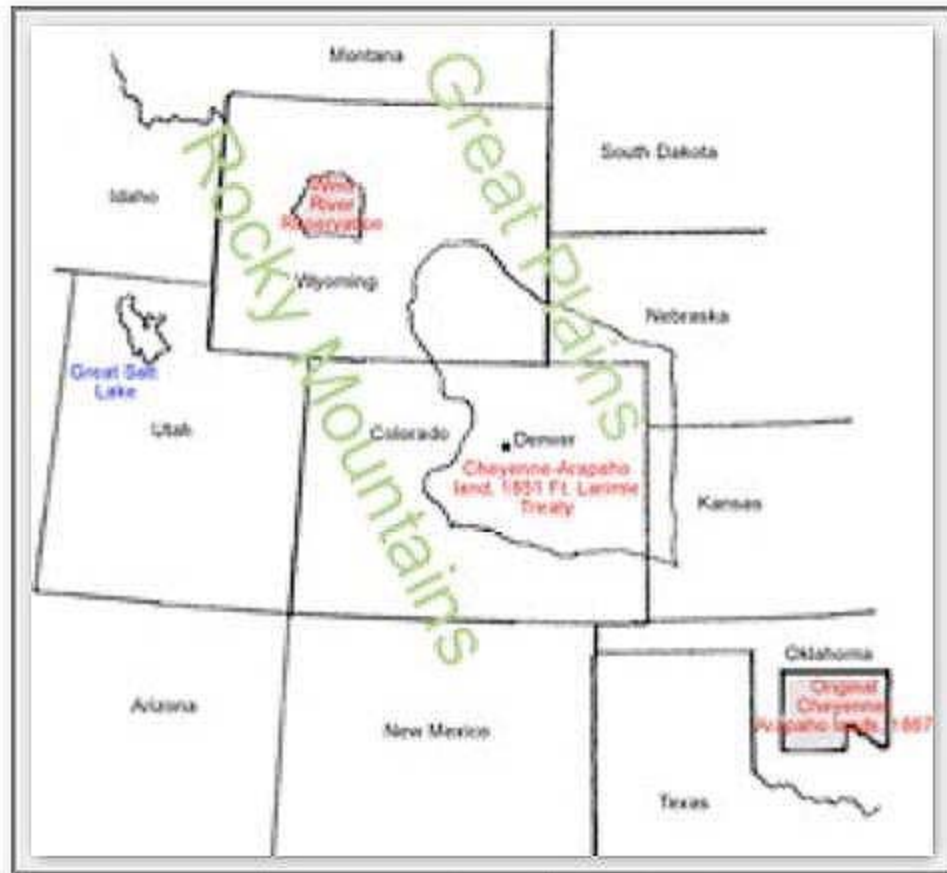


# Cheesman Park



## History:

As part of the 1851, Cheyenne-Arapahoe land Ft. Laramie Treaty the land now known as Cheesman Park was “acquired” from the Native Americans. The land was a burial ground for the Arapahoe. One of the stipulations of the Land Grant was that any bodies buried at the location could not be buried deeper than three feet, to not disturb and Native Americans who were buried there.



## *1860 Arapaho Land Grant*

In 1859, the land was given to the people of the City of Denver for use as a cemetery through an act of Congress.

William Larimer first laid out the plots and he named it "Mount Prospect"

The first undertaker was John J. Walley His business office was located at 1412 Larimer St. He was a cabinetmaker by trade.

John J. Walley's background:

In 1890 J.J. Walley, Dr. A.M. Burknam and R.P. Rollins were taken to court for "performing an unauthorized autopsy – Liability to heirs" and lost the case. The case alleged that the defendants had performed an autopsy on Tamar V. Thorpe on January 10, 1890. The family accused the plaintiffs for the not getting permission to perform the autopsy, while they stated that the body was given to them by a "friend" of the diseased whom she was living with and in order to have the body buried there had to be a certificate of death, which is why they performed the autopsy. The defendants were awarded \$25,000 for damages and psychological damages. The case was appealed in 1891 because it was discovered that the case was not tried

properly and that the Judge had ordered the jury to find in favor of the Plaintiffs. While the judgement was overturned the awarded damages were not refunded because of the Judges statement "I cannot conceive what damages could be proven to a Jury. The testimony discloses much that might be commented on in support of my conclusion that the Plaintiffs ought to not recover in this case, and that the judgement of the court below must be affirmed but respect for the dead and living forbid it"

The first person to be buried in the Cemetery was most likely Mr. John Stoefel who was hanged on a Cottonwood tree at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> and Cherry Creek. He was executed for killing his brother-in-law.

Another early burial was on March 30, 1859. It was Mr. Jack O'Neil; he was gunned down at a local Saloon because of a previous argument by a man that wen by "Rooker." The Rocky Mountain News printed the story and the location started to be called "Jack O'Neil's Ranch."



**City Cemetery**

Over time, different areas were designated for a variety of purposes. There were areas for the Grand Army of the Republic, The Odd Fellows, Society, Masons, Chinese, Potters field, and eventually a Catholic section.

The inhabitants of the Potters field that is of most interest. One of the Potters fields was located just behind a "Hospital" this was a place known as the Pest House.

*From Wikipedia "A pest house, plague house, pesthouse, or fever shed was a type of building used for persons afflicted with communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox, or typhus. Often used for forcible quarantine, many towns and cities had one or more pesthouses accompanied by a cemetery or a waste pond nearby for disposal of the dead."*

Even though it was located next to the City Cemetery, the people who had died could not afford the burial. This meant they would be dumped into the mass grave just behind the Pest House. This is the location of the Community Gardens in the current Denver Botanic Gardens.

The west side of the Cemetery was designated for the Masons and Oddfellows

THIS CEMETERY is laid out into suitable burial lots, and it is desirable for heads of families, and the different denominations of Christians to secure good lots for decoration and improvement for the burial of the dead.

The proprietors have organized under the charter, by electing Wm. Larimer, Jr., President and John J. Walley, Secretary and Treasurer.

WM. LARIMER, Jr., President.  
 JOHN J. WALLEY, Sec'y and Treas.


For further information enquire at the office of the Secretary, (where the plat of burial lots can be seen,) first door below the Tremont House, on Front street, West Denver.

N. B. J. J. WALLEY, Undertaker.  
 dly

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CASH FOR PILTS—at the Chicago Hide and Leather Store  
 L. O. HUNTINGTON & CO.,  
 Omaha, N. D.

*A notice placed in the local newspaper announcing the new Cemetery*

J. J. WALLEY,  
  
**UNDERTAKER**  
 AND EMBALMER.

---

Coffins, Caskets & Metallic Cases  
 336 Larimer Street,  
 DENVER, COLO.

*From an 1859 newspaper*

The southwest corner was scattered with several Potters fields

The mid-south section was designated as the Chinese section

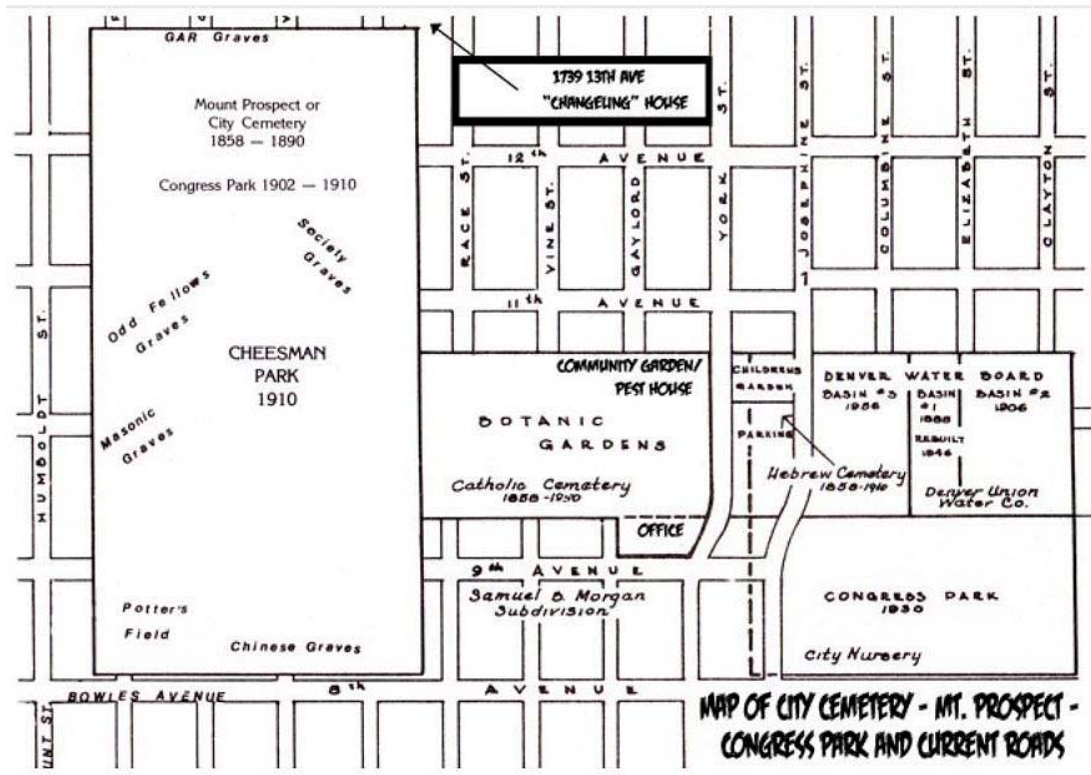
The location near the Pavilion was designated as the Society section and was the far end of the Catholic section

The northern area was designated the Grand Army of the Republic section

The location where the new parking lot is located at the east side of the Botanic Gardens and Congress Park was designated the Hebrew section

The bulk of the Roman Catholic section was where the Botanic Gardens is now located. Mayor Bates sold 40 acres to the Archdiocese; Father Machbeuf of the Roman Catholic Church was in charge of the purchase. The section was re-named "Mount Cavalry Cemetery."

The Hebrew Burial Society purchased the Jewish section of the Cemetery known as the "Hebrew Burying and Prayer Grounds" in 1875. The bodies from this section were removed in 1923, and then it was leased back to the city "forever." It was converted to an underground drinking water storage area and it still has that use today.



The Chinese section was given to a large population of Chinese who lived in the “Hop Alley” section of Denver. After the bodies were removed from this section, it was a shrub nursery until 1930

While all of this was taking place, the ownership of the land changed to John J. Walley (the original Undertaker). He did not do anything to help the condition of the property. Meanwhile the city was trying to shut down the Cemeteries, because this was not the beautiful garden/cemetery that the city wanted.

It was discovered that the property was part of a land treaty that pre-dated 1860, so the current owner had no legal right to own the property. The U.S. sold the land to the city of Denver and Mayor Bates for a total of \$200.00

By another Act of Congress dated January 25, 1890, the city was authorized to vacate this parcel of property known as Mount Prospect Cemetery from a place of burial to a Public Park. In recognition of Congress doing this for the city, Senator Teller changed the name of the park to “Congress Park.”

It would be the responsibility of the relatives to relocate the bodies from the Cemetery. However, those interred at the Potters fields generally had not family or during the course of their lives participated in activities that guaranteed that none of the living would claim them as relatives.

The city contracted with E.P. McGovern to remove the bodies for \$1.90ea and for them to be relocated to Riverside Cemetery. This work started on March 14, 1893.

During the excavation there was a Mining accident in Utah, and Denver casket makers has shipped all of the adult caskets for the Miners. This left Undertaker McGovern without a source for adult caskets. After depleting the area of adult caskets, McGovern was forced to switch to children's caskets. The problem with using children's caskets was the size (1 foot by 3 ½ feet). Because of this, he could not fit on body into a single casket, so he broke up the bodies to fit into the smaller caskets. This was a good deal for Undertaker McGovern because he was being paid by the body moved. He hired 18 people to help with this task.

The Health Commissioner conducted an investigation into the matter and it was the final decision to halt the removal and seal the land with the bodies intact.

Grave markers with dates prior to 1876 were moved to Riverside Cemetery and the rest were moved to Riverside Cemetery. Any bodies moved later have been buried in an unmarked location at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

All of the bodies recovered by Undertaker McGovern were moved to Riverside Cemetery.

Undertaker McGovern claimed that filling the graves back in was not part of his job, so when he was done with his work, all of the graves remained open. This is another reason that the Cemetery was sealed early.

Edward P. McGovern's background:

McGovern opened his office at the age of 27. The office was located at 1442 Arapahoe Street and was open for 44 years.

McGovern was not just the man hired to remove the unknown bodies from the Cemetery, he was also one of the founding members of the Colorado Funeral Directors Association.

In 1880, McGovern sells "E.P. McGovern Undertakers" to W.P Horan. (Horan/Horan & McContay)

When McGovern was hired to remove the bodies from the Cemetery, the city residents were so grateful that they voted him Grand Marshall of the Saint Patrick's Day parade of that year.

In 1900, McGovern listed himself as "Coroner"

In 1903, McGovern's son (Vincent) joins the business as an assistant. His other son (Paul J.) is Deputy Coroner in 1909

In 1923, McGovern opens a funeral home at 620 E. Colfax Ave

In 1925, E.P.'s name was replaced as owner of the Mortuary. Martin J. McGovern replaces him.

E.P. McGovern died in 1925 at the age of 75 (1851-1925)

On March 19, 1893, the headline of the Denver Republican newspaper read "The work of Ghouls"

The article revealed that workmen in charge of removing the bodies were breaking them into fragments and distributing the remains into two and sometimes three caskets, in which they are conveyed to a new burial site. The boxes provided by the Undertaker were three feet six inches long. Due to the dry soil, many of the bodies exhumed were rather well preserved. It must have been a gruesome site to witness intact remains being shattered to fit into these undersize caskets. The newsman described the scene; "The line of desecrated graves at the southern boundary of the Cemetery sickened and horrified everybody by the appearance they presented. Around the edges were piled broken coffins, rent and tattered shrouds and fragments of clothing that had been torn from dead bodies... all were trampled into the ground by the footsteps of the gravediggers like rejected junk."

This horrible site was augmented by the exhumations of the Chinese graves. Work of the graves was funded and carried out by the local Chinese community. These were not professional undertakers. Bodies were removed from the grounds; the bones were cleaned and wrapped for shipment to China. The fresher bodies were stripped of their tattered clothing and the decaying flesh scraped from the bones and left in the Cemetery.

An article from a local newspaper with some interesting "facts" about the burial practice:

*"The bones of every Chinaman who dies in this country are sent back to the Celestial Empire for internment. They are shipped in large boxes from San Francisco under the designation of "fishbone" at the rate of \$20.00 a ton. This fishbone fiction is in order to evade the rule of the steamship companies, which charge full rates for the transportation of dead bodies, says the New York World.*

*Nearly every Chinaman who comes here is under the care of the Six companies, they sign a contract guaranteeing the return of the bones of the dead for burial of the bones with their ancestors. On every steamer leaving San Francisco, there are invalid Chinese steerage passengers who hope to live until they reach their native country. An agreement exists between the Six Companies and the steamship managers which forbids the burial of these Chinamen should they die at sea, the Six Companies furnish coffins of the peculiar Chinese fashion for use in such emergencies.*

*When a Chinaman dies at sea, the body is embalmed, placed in a sealed coffin, and lowered into the hold. The expense is paid by the other Chinese passengers and the stewards of the ship, all of whom belong to that race. When the ship reaches Hong Kong the coffins are delivered to the Tung Wah Hospital"*

In one of the pauper's sections of the Cemetery, there was a complaint to the Denver Times (local newspaper) that Mr. Charles Cox (a representative from the local homeowners) who lived at 1064 Gaylord had seen how the paupers were buried. He claimed that the "rotten remains" of previous burials were dug up; sometimes two from the same grave were left out for hours behind the homes. The Undertaker explained that it was easier to dig in previously disturbed earth and the new coffins would lie flat to the coffin underneath when it was straightened. As the Chinese bundled the bones for shipment to China for a proper burial in their native country, the unfortunate former tenants of the potter's field were not to be treated with the same respect. These poor souls were shipped to Riverside Cemetery. The plot of land purchased by the city for the re-internment was a plot of land located by the Platte River. This was bottomland over the hill had far from the main Cemetery known as Poverty Flat.

The March 20, 1893 article from the Denver Republican stated it (the new burial site) was not fit for anything. When the Platte is flooded, the whole place is underwater. The following year there was a flood and some of the bodies washed downstream.

The management of the Cemetery later denied this. They currently claim that the bodies were buried to the southeast of the Cemetery.

This caused quite a controversy at the time. Mayor Rogers ordered all removals stopped. The city built a temporary wood fence around the park and it remained incomplete until 1902. Finally, shrubs were planted and the holes filled where the coffins had been and the remaining ones that had collapsed were filled in as well.

In 1898, the Architect and Civil Engineer, Richard Scheutze completed the plan for the layout of the park; however, he died before the park was completed. S.R. DeBoer added the final parts of the plan after Mr. Scheutze's death.

The Catholic Church kept their section of land until 1950 when it was finally added to the property of the park. In the later years it was considered empty and that, they had abandoned it. The fence that was put in place to keep people out of the area was falling over in areas, it was common to see children playing in the old Cemetery, and stories have been told of some of the children collecting bones and even the old headstones to use for themselves.

There were over 20,000 bodies buried in the Catholic section and there are only records of six of them:

- 7/10/1864 – The child of James Clifford
- 1865 – James O'Haire, years old and James O'Haire 28 years' old
- 1865 – F.J. Smith 4 years' old



- 1866 – Ellen Howlett 22 years' old
- 7/26/1866 – James Clifford 28 years' old

During the installation of the road that is on the east side of the Botanic Gardens, the city used the records of Mount Cavalry Cemetery to avoid accidentally digging up any bodies that might be in the route. This was not successful they unearthed three bodies during the construction.

In 1893, the problems with the Cemetery persisted, the local newspaper printed;  
*"Vandals at Work"*

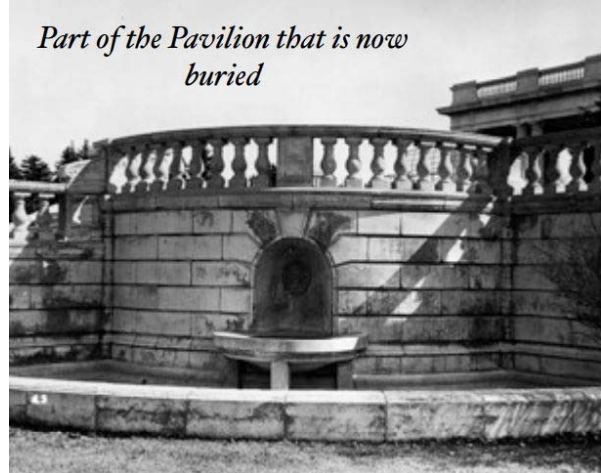
*Vaults of the old City Cemetery Robbed.*

*Denver – March 14, Vandals have been mutilating the remains of the dead in the old City Cemetery. The vault was closed eleven years ago, in 1882, and since then until Sunday the remains have reposed as safe in the vaults, as if they were underground in the grave. Who remains are, no one knows, as all records of the dead in City Cemetery is lost in some of the vaults in the City building. The vault has been broken open, and it is said that the jewelry has been removed from the corpse of a woman and the skeleton of a baby was stolen. Efforts are being made to discover the predators."*

When Horace Tabor died in 1899, flags were flown at half-staff and 10,000 people were reported to have attended his funeral, his body was interred at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Denver and later reinterred at Mount Olivet, where it now rests beside that of Baby Doe. When his body was exhumed from its original resting place, there was a huge celebration. The city hired a band and a celebration ensued. When the casket was exhumed, the coffin collapsed and fell apart, and then the corpse fell out. Then the family dog jumped in and ran off with one of Mr. Tabor's tibias.

In 1907, Gladys Cheesman-Evans and her mother Mrs. Walter S. Cheesman offered the city \$10,000 to name the new park "Cheesman Park" in honor of Walter Scott Cheesman and include a pavilion in memory of Mr. Cheesman. The donation was dependent on the condition that the park is named after Mr. Cheesman, so the west section was re-named Cheesman Park.





**The Walter Scott Cheesman Memorial**

Walter Scott Cheesman was born on Long Island, New York in 1838, the youngest of nine children. His father was reportedly involved in bookbinding and paper mills. During his youth, Walter would live in Chicago where he worked as a Druggist before coming to Denver. He also worked as a Druggist in Denver with a brother. He also sold necessities and potable spring water before expanding into Real Estate. He then became a leading financial player in Denver's early development. One of his most significant roles would be his involvement with together prominent Denverites in building Denver Pacific Railroad from Cheyenne to Denver, critical to the town's early survival. It was completed in 1870. Cheesman was also most responsible for the early expansion of Denver's water infrastructure. He would head four successive water supply companies between 1872 and 1907. Along with three other men, he also founded the organization that became the Denver Chamber of Commerce.

An article in the local newspaper at the time discussed the issue of renaming the land: From the Aspen Democrat – Sunday June 16, 1907

*Denver, June 15 –*

*If the name of Congress Park is not changed to Cheesman Park, the donation of \$100,000 offered by Mrs. Alice Cheesman, widow of Walter Cheesman and her daughter would be withdrawn.*

*For the first time since the offer was made Mrs. Cheesman spoke on the matter this morning. Her statement indicated that her heart is quite set upon having the name of her late husband perpetuated as her offer to the city suggests, and that there is no hope for its modification that some of the officials at City Hall and a large number of citizens hoped for in order that the park might remain and the park might get the benefit of the donation made by her in order that the name of Cheesman might stand out as the donor of this magnificent gift to the fact was particular established that the idea of calling a park by the name of Cheesman emanated from the widow and daughter is offered by them as a testimonial of their deep love for their husband and father.”*

The architects that were designing “Congress Park” had many features that were never added. They included a pond with water lilies on the west side of the park and even claimed that several different species of trees would be imported that had “never been seen in the area.”

The stone pavilion was quarried from the caverns of Treasury Mountain. The pavilion initially included ornate stairways, gardens and a complete lower level. The current pavilion is only the top half of the original structure. Just after the Park opened, the construction of the pavilion was completed and the structure was falling apart. The City Council on October 30, 1909 refused to accept the pavilion because of the cement work that had not been done properly, the foundation was cracking and there were concerns of future problems in the Colorado winters. The Ladd Sanger Construction company who had done the cement work was blamed. The city refused to pay for the pavilion and construction stopped. The columns of the pavilion were never finished/polished which has led to the pavilion slowly falling apart. To this date, there is no effort to fix the problems.

A solution to the problems with the construction was found; they pushed up several tons of dirt around the building and buried the entire bottom floor of the pavilion.

Years later S.R. DeBoer was contracted to add the fountains on the west side of the pavilion.

In 1907, the park was opened and it was named in honor of Walter Scott Cheesman

In 1913, The Colorado Mountain Club donated the brass monument located on the west side of the pavilion, which shows the mountain view

By 1950, the Catholic Church had removed all of the bodies from their section. They sold the property to the city to become The Denver Botanic Gardens.

In 1969, a mansion was donated to the Botanic Gardens for use as an office. The mansion is located on the southeast corner of the property. It was discovered that the foundation of the mansion was shifting, so they called an engineering firm to see what could be done to stabilize the building. The Engineering company started by conducting soil tests. They drilled some core samples from under the mansion. The Core samples revealed that there were vertical caskets

about 12 feet underneath the building. We consulted with a geologist and came to the hypothesis that the majority of the property is located on ground consisting of bentonite. *Bentonite expands when wet, absorbing as much as several times its dry mass in water. Because of its excellent colloidal properties, it is often used in drilling mud for oil and gas wells and boreholes for geotechnical and environmental investigations. The property of swelling also makes bentonite useful as a sealant, since it provides a self-sealing, low permeability barrier. It is used to line the base of landfills, for example. Various surface modifications to sodium bentonite improve some rheological or sealing performance in geoenvironmental applications, for example, the addition of polymers-* Wikipedia



**The Waring House**

Due to the areas bentonite content the caskets that were once buried only 3 feet deep have moved a considerable distance in some cases.

There have been several occasions when bodies and/or casket pieces have surfaced outside of the original boundaries of the Cemetery. One such story involved a family who lived on the west side of the original Cemetery boundaries. The family dog had been in the back yard, and when it came back in it had what appeared to be a human pelvis in its mouth. The family called the Police, who collected it and never contacted the family again.

11/08/2008;

FOX 31 Report

*“Denver – At the Denver Botanic Gardens, best known as a place to celebrate the beauty of living, it was a day to focus on the dead Friday after construction personnel working on a three-level parking garage unearthed apparent human remains left from the site when it was once one of the city’s first cemeteries. Gardens spokesman Will Jones said because the gardens property between Congress and Cheesman Park was once the site of a graveyard known as Mount Cavalry, the possibility of coming upon old human remains was something that had been planned for.*

*Because we were digging deep down into the ground for our new parking deck, we felt it would be prudent to contact the Coroner before any work was done, to ask her what we should do in the highly unlikely event that we find anything, said Jones. “She told us to stop immediately what we were doing,” and to contact the Coroner’s office*

*Sure enough, said Jones, “Earlier today just before lunch time, construction crews were digging. They found something that looked like splintered wood, and what may have been human remains. We weren’t sure what it was.” But, per the Coroner’s edict, we stopped what we were doing and contacted her office, and she came on property.”*

*The last burial at Mount Cavalry, a portion of which had been granted to Denver for use as a park, was 1908. When Mount Olivet Cemetery opened in Wheat Ridge in 1891, many of the Mount Cavalry bodies were transferred there for re-burial. Then, in 1950, nine years before the Denver Botanic Gardens opened for the first time; most of the remaining 8,600 bodies were also moved to Mount Olivet. Most, but it turns out, not all. Mixed amongst the splintered and dirt-caked remnants of aged coffins, at a depth of 4-5 feet, members of the Denver coroners staff found what appeared to be the bones of more than one person, as they carefully and methodically dug with shovels and hand trowels throughout the afternoon. When they quit work for the day at nightfall, no confirmation was given on how many sets of remains had been found. But at one point, coroner’s personnel could be seen placing bones – into three separate bags. There was no indication how much effort, if any, will go into attempting to identify the remains that were found Friday. But Jones said they will ultimately end up back in the ground at the same place to which all previous Mount Cavalry burials were transferred. “The Coroner told us that if any remains were found, they would be removed and taken to Mount Olivet cemetery in Wheat Ridge.” Jones said “We want to make sure these bodies, if they are bodies, we want to make sure that any of those remains are treated with the same respect today as they were treated with back then.” The new three-deck parking structure, to be built atop where the remains were found, will provide guest parking of more than 300. It replaces a 180 space surface parking lot visitors have been using until now. The new structure was supposed to open*

*in the spring of 2009. "Now depending on what the coroner tells us, that could change." Jones said, "but, again, was expecting to be complete in April 2009. But, because the coroner is working, our work on the parking deck stops. When she releases the property back to us, we will continue to work. Until then, were letting the coroner and her people take care of the remains, making sure they are treated properly. Jones said he was not worried about the Gardens ending up with a haunted parking garage, by building atop the not-so-final resting place for some of Denver's earliest inhabitants. "You know, said Jones, I'm not much one to believe in haunting... With the care and the way, we are handling things here, the spirits of these body parts – if they are body parts- will be very happy that we're treating them with respect." Following the discovery of the remains at the construction site we contacted the Denver Coroner's office and received the following response; "We have assisted in the excavation of the graves and removal of the skeletons/bones. Once we are sure there are no more, at least where they were doing construction, they will be released for burial at Mount Olivet. There is no report being generated per se. We have documented in our system that we did and "assist" for the Botanic Gardens, there is no actual investigative report or autopsy report, our only document that is public record, but we did not autopsy, therefore, no report."*



***Bodies unearthed during construction of Botanic Gardens Parking Lot***

The Coroner's office later did confirm that they unearthed approximately 54 bodies.

11/01/2010

*The Denver Post*

*Irrigation work at Denver's Cheesman Park last Thursday and Friday unearthed the former cemeteries eerie past in the form of four preserved skeletons. The coroner's office dated the bones as older than a century and well re-inter them at Mount Olivet Cemetery.*

*Their identities, however, are lost to history. Cheesman cemetery had a lot of criminals and paupers without headstones or any records, said Jill McGranahan, spokesman for the Denver*



*Parks and Recreation Department. "There's really nowhere to look to find out who these bones belonged to" Today a scenic park southeast of downtown, Cheesman Park was part of the 320 acres set aside as Prospect Hill Cemetery in 1859. "*

When the four bodies were unearthed, during the construction in October of 2010 we contacted the Denver Coroner's office and the Metro State Human Identification lab, to see if it would be helpful to documents and possibly identify the bodies. An agreement was reached to have the Human Identification Lab examine the bodies to see what might be discovered. We participated in the examination for documentation purposes.

In the first examination of the skeletons, there were determinations of possibly one female and three males. The only items other than skeletal remains were handles from the coffins, nails, a hair comb, a single bone clothes button, a .22 caliber bullet and brain lining from one of the skeletons.





**Our examination with the Metro State Human Body Identification Lab of the skeletons from the 2010 discovery**

During the examination, the skeletons were cleaned, measured, and photographed to document them. Some of the preliminary conclusions during the examination were that there were in fact five skeletons and that two had been mixed up while they were being packaged.

The initial reporting of the bodies was done by an anonymously by a worker from the landscaping company that was working at the site. He had dug up several of the bones and put them in a box near the road. A park ranger found the box and reported it. The person, who had initially found the bones, calling the KBPI morning show to talk about it, followed this. This skeleton turned out to be two skeletons.

The skeletons were completely clean and had no soft tissue, clothing, or wood from the coffins. This was most likely because the bodies were buried in very shallow holes. (3-4 feet) This would allow the bodies to be exposed to the rain and dry seasons. This would cause very acidic conditions that would have accelerated the natural decomposition. It was concluded that the bodies were buried shallow because of the agreement with the Native Americans that bodies could not be buried at a normal depth.

**T**HIS CEMETERY is laid out into suitable  
 burial lots, and it is desirable for heads of  
 families, and the different denominations of Chris-  
 tians to secure good lots for decoration and im-  
 provement for the burial of the dead.  
 The proprietors have organized under the  
 charter, by electing Wm. Larimer, Jr., President  
 and John J. Walley, Secretary and Treasurer.  
 WM. LARRIMER, Jr., President.  
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 For further information enquire at the office of  
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 Front street, West Denver.  
 N. B. J. J. WALLY, Undertaker.  
 dly

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**C**ASH FOR PELTS—at the Chicago Hide and  
 Leather Store  
 L. O. HUNTINGTON & CO.,  
 3613  
 Omaha, N. D.

*A notice placed in the local  
 newspaper announcing the new  
 Cemetery*

Inspiration for the film “The Changeling”

The movie is claimed to be from the 1968 experiences of writer/playwright Russell Hunter. He had rented a mansion (Treat Rogers Mansion) at 1739 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.

The Mansion rented for \$200.00, even at the time that was a reasonable price for this mansion. Hunter claimed that about a week after moving in he started hearing loud thumps and strange noises coming from a bedroom fireplace. He was eventually so frustrated with the sounds that he screamed “Stop It!” and the noises stopped.

The activity then changed to doors opening and closing, paintings flying off the walls and Mr. Hunter even claimed that the walls vibrated.

Mr. Hunter eventually decided to have a séance with some local psychics to see what was happening. He claims that the Psychics told him that there was the ghost of a child who was the son of the original owners of the home, and his spirit was trying to pass on a story. The claim was that when the child was born he was set to inherit \$700,000,000 on his twenty-first birthday. The child had been born sickly and was not expected to live to the age of inheritance the parents who wanted to claim the money realized that if the child did not live long enough they would not get any of the money. They decided to adopt a child that was similar to the sickly child and raise him as a replacement “changeling” so he could inherit the money. The sickly child was locked in a small attic room and left to die.

Mr. Hunter was told that he would be able to confirm the story by finding this hidden room. He claims that there was a hidden door leading to an attic room, when he opened the door, a red rubber ball came bouncing out and down the stairs. He also discovered several toys, a bed, and

a bathtub that a child would use. He also claimed to find a diary that contained stories of his life and how his parents had been ashamed of him from the time of his birth. It also mentioned that his favorite toy was a red rubber ball.

The Psychics eventually told Mr. Hunter that the sickly boy had died and the family had him secretly buried in a south Denver location that was now under the closet of a home. They also stated that the replacement child had graduated college and become a successful businessman.

The psychics gave Mr. Hunter the address of the home in south Denver and said that once he unearthed the body, he would find a gold medallion that would be inscribed with the child's birthdate. They told him that once he had the medallion he could go to the public and expose the truth to set the boy's spirit free.

Mr. Hunter claims that he was eventually allowed to dig for the boy and indeed, did find the medallion. Once he had the medallion, Mr. Hunter says that the walls of the mansion "shook" and that the thumps were increasingly louder. He even claimed that a glass door exploded and severed an artery in his arm, requiring medical attention.

Mr. Hunter moved from the location to a home on Kearny Street and claimed that the haunting followed him. He was so desperate that he contacted a Priest with the Epiphany Episcopal Church, who he says came out and "Exorcised" the home.

The home was demolished in 1974, and the claims are that one of the walls "exploded" and killed a construction worker.

If a story ever existed that would expect to excite paranormal activity this is surely at the top of the list.





**Bodies unearthed during construction near Cheesman Memorial**

**Some of the reported activity:**

- It has been reported that if one goes to the park on a certain moonlit night that all of the old grave outlines can be identified.
- Some people have claimed that while reclining out on the line they found it very difficult to get up, as if something was holding them down.
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**View of Cheesman Memorial**

- Claims of whispering voices throughout the park that came from unseen sources
- A spot where the sun never casts a shadow and this has been covered up by the city as to not place anything in that area.
- There was a grave worker who was looting, and claimed that he was contacted by a ghost.
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**Location at Riverside Cemetery where some of the City Cemetery bodies were moved**