery and typhoid after drinking Colorado (Grand) River water.

Interestingly, there are two Grand Junction locations identified by the name, "Crawford," and they honored two different men.

Crawford Avenue was named for Gov. George A. Crawford, president of the Grand Junction Town Company and considered the founder of Grand Junction.

Crawford Addition, or Riverside, was named for J.A.K. Crawford who worked for the railroad and ran a brick factory near his house on Lawrence Avenue in the Crawford addition.

Henry Rood, for whom Rood Avenue was named, served in the state legislature. Allison White, for whom White Avenue named, was a leading citizen in the early days. Both Rood and White were members of the Grand Junction Town Company.

Crosby Avenue, which parallels the railroad, was named for Dave Crosby, a commissioner for the government land office here in about 1908. He was also in the real estate business.

Kimball Avenue was probably named for the Kimball family which settled in the De Beque area around 1882. The Kimballs were first to bring cattle in large numbers to the area in 1883.

Struthers Avenue is said to have been named for Alex Struthers, a master mechanic for the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. He was one of the first to build in that area.

Noland Avenue evidently was named for C.P. (Perry) Noland who was a member of the firm of Noland, Moore & Co. a dry goods store on Main Street before the turn of the century.

Ouray Avenue is named for Chief Ouray, chief of all the Ute Indians at the time they were forced out of the area into Utah, opening up the country for settlement by the whites.

Chipeta Avenue was named for Ouray's wife. She was said to be the perfect wife, attractive, intelligent a good housekeeper, and a generous hostess.

Gunnison Avenue was named for Captain J.W. Gunnison who surveyed this area into Utah, where he was murdered by the Indians in June of 1853.

The original town plat named the first four parks Walnut (now Hawthorne), Chestnut, (now Washington), Cottonwood (now Emerson) and Maple (now Whitman). Neither Lincoln nor Riverside Park was part of the original town. While two of the four original parks were apparently named for noted writers of the era, Whitman was not named for Walt Whitman, the poet. Instead, the name was chosen to honor Marcus Whitman, explorer and missionary, who swam the river here in 1842 in his dramatic ride to "save Oregon for the U.S."

Lawrence Avenue got its name from W.B. Lawrence, an early resident of Grand Junction and city treasurer in the early days.

Mantey Heights was named for Fred Mantey, a saddle-maker and a pioneer resident who first lived on North Seventh Street before developing and moving to Mantey Heights.

Early residents remember when First Fruitridge was known as Poverty Hill, maybe in sarcasm since some of the finer old homes of the city were built out there early in the town's existence.

This list is not an all-inclusive history of the area, but perhaps it is a start.