



## Parked in the Past

### Pioneers buried at Guffey had varied occupations, lifestyles

#### Early lives reveal history of area

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The Guffey Cemetery has been in the news lately after ground-penetrating-radar workers drove equipment over graves last summer. Before the radar work was done, a committee's cleanup of historic fences and trimming of 100-year-old trees angered, shocked and disappointed some area residents (see Flumes of Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, and Nov. 16).

The work was controversial, but one result of the project was the discovery of 15 to 20 unknown and unmarked graves of early Guffey citizens. Before the radar work was begun, 31 sites were known.

These are the stories of a few Guffey pioneers who share a final resting place in the Guffey Cemetery. Their tales reveal a hint of the people who first settled in Guffey and the surrounding areas of Black Mountain and Current Creek at the turn of the 20th century.

The cemetery is found on few maps, and a Google search won't get you there. You find it by walking down a narrow footpath

through a ponderosa pine forest and up a hill to a majestic view.

Caution: The path is on private property, and the cemetery ownership is unknown and is currently being researched by Park County authorities.

#### **Early Guffey**

It's hard to imagine when driving through Guffey today what the town was like when it was new. There were 500 people living in town and another 700 in outlying areas. Gold miners first discovered the potential in the area in 1895; later, cattle and sheep ranchers sustained the town, and farmers had success growing potatoes. There were 40 businesses within the town limits, rodeos were held on the street, and the dance hall was a popular place for families; the dance hall also doubled as town hall. Businesses included mercantile and grocery stores, the Townsend Hotel and, after cars became popular, a filling station.

According to Helen Cahill in her book, "Guffey, One Hundred Years of Memories," the post office was first

established on April 12, 1895, as Freshwater, named for the Freshwater Mining District. The name was later changed to Idaville in honor of local mine owner Ida McClavey Wagner. And on May 23, 1896, it was changed again, this time to Guffey, named for James M. Guffey of Pennsylvania.

He was among the most successful individual producers of oil and natural gas in the United States, was instrumental in forming the Gulf Refining Co., and was affiliated with Standard Oil. He was the committeeman representing Pennsylvania at the 1908 Democratic National Convention in Denver, but he was unseated at the convention because he did not support William Jennings Bryan as the presidential candidate.

According to Cahill's book, James Guffey may have had mining properties in the Freshwater district, and it is said he paid \$500 to have the town named after him. In today's dollars, that \$500 would be about \$12,000.

James Guffey gave his name to the town, but it was the people moving into the area in the late 1890s and early 1900s that established the town of Guffey. Of those buried in the Guffey Cemetery, some were successful business owners, and others were ranchers who experienced bad luck. The children who died young and the old-timers who didn't all left their mark in this southeastern corner of Park County.

### **Baby Buford Swope**

His full name may have been "Baby" Buford; that's the name on his headstone. He was a few days short of 16 months old when he died on Aug. 7, 1897, and is the youngest and probably the first person buried at Guffey. His parents were

William and Marry Swope, who were originally from Missouri.

Baby Buford had an older brother and three older sisters: William, 10, Edna, 7, Edith, 5, and Elsie, 3. The elder William Swope ran several stores in town and is listed in the Colorado Business Directory for Guffey in 1901 (general merchandise) and 1905 (dry goods, boots and shoes). In 1907 it was reported in *The Flume* that a large copper strike was discovered on land William Swope co-owned southwest of Guffey. He owned the first car in Guffey, and in 1908 was a Park County commissioner. By 1910 the family had moved to Cañon City.

### **W. T. Boutwell**

According to a Boutwell family page on [www.familytreemaker.com](http://www.familytreemaker.com), William Thurston Boutwell died while visiting a friend in a Colorado mining town. He had been living in San Francisco for 10 years before he arrived in Guffey in 1904 and was a widower for nine of those years. His first wife, Mary, died of pneumonia in 1895.

The friend Boutwell was visiting may have been Helen Curliss, who he married in Guffey at high noon on June 1, 1904, two months before his death. Curliss was a sister to Matilda Townsend, who ran the Townsend Hotel in Guffey. In its June 10, 1904, edition, *The Flume* wished the newlyweds "a long and happy life."

Boutwell is the only known Civil War soldier buried at Guffey and has the only military headstone there. He served in Company B - 13th New Hampshire Infantry from August 1862 to the war's end in 1865.

He was born Sept. 13, 1842, in New Hampshire and died on Aug. 2, 1904, in Guffey at age 61.

## **William and Matilda Townsend**

William Townsend was a hotel proprietor when the 1900 census was taken on June 15 that year. It is a safe guess that his business was the Townsend Hotel – sometimes called the Townsend House. That was the name of the hotel his wife, Matilda Townsend, ran in Guffey after her husband's death.

He was born in New York on April 6, 1836, and died in Guffey on Sept. 5, 1903, was 67 years old and has a marked grave at the Guffey Cemetery.

In her own obituary, Matilda Townsend was said to have “sterling qualities [and was] beloved by all.” She also seems to have taken a no-nonsense approach to running the hotel.

In 1908, C. B. and Merle Dell were honeymooning at the Townsend Hotel. Their friends treated the couple to “an old-fashioned charivari” (discordant mock serenade) after the wedding, as reported in *The Flume* of June 19, 1908.

“Things were progressing nicely until Mrs. Townsend opened the door and threw a pan of water on Gus Cohen, which put a stop to all further proceedings,” *The Flume* story said.

At the time, Matilda Townsend was a 68-year-old widow. Gus Cohen, 51, owned “the largest pharmacy in town,” according to advertisements of the day. In the Guffey portion of the 1910 Colorado Business Directory, Cohen's business enterprises were listed as “flour and feed, groceries, justice [of the] peace, postmaster.” But Cohen's many accomplishments didn't stop the widow Townsend from controlling the noisy crowd at her hotel.

Matilda Townsend, originally from Michigan, died on Aug. 10, 1909, at age

69 and was buried next to her husband in the Guffey Cemetery.

William Flavious “Flave” White and Charity Kate McBeth White

Flave and Kate White came to Guffey in 1896 from Macon County, Mo., where they were married in September 1890; at the time, Flave was 55 and Kate was 24. The 1900 U.S. Census showed they lived in Cotopaxi in Fremont County with their four children – John, 7, Willetta, 6, Virgil, 5 and Alfred, 2, but recollections by son Virgil as told in Cahill's book put the family in Guffey during the children's growing-up years. It is unknown but possible that after the parents died, relatives living in the area raised the children in Guffey.

There was a murder in Guffey soon after the family moved there. The town had no jail for the prisoner, so Flave White was appointed marshal and told to build a jail. He also helped build the dance hall, which doubled as the town hall. He was a farmer by trade.

According to *The Flume* of Aug. 28, 1908, Flave White died on Aug. 21, 1908, after an illness of many weeks. After a funeral at City Hall, he was buried at the Guffey Cemetery next to Kate White. She had died in 1903.

## **Joseph Carpenter**

On Jan. 29, 1906, Joseph Carpenter was riding home when his horse spooked and started running; he fell off the horse and landed on his head. The injury was severe, and Carpenter died three days later on Feb. 1. He is buried somewhere in the Guffey Cemetery.

Of French-Canadian descent, Joseph Carpenter was 45 years old in 1906 and living on the Roberts Ranch one mile outside of Guffey. He had lived there with

his two daughters, Cora, 18, and Margaret, 14, for only a few weeks before the accident happened.

He was no stranger to the Guffey area, having lived there for 10 years working as a miner. He had filed on two claims in the Freshwater Mining District. He had recently taken up ranching to settle down "to a peaceable ranch life with his two daughters," The Flume of Feb. 9, 1906, reported.

A peaceable life might not have been Carpenter's fate if he had lived. He filed for divorce in 1902 from his wife of 15 years, Margaret Carpenter. He charged her with abandonment and desertion of him and their daughters and with "adultery ... committed at various times ... with [various] different men," the court summons read.

A story in the Sept. 15, 1905, Flume indicates Joseph Carpenter had more family trouble than just a wife with outside interests. She also spent time in the Fairplay jail in 1905 for theft from a Como store.

And the oldest daughter, Cora, may have picked up some of her mother's bad habits. The Flume said Cora "was inclined to be pretty [wild] and has been leading a merry life since her arrival at Guffey." She ran away from home earlier in 1905 and walked to Cañon City, a distance of 33 miles. She told authorities she was being abused by her father because he wanted Cora to marry a man she did not love.

Joseph Carpenter's story was that Cora was dating a bartender. Her father did not approve of the bartender and told Cora to stay away from him. She later went to a dance with the man and was scolded when she returned home.

In August 1905 Joseph Carpenter's ex-wife, Margaret Carpenter, and their daughter, Cora, allegedly stole a livery rig. They rented it in Cañon City and didn't return it. The owner of the rig had the two followed from Cañon City to Guffey and on to Victor. They were apprehended in Cripple Creek, and the rig was found in a Victor barn.

That edition of The Flume said no decision had been made on "what to do with the two women," and no further mention of the incident was found.

No record was found of the three Carpenter women after the January 1906 death of Joseph Carpenter. His estate was on the delinquent tax list through at least 1907.

### **Lawrence Walters**

In 1906, Lawrence Walters was a rancher and miner, age 32, and single. His brother Goodie Walters was 40 and also single. They worked the ranch and Black Mule Mine together. The brothers were of German descent and from Missouri.

It was reported in the April 20, 1906, Flume that on the afternoon of Easter Sunday, April 15, 1906, Lawrence Walters drove the seven miles into Guffey from his ranch in the Black Mountain area to pick up a spool of barbed wire. He carried a revolver in his holster.

When Lawrence Walters stooped to pick up the fence wire and put it in his wagon, the gun slipped out of his holster, struck the wire and discharged. A bullet hit Walters in his right lung and he slowly bled to death. He died Sunday evening.

A sister, Lizzie Walters, arrived in Guffey the following Wednesday from St. Joseph, Mo., The Flume edition of April 27 said, but she was too late to see her brother before he was buried at the

Guffey Cemetery. The funeral and burial were on Tuesday, April 17.

### **Walter Ballenger**

Walter Ballenger has a headstone at the Guffey cemetery, but very little was discovered of his life. He was born in Spiceland, Ind., on Nov. 25, 1870, and died Jan. 31, 1902, at age 31. The 1900 Census listed his occupation as a harness maker. He lived in the Current Creek area of Fremont County.

Ballenger's grandparents, Henry and Rebecca Ballenger, were among the Quaker pioneers who founded Spiceland in the early 1800s. His parents, Nathan and Margaret Ballenger, were also prominent leaders in the Quaker Society of Friends in Spiceland. His father served in local politics.

Walter Ballenger had seven siblings and was from a long line of religious and political leaders. There was no record found of why he moved to Guffey.

**Images on the following page**



## Early Guffey

In this undated photo of early Guffey, one can see a row of false-fronted buildings of the business district. (Photo courtesy of the Park County Local History Archives, source: Sam & Bette Sciortino)



## Baby Buford Swope

Apparently the first and the youngest burial at the Guffey Cemetery, Baby Buford died in

August 1897 at the age of 15 months, 26 days.  
(Photo by Laura Van Dusen/The Flume)



## W.T. Boutwell

William Thurston Boutwell served as a union soldier in the Civil War. He died at age 61 in Guffey two months after his second marriage. The star in front of his headstone has the letters "G.A.R." for Great Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization for Union veterans. It was dissolved in 1956 when the last veteran died. (Photo by Laura Van Dusen/The Flume)



## Cemetery view

The site early Guffey pioneers chose for the cemetery has a view of hills dotted with ponderosa pine. (Photo by Laura Van Dusen/The Flume)



## Street rodeo

Rodeos were held in the street in the early days of Guffey. The year for this photo is unknown, but the day is July 4, sometime in the early 1900s. (Photo courtesy of the Park County Local History Archives, Source: Harry C. Epperson Estate)



## Townsend house

The Townsend Hotel, or Townsend House, was the early-1900s business of William and Matilda Townsend. In the photo, Matilda Townsend is at the far right. (Photo courtesy of the Park County Local History Archives, Source: Townsend Family)