



# FRIENDS *of* HISTORIC RIVERSIDE CEMETERY

## **Highlights of Riverside** **A walking (or driving) tour**

October 31st, 2009

The Friends of Historic Riverside Cemetery is a volunteer run, member supported, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting awareness and preservation of Denver's oldest cemetery.

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# About Riverside

**Historic Riverside Cemetery** is Denver's oldest operating cemetery. Founded in 1876, the burial grounds were intended to be a parklike cemetery, and a respectable resting spot to replace the blighted pioneer cemetery, Mount Prospect (now Cheesman Park).

The cemetery is 77 developed acres and the last resting place for over 67,000 people. There are markers for about half of those buried here.

The chapel, office and crematory were built in 1904; at the time, it was the only crematory between St. Louis and San Francisco. It was used until 1950.

One of the most unique treasures of Riverside Cemetery is the largest number and wide variety of zinc markers at any cemetery in the world. Also known as "**white bronze**," this type of marker was made from about 1870-1914.

The markers were cast into metallic sheets, shipped from the factory, and assembled on site by fusing the pieces together with hot zinc. When first cast, these markers were white, but over time they take on a bluish hue. They were sold in catalogs and by traveling salesmen, and were available in the most common marker styles of the era. Markers of this sort were far less expensive than their counterparts in materials such as marble or granite.

To identify a marker as zinc, first look for bluish-gray to dark gray markers. The markers will be hollow, and you will be able to see seams along each corner. Another tell-tale sign of a "zinker" are the acorn-like screws jutting out from the inscription panels. The markers could even have a "temporary" panel with a symbol or plain design, and then, when a new panel was needed, with family names or inscriptions, it could be ordered and easily replaced. The most common type are four-sided obelisks, however, at Riverside, there are a number of sculpted zinc markers with cherubs, full-sized angels, and even soldiers. These markers can be as tall as 14 feet!

Riverside was dedicated as a National Historic District in 1992. In 2001, Riverside lost its Platte River water rights. Without water, the historic landscape has suffered a staggering loss of trees and turf. The once lush turf grass is all but gone from the property, leaving only weeds and patches of native grass as groundcover.

In 2008, Riverside Cemetery was listed as one of Colorado's "Most Endangered Places" by **Colorado Preservation, Inc.**, and in October 2009 **The Cultural Landscape Foundation** recognized Riverside as a "Shaper of the American Landscape". The purpose of this award to draw "attention to endangered (or threatened) nationally significant cultural landscapes."

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Are there still people being buried at Riverside?**

Yes. Although plots are no longer being sold, people who own lots can be buried at Riverside.

### **Can I find out where my family member is buried?**

You will need to visit the office on Tuesdays or Thursdays, when the office is staffed by a volunteer member of the Fairmount Heritage Foundation. The cemetery is open from 8-5 daily.

### **What happened to the trees?**

Riverside lost its water rights in 2001, and the drought and inability to water has taken its toll on the landscape.

### **Who owns Riverside?**

Riverside has been owned by Fairmount Cemetery Company since 1900, and all operations were merged in 1920.

# Map of Riverside

**A** Seerie Monument/Riverside Office Building

**B** Barney and Julia Ford

**C** Captain Silas Soule

**D** Aunt Clara Brown

**E** Sarah (Sadie) Likens

**F** Count Henri and Katrina Murat

**G** Lester Drake Cabin

**H** Augusta Tabor

**I** Philip Zang

**J** John Long Routt



# Who are the Friends?

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# Highlights of Riverside

## A Seerie Marker/Riverside Office Building

Your tour starts at point A on the map. Take a glance to the north, at the very edge of block 19. From where you are standing you should see a large rectangular marker with the name "Seerie." **David Seerie** was a very successful building contractor, whose firm built a number of large buildings in the city, including the Capitol building, the Brown Palace and the Cheesman Dam. A number of large stone residences in the city were also built by the construction firm of Seerie and Geddes.

The Riverside Office building has a chapel and crematory inside. It was built in 1904. The architect who designed was **Frank Edbrooke**, who designed the Brown Palace, The Tabor Opera House, and the Denver Dry Goods Building.

## B Barney and Julia Ford

**Barney Ford** escaped slavery in 1848, married **Julia A. Lyoni**. Julia's sister was married to a famed Abolitionist, Henri Wagoner, and the couple worked with their in-laws to promote the causes of racial justice, such as non-segregated education, abolition and voting rights. When gold was discovered in California in 1849, the newlyweds decided to find their fortune out west. They ran a hotel in Nicaragua before coming to Denver in 1860. He owned and operated profitable businesses in Breckenridge and Denver, prompting his being called Colorado's "Black Baron." His Inter-Ocean Hotel at 16th and Blake was a western landmark by 1872. He was the first black on Denver's Social Register. The Ford's were influential in Colorado giving blacks the right to vote when it became a state in 1876.

Next, head to the northeast; as you leave block 20 enroute to Block 27, you'll pass several sections, including the Colorado Pioneers, Denver Orphans Home, and the German War Veterans sections. The large Corinthian Column marks the section, near the end of block 28.

When you get to the middle of **the military section**, Block 27, as you travel to the grave of Silas Soule, you'll see two large zinc markers with tall soldiers on them. One is facing out toward the rest of the cemetery, to guard the civilian dead, and the other is facing towards his comrades, guarding their resting places. The one facing the military markers is the marker of **George Wise**, and it was made in the likeness of his father William Wise. The marker was recently restored and rededicated.

### **C** Captain Silas Soule

During the Civil War, **Silas Soule** served as a 1st lieutenant in Kit Carson's scouts before transferring to the 1st Colorado Cavalry as a Captain of D Company under Col. John Chivington. After the Cavalry's victory at Glorieta Pass, Soule became adjutant at Chivington's Denver headquarters. In 1864, he became Major Edward Wynkoop's second in command at Fort Lyon. In November 1864, Soule protested Chivington's decision to attack peaceful Arapaho and Cheyenne camped at Sand Creek. Soule and his men went with Chivington to Sand Creek, but didn't participate in the massacre. Soule later testified before a board of examination about the massacre. After becoming Denver's provost marshal, he married Hersa Coberly on April 1, 1865. An assassin killed him 3 weeks later.

### **D** Aunt Clara Brown

Born a slave in Virginia, **Clara Brown** was freed when her second owner died in Kentucky. A Kentucky law made freed slaves leave the state within one year, so Clara went to St. Louis and then on to Leavenworth, Kansas. The first black woman to cross the plains, she arrived in Denver in 1859. Through her laundry business and grubstaking miners, she acquired property worth \$10,000. Clara was proud to be the first woman to become a member of the prestigious and exclusive Colorado Society of Pioneers. To be a member of the Society of Pioneers, the person had to have come to Colorado before January 1, 1861 and play a noteworthy role in Colorado's growth.

### **E** Sarah (Sadie) Likens

**Sarah (Sadie) Likens** lost her husband, two brothers, and four nephews in the Civil War. She became a nurse during the Battle of Shiloh, then traveled from battlefield to battlefield nursing the wounded. After the war, Sadie remarried and had four children. She later came to Denver and was active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which led to her appointment as Denver's first police matron from 1888-1895. It is believed she was the second matron in the nation, with the first installed in Chicago. Besides doing charity work on behalf of women and children, Sadie supported veterans organizations. After her death at the age of 80, Denver area veterans erected a fountain in her honor on the corner of East Colfax and Broadway in the Civic Center.

The large white crucifix to the north of Sadie Likens' grave marks what is known as the "Catholic" section, even though there are no formal designations for any religious, fraternal, or ethnic sections in the cemetery.

### **F** Count Henri and Katrina Murat

Count **Henri Murat**, born in Hanover, Germany, claimed to be the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte's King of Naples. Henri, a barber, and his wife, **Katrina**, arrived in Denver in 1858. During the first winter in Denver, Henri and David Smoke built the El Dorado Hotel, a log structure, which opened for business in February 1859. Katrina prepared and served home cooked meals for their patrons. Of the first four white women in Denver at the beginning of 1859, she was the only one who remained. Katrina used fabric from her clothing to make the first flag to fly over Auraria and Denver in 1859.

Looking north you'll notice a tall statue of a gentleman holding his hat at his side. The large marker marks the resting spot for **Col. James Archer**, the man who brought water and gas lights to the city of Denver. He died in 1882, at the age of 58.

## **G** Lester Drake Cabin

Notice the unusual marker for **Lester Drake**, (created by the **M. Rauh Marble Works**) which is a replica of his cabin in Black Hawk, where he mined for gold. The marker is a solid block of limestone and stands about 6' tall at its highest point. Lester Drake arrived in Denver in 1860 and went on to Black Hawk where he became a gold miner. In 1879, he purchased 550 feet of patented ground on Williams Lode. Over the next two years, he mined \$42,000 worth of gold.

## **H** Augusta Tabor

When **Horace Tabor** came to Colorado in June 1859, his wife, **Augusta**, and their infant son, Maxcy, came with him. While Horace prospected in Central City, Augusta earned money selling homemade bread and pies and feeding the miners. The Tabors left Central City and traveled to California Gulch, near Leadville, where they lived for a time before living in Oro City, Buckskin Joe, and finally Leadville. Augusta planted gardens, fed miners, weighed their gold dust, was postmistress, ran a general store, and nursed sick and injured miners. In 1878 Horace grubstaked two miners, who discovered the Little Pittsburgh Mine, making the Tabor's wealthy. They moved to Denver after Horace was elected Lieutenant Governor. Horace sold his share of the Little Pittsburgh and purchased the Matchless Mine, which made him a millionaire. Horace enjoyed spending money having a good time. when Augusta criticized his spending, he moved to the Windsor Hotel. He later met divorcee Elizabeth McCourt Doe, known as "Baby Doe," and asked Augusta for a divorce. At first she refused to divorce Horace, but later did so under protest, stating she still loved him. In 1892, Augusta went to Pasadena, California for her health. She died there at the age of 62, leaving \$1.5 million to Maxcy and her siblings.

## **I** Philip Zang

Born in Bavaria, Germany, **Philip Zang** came to Denver in 1869. He worked as superintendent at John Good's Rocky Mountain Brewery from 1869-1871. He bought the brewery from Good in 1871 and renamed it the Zang Brewery. After enlarging the brewery, Zang produced 150,000 barrels of beer per year, making it the largest brewery between St. Louis and San Francisco. His competitors were Adolph Coors Company and the Tivoli-Union. An English syndicate purchased the brewery in 1889 and change the name to Philip Zang Brewing Company. They hired Adolph Zang, Philip's son, to manage the brewery for them.

## **J** John Long Routt

**Captain John Routt's** abilities as an officer were noticed by General Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War's Vicksburg campaign. Routt served as the second assistant postmaster general after the War, before President Grant appointed him Colorado Territory's last governor from 1875-1876. he was elected Colorado's first state governor from 1876-1879, and was re-elected from 1891-1893. He also served as Denver's Mayor from 1883-1885. Routt County is named for him.

The **Friends of Historic Riverside Cemetery** would like to express our deep gratitude to **Cliff Dougal** for providing the biographical information included within this guide, and to **Kate Barnes** for developing the tour narrative and map.