

DOUGLAS PARK CEMETERY

A WALKING TOUR



WELCOME

DOUGLAS PARK CEMETERY is a historical treasure trove awaiting your discovery. As you follow the tour through the stately wooded grounds, you will soon find yourself silently communing with that dazzling variety of characters who built the city of Douglas, and *made* the Old West.

Time required: From 1 to 2 hours.

Directions: Start at the main entrance at Ash and Ninth Streets, in Douglas.

Route: See Tour Map at the center of this guide.

Hours: Open 7 a.m. to dusk, every day of the week.

Parking: On the street, or on roadways in the Cemetery.

Rest room: Available in the Maintenance Building, near the main entrance.

(Sorry, there are no pets allowed on the grounds.)

The Douglas Park Cemetery was established in 1902, to replace the original "Pioneer Cemetery" north of the city, which was considered too remote and unattractive for the young and growing city of Douglas. The new grounds consisted of a rectangular ten acre parcel, laid out along a low ridge system at the east edge of the city. Expanded three times since its inception, as of the year 2000, about 5,200 interments had occurred, with the cemetery comprising a total of 40 acres. A network of gravel roads affords easy access to every part of the grounds. A variety of deciduous and coniferous trees are present throughout, often in dense concentrations. Antelope, deer, rabbits, squirrels, turkeys, owls, and buzzards are all frequent visitors to the grounds.

Burial plots are typically arranged in rectangular clusters of 30 graves each. In addition, full-circle and quarter-circle areas throughout the grounds serve as family (or else fraternal society) plots. A **Veterans** section is located along the northwest edge of the cemetery and, directly adjacent to that, an area for **Grand Army of the Republic** veterans (that is, soldiers of the Civil War Union Army); several of the burials in these sections are "transplants" from the old Pioneer Cemetery. **Babyland**, reserved for burials of infants less than one year old, is located in the southeast portion of the grounds; many of the tombstones in this section have been funded by donations, and all of the lots are provided at a nominal fee. (The Veteran's and Grand Army sections are situated along the first half of the tour route, while Babyland is at the end; for exact locations, see the Tour Map.)

Tombstones often reflect the character and interests of the deceased, through words, images, or a combination of the two. At Douglas Park, tombstone images run the gamut. Besides the rather common crosses, Bibles, angels, and stylized flowers and foliage, also on display are: a pickup truck, a Model "T" car, a Ford Mustang car, an airplane, sailboats, a dirt bike (with rider), and a motorcycle (sans rider). In addition, you will see saddled horses (usually but not always riderless), cowboy hats, boots, lassos, wagon wheels, animal traps, branding symbols, and an Indian teepee. Watch for an elephant (representing the Republican political party; but no donkeys are in

evidence), at least one cat, a birdhouse with birds, several deer and other wild animals, and many domestic farm animals. There are several fishing poles, and some armed hunters. Log cabins, landscapes, farms and ranches are common; there is an oil rig or two, and some windmills. And finally: a padlock and ring of keys (– this for a former locksmith); a microscope; an artist's palette-and-brush; a palm tree; an ink well (with quill pen); a rendering of Leonardo's *Last Supper*; a stuffed "Teddy bear;" a bar of notated music; and a cast iron cooking stove.

The verbal inscriptions are not as varied as the visual. There is one lengthy quotation of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and there are several original epitaphs: especially notable are those of Ben and Maggie Wheelock (**8**) and George W. Pike (**15**). Others – carved in stone for eternity – include: "Thank you cowboys for the ride," and – "I'd rather be at Silver Spruce" (which is a Wyoming hunting resort).

Across the years, some unusual burials have occurred at the Douglas Park Cemetery. For example, according to the official records, an Elmer J. Phelps is buried "in the roadway." On the face of it, this seems bizarre and inexplicable – until we note that Phelps's death date, 1902, is the very year in which the Cemetery was established; the initial stages of any big project are, as everyone knows, always a little chaotic Or consider: According to the records, one burial in the 1960's consisted solely of – "a leg." Not until about a decade later was the limb joined by its original owner (who had suffered from diabetes) And then, in 1976 the body of octogenarian Lionel H. Curtis was found by firefighters in the smoldering ruins of his ranch home, with the charred remains of his dog draped protectively across his torso; best friends to the end, the two are interred in the same grave.

To conclude the preliminaries, we note without particular comment that there are certain ... occurrences ... associated with the grounds: all certainly explicable, but as yet, unexplained. For example: Why does the flag pole near the main gate glow so oddly, at a certain hour of the dusk? Then too, some observers report a point of light emanating from the tree line, at a particular time of the night – every night Giant owls have been known to fall from the trees, lifeless, without obvious cause ... but then, these are matters to ponder another time: *The Tour is about to begin* –

[*Caveat*: Cemeteries house the dead, but they are made for the living – for those who wish to remember, and to contemplate During your visit, please respect the privacy of those remembering those who rest in peace.]





WALDO BOLLN

1878 ~ 1938

Waldo Bolln is one key member of the Bolln family, an enterprising group that helped keep food and other necessities in the pantries of the earliest Douglas settlers, and of several generations of their descendants.

Born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, Waldo Bolln came to Douglas in 1901, to work with his brother, Otto, in the flourishing general merchandise store owned and operated by their uncle, George Bolln. (The elder Bolln had purchased the store at the U. S. Army's Fort Fetterman, then moved it to nearby Douglas in 1888; by the time Waldo arrived, George Bolln was renowned as one of the leading merchants in Converse County.) After the death of their uncle in 1904, the brothers continued to jointly operate the George Bolln Mercantile Company for the next ten years.

Then, in 1914, Waldo decided to try his hand at dairy farming. Traveling to Wisconsin, he purchased a dairy herd and brought it to Douglas – only to discover, upon arrival, that the entire herd was tubercular and had to be destroyed. (The Wisconsin veterinarian who had certified the herd was convicted of fraud and imprisoned.)

The following year, Waldo formed a partnership with friend Albert Peyton, and the two established the Peyton Bolln Grocery in Douglas. Bolln eventually became sole owner of the business, which he ran successfully until 1936, when he relinquished management to his son, Otto, who operated the store until 1970. The elder Bolln went on to serve as the Douglas Postmaster until the time of his death.

*The George Bolln Co. store, on
North 2nd Street, about 1898*



C. H. HOFMANN

1879 ~ 1947



The Hofmann plot is one of the more attractive in the Douglas Park Cemetery. The massive family marker is accompanied by two smaller stones – one for C. H. and the other for his wife, Effie – and the three are arranged symmetrically about the longer axis across the space, which measures 25 feet wide and 50 feet long. Located on a gentle easterly slope, the plot is framed by six towering evergreens, three at each longer side, all evenly spaced. Viewed from down slope, at the east edge of the plot, the overall effect is at once stately and serene.

Given this spacious, carefully planned composition, it may come as no surprise to know that Christian Henry Hofmann arrived in Wyoming in 1901 to manage the “undertaking department” of a Cheyenne mercantile company, after having received his professional training from Chicago’s United States School of Embalming.

Later on, in Douglas, Hofmann established an upholstery and furniture business, in addition to maintaining his own undertaking practice (thereby effectively doubling his customer base, to include the living as well as the dead). While in Douglas he also served as the Converse County Coroner for many years.

Hofmann was married to Effie Alice Hubbard in 1902.



Overview of the stately Hofmann family plot. Note the two smaller headstones in the foreground—for C. H. (l.) and wife, Effie.



GEORGE H. CROSS

1854 ~ 1946

Born in Montreal, Canada, George Cross attended three different colleges or universities and completed a four-month tour of Europe before deciding to head for the Colorado Territory, in the company of two friends familiar with the area. The three eventually established a small ranch in Colorado, and first herded their stock north into Wyoming in 1877.

Cross established his U. S. citizenship in 1883, then filed on a homestead in what was soon to become Converse County. The following year, he married his childhood sweetheart, Lea Marie LeVasseur, of Quebec, Canada. Their first two children, both daughters, died of diphtheria during a family visit to Canada in 1889. Obviously undaunted, the Crosses subsequently raised a total of nine children to adulthood.

Cross began a political career with his election as one of the first Converse County Commissioners, in 1888. He also served as a State Senator for many years.

Several of Cross's accomplishments were key steps in the early development of Douglas – including the construction of the LaBonte Hotel (in partnership with Otto Bolln [see **1**]), organization of the Converse County Bank, and establishment of a telephone company for residents of rural areas around the young city of Douglas.

*George H. Cross, probably about
1890*



JOHN MORTON

1862 ~ 1916



Born in Germany in 1862, John M. Jenne emigrated to the United States with his family in 1867. Raised in Illinois, Jenne left home at the age of 15 and lived for a time in Chicago before joining the U. S. Army at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. While serving, he saw action in Indian campaigns in Arizona and New Mexico. When he later decided to desert the Army, Jenne adopted the moniker “John Morton,” a name he legalized in 1904.

After working as a miner in Colorado for a time, Morton came to Rawlins, Wyoming in 1880, where he worked as a ranch hand. By 1890, he was in business for himself, and soon moved his new sheep ranch operation to Converse County. To his home ranch on the North Platte River (purchased from John T. Williams [7] in the early 1900's), Morton added the Boot Ranch and Sand Creek Ranch in 1912 – and a great deal more in the following years. In time, the Morton holdings were the most extensive in the state.

Morton was also active in state and local politics, serving as a State Representative and as Mayor of Douglas. At the time of his death, he was president of three enterprises: First National Bank of Douglas, the Douglas Electric Light Company, and the Douglas Mercantile Company.

After his death, the Morton empire was ably administered by his wife, Sarah McDermott Morton (5) and their eldest son, Jack.



John Morton



SARAH MORTON

1874 ~ 1952

Sarah McDermott was born in New York, and moved with her family to Wyoming, at the age of 14. She married the rancher John Morton (4) in 1894, and they raised a family of five children.

After John's death in 1916, Sarah managed the Morton ranch with her eldest son, Jack (b. 1895). They continued to acquire land—their most notable acquisition being the Fiddleback Ranch on Cheyenne River, in 1944—and to increase the size of their livestock herds. By 1930, lands managed by the Morton Land and Cattle Co. defined a swath about 200 miles long through the eastern half of the state, extending from Laramie to Gillette.

Two of Jack Morton's younger brothers, Edward and James, participated in the operation of the Morton empire—but proved susceptible to (at least) one temptation readily available in the growing city of Douglas: bootlegged whisky. After a series of "episodes," an exasperated Sarah directed the town sheriff to close down the bootleggers—and to rid the town of one Maggie Wheelock (8), who was a major supplier of liquor (—and of other temptations equally unsavory). Unfortunately for Sarah, the sheriff was stymied by Wheelock's threat to close her bank accounts, cash in her municipal bonds, and shut down her rental properties, thereby effectively bankrupting the town. One local historian remarks that this affair was probably "the only battle Sarah Morton ever lost."

Sarah Morton



LEROY MOORE

1883 ~ 1963



Leroy Moore was born at the Ogalalla Ranch in northeast Wyoming, where his father worked as a range foreman. During the tumult preceding the Johnson County War (which pitted homesteaders against established ranchers), his father was accused of rustling and forced into hiding; whereupon, he sent Leroy and the rest of the family to Texas for safekeeping. There, during his early school years, Moore revealed a scholastic bent. (Perhaps because he never completed high school, he later took to schooling himself, packing his saddlebags with scholarly books.) Eventually, the Moores reunited in Wyoming and purchased a ranch on Lightning Creek, where Leroy was raised to adulthood.

In 1909, he married Edna Irvine, with whom he had five children. (Edna died in 1918, and in 1920, Moore married Helen Slonaker, with whom he had five additional children. The couple raised all ten children to adulthood.)

After purchasing his in-laws' ranch in 1915, Moore began adding to his holdings, doubling and tripling his acreage at bargain prices during the Great Depression. Later, the purchase of the Buzzard Ranch on Sweetwater Creek almost doubled the size of his holdings. Although the Moores retired to California in the 1950's, Leroy actively supervised his ranch lands for the remainder of his life.

The Moore stone is a model of elegant, restrained design: a perfectly-scaled ornamental vase is set before a rectangular slab, in an exquisite, asymmetrical composition.



The Moore family stone: elegant simplicity



JOHN T. WILLIAMS

1859 ~ 1914

John T. Williams is a versatile and ambitious figure in Wyoming pioneer history. After working as a range foreman for a large ranch in central Wyoming, Williams established his own livestock operation in 1885. He later formed a partnership (with George Metcalf) to operate a general merchandise store at the pioneer settlement, Fetterman City.

In 1888, he became the first elected sheriff of Converse County; later, he also served as a deputy to Sheriff Josiah Hazen (9), and he was twice elected senator to the Wyoming state legislature.

Williams played several key roles in the early development of Douglas. He was instrumental in creating the Wyoming State Fair; in developing an irrigation system for local ranchers; and in the founding of the Douglas municipal power and light plant. He is also credited with supervising construction of an early Douglas landmark, the Unity Temple Building, in 1902.

In the spring of 1898, Williams received secret communiques from the U. S. War Department, which directed him to recruit Converse County volunteers for a Wyoming regiment of "horsemen and marksmen" — these to fight in what was soon to become known as the Spanish-American War. (Many of the graves in the **Veterans** section of the Cemetery are a partial testament to his success in this regard.)

Williams was married to Elizabeth Ragsdale in 1887, and the couple raised a family of three children.

John T. Williams



MAGGIE WHEELOCK

1878 ~ 1940



Born and raised in Ohio, Margaret AuFrance came to Wyoming in the late 1890's, on the arm of a man who would soon prove to be a professional paramour – to herself, and to a subsequent parade of equally naive or complicit young women. After establishing “Maggie” as a professional madam in the new city of Douglas, the man disappeared, leaving her to fend for herself. Which she did, with uncommon success.

Maggie took to recruiting and very efficiently managing a score of willing young women out to profit from the carnal appetites of the western frontier. City Hall turned a blind eye to the business – except for tax assessments, invariably levied at twice the going rate, augmented by fines generated in police raids conducted according to the city's financial necessity.

Maggie's husband, Benjamin E. Wheelock, whom she wed in 1913, was fluent in several American Indian languages and served as an interpreter for the state and federal governments.

Maggie followed her husband to the grave after a period of only seven weeks; the two are buried side-by-side, and share a common marker. (Benjamin's father, B. C. Wheelock, also resided in the area and is interred beside the couple.)



*Maggie and Benjamin Wheelock
(This photographic image is also
affixed to the couple's tombstone.)*



JOSIAH HAZEN

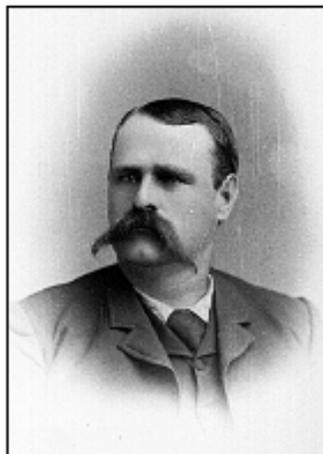
1854 ~ 1899

In June 1899, Converse County Sheriff Joe Hazen was killed in ambush near present-day Kaycee, Wyoming by a member of the notorious “Hole-In-The-Wall Gang” – either Tom Roberts or Harvey Logan (alias Harvey Currey), depending upon which press account (or wanted poster) is to be believed. (The Gang’s roster at one time also boasted several members of the arguably more notorious “Wild Bunch” – including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.)

At the time of his murder, Hazen was leading a posse in pursuit of three of the Gang who were implicated in a train robbery that had been committed a few days earlier near the city of Medicine Bow, Wyoming. Only one of the trio – Bob Lee, alias Bob Curry – was eventually apprehended, although not until the following year, in March of 1900.

Born in Illinois, Hazen worked in Wyoming as a cattleman, operated a livery stable, and had a part interest in a local copper mine, before becoming Sheriff of Converse County in 1897. He married a waitress, Nettie Burlingham, in 1890 and fathered two sons.

Sheriff Hazen was buried in the old Pioneer Cemetery north of Douglas, in one of the largest funerals the city had yet seen; mourners included Wyoming Governor J. DeForest Richards. Hazen’s remains were moved to their present location in the Douglas Park Cemetery in 1917.



Converse County Sheriff Joe Hazen

L. C. BISHOP

1885 ~ 1961



Loren Clark Bishop served for 18 years as the State Engineer of Wyoming. Lauded for his administrative and engineering prowess, he was originally appointed “by popular demand” – as expressed in letters of endorsement sent to the governor from hundreds of water users across the state.

As a boy, Bishop left school in the eighth grade to help support his family, working as a ranch hand.

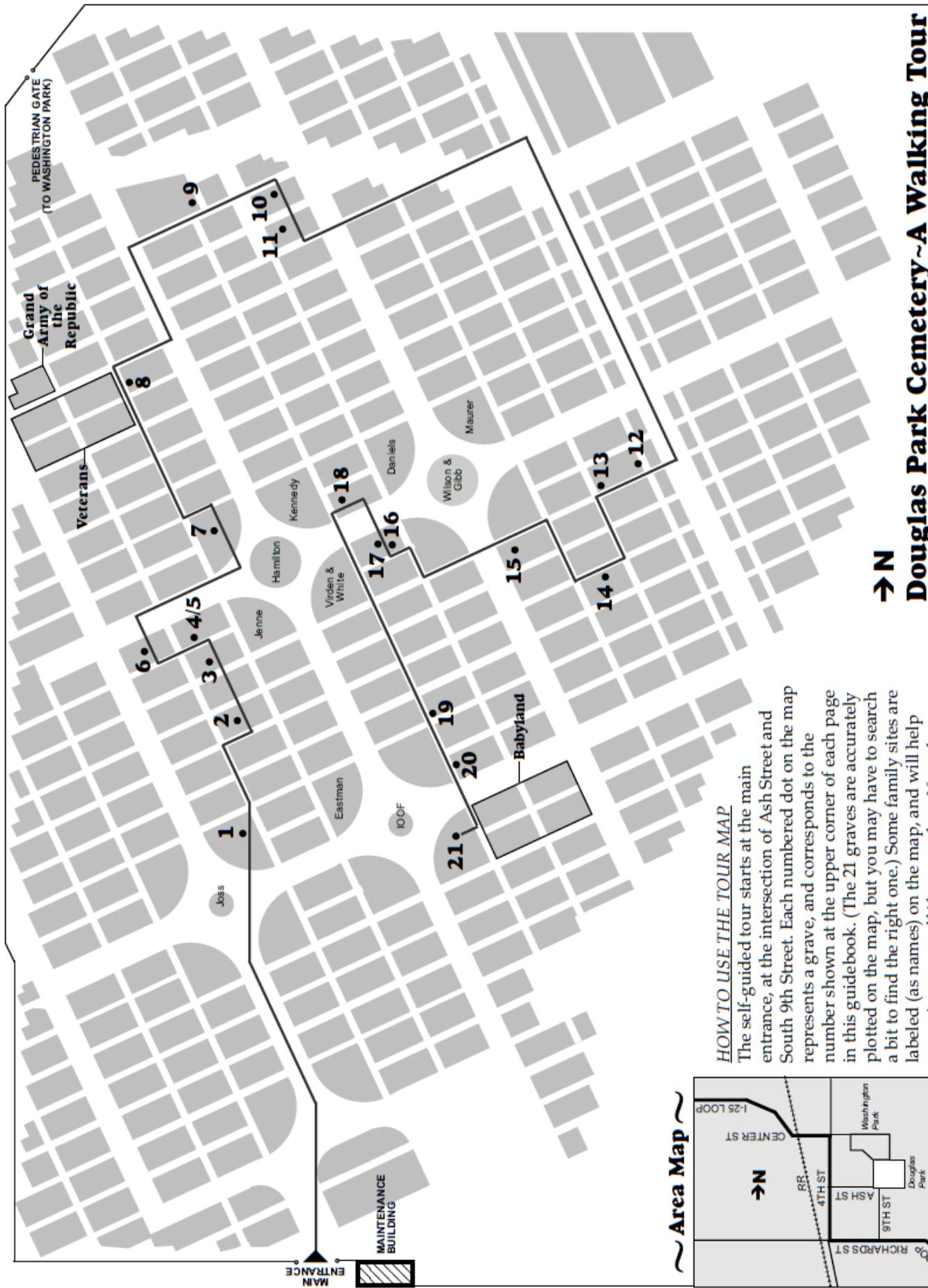
At the age of 20, he purchased a restaurant from L. E. Falkenberg (**16**), and ran it successfully for several months. But after contracting typhoid fever, he sold the property, accepting an unsecured note as payment. The new owner promptly re-sold the business, and skipped town – taking, for good measure, Bishop’s stash of money, his 45 Colt revolver, and his best suit of clothing.

Soon thereafter, in 1906, Bishop entered the surveying profession, working with a party on the LaPrele Irrigation System. In 1919, he was appointed managing engineer by the Douglas Reservoirs Company, with whom he went on to enjoy a lengthy tenure. When, in 1938, a new governor (Leslie Miller) assumed office, the noted campaign of endorsements resulted in the governor’s appointment of L. C. Bishop as the new State Engineer.

In 1911, Bishop married Sadie Almeda Greenwood, with whom he raised a family of four. He was also a U. S. Army veteran, serving for a total of 14 years.



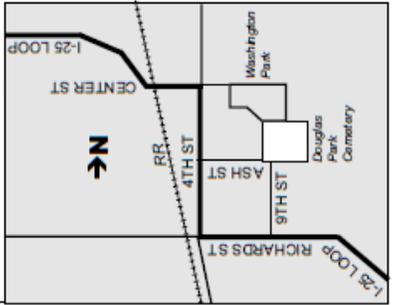
L. C. Bishop—State Engineer of Wyoming, 1938-1956



Douglas Park Cemetery ~ A Walking Tour



Area Map



HOW TO USE THE TOUR MAP

The self-guided tour starts at the main entrance, at the intersection of Ash Street and South 9th Street. Each numbered dot on the map represents a grave, and corresponds to the number shown at the upper corner of each page in this guidebook. (The 21 graves are accurately plotted on the map, but you may have to search a bit to find the right one.) Some family sites are labeled (as names) on the map, and will help you orient yourself if you get lost. Note that, on this map, North is to the right.



FREDERICK H. HARVEY

1858 ~ 1920

Frederick H. Harvey was a leading, even brilliant, figure on the early Wyoming bar. Born in Iowa, Harvey graduated from Iowa State University in 1884, then earned a graduate law degree from Columbia Law School, New York.

He came to Douglas in the year of its official founding, 1886—and, two years later, became the first Converse County Attorney. For several years, he was also retained as a defense attorney by the inveterate horse thief George W. Pike (15).

In the Johnson County War of 1892, which saw established cattle ranchers pitted against homesteaders and opportunistic livestock rustlers, Harvey reportedly functioned as a “hired gun” of the cattlemen, although his “ammunition” in this capacity consisted strictly in the form of legal services and strategic advice.

Elected as the second mayor of Douglas in 1900, Harvey proved an able and popular administrator, being re-elected to successive terms without opposition, and serving for a total of 8 years. During his tenure, he was responsible for the widespread planting of trees throughout the young city of Douglas, entrusting their ongoing cultivation to the ladies of the town.

Following his tenure as mayor, he served as District Court Commissioner until the year of his death. A life-long bachelor, Harvey left no descendants of record.

*Frederick H. Harvey—lawyer,
politician, tree planter*



JOHN D. O'BRIEN



1838 ~ 1915

Amongst the very earliest Wyoming pioneers, John D. O'Brien was born in Ireland, the youngest of nine children. He came with his fatherless family to America in 1847, to reside in New York.

In 1852, at the age of 14, O'Brien enlisted as a musician in the U. S. Army, serving in conflicts with southern American Indian tribes. After a brief respite from the service, he joined the Union Army during the Civil War.

Coming west with the Army in 1867, O'Brien assisted with the building of Fort Fetterman, Wyoming, an outpost on the edge of the western frontier. After serving in various exploratory expeditions, he was discharged in 1877 and settled on a ranch just west of present-day Douglas.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, O'Brien re-enlisted yet again, serving in the Philippines as a commissioned captain in the First Wyoming Infantry, where he was wounded in action.

O'Brien married the Irish-born Anastatia Shea, with whom he fathered a total of 15 children. Their eldest daughter, Margaret, was the first pioneer child born at Fort Fetterman, in 1867.

O'Brien was proud of his status as an "old timer." In a January 26, 1887 letter to Bill Barlow (**18**), editor of the local paper, O'Brien stated: "I lay claim to being the oldest 'residenter' in and around Fetterman or Douglas. I came here in June, 1867, when Fetterman was not known ..."



"Old Timer" John D. O'Brien



MICHEAL HENRY

1840 ~ 1924

Micheal Henry was founder of the renowned "88" Ranch, one of the most ambitious Wyoming ranching operations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Born in Ireland, Henry graduated from a military academy in New York state, at the age of 15. Coming to Wyoming in 1855, he served as a bugler for U. S. Army troops stationed on the western frontier.

Later, during the Civil War, he fought in the Union Army at Gettysburg and Vicksburg; following the war, he returned to the western borders of the country to serve in Army patrols along the emigrant trails.

After being discharged in 1877, Henry built a log cabin in Wyoming on a parcel of land north of the North Platte River; here he established a blacksmith shop to service a local stage station, while his wife, Catherine (with whom he raised six children), served as a cook, nurse, and innkeeper.

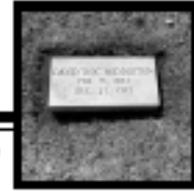
Soon Henry began acquiring and breeding horses, eventually growing his herd to more than 3,000 head. Acquiring an international reputation, Henry's "88" Ranch at one time supplied horses to the governments of both Holland and the United States.



*U. S. Army Bugler Micheal Henry
in 1855, age 15*

“Doc” MIDDLETON

1851 ~ 1913



James M. Riley, alias David “Doc” Middleton—one alias amongst a dozen more, but the one that has stuck—was born in Mississippi, spent much of his life in Texas and Nebraska, and did not come to Douglas until 1913, at the age of 62. Regarded as one of the last of the “men of the Old West,” he had already appeared in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and was one of the annual attractions at the city of Cheyenne’s Frontier Show. In 1893, he was the favorite in a 1,000 mile horse race, which began in far western Nebraska and ended at the Chicago World’s Fair. Horse troubles, however, forced him out somewhere in the middle of Iowa, and he had to settle for a \$75 consolation prize.

Middleton has been called “the luckiest outlaw,” since, despite being implicated in numerous murders, thefts, and cattle rustlings, he served time for only a single murder conviction—until his Douglas debut. Upon his arrival, Middleton opened a saloon in Orin, a nearby village, but was soon convicted of selling alcohol illegally. While imprisoned in the county jail, he contracted erysipelas (a usually benign skin disease) and was quarantined in the city’s “pest house,” a three-room bungalow located next to the new Douglas Park Cemetery. He died of pneumonia while an inmate of the house, and was buried at county expense.

Middleton’s grave remained unmarked for more than 50 years. Not until 1976 did one of his descendants place the stone tablet that marks the site today.



Nebraska State Historical Society

Doc Middleton—here playing the good loser, visiting the finish line of the Chadron-to-Chicago horse race, 1893.



GEORGE W. PIKE

1855 ~ 1908

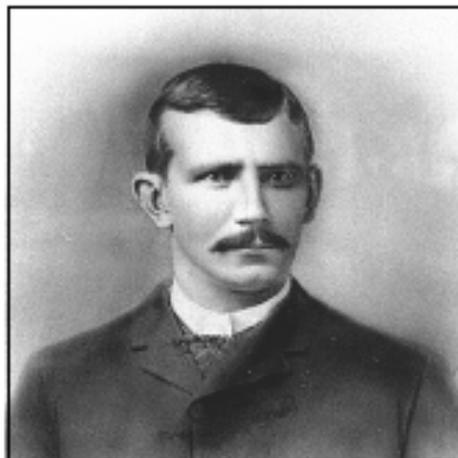
One local historian describes George Pike as “a gallant and unusually successful horse thief.” Pike came to Antelope, Wyoming—the tent town that would soon become Douglas—in 1885. He thrived first as a gambler and petty con-man, and then as a “rancher” — meaning, in Pike’s case: horse thief. In this capacity, he came to be widely regarded as the single greatest “success” in all of the Old West.

Habitually on trial, he was never convicted, thanks in no small part, perhaps, to the able counsel of his attorney, Frederick H. Harvey (11).

But Pike’s life turned when, one day, the proverbial “tables” did: Attorney Harvey, by now dismissed from Pike’s service, successfully represented a defendant against charges brought by Pike himself for the alleged theft of a horse belonging to Pike. Harvey argued that the horse in dispute had probably been stolen by Pike in the first place, thus nullifying his claim. The court bought the argument, and the case was dismissed. In the face of this embarrassment, Pike henceforth strove to become a “more or less respected” citizen of Douglas.

The epitaph inscribed on Pike’s tombstone, which calls him “the wildest one of the wayward West,” was composed shortly after Pike’s death by an anonymous writer on the staff of *The Denver Post* newspaper.

George W. Pike, looking the “more or less respected citizen”



L. E. FALKENBERG



1864 ~ 1903

Louie Falkenberg was killed in one of the region's last Indian battles, which occurred at Lightning Creek, Wyoming (about 45 miles northeast of Douglas) on October 31, 1903. A ranch hand and trapper by trade, Falkenberg had joined a sheriff's posse of five, which was pursuing a small band of South Dakota Sioux Indians suspected of illegal hunting and theft within the state of Wyoming. Apprehended on the banks of Lightning Creek, the Indians opened fire on the posse, killing Falkenberg instantly and mortally wounding the sheriff. Four Indian braves were killed in the return fire, and one squaw was seriously wounded.

Although the surviving Indians escaped from the site of the battle, nine were later captured, returned to Douglas to stand trial—and ultimately acquitted. At trial, it was concluded that the two actually guilty of the killings were themselves killed in the return gunfire. (One of these—a “Chief Eagle Feathers”—was reportedly a graduate of Pennsylvania's Carlisle College.)

The funeral for Deputy Falkenberg boasted a long procession of mourners, and drew one of the largest public gatherings in Douglas history. Funds raised from the citizens of Douglas were used for the monument that now marks his remains.



The nine Indians brought to trial in Douglas for the murder of Deputy Falkenberg. All were acquitted.



ALVAH W. AYRES

1841 ~ 1918

One of southeast Wyoming's most popular scenic attractions bears the name of the family headed by Alvah Washington Ayres: this is the Ayres Natural Bridge, located several miles west of Douglas.

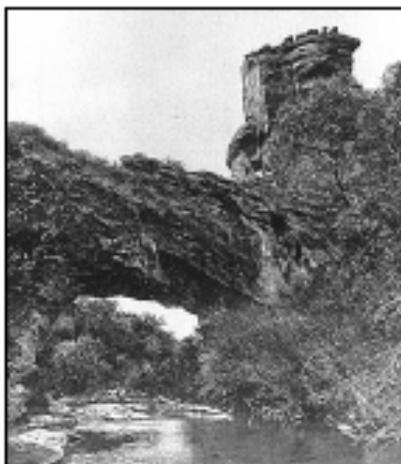
After coming west from Kansas in 1860, Ayres drove wagon teams for more than 20 years, in both Colorado and Wyoming. It was during this itinerant life that he first saw the bridge that now bears his name: a natural span of rock that stretches across the flowing waters of LaPrele Creek. In 1882, he homesteaded the scenic land around this bridge and began raising cattle and horses.

Ayres was active in state politics, serving as a Representative in 1892. He was also instrumental in organizing the Wyoming Pioneer Association, an organization devoted to researching and recording the early history of the state.

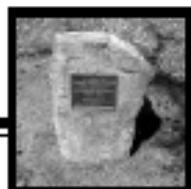
Ayres was mortally injured in 1918 on a trip to Douglas, when an automobile frightened the team of horses he was driving, and sent his wagon out of control.

In 1920, the land that is today known as Ayres Natural Bridge Park was deeded to Converse County by Ayres' adopted son, Andrew—son of Sallie O. (Clay) Button, whom Ayres had wed in 1890. Today, the Park is maintained and administered by Converse County, and is open to the public on a seasonal basis.

The natural rock bridge located on the Ayres homestead was one of the earliest tourist attractions in Wyoming.



MERRIS C. BARROW



1857 ~ 1910

Born in Pennsylvania to a minister and his wife, Merris Clark Barrow was educated for the ministry, but had other ambitions. Moving to Nebraska in the latter half of the 1870's, he learned and practiced the printing trade while leasing a small local newspaper. In 1879, after a stint with the U. S. Postal Service, he became city editor of the *Laramie Daily Times* paper, in Laramie, Wyoming.

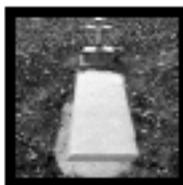
Then in 1886, while working for a Rawlins, Wyoming newspaper, Barrow heard of a new railway being laid through central Wyoming. Sensing brighter prospects, he moved his family – including wife Minnie and three children – to what he considered a promising locale along the new railway: the Army's abandoned Fort Fetterman, near present-day Douglas. Here Barrow began publishing a weekly under the pseudonymous masthead, "Bill Barlow's Budget." In 1886, the Barrows finally settled, moving themselves and their paper to the new town of Douglas.

In time, Barrow began issuing his weekly newspaper editorials in a monthly magazine, under the rubric, "Sagebrush Philosophy;" although abstruse, verbose – and today all but unreadable – the pieces achieved some national popularity for their brusque and jocular irreverence.

In Douglas, Barrow served as the first Town Clerk, and then as Mayor in 1890. He continued publishing the "Budget" up until the time of his death. Still in publication, the paper's name was changed to *The Douglas Budget* in 1914.



*"Bill Barlow"—the Sagebrush
Philosopher*



JIMMIE MITCHELL

1920 ~ 1938

In June 1938, an automobile accident caused the death of an 18-year-old boy who was traveling through Douglas with his family—a group described in the city press as “a band of Gypsies.”

The Roma—or Gypsies, as they were called (in the mistaken belief that they came from the country of Egypt)—were an ethnic group that emigrated to Europe and America from India. Because of their nomadic way of life and their traditional penchant for petty theft, they were typically regarded with suspicion amongst the locals wherever they traveled.

In Douglas, however, the unhappy accident afforded citizens “an excellent opportunity to study” the Gypsies’ “strange customs and characteristics”—according to the *Douglas Budget* reporter who covered the story. And despite the citizenry’s “rude, unsympathetic stares,” the Gypsy family apparently welcomed the attention, inviting the public to view the proceedings:

“Following the last prayers of the Priest the casket was opened full length. Cloths which bound the hands and feet were severed and another which had been tied under the chin and over the head was removed ... Clean washrag, towel and tooth brush and some money were laid beside the youth for use ‘on his way up.’” The funeral then concluded with “a sumptuous feast and songfest.”

The *Budget* reporter concludes with the acid observation that the family “left more money in Douglas than they took away—something that rarely happens to a Gypsy band.”

Mitchell’s grave is somewhat unusual for the Douglas Park Cemetery, in that the top of the concrete coffin enclosure remains visible at ground level, by design.



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JOSEPH R. HYLTON, M.D.

1883 ~ 1946

Joseph Roy Hylton was born and raised in Kansas, and completed his pre-medical studies at the University of Nebraska, at the age of 16. He earned his M.D. degree at Bennett Medical College in Chicago, graduating in 1906.

With a professional colleague, Hylton began his medical practice in Glenrock, Wyoming (about 20 miles west of Douglas), then later came to Douglas to practice general medicine, until his retirement in 1941. Hylton's patients included employees of the local madam, Maggie Wheelock (8)—for whom, it is said, he would occasionally prescribe shots of medicinal whisky.

He married Ara Louise Davis in 1907, and they raised a family of three children.

Hylton is perhaps best known today for his acquisition of the first Triple Crown winner in history, named "Sir Barton." (Although at the time, the "Triple Crown" distinction had not yet been made, the magnitude of the achievement not yet recognized, in the horse racing world.) The champion thoroughbred lived out his retirement on the Hylton ranch, and was ultimately interred there. Later, his remains were moved to Washington Park, immediately north of the Cemetery, to rest beneath the memorial on view there today. (The Park is accessible through a pedestrian gate at the north end of the grounds; see Tour Map.)

*Memorial to Sir Barton—
located in Washington
Park, immediately north
of the Cemetery.*



The Living History of Douglas Park Cemetery

As I wander through the cemetery
I'm amazed at what I see.
Not only lots with trees and stones
But amazing history.

Here lies a respected madam
Maggie Wheelock was her name
She and her girls worked the Green House
Where South Second Street earned fame.

She was very stern in nature
But showed a tender side too
Caring for the gals that worked for her
A 60-40 split would do.

Down the road a little further
A unique stone catches my eye
It belongs to J. T. Williams
A clever sort of guy.

Tho' he never would drink whiskey
Himself, no none at all
He used it to gather votes
Out at the LaPrele Ball.

He longed to be the Sheriff
So he would slip a man a drink
Out from under his batwing chaps
Quite a politician, don't you think?

The people at the dance
They all took the bait
J. T. Williams was the first
Elected sheriff in 1898.

The next stone that I visit
Does not stand out like some
It's small and bears the inscribed name
Of the notorious "Doc Middleton."

He was a horse thief from Nebraska
Stealing thousands from the Sioux
Killed four men in self defense
Served time in prison too.

Doc Middleton went straight in time
For his bad ways had to go
He joined the famous Buffalo Bill
And rode in the Wild West Show.

As I walk a little further
Down the cemetery lane
I see a stone of sand and grout
That bears a statesman's name.

Have you heard of Josiah Hazen?
He was famous in our state
He was a very well liked sheriff
But he couldn't outsmart fate.

While chasing some train robbers
In the area of Teapot Dome
He was shot by those he hunted
So his posse brought him home.

As history tells the story
He bled too much and died
Masons came from all around
To show their mournful pride.

There are many others here
Who inspire me as well
George Pike, Maude Dawes and Mike Henry
Have hidden stories yet to tell.

So folks: Please don't let our history die
We all need to write it down
So those who will live after us
Will know the history of our town.

—Kenny & Neb Simonton

**[T]he growing good of the world is partly
dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things
are not so ill with you and me as they might
have been is half owing to the number who
lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in
unvisited tombs.**

**George Eliot
*Middlemarch, 1872***

*Photos of cemetery overviews, Pleasant Valley Schoolhouse, Sir Barton Memorial, and all tombstones,
by J. Derks. Except as noted, all other photos courtesy of the Wyoming Pioneer Memorial Museum.*

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