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GILMER BROTHERS ADVERTISING THROUGH THE 1870'S

We have already documented the advertising of the Greymouth hotel through the 1860's which was carried using the Sweeney's Hotel brand until 9 December 1869. By this time the hotels at Cobden, Westport and Charleston were also included in the advertisement and the concept of advertising a chain of hotels had been established.

This continued into the 1870's but for a number of years there was not a clear projection of the Gilmer Brothers brand. The chain advertisement of early 1870 was under the banner of Hamilton Gilmer's Hotel Greymouth and while the hotels at Westport and Charleston had changed to "Gilmer's" this gave the impression of them all being run by one Gilmer rather than the business name of Gilmer Brothers. The Cobden Hotel still carried the name of Hamilton's Hotel probably because that was how it was widely known. It had carried that name since 1865.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
MAWHERA QUAY,
GREYMOUTH.

Commercial men and visitors to Greymouth will find this most centrally-situated and commodious hotel to be the best suited for transaction of business of any in the town of Greymouth. It is by far the largest, and possesses not only a most complete suite of Bedrooms, but also two of Alcock's best finished Billiard Tables, which are unsurpassed in New Zealand, and are always attended to by attentive and experienced markers.

The ample accommodation, and view from the balconies, fully warrant its appellation of a first-class family hotel and home.

For public lectures or entertainments the large hall is without an equal on the Coast, if, indeed, surpassed in the Colony.

Visitors during the Christmas week will meet with every attention to their wants, &c.

A night watchman at all times in attendance.

A thoroughly experienced cook, with watchful and attentive assistants to look after the dining-room.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL
Mawhera Quay, Greymouth.
HAMILTON'S HOTEL,
Cobden.
GILMER'S MELBOURNE HOTEL,
Charleston.
GILMER'S POST OFFICE HOTEL,
Westport.

T A M E S J O H N S O N

Grey River Argus 4 January 1870

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
Greymouth ;
HAMILTON'S HOTEL,
Cobden ;
GILMER'S BROTHERS' HOTEL,
Ahaura ;
GILMER'S MELBOURNE HOTEL,
Charleston ;
And **GILMER'S POST OFFICE HOTEL,**
Westport ;

Are now being carried on under the most efficient management on the West Coast.

Commercial travellers and strangers will find the above hotels the best fitted and the most commodious on the Coast.

Attached to each hotel are anterooms for the display of samples.

The billiard-rooms and tables are indisputably *par excellence*, unequalled in New Zealand.

The livery stables and stud of horses are too well known to need comment.

All the above hotels are specially built to suit the requirements of the digging community.

Grey River Argus 11 August 1870

The need to establish a good advertisement was clear. Greymouth was the key community on the West Coast with a relatively large population, many of whom were transient, and were likely to move to other locations where Gilmer Brothers' hotels were located. In Greymouth itself there was still a relatively small population of around 2000 people but a large number of hotels. In the newspaper of 11 August 1870 there were 32 hotels advertised on page one. So the market was very competitive.

In August 1870 the new Ahaura Hotel had been included in the advertisement for the first time and it was shown with the business name of Gilmer Brothers. This advertisement was quickly changed but only in layout and not content and by 1 September 1870 it occupied a very prominent position at the top of a column. This was at the expense of a strong competitor, Joseph Kilgour's Union Hotel, located further east on Mawhera Quay, who had stopped advertising. Although it was important to advertise, Gilmer Brothers business also did not advertise all year round.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL Greymouth.

Commercial travellers and strangers will find the above and under-mentioned Hotels the best fitted and the most commodious on the Coast.

Attached to each hotel are anterooms for the display of samples.

The billiard-rooms and tables are indisputably *par excellence*, unequalled in New Zealand.

The livery stables and stud of horses are too well known to need comment.

All the above hotels are specially built to suit the requirements of the digging community.

HAMILTON'S HOTEL,
Cobden ;

GILMER'S BROTHERS' HOTEL,
Ahaura ;

GILMER'S MELBOURNE HOTEL,
Charleston ;

And GILMER'S POST OFFICE HOTEL,
Westport ;

Are now being carried on under the most efficient management on the West Coast.

Hotels.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL, GREYMOUTH.

In carrying out the extensive additions to this Hotel, which more than renew it, and render it far and away the largest and most complete on the West Coast, a true regard has been paid to the elegance and solidity of its architecture, while all the internal arrangements of every department will be found to fully correspond.

Thoroughness everywhere has been a special aim.

Its central situation and vicinity to the Steamboat Wharf present great inducements to Commercial Travellers (for whom there are set apart Sample Rooms), and to Visitors, Private Families, and the Mining Community of Greymouth and the Up-Country Districts, this Hotel has not its equal for comfort and convenience. During the approaching Christmas Season all its resources will be called into play for the comfort of its guests, and the cuisine will speak for itself in that "merrie time."

THE BILLIARD ROOM,

which contains two tables by the best makers, are watched by competent and attentive markers.

THE MASONIC HALL,

the largest on the Coast, is the most suitable for Balls, Banquets, and Public Meetings.

In connection with the above Hotel are

LIVERY STABLES,

under efficient management ; and the Horses, having been selected by competent judges, are the best to be found in New Zealand.

POST OFFICE HOTEL,

WESTPORT.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
COBDEN.

GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL,
AHAURA.

GILMER'S MELBOURNE HOTEL,
CHARLESTON.

The advertisement of 29 November 1871 (above right) was produced after a break of about three months. It has extensive copy directed at a number of different audiences and highlighting the full scope of the hotels' activities. The advertisement was at the top of the column replacing a number of other much smaller ads. The position was obviously dictated by the size and the amount of money that had been paid. It is of interest that Hamilton's Hotel at Cobden has been named as "Hamilton Gilmer's Hotel". It is difficult to see that this would be a deliberate renaming as John Hamilton was still advertising separately advertising the hotel as Hamilton's Hotel as recently as 31 May 1871, albeit to market the horse hire business.

H A M I L T O N ' S H O T E L ,
 C O B D E N .
 — —
 H A M I L T O N ' S L I N E O F S A D D L E
 H O R S E S .
 — —
 F u r t h e r R e d u c t i o n s t o m e e t t h e t i m e s .
 — —
 S T A T I O N S — C O B D E N , C A M P T O W N , A N D
 A H A U R A .

Grey River Argus 31 May 1871

The large advertisement (see below) was produced with a Christmas theme for Christmas 1872 and this was changed to remove the reference to Christmas on 17 January 1872. The advertisement also included the Livery Stables at Reefton for the first time but in all other respects was the same as the previous advertisement. This later advertisement ran until 15 June 1872 when there was a further small change to show the number of billiard tables as three rather than two. Each time there had been a change in the services offered by the chain, there was some reference in their advertising even though it took a little time for the changes to be made.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL

GREYMOUTH.

In carrying out the extensive additions to this Hotel, which more than renew it, and render it far and away the largest and most complete on the West Coast, a true regard has been paid to the elegance and solidity of its architecture, while all the internal arrangements of every department will be found to fully correspond.

Thoroughness everywhere has been a special aim.

Its central situation and vicinity to the Steamboat Wharf present great inducements to Commercial Travellers (for whom there are set apart Sample Rooms), and to Visitors, Private Families, and the Mining Community of Greymouth and the Up-Country Districts, this Hotel has not its equal for comfort and convenience.

THE BILLIARD ROOM,

which contains 3 tables by the best makers, are watched by competent and attentive markers.

THE MASONIC HALL,

the largest on the Coast, is the most suitable for Balls, Banquets, and Public Meetings.

In connection with the above Hotel are

LIVERY STABLES,

under efficient management; and the Horses having been selected by competent judges, are the best to be found in New Zealand.

POST OFFICE HOTEL,
WESTPORT.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
COBDEN.

GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL,
AHAUUA.

GILMERS' MELBOURNE HOTEL,
CHARLESTON.

GILMERS LIVERY STABLES,
REEFTON.

Grey River Argus 15 June 1872

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL

GREYMOUTH.

Has no equal in Greymouth, for extent and completeness of appointment:
Magnificent Billiard Room.

POST OFFICE HOTEL,
WESTPORT.

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
COBDEN.


GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL,
AHAUUA.

GILMERS' MELBOURNE HOTEL,
CHARLESTON.

GILMERS LIVERY STABLES,
REEFTON.

Grey River Argus 28 September 1872

Later in the year on 28 September 1872, the advertisement was substantially reduced in size. This still referred to the Cobden Hotel as Hamilton Gilmer's and the only hotel called Gilmer Brothers was the Ahaura hotel. The smaller advertisement ran continuously on a daily basis throughout 1873 until 30 May 1874. However, after that there were no further hotel advertisements for that year until November. Instead, the business placed daily advertisements for the new mail coach service they were now running to Reefton.

V.  R.

GREY VALLEY AND REEFTON
MAIL LINE OF COACHES, be-
 tween Greymouth, the Grey Valley, and
 Reefton.

Start every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.45
 a.m, from Gilmer's Hotel.

All carriage of parcels must be prepaid to
 ensure responsibility.

GILMER BROS.,
 Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 12 January 1874

On 5 November 1874 the first Gilmer Brothers advertisement for Greymouth appeared. This has the appearance of a compromise because no other hotels were mentioned by name although their locations were included as "branches". Nevertheless, the advertisement reflected the reality of the ownership for the first time as the hotels were owned by the business rather than an individual, Hamilton Gilmer, notwithstanding the fact that he may have had a major interest and been a strong driving force.

GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL,
 GREYMOUTH,
 Now by far the largest and most commodious
 upon the West Coast, affords the
BEST ACCOMMODATION.

—

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it
 offers Spacious Sample Rooms, Private
 Parlors, and the most extensive sources
 of commercial knowledge in the
 district.

—

For Concerts, &c., the Masonic Room is pro-
 nounced the finest in New Zealand,

—

The Billiard Room possesses three of Alcock's
 best Tables, most carefully attended.

—

Branches at Cobden, Ahaura, Charleston,
 and Westport, and in connection there-
 with, and also at Reefton, Livery
 and Bait Stables.

GILMER BROTHERS.
 Proprietors.

Grey Valley Argus 5 November 1874

This advertisement was placed on a daily basis until 2 August 1875 when it stopped. There was then a very significant gap of five months until a new more extensive advertisement was placed on 16 February 1876. This used the Gilmer Brothers name on most of the hotels except Westport and Charleston although it was clearly shown that these were Gilmer Brothers' hotels.

The advertisement continued on a daily basis throughout the year and it was changed on 18 December 1876 so that it included the coach fares to Reefton and the intermediate stops. By this time there was little competition for the Gilmer Hotel in Greymouth. The only opposition based on the size of their advertisements were the adjoining Albion Hotel of Richard Tonks and another Mawhera Quay hotel of Joseph Kilgour, the Union. However, this hotel while well situated was not part of a chain and did not operate a coach line which would bring passengers to its own hotels.

GILMER BROS.' HOTEL GREYMOUTH,

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the
BEST ACCOMMODATION.

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers Spacious Sample Rooms, Private Parlors, and the most extensive sources of Commercial knowledge in the district

To Parties desirous of renting a Large Hall for Concerts, &c., the Masonic Room is pronounced to be the finest in New Zealand, and possesses an Entrance specially made and adapted for Ladies. It can accommodate over 400 persons. The entire Hotel has been remodelled and rebuilt, and is equal in its interior arrangements to any in New Zealand.

The large Billiard Room possesses three of
ALCOCK'S RENOWNED TABLES,
which are most carefully attended to.

A NIGHT WATCHMAN KEPT UPON THE PREMISES.

Gilmer Brothers' Hotelkeepers, Cobden ;
Gilmer Brothers' Hotel, Ahaura ; also,
Melbourne Hotel, Charleston ; and the
Post-office Hotel, Westport.
Now the Largest and most Commodious
Family Hotel there.

LIVERY AND BAIT STABLES.

The Mammoth Line of Post Horses is the largest and best selected on the Coast, and is constantly reinforced by fresh drafts.

Coaches leave Gilmer Brothers' Hotel every morning for Ahaura, Grey Valley, and Reefton.

GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 16 February 1876

GILMER BROS.' HOTEL GREYMOUTH,

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the
BEST ACCOMMODATION.

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers Spacious Sample Rooms, Private Parlors, and the most extensive sources of Commercial knowledge in the district

To Parties desirous of renting a Large Hall for Concerts, &c., the Masonic Room is pronounced to be the finest in New Zealand, and possesses an Entrance specially made and adapted for Ladies. It can accommodate over 400 persons. The entire Hotel has been remodelled and rebuilt, and is equal in its interior arrangements to any in New Zealand.

The large Billiard Room possesses three of
ALCOCK'S RENOWNED TABLES,
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A NIGHT WATCHMAN KEPT UPON THE PREMISES.

Gilmer Brothers' Hotelkeepers, Cobden ;
Gilmer Brothers' Hotel, Ahaura ; also,
Melbourne Hotel, Charleston ; and the
Post-office Hotel, Westport.
Now the Largest and most Commodious
Family Hotel there.

LIVERY AND BAIT STABLES.

The Mammoth Line of Post Horses is the largest and best selected on the Coast, and is constantly reinforced by fresh drafts.

Coaches leave Gilmer Brothers' Hotel every morning for Ahaura, Grey Valley, and Reefton.

FARES—Brunnerton, 5s ; Nelson Creek, 10s 6d ; Ahaura, 16s ; Totara Flat, 1l 1s ; Grey Junction, 1l 3s 6d ; Reefton, 1l 11s.
GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 18 December 1876

This advertisement only lasted a short time until 8 January 1877 and there was no further Greymouth advertisement until 8 December 1877. This latest advertisement was large and placed at the top of a column. It mentioned the locations of the hotels but not their names. Reefton was included for the first time but Charleston was excluded as it had been sold. Also omitted was the reference to Livery and Bait Stables and the fares payable on the coach.

Throughout 1877, Gilmer Brothers were very preoccupied at Reefton with Dawsons Hotel which we have identified they were occupying in June of that year and perhaps earlier. They advertised in the Inangahua Times from at least 1 January 1877 (earlier editions of this newspaper are not readily available¹) and these advertisements continued throughout 1877. They ceased in January 1878 and the hotel was sold the Reefton hotel shortly afterwards.

GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL,
Greymouth,

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the best accommodation.

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers spacious sample rooms, private parlors, and the most extensive sources of commercial knowledge in the district.

To parties desirous of renting a large hall for concerts, &c., the Masonic room is pronounced to be the finest in New Zealand, and possesses an entrance specially made and adapted for ladies. It can accommodate over 400 persons. The entire Hotel has been remodelled, and is equal in its interior arrangements to any in New Zealand.

The large Billiard Room possesses three of Alcock's renowned Tables, which are most carefully attended to.

A Night Watchman kept upon the Premises.

GILMER BROS.,
Hotelkeepers,
Greymouth, Westport, Reefton, Ahaura, and
Cobden,
Forming a chain of communication unequalled in New Zealand.

Their mail coaches leave the above establishments every morning for Ahauru, Grey Valley, and Reefton.

All parcels must be pre-paid.

GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 8 December 1877

HAMILTON GILMER'S HOTEL,
GREYMOUTH;
HAMILTON'S HOTEL:
COBDEN;
GILMER BROTHERS HOTEL,
AHAURA;
and
GILMER'S MELBOURNE HOTEL,
CHARLESTON.

Are now being carried on under the most efficient management on the West Coast.

POST OFFICE HOTEL,
WESTPORT.

(Nearest to all Public Buildings.)

Commercial Travellers and Strangers will find the above-mentioned Hotels the best fitted and the most commodious on the Coast.

Attached to each Hotel are ante-rooms for the display of samples.

The Billiard Rooms and tables are indisputably *par excellence*, unequalled in New Zealand.

The Livery Stables and stud of horses are too well-known to need comment. All these favourite Hotels are specially built to suit the requirements of the digging community.

Horses for hire at Reefton to Lyell and other parts of the Coast.

**REDUCTION IN LIVERY
AND BAIT.**

Livery and Bait, per night	...	10s.
Per feed	...	5s.

Inangahua Times 3 January 1877

¹ <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

Gilmer Brothers sold the Reefton Hotel back to John Dawson in February 1878 and with the purchase of the Duke of Edinburgh in Wellington in March 1878 Sam Gilmer was needed there to run the new hotel. In June 1878 Robert Gilmer took over the licence of the Masonic Hotel at Nelson. These very substantial additions to the Gilmer Brothers chain of hotels increased not only the scope of their operations but also the quality.

The changes were reflected very simply in their Greymouth advertising. On 26 August 1878 their standard advertisement was amended to exclude Reefton and include Nelson and Wellington in the locations they covered. They clearly had "*a chain of communication unequalled in New Zealand.*"

GILMER BROTHERS' HOTEL
Greymouth,

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the best accommodation.

—

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers spacious sample rooms, private parlors and the most extensive sources of commercial knowledge in the district.

To parties desirous of renting a large hall for concerts, &c., the Masonic room is pronounced to be the finest in New Zealand, and possesses an entrance specially made and adapted for ladies. It can accommodate over 400 persons. The entire Hotel has been remodelled, and is equal in its interior arrangements to any in New Zealand.

—

The large Billiard Room possesses three of Alcock's renowned Tables, which are most carefully attended to.

—

A Night Watchman kept upon the Premises.

—

GILMER BROS.,
Hotelkeepers,
Greymouth, Westport, Nelson, Wellington,
Ahaura and Cobden,
Forming a chain of communication unequalled in New Zealand.

—

Their mail coaches leave the above establishments every morning for Ahauru, Grey Valley, and Reefton.

—

All parcels must be pre-paid.

—

GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 26 August 1878

GILMER BROTHERS HOTEL,
Greymouth,

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the best accommodation.

—

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers spacious sample rooms, private parlors, and the most extensive sources of commercial knowledge in the district.

To parties desirous of renting a large hall for concerts, &c., the Masonic room is pronounced to be the finest in New Zealand, and possesses an entrance specially made and adapted for ladies. It can accommodate over 400 persons. The entire Hotel has been remodelled, and is equal in its interior arrangements to any in New Zealand.

—

The large Billiard Room possesses three of Alcock's renowned Tables, which are most carefully attended to.

—

A Night Watchman kept upon the Premises.

—

GILMER BROS.,
Hotelkeepers,
Greymouth, Westport, Nelson, Wellington,
Ahaura and Cobden,
Forming a chain of communication unequalled in New Zealand.

—

Their mail coaches leave Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, for Ahauru, Grey Valley, and Reefton, at 8.30 a.m., returning on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday.

—

All parcels must be pre-paid.

—

GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 31 December 1880

The above advertisements ran continuously throughout 1879 and 1880 until 2 March 1881 when the advertising ceased. It recommenced on 5 September 1881 with a new and smaller ad.

The dissolution of the Gilmer Brothers partnership was advertised on 10 February 1882. With this major event the hotels were divided between the partners and the future advertising of the Greymouth hotel would be determined by Sam Gilmer. However, Hamilton had his own ideas and the Gilmer Brothers advertisement last ran on 15 March 1882 and on 16 March he commenced advertising the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel in Wellington in the Grey River Argus..

GILMER BROTHERS HOTEL,
Greymouth.

Now by far the largest and most commodious upon the West Coast, offers the best accommodation.

To Commercial Travellers and Tourists it offers spacious sample rooms, private parlors, and the most extensive sources of commercial knowledge in the district.

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Bathrooms.

The Mail Coach for Reeton.

The large Billiard Room possesses three of Alcock's renowned Tables, which are most carefully attended to.

A Night Watchman kept upon the Premises.

GILMER BROS.,
Hotelkeepers,
Greymouth, Westport, Nelson, Wellington,
Ahaura and Cobden,

Forming a chain of communication unequalled in N. & Zealand.

GILMER BROTHERS,
Proprietors.

Grey River Argus 5 September 1881

DUKE OF EDINBURGH HOTEL
(Corner of Willis and Manners Streets,) WELLINGTON.

HAMILTON GILMER,
LATE OF GREYMOUTH,

Begs to inform his West Coast friends and acquaintances that he has taken the above CENTRAL AND COMMODIOUS HOTEL, and trusts there to merit a continuance of trade from West Coast visitors that was so liberally extended to him during his seventeen years' residence in Greymouth.

Excellent accommodation for travellers and boarders.

Only the very best brands of Wines, Spirits, and Ales kept in stock.

HAMILTON GILMER.

Grey River Argus 16 March 1882

Newspaper advertising was a major part of the Gilmer Brothers business strategy. It was very obvious that Hamilton Gilmer in particular had a very close association with the management and editors of the Grey River Argus over the years. He used this to his advantage and also to the advantage of the business over many years. The cost of the advertising must have been large but there is no doubt that the side benefits obtained were also very useful and worthwhile.