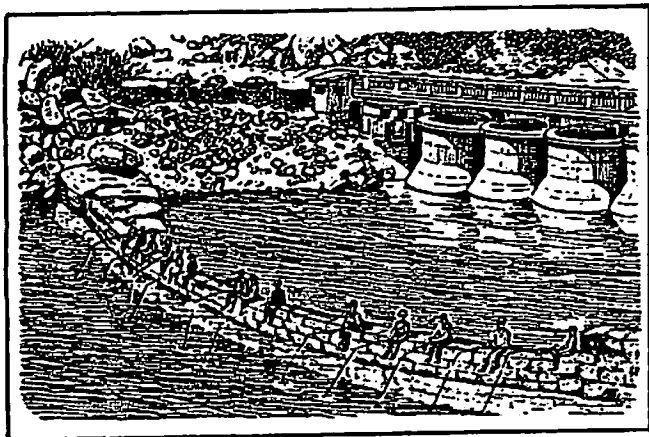


# EARLY COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

(Continued from Cover)



The original Big Bear Lake dam, built in 1883, is in the foreground. At upper right is the new multi-arch dam, erected in 1911.

creating Big Bear Lake as a huge reservoir, "that was to turn a brush covered valley into the Orange Empire."

Redlands was still only a "paper" community when it became embroiled in heated rivalry with Lugonia, where the first store, school house, post office and hotel were located. Both were competing for the honor of having their settlement chosen for a proposed new town-site and Lugonia, because of its long-standing assets, assumed it had a head start. Its leaders apparently failed to comprehend the high-powered tactics used by Judson and Brown in promoting their own colony over the ensuing five years. Then two dramatic events occurred during the next eight months; tilting the balance in Redlands' favor. First, a group of local businessmen formed the "Redlands News Company" and hired Scipio Craig, fiery red-headed owner-editor of Colton's Semi-Tropic newspaper, as managing editor of Redlands' first newspaper, The Citrograph. It was a brilliant choice, for Craig became not only Redlands' greatest booster, but perhaps

the one most responsible for its initial success. Second, the California Southern Railroad (now the Santa Fe) ran a branch line to Redlands in 1888 and established a depot there. In those days any town with a railroad ruled the roost.

During those arbitrary years, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors held a number of mass meetings regarding incorporation without arriving at a decision. They finally voted to hold a local election to settle the matter. On November 26, 1888, residents from both communities braved a driving rainstorm to go to the polls, where the final tally favored incorporation under Redlands' name by 216 to 63.

Pioneer newspapers played an important part during those formative years. Reading their contents today, one finds it hard to believe normal, red-blooded men and women lived in Lugonia and Redlands then, rather than a group of scripture quoting, blue-nosed reformers. Most local editors were prohibitionists, ranting and raving against the evils of drink and wages of sin, without mentioning far greater aberrations often taking place behind the closed doors of Redlands' Victorian mansions.

Lugonia's first newspaper, The Chronicle, didn't last long enough to debate the pros and cons of prohibition. Apparently printed on a small hand-press, it was a poorly edited, weekly two-page journal (enlarged to four pages for the last two issues), printed on inferior quality, gray-colored paper — measuring five by eight inches in size. Born on January 5, 1884, The Chronicle expired only five issues later on February 2, 1884. During its short life, publishers L. S. Stillman and F. M. Townsend — proprietor of the "Lugonia, Redlands and Crafton Express" stages — reported local news items

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