

A Brief History of Grand Lake Cemetery

The United States government acquired the land where Grand Lake Cemetery sits today from the Spanish with the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1831. September 9, 1850 the Federal government included this parcel into Utah Territory. Utah ceded the western half of the current Colorado, including the cemetery area to Colorado Territory February 28, 1861.

The first survey of the area was done by H.E. Cox for the Colorado State Surveyor in 1882; it became the SW ¼ of Section 31, Township 4N 75W, 6th Prime Meridian. The Federal government reclaimed the property from the State of Colorado to include it in the Medicine Bow Forest Reserve, July 18, 1902.

Although there is some evidence of very early burials on the property, the first modern burial on the Cemetery site is believed to be Hibbard Miner, who died in 1884.

On October 20, 1904 the west half of Section 31 was removed from the Medicine Bow Forest Reserve into Government Land Office administered land available for homesteading. A half a section would only have allowed for two 160-acre homesteads.

By this time there had been numerous burials on the site. Nonetheless, Josephine Young filed a homestead entry on the SW ¼ of Section 31 August 28, 1905. Josephine was a prominent Grand Lake resident with an interesting family history. Her mother, Mary Jane, was the widowed daughter of John Baker, Grand County's first elected sheriff and one of the first to discover silver in the area. Mary Jane moved to Grand Lake in 1878, homesteaded 114.32 acres on the west shore of Grand Lake in 1878, and built a hotel, the Fairview House in the autumn of 1881. The Fairview property was the location of the infamous County Commissioner shooting July 4th, 1883 and was a highly regarded hotel until it was demolished in 1937. In time Mary Jane gave her son Chris Young and his wife Josephine part of her land. The couple built the Rustic Hotel on their portion about 1900. Chris operated a stage route to Georgetown and Josephine managed the Rustic. Chris died in 1905, and Josephine filed her homestead claim on the Cemetery property August 28th, 1905. She remarried H.C. Langley in 1906. Ms. (Young) Langley never completed the necessary improvements to qualify for her homestead patent, and her homestead claim reverted to from the Government Land Office to Arapaho National Forest January 28, 1913.

When Rocky Mountain National Park was created by an Act of Congress January 26, 1915, the portion of Arapaho National Forest including our Cemetery was transferred to the Park. Frank Huntington resurveyed the site October 8, 1917 and established the Cemetery as 4.2 acres. The Park's enabling and subsequent legislation conferred no explicit authority for the Cemetery's continued use and existence.

In 1944-1945 final preparation to fill Granby and Shadow Mountain reservoirs, the largest storage features of the Colorado Big Thompson Project, began. Concerned locals and the Bureau of Reclamation arranged for the transfer of 14 graves from two small cemeteries in the area to be flooded into the current Cemetery.

Implied use evolved from the date the Park was established until 1966. At this time a thirty-year series of temporary special use permits allowed for the continued operation of the Grand Lake Cemetery. As use as a cemetery is not, by nature, a temporary operation, it became a goal of both Rocky Mountain National Park and the Town of Grand Lake to reach a more permanent agreement. Work on a Permanent Permit started in anticipation of the 1996 expiration of the Special Use Permit. NPS-53 states that a Special Use Permit "...must not be granted unless the authority for allowing the action can be clearly cited..." and no authority existed for the Grand Lake Cemetery.

On April 27th, 1992 the Town Board of Trustees adopted Resolution #2-1992 agreeing to certain rules and regulations for the perpetual operation of the Grand Lake Cemetery, including the agreement not to expand the current site and to pursue the acquisition and development of a second cemetery site elsewhere within the community by December 31, 2005. Congress, by Section 813 of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, 110 Stat. 4189, P.L. 104-333 authorized the Town of Grand Lake to maintain permanently, under appropriate terms and conditions, the Grand Lake Cemetery.

To fulfill the stipulation to acquire land for a future cemetery by the end of 2005, the town acquired the Thomasson property.

The Adams-Onís Treaty

Also called the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819, the Adams-Onís Treaty was one of the critical events that defined the U.S.-Mexico border. The border between the then-Spanish lands and American territory was a source of heated international debate. In Europe, Spain was in the midst of serious internal problems and its colonies out west were on the brink of revolution.

Facing the grim fact that he must negotiate with the United States or possibly lose Florida without *any* compensation, Spanish foreign minister Onís signed a treaty with Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Similar to the Louisiana Purchase statutes, the United States agreed to pay its citizens' claims against Spain up to \$5 Million. The treaty drew a definite border between Spanish land and the Louisiana Territory.

In the provisions, the United States ceded to Spain its claims to Texas west of the Sabine River. Spain retained possession not only of Texas, but also California and the vast region of New Mexico. At the time, these two territories included all of present-day California and New Mexico along with modern Nevada, Utah, Arizona and sections of Wyoming and Colorado.

The treaty -- which was not ratified by the United States and the new republic of Mexico until 1831 -- also mandated that Spain relinquish its claims to the country of Oregon north of the 42 degrees parallel (the northern border of California). Later, in 1824, Russia would also abandon its

claim to Oregon south of 54'40,' (the southern border of Alaska.)

<http://www.pbs.org/kpbs/theborder/history/timeline/2.html>



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Adams_onis_m