

# FIRST DRAFT

# Fruita's first doctor was an innovator and inventor

**A**t the turn of the 20th century, Fruita was a small town bustling with innovation.

■ The first automobile arrived in town, not from a far-away dealer but through the craftsmanship of a local man.

■ The first observatory was built at a Fruita home, with a locally constructed telescope.

■ A company was formed to construct and sell X-ray machines.

■ A small hospital was built to serve railroad workers and others.

■ The town's first pharmacy opened.

Most amazing is the fact that one man was involved in all of these endeavors: Dr. James M.G. Beard.

Born in New Hampshire in 1844, Beard taught school in Indiana prior to attending the University of Michigan, then medical schools in Kansas City and Chicago. He practiced medicine in Indiana, Arkansas, Kansas and Saguache, before moving to Fruita in 1894.

Beard and his first wife, Roseltha, had four children. But she died while the family was living in Saguache, and he married his second wife, Mary Ellis, who was known as Mait.

Beard's son, John, joined his father in the creation of Beard and Sons Drug Store. Later, John would be the founder of the Beard family's goat and sheep ranch that operated in the Devil's Canyon area of what's now McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area.

Another son, Edgar, published two early newspapers in Fruita.

Sometime during his early years in Fruita, Dr. Beard decided he wanted an electric automobile. It's not clear how much Beard was involved in the design of the car, which is pictured on this page. But it is known that his friend and neighbor George Newbury, who has been described as a mechanical genius, built the vehicle.

Beard also partnered with Newbury to build a telescope and observatory at his home near McCune Avenue in Fruita. It may have been the first observatory in the Grand Valley.

Beard ordered the lenses for the telescope himself, but returned the first set to



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOWER VALLEY HERITAGE CHAPTER

Dr. James Beard, sitting in his electric car, outside his medical office and hospital, circa 1910. The men on crutches are hospital patients. The man without crutches is Dr. Robert Benjamin Porter.

the company from which he purchased them because they were marred with spots. "I'm not buying a glass map of the Hawaiian Islands," he reportedly said. "I want clear glass for lenses for a telescope."

In the 1970s, long after Beard's death, the six-inch telescope was donated to the Delta County School District, to be used by students there.

Sometime around the turn of the century, Beard became interested in the use of radiation to treat cancer patients and in radiography, or X-rays. Both fields were in their infancy at the time.

Beard reportedly traveled to Unaweep Canyon and mined small amounts of uranium ore, which he ground up and glued into small discs for making radiography images of patients. And according to several accounts, he corresponded with Nobel Laureate scientist Marie Curie in Paris about the use of radioactive substances.

His practical mind became dissatisfied with the existing technology for X-ray machines. So, he turned once again to his friend Newbury, and they designed and patented a hand-crank electric system for his own X-ray machine. By 1902, Newbury and Beard had established a small manufacturing firm to build and sell the machines.

Later, son John Beard worked with Newbury on the venture. However, changing technology soon made the design of their X-ray machine obsolete.

Early in the 20th century, Dr. Beard established Fruita's first hospital, a four-bed facility operated on the second floor of the building that also housed his medical practice, and near the family drug store.

Working under contract with both the Denver & Rio Grande Railway and the Uintah Railway, Beard created the hospital primarily to treat railroad workers. But it was also open to local patients.

Beard operated the hospital

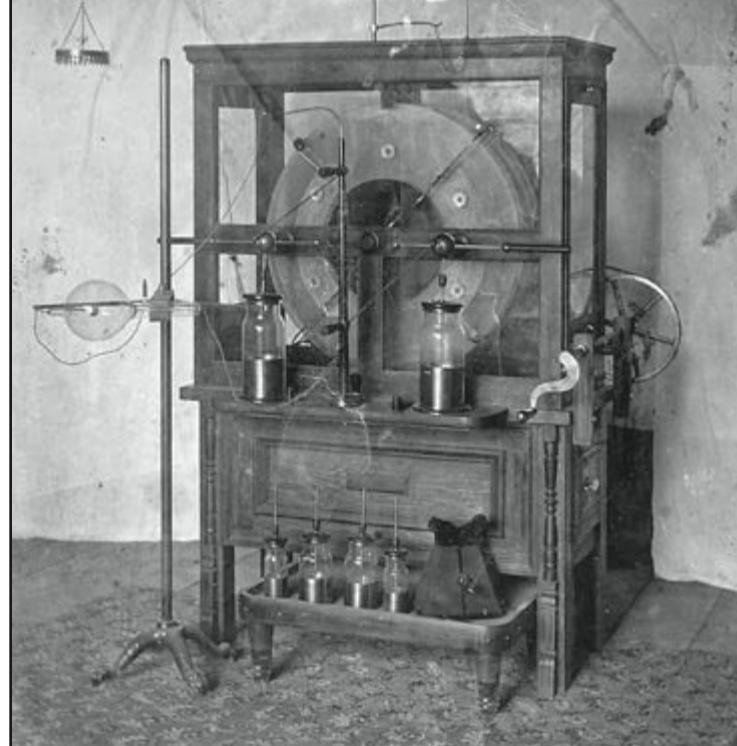


PHOTO COURTESY OF LOWER VALLEY HERITAGE CHAPTER

A hand-cranked X-ray machine designed by Dr. James M.G. Beard and built by Beard and George Newbury.

in partnership with Dr. Robert Benjamin Porter, but the facility closed after Beard's death in 1912.

His death is believed to be related to Beard's years-long research into radioactive materials, and his extensive handling of them. His X-ray machines had open X-ray tubes, which were known to be a health risk just a few decades later.

Obituaries in local newspapers told of Dr. Beard's lengthy fight with an unknown disease. He traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, to seek help, but doctors there could do little to halt his disease. He died at his home in Fruita on April 27, 1912.

But Beard's legacy and family continued in the Fruita area.

In addition to his work at the drug store and with the X-ray machines, son John served for a time as Fruita's town marshal.

Additionally, he, and later

his son Irving, first ran angora goats, then later sheep in the area from Devil's Canyon to Pollock Canyon, as well as on Glade Park and Piñon Mesa. Irving and his wife, Dorothy, also had ranch property near Leadville and Fairplay.

John's other son, Wallace Beard, owned and operated a construction company near Fruita for many years.

Edgar Beard, John's brother, operated first the Fruita Independent newspaper, then later The Fruita Record.

Sources: Sheila (Beard) Latta; "Images of America: Fruita," by Denise and Steve Hight; "Profile of Dr. J.M.G. Beard," by Dorothy Beard, in "Echoes of A Dream," historic newspapers from Grand Junction and Fruita; Museums of Western Colorado.

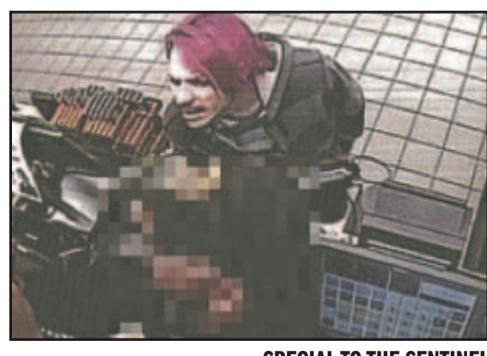
Bob Silbernagel's email is [bobsilbernagel@gmail.com](mailto:bobsilbernagel@gmail.com).



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHEILA LATTA  
Dr. James M.G. Beard.

## BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF



SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Police are seeking this man as a suspect in the case of a counterfeit \$50 bill that was passed at a gas station on North Avenue.

All contents copyright © 2018 The Daily Sentinel. All republication rights are reserved. Material in this publication may not be published, broadcast, rewritten for broadcast or publication or redistributed directly or indirectly in any medium.

How to reach us: 242-5050. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Circulation phones are open 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on weekends.

### CIRCULATION

Subscription and delivery questions: 242-1919 or (800) 332-5833

### ADVERTISING

Retail advertising: 256-4289

Classified advertising: 242-1313

Pick 3 Midday Sunday: 3, 4, 7 Evening Sunday: 9, 2, 0  
Cash 5 Sunday: 4, 15, 20, 30 and 32  
For information, go to [www.coloradolottery.com](http://www.coloradolottery.com).

Features and entertainment: 256-4224

Sports: 256-4203

Commentary: 256-4236

### coloradopress ASSOCIATION



2011 • 2012 • 2013

2014 • 2015

The Daily Sentinel (ISSN 1445-8962)  
Published every morning at 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.  
Periodical Postage paid at Grand Junction, CO.  
Carrier home delivery prices: 13 weeks - \$65.00; 26 weeks - \$130.00; 52 weeks - \$260.00.  
Weekend delivery packages: Wednesday thru Sunday - \$244.40; Friday thru Sunday - \$197.60.  
Saturday & Sunday - \$163.80; Sunday only - \$163.80.  
Weekend Delivery includes the following date in 2018: Nov. 22.  
Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday.  
Mall (USPS): \$30.00 per week, \$1,560 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
The Daily Sentinel, 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.

### Curious about the Value of Your Home?

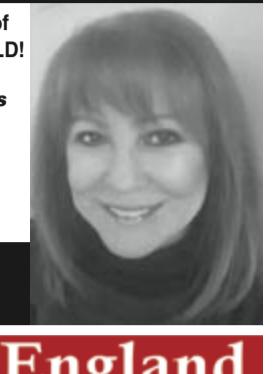
I am happy to provide a FREE market valuation of your property, & then tell you my plan to get it SOLD!

Selling Mesa County Full Time For 24 Years

**Tina Harbin**  
RE/MAX 4000<sup>inc.</sup>

970-234-3808  
[tinaharbinhomes@gmail.com](mailto:tinaharbinhomes@gmail.com)

12/27/16



**FREE TRAVEL SHOWS**  
**GRAND JUNCTION**  
**Wed., May 9**  
**10 AM, 2 & 7 PM**  
**Grand Vista Hotel**  
**2790 Crossroads Blvd.**

**MONTROSE**  
**Thurs., May 10**  
**10 AM, 2 & 7 PM**  
**Holiday Inn Express & Suites**  
**1391 S. Townsend Ave.**

**RECEIVE A \$100 HOLIDAY COUPON AT SHOWS**  
**HOLIDAY VACATIONS**  
**800-826-2266**  
**holidayvacations.com**  
**keyword: kjct**

**New England Fall Foliage**  
**Sept. 29 - Oct. 7**  
**with**  
**RUSS PAPPAS**  
**KJCT 8**

**Airfare & 11 meals**  
**Boston sights**  
**Hancock Shaker Village**  
**New York City**  
**Broadway musical & more**  
**LOCAL DEPARTURE**

### MEMORIAL DAY ADVERTISING DEADLINES

### ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

The Daily Sentinel's advertising deadlines will be moving up to accommodate the

### Memorial Day Holiday!

This early deadline schedule is designed to help you plan your advertising around the holiday.

Publication Date	Display Advertising	Deadline
5/26, Saturday	5/23, Wednesday, 12 NOON	
5/27, Sunday	5/23, Wednesday, 12 NOON	
5/28, Monday	5/24, Thursday, 12 NOON	
5/29, Tuesday	5/24, Thursday, NOON	
5/30, Wednesday	5/25, Friday, 12 NOON	
5/30, Sentinel Weekly	5/22 Tuesday, 12 NOON	
5/31, Thursday	5/25, Friday, 5 PM	
6/1, Out & About	5/25, Friday, 3 PM	
6/3, Real Estate Weekly	5/25, Friday, 12 NOON	

### Classified Liner Ads (Private Party & Commercial)

5/27, Sunday	5/25, Friday, 2 PM
5/28, Monday	5/25, Friday, 3 PM
5/29, Tuesday	5/25, Friday, 3 PM

5/30, Wednesday	5/23, Wednesday, 3 PM
-----------------	-----------------------

### Legals

5/27, Sunday	5/22, Tuesday, 3 PM
5/28, Monday	5/22, Tuesday, 3 PM
5/29, Tuesday	5/22, Tuesday, 3 PM
5/30, Wednesday	5/23, Wednesday, 3 PM

**THE DAILY SENTINEL**  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 • Advertising 256-4289

### attention health care providers

**MAY IS HEALTH MONTH IN THE DAILY SENTINEL**

Mesa County residents have a variety of options when it comes to choosing health services. Make your office/business or service stand out from the rest with full color ads in The Daily Sentinel during the month of May.

Run your 2 col. x 6.75 in. color ad on the Health & Wellness pages on any Tuesday in May, plus one Bonus Day for \$315. BONUS DAY AD MUST RUN IN THE MONTH OF MAY.

**MEDICAL SPECIALISTS USED- past 12 months**

	Mesa County Adults	Mesa County Adults	% that read The Daily Sentinel
Chiropractor	22,114	19.3%	66.8%
Corrective eye surgeon	5,416	4.7%	66.4%
Cosmetic surgeon	921	.8%	54.1%
Eye examiner	31,049	27.2%	66.2%
OB/GYN	16,380	14.3%	63.4%
Skin doctor	11,449	10.0%	69.8%
Visiting home nurse	2,268	2.0%	45.8%

Your Daily Sentinel print ads work for you online... we automatically digitize your ads into online content to increase your business search engine optimization ranking on Google, Yahoo, or Bing.

Contact your Daily Sentinel ad representative to reserve your space, or call: 256-4289

**THE DAILY SENTINEL**  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 • Advertising 256-4289 • Classified 242-1313 • For Home Delivery Call 242-1919