

Burns Area Cemeteries

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Excerpts from a note book put together by Mildred "Mike" TOOMER of Gypsum, completed in August of 1989. She gives credit to Joe ALBERTSON, Albert SKILES, and Freda LOWE, "who were valuable sources of information." There are photographs on file at the Eagle Library.

Crown Hill Cemetery

- BAILEY, Baby
- BURROWS, Elmer George
- DeWOLF, Donald G.
- HOOPER, William

There are five graves located on Eagle County road #39(Crown Hill Cemetery), four miles north west of the Burns Post Office.

1. Elmer George BURROWS, father of Elmer BURROWS, died in Glenwood Springs about 1931. There's a funeral home marker, glass in broken and wording almost gone. The wooden fence is in good shape and pink/white crushed stone cover the grave. It is becoming overgrown with weeds and sage brush.

2. & 3. Joe ALBERTSON was not sure which is William HOOPER's grave. (He could not remember who is buried at the other grave. William HOOPER was the father of Charlie and Walter HOOPER and homesteaded the HOOPER Place presently (1989) owned by Bill NOTTINGHAM. The board fences are in bad shape and in need of repair. Graves are over grown with sage brush and weeds. Number 2. has a natural stone sitting up right and no visible markings. Number 3. has a natural stone sitting up right and a lower stone - presumably foot marker. Neither have any visible markings.

Number 4. grave has a flat stone inscribed with: Baby BAILEY 1896 - 1897. There is a wire fence topped with poles and wooden corner posts. There is at the front of the head stone a conch shell (seems to be made of cement/marble?). The grave is over grown with sage brush and weeds.

Number 5 grave has a head stone with a lamb at the top and is inscribed: Donald G. DeWOLF Jan 7, 1914 - May 28, 1917 "Tis a little grave but oh have a care, for world wide hopes are buried there." There is an iron fence around the grave. Sage brush and weeds cover the site, but someone visits the grave every year of so, as evidenced by a small bunch of slightly faded silk columbine. Joe ALBERTSON said he was about 12 years old when the DeWOLF baby drowned in Catamount Creek. He remembers coming across the Derby Canyon to the funeral and was a pall bearer or whatever they were called at the time.

The following letter is included in its entirety

Dear Mrs. BENTON, Enclosed you will find a brief sketch of the founding of Crown Hill Cemetery. I wanted you to know how we lived without a place for our dead, what we did without telephones how we built our own coffins and how, at least one man could live among us and never really be known, and how a child grew to womanhood in those surroundings. There are other ways of telling the simple story but I thought this one quite effective. Please let me know if you want it written in a different way. Very Truly Yours, Mabel A. POAGE

When I was a small girl I lived there where now you live. In fact I was born at Red Cliff because they had no doctor in Burns and my mother was only eighteen. I was a week old when I came home barely in time to miss the first snow.

My father was John F. MOSES of the U Bar U Ranch. He owned a third of the cattle on the ranch and managed it. My mother was Inez McMILLAN. Her father had a ranch near the EDGE and BAILEY places.

As I grew older my life was the cattle and the horses. I rode at the age of four and I spent long hours thinking of names for all the cattle I might see. I did not care for people, in fact I crawled under the bed when anyone came to the ranch to see the folks.

Three men came to the ranch one day and later I heard mother and dad talking about a cemetery. Now what on earth was that, I wondered. Later more men came and I asked mother what it was all about. She said they wanted to get some land for a cemetery and thought it might be taken from some rough land at the back of the ranch. There was so much land out there and no water for it so it could not be used.

And then the really strange thing happened. A man and a woman came followed by three other women. They had been crying and they seemed very careful of a sort of polished box they carried. Later mother told me they had lost their baby and had to have a place to bury her. They wanted to start a small cemetery just outside our back gate. I was so confused I could hardly think. Mother had some explaining to do as to why they must bury a baby that got lost.

Later I somehow knew the cemetery was started. Not often but some times we would see a small group of people going through the yard and we knew where they were going. I don't know how, we just knew.

It was some years later when I learned the real truth of that cemetery. We had such a good man working for us. He even was elected Captain of the roundup and other ranchers really listened to him. His name was John MOROHAN but everyone just called

him Johnny. He had only one failing, he would get drunk and some times he was not able to work for several days or a week.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe CROCKET from across the river, came for a visit and decided to stay all night. Dad did not go to the bunkhouse to see if all was well. He said Johnny would keep thing in order.

Very early the next morning, when mother was the only one up, a tap came on the door and a new man stood there. He did not know us yet so he said, "John's dead," and went back to the bunkhouse. Mother ran to the bed room and called dad and he got out of bed and hurried to the bunkhouse. Yes, it was true. Our pleasant, laughing foreman was dead. He had been drinking and smothered himself.

It was a dreadful day. Very early pounding began and we knew the men were making a coffin. Dad was trying to find Johnny's relatives but no one seemed to know who they were or where they lived. Since there were no telephones men rode around the valley and told them the news.

All that day and most of the night dad walked the floor or the yard but no one ever came to claim Johnny's body and so the ranchers decided to lay him away in or cemetery.

I begged mother to take me out to see him but she was horrified at the very idea. She said to remember him as he always was around the ranch not in a home made coffin.

FARGO GULCH

Two graves located about 1/2 of a mile from Burns Post Office on County road #39, up Fargo Gulch (up the left side of #39).

One grave is FARGO. He broke both legs crossing the gulch sitting on just the running gears - no bed or box on the wagon. The reach broke and took him down.

Albert SKILES' grandmother stopped in to see him in the bunk house where he lay recuperating and he said to her, "Mrs. COX, my leg feels like it is crawling." She looked at it and said it was (with maggots). They say he died of gangrene.

The other is thought to be a RICHARDS or a RICHARDSON. He was killed trying to break an outlaw horse at the Newcomer Place, located at the top of Burns hill.

Both graves are marked with natural rock, on a dry hill side.

COUNTY RD #301

There used to be a wooden cross high-up in a dead tree, across the Colorado River, near the railroad track, about four miles south west on #301 down the road from the Burns Post Office.

Freda LOWE told me her husband, Dick LOWE, foreman for D. & R. G. W. R. R., was working a crew of Navaho Indians. They were replacing steel rails and stopped at this spot to eat lunch. They wanted to go swimming but he warned them not to go in the river. They got caught in a whirlpool and it lifted their bodies out of the water - up in the air. Three of the men were saved, but two drowned.

They recovered one of the bodies and Dick took it out on a hand car, the others wouldn't touch the dead body. They put a wooden cross in the tree to mark the sight. (It's fallen out of the tree or has been torn down in the last few years.) Later the other body was found on an island below the Dick SCHULTZ place. He spotted the body because of circling buzzards.

TIPPETT's GRAVE

These three pictures (photographs are in the note book) are Captain TIPPETT's grave, a captain in the Civil War. The grave is marked with two steel posts; a natural rock planted up right marks the grave also. It is located .6 of a mile up the road leading to the John BENTON house.

NEAR JOHN BENTON HOUSE

Two tenths of a mile up the road from (TIPPETT's grave) the John BENTON house, on the right - just off the road is this grave. Natural stone faces "Castle" (mountain). No one seems to know who is buried here.

DETWILLER

Across the road and up the hill from the DETWILLER Place, four miles north east of Burns on County road 301 there are two graves. They used to be surrounded by a wooden fence. (DETWILLER homesteaded by McMILLAN) One grave is "Maid of Independence" McMILLAN, Maida, born July 4, and died September, 14 months later from eating chokecherries probably pits and all. She was Joe ALBERTSON's mother's sister, Joe's aunt.

The other grave at this site is Francis MALEY, an 18 year old nephew of Joe ALBERTSON's grandmother, McMILLAN. He came to visit his aunt from back east and said he was pistol whipped and robbed on the trip, but seemed all right when they met him at Wolcott. He soon began having black out spells and died during one of them.

On the meadow above the DETWILLER house is the grave of a young surveyor. He was camped at the mouth of Catamount Creek, got a bug in his ear and it drove him crazy and finally killed him.

A post at the grave in the middle of a pile of rocks once bore the date 1874 and the name John NELSON. The first name and the letter N and L are visible today July 1989.

