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HISPANIC PEOPLE OF GRAND JUNCTION

By Liz Herrera

THE ARRIVAL

On a warm day in the spring of May 1925, Antonio Garcia and his family arrived in Grand Junction by train. With Antonio was his father, Antonio Jose Garcia, his mother, Luz Rodriquez, and siblings Lorenzo, Cedric, and Josephine. Holly Sugar Company had recruited the family from Pueblo, Colorado to work in the sugar beet fields of the Grand Valley. Their job was to hoe, thin, and harvest the sugar beet. Holly Sugar brought in entire families to maintain the stability of the work force and the company provided housing. Grand Junction had an established Hispanic population, but the need for more labor brought Hispanic people in increasing numbers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA
Antonio Garcia (C), Lorenzo Garcia (L), Cedric Garcia (R).

In addition to the Garcias there were several families who arrived before 1925 and many arrived after this date. Cecilia Colunga was born in Ravingwood, Colorado, a settlement near Walsenburg that has since disappeared. Her family made at least two trips to Grand Junction before settling there. Her parents, Porfirio Espinoza and Eulida Padilla were from Mora and Coyote, New Mexico. Joseph Martinez was born in Vadito, New Mexico, in Taos County. At 14 years of age he left his family and moved to Grand Junction with his uncle Timoteo Martinez. Rudy Colunga was born in Grand Junction in 1924 but his family had migrated from Mexico. They received a passport stamped with ACCEPTED LABOR, HAMLIN SUPPLY CO., ACCEPTED BY DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORITY. The family first stopped in New Mexico but came to Grand Junction because of the promise of work in the sugar beet fields. Felimon Herrera was born in Questa, New Mexico, and came to Grand Junction with his brothers to find work. All these people eventually stayed in Grand Junction, returned to raise their families, or retired in Grand Junction.

THE COLONIA

Early Hispanic people of Grand Junction usually lived in the Colonia, and they worked in the beet fields. Families arriving in Grand Junction were hired by the farmers at the train stop. They worked the months of the sugar beet harvest, and lived on the farms in temporary housing. Some people had housing with water; some did not. The company made houses available to these workers so they would stay for the next harvest. These families paid little or nothing for rent.

Within the Colonia was a closeness between friends and families who lived and worked together. The housing consisted of a row of connected adobe homes or apartments (ten to a row), with a break (an alley) to set off the total of twenty homes. Each apartment had two rooms, two windows,

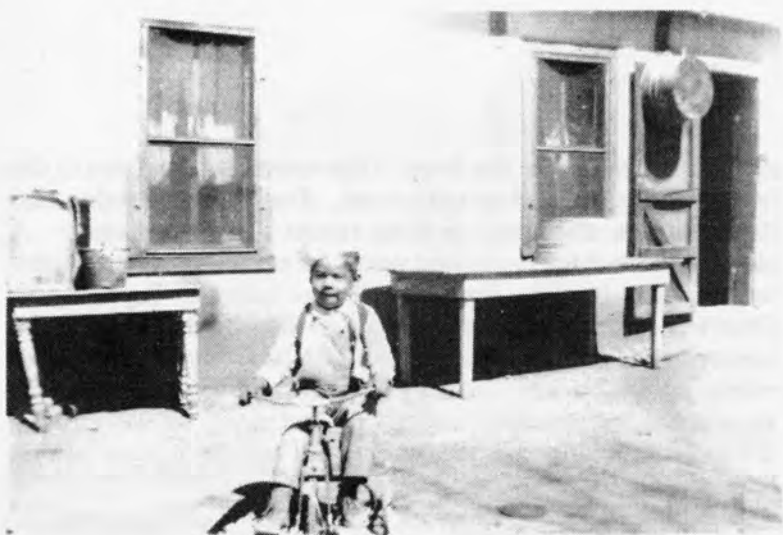


PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

The Colonia.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Moses Herrera in the Colonia.

and two doors--one to the front of the apartment and one to the back. Back doors led to outhouses. Floors were wooden and there was no electricity or heat except for a wood stove. A single outside faucet supplied water for all the families. Water was brought into the homes as it was needed. As many as fifteen people from one family would live in these two room homes. There was no refrigeration. In fact, when asked about refrigeration, Cecelia Colunga laughed and said, "We did not know what refrigeration was. If we had meat, we would hang it outside to keep fresh. With so many to feed, it went as fast as it sometimes took to hang it".

Some farmers provided housing for their workers, but many did not, so the Colonia served as a permanent base. If the people were working with sugar beets, then Holly Sugar charged them little or no rent. They also provided company stores where workers and their families could buy food and clothing. Often the families charged things at the company store, and when they received pay for working in the sugar beets, the charged amount was deducted from their pay.

Some of the more resourceful people found other kinds of work and moved out of the Colonia. The first move was to what is still referred to as the "Gara". Others went to "El Poso", "Connected Lakes", and "Riverside". Today these areas within Grand Junction are still predominately Hispanic.

Following the harvest of the sugar beets, most people prepared for the winter months. They purchased most of their supplies from the company store--flour and sugar, in 200 pound cans, lard for cooking and coffee in 25 pound cans. Potatoes and other vegetables were purchased from the local farmers. Canned milk, sufficient to last through a winter of unemployment, was also purchased locally. Meat for the family often came from sheep, which were purchased and butchered and from trips to the mountain to kill deer. Beans, the major item in the Hispanic diet, were stockpiled as well for the



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Josephine (Garcia) Herrera with sugar beet factory in the background.

winter months. A favorite addition to any Hispanic menu was warm tortillas smeared with lard and lightly salted. It may sound simple and unappealing but the ingredients were accessible to the Hispanic community. Food for the family was often scarce.

Unscrupulous businessmen sometimes took advantage of the Hispanics. A Greek storekeeper, for instance, reportedly overcharged his Hispanic customers. Ironically, he was later killed by another Greek immigrant, a good friend, whom he also tried to cheat. Two small businessmen, however,--Mr. Booker and Mr. Porter--treated the early Hispanics well and are fondly remembered by them.

Individual stories of early Grand Valley Hispanics depict the diversity of their accomplishments. Antonio Garcia could not speak English when he came to Grand Junction as a small boy. The farmer with whom the family worked sent him to the old Roan school, a one-room school house with all ages of children taught together by a Miss Williams. He remembers her trying very hard with all the children. His father spoke English so she sent home notes or visited the family to help young Antonio Garcia. She made sure that he had lunch and a cup for water. Hispanic children were enrolled in school until they reached the age of 12 or completed the sixth grade. After that they went to work in the fields.

THE LABOR

Families usually worked together in the fields, where they hoed, weeded and topped the sugar beets. Onions, potatoes, vegetable and fruit production also required the labor of early Hispanics of Grand Junction. Hispanics sometimes worked alongside Chinese and Japanese people. Josephine Herrera remembers working with German Prisoners of war in the Palisade orchards. Despite the fact that German POW's and Hispanics worked side by side picking peaches, they were not allowed to talk to each other. The trucks arrived in the



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Working in the lettuce fields.

Colonia at daybreak and picked up anyone who wanted to work that day. Parents and children waited--lunches in hand--for the trucks to arrive and take them to work. At dusk the trucks returned them to the Colonia.

Many of the early Grand Valley Hispanics found employment outside of agriculture. Joseph Martinez and Antonio Garcia worked for the railroad as section gang laborers, laying track for wages, beginning at twenty cents an hour. These workers were not allowed in the round-houses. They were employed first by Western Pacific, then by the Rio Grande Railroad. Martinez and Garcia retired from the railroad and remained in Grand Junction. Rudy Colunga returned from service in World War II and went to work for Holsum Bakery at a wage of seventy cents an hour. He remained with them for 40 years and retired in 1987. Felimon Herrera, another early Grand Junction resident, worked for twenty-five cents an hour for Dr. Groom in the Redlands digging ditches for a water pipeline, washed cars for the Packard Auto Company and Central Chevrolet for thirty-five dollars a week, repaired radiators for Jack Wallace at Jack's Radiator Shop, and was employed by the Concrete Pipe Company. Many Grand Valley Hispanics travelled to the coal mines of Sunnyside, Utah. Those who left, usually returned to Grand Junction and settled there.

These families contributed much to the development of Grand Junction. Rudy Colunga, an adobe worker, and his family helped build the Manty Heights subdivision in Grand Junction. Family photographs depict the Colunga family carrying buckets of mud on their heads, machines used to make bricks, the cooling process and the homes which were built. Colunga does not remember how much they were paid, but he takes pride in the fine houses he built. Many of these beautiful Manty Heights homes are admired today for their fine craftsmanship.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Antonio Garcia (L) on South 9th Street construction site.

LIFE

Life in Grand Junction and the Colonia was seldom easy, but there were good times. Parties in the homes of neighbors were frequent since people lived close together. Neighborhood get-togethers often celebrated marriages and baptisms. Birthdays or Saints Day were celebrated with the singing of the "Mananitas". A group of children would go to a house and sing Happy Birthday to the lucky person of the day.

Movies were another form of entertainment. The Avalon, Kiva or Mission theaters offered movies for an admission charge of ten cents. For a dime children and adults could roller skate. During this era, Mr. Pantuso provided an annual Thanksgiving dinner at his restaurant on Main Street. At Christmas, the city of Grand Junction sponsored a dinner at the Avalon theater for all residents. Each child received a gift and everyone watched a movie. Church was an important part in the lives of Hispanic people. St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the Zion Assembly of God Church were the two most important to the Hispanic community.

The Colonia was a community which brought together Hispanic people from very different parts of the United States and Mexico. Because of the diversity of groups of Hispanics, and the fact that they lived so closely together, there was always the possibility of violence and fear of unfamiliar groups. There was a vast difference between people from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Mexico. However, bias and discrimination from outside the Colonia was stronger than fear of other Hispanics. The KKK was active in Grand Junction during the 1920's and many of the Hispanics were a target of this group. Crosses were burned in the neighborhoods, children were warned to only walk on one side of the street, and signs throughout the town warned Hispanic men and women not to enter certain establishments. Signs in restaurants, such as "NO MEXICANS ALLOWED", left little doubt that Hispanics were wanted only for their labor in the fields.

Luz Garcia remembers when her son, Lawrence Garcia, came home from the War. Luz Garcia anxiously awaited her son's return, because she had heard nothing, even though several Grand Junction men had returned. Luz worked at Santy's Cafe--cooking, cleaning and waitressing. One day while cleaning, she heard a commotion out front. Her son and a friend (a black soldier) were being thrown out the front door. They had come in to surprise Lawrence Garcia's mother and have a beer. The sign above the bar still read: "NO INDIANS, NO MEXICANS," and blacks were also barred from the cafe. Luz Garcia rescued her son but his friend was still refused service. Even though these men had served in the war, they were refused service in most restaurants and cafes of Grand Junction.

Hostility towards Hispanics occurred elsewhere in Colorado, as well. Contractors faced hostility toward seasonal laborers. A group of seasonal workers went to Carbondale to work the potato harvest. When they arrived by train, the townspeople met the train with guns and pitchforks and demanded that the contractor make the Hispanics get off the train across the river--away from the town. Some of the families who had worked hard so they could move out of the barrio called the Colonia were not allowed to move into some Grand Junction neighborhoods.

Times have changed. Grand Valley Hispanics now live where they want and have the jobs and careers that they desire. They have settled quietly into the town of Grand Junction--so quietly, in fact, that many Hispanics are not aware of their Grand Junction roots. But the memories of living through the times are still with all of us, as stories are told of the hard labor and the discrimination.

Hispanics contributed significantly to the development of Grand Junction. Their contribution is evident in the agricultural process, the building of homes in the area, and the building of railroads.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Luz Garcia (L). Josephine (Garcia) Herrera (R).

FROM THE AUTHOR

I have heard stories all my life about the lives of my ancestors in Grand Junction but could find little in the history books of these lives. I intend to do additional research and interviews to capture the historical reality of lives of the Hispanic people who came here to work, stayed to raise families and lived out their lives in Grand Junction. Traditions of our culture have always been translated orally throughout generations. I hope to extend and enhance our traditions by writing them down in a form that can be given to our future generations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Jane Elizabeth (Liz) Herrera was born in Grand Junction, Colorado, attended Grand Junction High School, and graduated in 1968. She now attends Mesa State College where she is majoring in History. Liz Herrera plans to attend graduate school to study the history of the Southwest and Hispanic people. The author first heard many of the stories in this article from her father and mother, Bert and Josephine Herrera.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPHINE HERRERA

Liz Herrera in Connected Lakes.

NOTES

1. Interview with Cecilia Espinoza Colunga, Grand Junction, Colorado, February 1990.
2. Interview with Antonio Garcia, Grand Junction, Colorado, March 1990.
3. Interview with Joseph Martinez, Grand Junction, Colorado, March 1990.
4. Interview with Rudy and Hope Colunga, Grand Junction, Colorado, April 1990.
5. Interview with Felimon and Frances Herrera, Grand Junction, Colorado, April 1990.
6. Interview with Josephine Garcia Herrera, Grand Junction, Colorado, Spring 1990.

THE KREX STORY: A History of Broadcasting in the Grand Valley

by
Kenneth L. Schwietert

On Christmas Eve, 1906, telegraph operators around the world were surprised to hear, amid the telegraphic codes, the sounds of a human voice. The Canadian-American engineer Reginald A. Fessenden (1866-1932) had perfected voice communications over radio.¹ His work, along with the invention of the vacuum tube by the American Lee DeForest, provided the basis for modern radio.² Though these points are fact, many historians find it difficult to credit just one man with having "invented" radio or television. While historians argue about who should receive credit for the beginnings of radio and television, we know who brought them to the Grand Valley. That person was Rex Howell.³

Howell was born in Norton, Kansas, on May 22, 1907. By the age of ten, he was living on a ranch with his parents in eastern Colorado where the nearest thing to electricity was the old, hand-cranked telephone that interconnected all the area ranches to Vona, Colorado. He liked ranch life, and his ambition was to be the best cowhand in the country.⁴ By 1920, drought and high winds drove the Howell family off their ranch and into Longmont, Colorado. There he met a boy his own age who had constructed a wireless station, and together, the two began to learn more about transmitting messages through the air.⁵ By the end of 1921, Howell had his first

license and had established somewhat of a record when his homemade equipment sent a signal that was picked up in Boulder, twenty miles away. While still in high school, he worked as operator, announcer, and janitor at one of Denver's pioneer stations, KFEL. By graduation from West Denver High in 1925, Howell's ambition was to start his own broadcast station.⁶

In 1926, Howell bought some radio transmission equipment from the estate of Eldon Hor, a pioneer Denver radio engineer, who was electrocuted while installing a station for the University of Wyoming at Laramie. This equipment had been licensed for portable use by the Department of Commerce, the agency responsible for radio licenses before the formation of the Federal Communications Commission, and was under the call letters KFXJ. This license specifically prohibited the equipment from operating in any city where there was an existing broadcast station.⁷ To solve this problem, Howell simply moved two blocks beyond the Denver city limits and set up a small fifteen-watt station in a small house in Edgewater. The official opening was on the night of May 1, 1926.⁸ To commemorate this May Day beginning, Howell always tried to make changes - whether in call letter, power increases, changes in the station, and new promotions - fall in the month of May, though he did not always succeed in these attempts.⁹

Howell ran the station by himself. A typical day began with the station opening at 5 a.m., signing off for a couple of hours in mid-morning so he could catch the streetcar outside the station to sell advertising, and then hurrying back to go on the air with his sponsors' messages. This routine would be repeated in the afternoon, with the broadcast continuing from 5 p.m. until midnight.¹⁰ KFXJ was granted a full-scope license with the passage of the Radio Act of 1927, and the station became a fixed unit. By this time power had increased from

fifteen watts to fifty watts and, by 1930, to a "powerful one hundred watts."¹¹

National broadcasting came to the Denver area when station KOA became an affiliate station of the National Broadcasting Company. Because of KFXJ's superior quality, many believed it would be added to a rival nationwide network, the Columbia Broadcasting System. Howell was deeply disappointed when KLZ, Denver's oldest station, rather than KFXJ became a part of the CBS network. Undaunted, Howell began to look for a new location.¹²

A vacation to Grand Junction in 1930 aroused Howell's enthusiasm. He saw Grand Junction as a community physically isolated by mountains from both Denver and Salt Lake City, and without signals, except for rare occasions on cold winter nights when residents could hear some distant stations.¹³ While in Grand Junction, Howell visited W. M. Wood, secretary of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, and Lee Burgess, a prominent local businessman. Both encouraged Howell to move to Grand Junction.¹⁴

Shortly after his return to Edgewater, Howell was visited by a Grand Junction delegation headed by E. Frank Winfield, a director of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce. The delegation urged Howell to request a transfer of his license to Grand Junction. Howell made a quick decision, and the Federal Radio Commission, the immediate forerunner to the Federal Communications Commission, granted permission for the transfer in the fall of 1930.¹⁵

Howell acquired property in Grand Junction on a barren hilltop north of the city. The area had previously been an orchard but was cleared for a new subdivision called Hillcrest Manor. His studio was the first construction in the subdivision.¹⁶ The formal opening of KFXJ in Grand Junction, to be known as the Voice of Western Colorado, was January 13, 1931 (an exception to scheduling important events during May). Shortly after broadcasts began, however, Howell ran out of operating capital and was forced to look for a loan. He knew

this would be difficult because he was a newcomer to the community. Two close friends, Frank Winfield and Herman Vorbeck, suggested that Howell call on a mutual friend, Dr. O. M. Morrison, a local dentist.

Howell's wife, Lucille, remembers that Howell felt timid and embarrassed by having to ask a total stranger for a loan.

He went up to Dr. Morrison's office in the First National Bank Building without any idea as to what he would say. He was still trying to find the right words when the doctor came out and, giving a big smile, said, 'Mr. Howell, I am told that perhaps you need some funds to carry on your plans for a broadcasting station here. How much do you need?' Rex replied that he needed a lot of money, maybe as much as \$750, which was a lot of money in those days. We always remembered the kindness that the doctor showed us. He took Rex to his secretary and said, 'Please write a check to Mr. Howell for \$1000.' He never asked for any security nor questions about how the money would be spent. All he said was, 'We all wish you well in the fulfillment of your dream.'¹⁷

In 1934, an amended Federal Communications Act was passed, creating the Federal Communications Commission, which is the administrative agency charged with the responsibility of licensing all communications, both by wire and by radio, with exception of government services and the military.¹⁸

By the beginning of the 1940s, radios were popular in homes, but people considered them a means of entertainment rather than a source of "real" news. To receive news, one read either the morning or the evening newspaper. This changed dramatically when on December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack against the U.S. naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Suddenly the American public turned

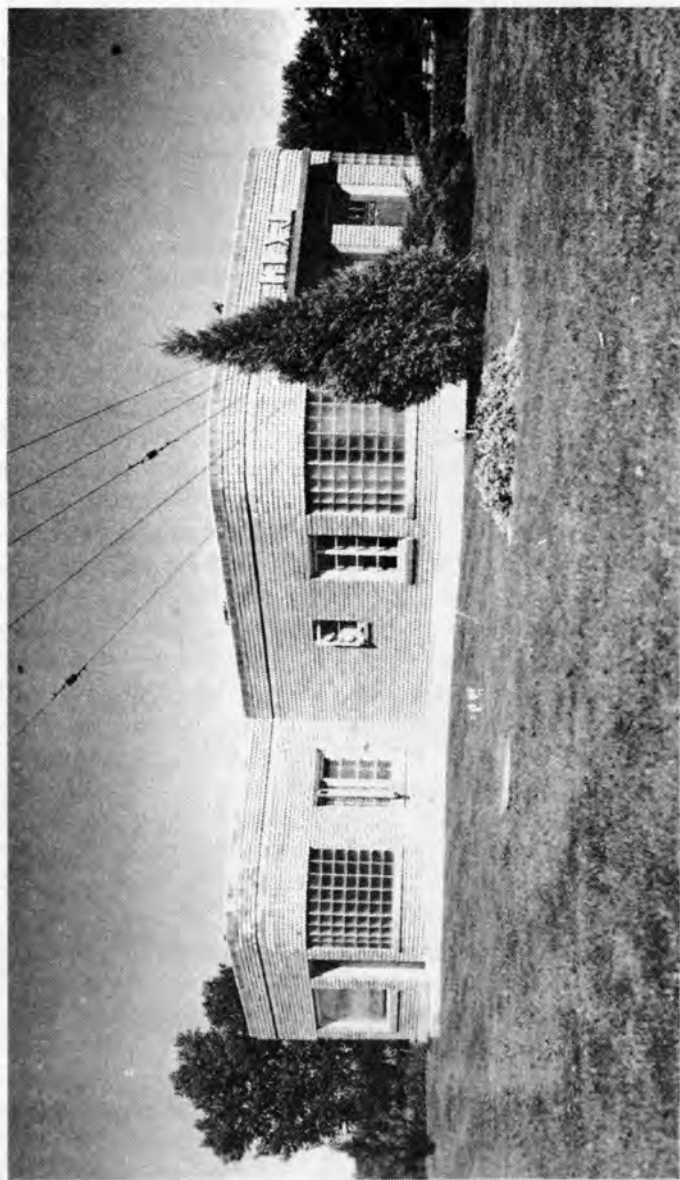


PHOTO COURTESY OF CARL ANDERSON

Radio station, ca. 1940.

to the radio to learn what was happening "right now", not what happened six or eight hours earlier. With new transmitters and field correspondents offering on-the-spot coverage, radio achieved a new level of importance. Radio became a necessity in the American home.¹⁹

With a surge in the importance of radio, KFXJ received authority from the War Production Board to build a new station. Construction was completed in 1942.²⁰ The station now operated on one thousand watts of power.²¹ In addition, on May 1, 1952, Howell opened a radio station in Glenwood Springs carrying the call letters KGLN.

In 1954, television began to supplant the popularity of radio. Former KFXJ station manager, Carl Anderson, recalls, "If you were the only one on the block to have a TV, then you would have people from two blocks around coming to your house to watch it."²² To keep up with the times and to embrace this new and exciting media, Howell decided to expand the KFXJ facility to include television. As word got out, the excitement in the community grew. Local newspaper advertisements began to take on a new twist. Automobile dealers advertised that they would give television sets to the purchasers of each new or used car. Furniture stores placed full-page ads featuring television sets and reminding the readers that television "is really coming to town".²³

Howell set a May 1, 1951, target date for this new enterprise, but it was delayed by the late arrival of the 343-foot transmission tower and the twelve batwing antennae needed to send out the signal.²⁴

On May 22, 1954, Grand Junction's first television signals went on the air with its test pattern. Regular programming started on May 30, 1954, with most of the evening's program consisting of a film of construction and development of the station.²⁵ Unlike today's schedule, sign-on was at 6:30 p.m. with the test pattern, and regular programming began at 7:00 p.m., with sign-off at 10:30 p.m. The development of television created a new feature in the

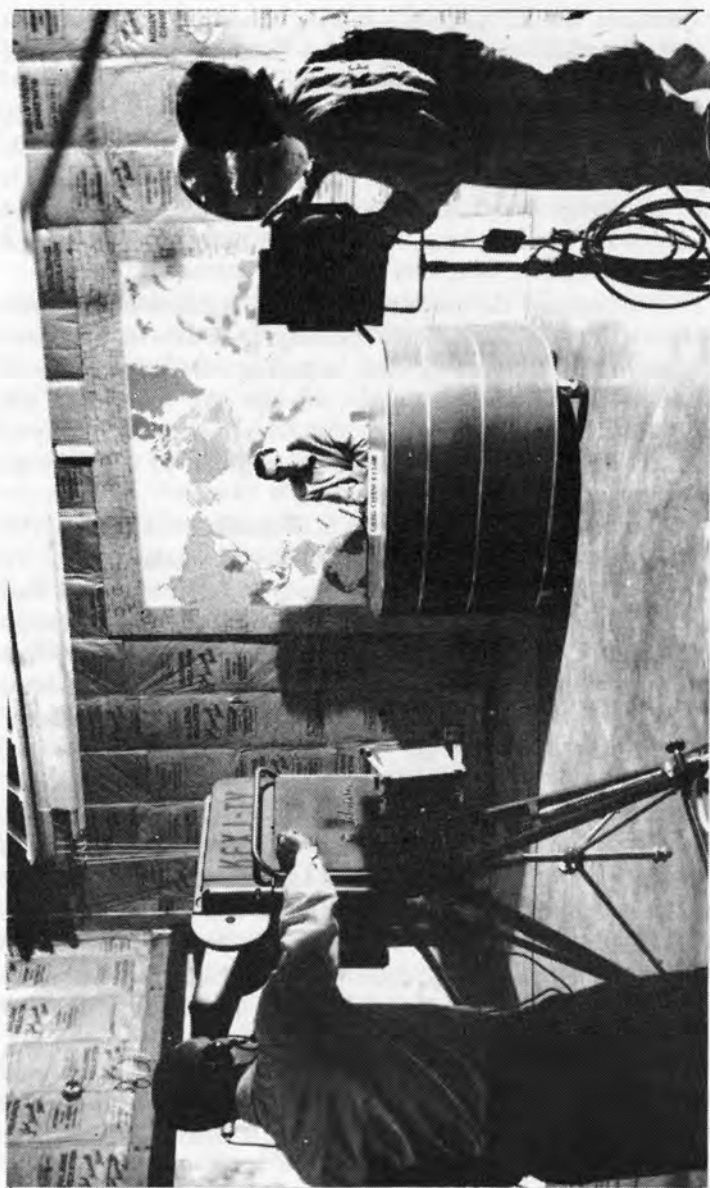


PHOTO COURTESY OF CARL ANDERSON

Chancellor in studio.

Daily Sentinel, the KFXJ programming schedule, with the first television schedule appearing in the "Radio Round-Up", the newspaper's daily programming guide.²⁶

KFXJ was one of the few television stations in the United States with access to more than a single network. Though listed as a CBS-affiliated station, KFXJ had the option of selecting programs from other networks because with no other network in the area, there was no violation of the duplication laws.²⁷

Although KFXJ was an old, familiar name to the area residents, it lacked the special identity that new call letters were bringing to stations across the nation. In 1955, Howell petitioned the FCC for a change in the call letters of his station to KREX (KRex). The petition was approved in May of 1956. The KFXJ call letters were then given to the station that Howell was opening in Montrose.²⁸

Things went well for both KREX-AM and KREX-TV, but the station still had some "firsts" to add to its record. In 1958, Howell learned that a Price, Utah, television station had a direct network hook-up and was planning to air live coverage of the World Series. KREX received permission to relay the signal by portable translator stations from Price to Grand Junction, on the condition that Howell obtain the funding to install the translators for that week.²⁹ He needed to determine the exact location for the relay stations and obtain owners' permission for relay stations located on private property. KREX's chief engineer, Cecil Whitchurch, made airplane flights over the area and traveled by jeep to isolated mountain tops to determine relay station locations for the transmission of the World Series to the people of the Grand Valley. When he was through with his figures, Whitchurch determined that only two relays were needed to accomplish the job, but the type of relay needed would be expensive.³⁰

Valley residents supported the effort, and fund-raising events were undertaken. Sports-centered organizations were not the only people who contributed. Many individuals

contributed so that they could "see" if a ball was a ball or if a strike was a strike, and not just hear or read about it.³¹ Through the efforts of the community and the staff of KREX, the dream of many sports fans in the Grand Valley was realized. The World Series was televised in the fall of 1958, and for the first time Grand Valley residents saw live coverage of their favorite baseball series.³²

At this time, television was still a newcomer to the broadcasting industry, and its equipment was considerably less sophisticated than the equipment used in studios today. Before direct links with the networks, all programs, except "live" programs were on film. All major series were filmed and studios received the film two or three days before they were scheduled to be broadcast. The day after the showing, a film was sent to the next station on the list or returned to the distributor.³³ Occasionally, a scheduled program did not arrive in time for its broadcast time. Most stations kept extra reels of filmed programming on hand for such emergencies.³⁴ Commercials for national name-brand merchandise were also on film, but all local ads were broadcast live. A company sponsoring a program at 8:00 p.m. with three "spots", brought the advertised articles to the station sometime during the day. The display for the ad would be set up during the film broadcast, and at the appointed time, the camera would go "live". One of the station salespersons or a representative from the client company would do the sales presentation. There was no room for mistakes. If an error were made - incorrect grammar, mispronunciation of a word, a wrong price, or anything else - it went out to the thousands of viewers.³⁵

Time was always of the essence. The films were timed to allow the exact number of minutes and seconds for station identification, public service announcements, and commercials. Many times as a live spot was broadcast, the engineer would "punch black" (which would cause viewers' television screens to go blank) for just a couple of seconds, long enough to turn the spot lights to the side, turn the camera, and begin the next

commercial. Immediately afterward, a short filmed commercial would be broadcast while the crew ran upstairs to the other studio, where the next spot was already set up to go, and begin to broadcast it.³⁶

All ads had to be checked before they could be aired, because FCC regulations were stricter then than now. Each employee would be shown a copy of the FCC rules and regulations that pertained to what could be shown on the air and what could not. On occasion, a merchant would bring an unacceptable item; for example, women's foundation garments or swimwear could not be shown.³⁷

Though television was gaining popularity, radio was also increasing its listening audience. Howell was on top of the growing national trend. On May 1, 1960, KREX became Grand Junction's first FM station. "92.3 on your FM dial."³⁸ Most people still got the latest news from their radios, but just as Pearl Harbor boosted radio into a position of greater importance, another national tragedy placed the same emphasis on television. On November 22, 1963, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy stunned the entire nation. Television coverage was extensive. Due to the rumors of possible government takeover by foreign powers, and the magnitude of the disaster, the American people wanted to "see" and not just "hear" what was going on in their country. Visually witnessing the leaders of our nation as they continued with the business of running our government maintained a feeling of security for many Americans.³⁹

In 1966, Howell sold both the AM and FM radio license and equipment and the television station to a group of businessmen from Cincinnati, Ohio. They took on the corporation name of XYZ Television, Inc., because the station in Montrose was now called KREY and the newly opened station in Durango (May 1, 1965) was called KREZ.⁴⁰ Three years later, Howell took back the controlling interest of the station due to non-payment by the new owners. A new agreement was drawn up, and the station continued to grow.⁴¹



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARL ANDERSON

Rex Howell.

On September 7, 1978, Rex Howell died.⁴² In 1984, the XYZ network was divided and sold again. This time, the television station went to Russ Withers, owner of several radio stations and a television station.⁴³ The partnership of Berry Turner, formerly a resident of Grand Junction, and John Culpepper, of the famous Culpepper family of Texas purchased the radio portion of the business.⁴⁴

The radio station operated under new call letters: KVEE for FM and KIIO for AM. This gave the new owners the option of referring to the FM as VFM to combat the successful advertising image of their strongest competitor, QFM. The new station was managed by Jim and Karen Hendricks, who moved the studio location to a site across from Sherwood Park, where it remains to this day.⁴⁵

On August 28, 1989, Turner and Culpepper sold their radio station to Richard Dean, who uses the corporate name of Marantha Broadcasting Company.⁴⁶ Much happened during the few months of this new ownership. Jim Terlouw replaced the Hendricks' and became general manager. On November 15, 1989, the call letters became KJYE AM and FM, and on April 20, 1990, Marantha Broadcasting's AM station became the first in Grand Junction, and one of the few in the nation, to broadcast stereo AM. The station currently has a new 100,000 watt FM transmitter, a big change from Howell's first 15 watt transmitter, and on April 30, 1990, the AM station obtained a new call sign: KJOY. A new call sign for the FM is also on the horizon.⁴⁷

"The future for radio looks good," says manager Jim Terlouw. Terlouw plans to extend the stations coverage. With twenty-one translator stations in western Colorado and eastern Utah carrying their signals, it is easy to see why Terlouw is optimistic.⁴⁸

The television portion of the XYZ network has also expanded under the guidance of Russ Withers. At present,

there are sixty-seven translator stations throughout western Colorado, eastern Utah, and northern New Mexico carrying the KREX signal. Eighteen of these stations are directly licensed by KREX; the others are licensed by towns and organizations bringing the signal into their areas.⁴⁹

The future plans for KREX will continue to provide the highest-quality signals for the viewers receiving transmissions and to expand coverage to take in other rural areas which are still unable to receive quality television.⁵⁰

NOTES

- ¹John Hasling, *Fundamentals of Radio Broadcasting* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980) 1.
- ²Michael Winship, *Television* (New York: Random House, 1987) 4.
- ³Carl Anderson, close friend and thirty-six year employee of Rex Howell, interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 27 April 1990; Department of Commerce letter, date undecipherable, in possession of the Howell family.
- ⁴Lucille Howell, wife of Rex Howell, telephone interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 10 March 1988.
- ⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁷*Ibid.*, and *Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1976.
- ⁸Howell interview.
- ⁹Anderson interview.
- ¹⁰Howell interview, Anderson interview.
- ¹¹Carl Anderson, Rex Howell's records in possession of Carl Anderson and Mrs. Rex Howell.
- ¹²Anderson interview; Jim Terlouw, general manager for KYJE AM and FM radio interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado 26 April 1990.
- ¹³*Daily Sentinel*, 23 May 1976.
- ¹⁴Anderson interview; Howell interview.
- ¹⁵*Daily Sentinel*, 10 December 19930.
- ¹⁶Howell interview; Anderson interview; Mesa County Planning Department county files, building permit, 9 December 1930.
- ¹⁷Howell interview.
- ¹⁸*Television Rules and Regulations of the FCC*. 1987.
- ¹⁹Walter Cronkite, "Broadcasting in America," broadcast on KREX television 26 October 1976.
- ²⁰Anderson interview.
- ²¹FCC letter of permission, 30 June 1942, in possession of Carl Anderson.
- ²²Anderson interview.
- ²³*Daily Sentinel* 25 May 1954.
- ²⁴*Daily Sentinel*, 31 May 1954; Al LaDage, chief engineer for Krex and 31-year employee of the station, interview by author Grand Junction, Colorado, 8 January 1988.
- ²⁵*Ibid.* Anderson interview; KREX film, 1954, "Television comes to Grand Junction".
- ²⁶*Daily Sentinel*, 31 May 1954.
- ²⁷Anderson interview.
- ²⁸Anderson interview; FCC license dated 15 May 1956, in possession of KREX.
- ²⁹LaDage interview.
- ³⁰Cecil Whitchurch, former chief engineer during the early years, telephone interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 21 April 1989.
- ³¹Anderson interview; and author's personal recollections.
- ³²Roger Scholbe, former salesman and newsman for KREX, interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 12 April 1989.
- ³³Author's personal recollections.
- ³⁴LaDage interview and author's personal recollections.
- ³⁵Bill Cleary, former news director for KREX, later served as an aide to Wayne Aspinall, more recently the president of Club 20, interview by author, 25 January 1989; author's personal recollections; LaDage interview.
- ³⁶Bill Maurer, former salesperson for KREX interview by author, 22 Decembaer 1988.
- ³⁷LaDage interview.
- ³⁸Terlouw interview.
- ³⁹Cronkite, "Broadcast in America."
- ⁴⁰LaDage interview.
- ⁴¹Anderson interview.
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- ⁴³Russ Withers, owner and director of Withers Broadcasting and present owner of KREX, interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 23 March 1989.
- ⁴⁴Terlouw interview.
- ⁴⁵Jim and Karen Hendricks, former managers of KVEE and KIIO under the ownership of Turner and Culpepper, interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 10 May 1989.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷Terlouw interview.
- ⁴⁸Terlouw interview.
- ⁴⁹FCC license for the eighteen translators, in possession of KREX.
- ⁵⁰Withers interview.

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