

HISTORY HERE AND NOW

Help solve the mystery of Whitewater burials

Final in a series on the history of local cemeteries.

Do you know someone here?

The quaint Whitewater cemetery is like those you may have seen in old Western



CAROL ANDERSON

films — high on a hill in the desert, where the wind always blows. It is a nostalgic and comforting place. When you go through the town of Whitewater, look up to the east and you will see the many small, fenced family areas.

But, we have many graves that have not been identified. Some markers have worn off and are no longer readable, and some never existed.

Other “residents” have been

moved to Grand Junction-area cemeteries by their family where there is water, grass and perpetual care.

We have empty spaces and cannot identify those either.

One of the former residents who was moved was George Gaylord, an original settler in Whitewater who helped start the Congregational Church there in 1895. His son Lewis went on to set up a publishing company in California, while his son Edward bought the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

We also have a father and daughter who died and were buried on the same day during an early-day epidemic, their remains carried by horse and wagon to hand-dug graves.

The 50-acre Whitewater cemetery, given by land patent by President Taft, is one of the oldest cemeteries in Mesa County, the first burial being Susan Rebecca Keeler White, who died and was buried in March 1888.

Many of the town’s original settlers are laid to rest here. But

we have a problem. Over the years records have been lost, if there ever were any. We’ve worked hard to build a database of those resting here but there are many questions remaining.

Will you help? Is there someone you know buried there? Is there a family with roots in the Whitewater area that may have someone buried there? Will you ask around and let us know? Would you like to join the Whitewater Cemetery Association?

We have a spring and fall meeting, with a potluck, and also workdays as needed throughout the year. We work together to maintain the records as well as this special place. Please contact Sue Chapman, 243-1808, or Carol Anderson, 487-3827, with information.

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Carol M. Anderson came to western Colorado in 1975. She wrote “Kannah Creek: The People, Their Stories & the History” and “Whitewater: The People, Their Stories & the History.”

18_jun-2010



Clipped By:

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Fri, Sep 16, 2022