



The two buildings in the lower center of the photo are the two original buildings that have remained unchanged. The building on the left was the managers' quarters' and the building on the right was the apartment building. Daily Sentinel Collection Loyd Files Research Library
Museum of Western Colorado photo

Veteran's Hospital - Proud Legacy of Service

By Kathy Jordan

It must have been a proud day for a small group of Grand Junction businessmen on Jan. 24, 1945, when the announcement was made that a Veterans hospital would be built in Grand Junction.

The Daily Sentinel reported that the group, which was formed shortly after WWII was declared was headed by Walter Walker and included Charles Rump, W.C. Kurtz, "Clyde H. Biggs, C.D. Mosland, W.M. Wood, C.. Walker, Frank H. Reeds and Porter Carson.

Walter Walker, publisher of The Daily Sentinel, spearheaded the movement to get a Veterans hospital here. The story reported, that Mr. Walker "first presented the matter of a veteran's hospital to General Frank Hines, then National Administrator of Veterans Affairs, a number of years ago. Invaluable services in the efforts to secure a veteran hospital were rendered by the late Congressman Edward T. Taylor and the late United States Senator Alva B. Adams. Congressman Taylor particularly took a deep personal interest in the matter for some years preceding his death."

In 1945 when it appeared that Grand Junction would get the hospital the city selected 40 acres east of the golf course “on the out skirts of Grand Junction” to donate the necessary land to the government for the hospital to be built on. The city had planned to use these 40 acres as an extension of the golf course to make it 18 holes.

The story went on to say that the city had cleared the land, made arrangements for a sufficient water supply and had made arrangements with the Grand Valley Irrigation Co., to move the ditch that ran through the property.

The contract had been let for \$3,406,000 to the Olson Construction Co. of Lincoln, Neb., and Salt Lake City for the 150-bed T-shaped hospital building. The Sentinel story reported that “the structure was to be the most modern hospital, 100 percent fireproof and of reinforced concrete construction”.

When the hospital was complete the “T” six stories high and the stem was three stories high.

The story reported that the Veteran administration officials said that “in addition to the main structure there are to be 11 additional buildings including managers quarters, apartment building, nurses quarters storehouse, station garage, boiler house, utility building, laundry building, incinerator building, and water tank and tower that would hold 100,000 gallons.”

At the time of the announcement it was estimated that eight to 10 doctors, two dentists, and laboratory technicians will be employed. Specialist and other community doctors will be utilized.

The first floor was for offices and administration and visitors. The second was for laboratories and medical and dental work and included a chapel. Patients rooms were on the third, fourth and fifth floors. The kitchen was on the third floor, with the main operating rooms on the sixth floor.

The buildings built to the west of the hospital were: the manager’s quarters, apartment building, nurses’ quarters, attendant’s quarters, storehouse, garage, boiler house, utility shops, laundry, and incinerator.

Over the years the hospital has been expanded to deal with the increasing number of Veterans. Of the original nine buildings to the left of the hospital it appears that only three remain. One of the three, the nurses quarters, it appears it has new stucco, windows and roof, but has

maintained its original design. The manager building and the apartment building remain unchanged at this time.