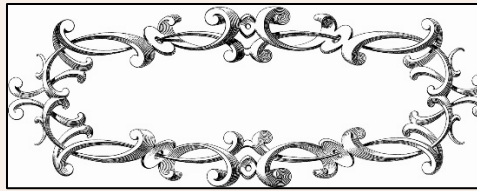


Founded in 1887, the Como Cemetery is a reflection of the former resident's life and times. In 2019, it celebrates its 132<sup>nd</sup> anniversary!



## NOTES

- ☞ **Size:** 4 ½ acres; owned and managed by Park County.
- ☞ **Number of burials:** 461; one-third of these are unknowns.
- ☞ **Historic Designation:** placed on the National Register of Historic Places on 4.10.2017.
- ☞ **Original location:** the first cemetery was located some distance behind the Como schoolhouse.
- ☞ **Governance:** one of 4 county cemeteries owned and managed by Park County via the Board of County Commissioners. The county has a total of 35 cemeteries although some are privately owned and not open to the public.



## THE COMO CEMETERY:

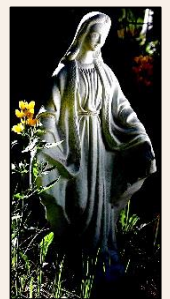
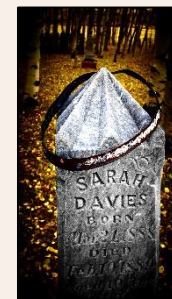
### A Stroll Through the Past

**Founded in 1887**  
**Still in use today**



County Road 33  
Como, Colorado 80432

Elevation: 9,916'



Photos by Sean Brubaker, Evoke Images

## The Como Cemetery is a delight to visit in any season!



*Before you lies the remains of the area's founding families, interesting characters, young children (whose headstones are usually adorned with a lamb) and the "unknowns," marked with a numbered iron plaque or a blank mortuary marker. Enjoy and respect the quiet as you stroll through this important burial ground. Please do not carve on any of the trees.*

**#1. SPEAS CHILDREN** Sam Speas was a popular engineer who lived in Como. His wife, Anna, was a young beauty from Boulder, CO. Sadly their three young daughters all died in 1891: Elizabeth, age 3; Nellie, age 2 and Mary, age 1. Five years later, Anna was charged with Accessory to Murder after she and another woman were in the home of a male acquaintance who shot and killed the Como town marshal. Anna was later acquitted but the shooter was sentenced to prison. She moved to Denver after divorcing Sam and died in Denver at age 28; she was repeatedly beaten by a male roommate but charges were never filed.; pneumonia and alcoholism were listed as the causes of death.

**#2. DAISY STARK** was just a young teenager when she died at age 13 years, 7 months and 21 days. The daisies carved on her headstone signify innocence, youth and hope.

**#3. WILLIAM BLANCHARD**, also an engineer on the Denver South Park & Pacific, was killed in 1889 after his train overturned outside of Buena Vista, CO. His poignant epitaph reads:

He left his wife and little ones,  
He bid them each goodbye,  
And started as he oft had done,  
Not thinking each was right.  
As engineer he watched his train,  
His duty strove to do,  
Ah little did he think that soon,  
He'd be on earth no more.

**#4. ANNE (COLEMAN) and JAMES DELANEY** were long-time "Como-ites" who had 4 children. James owned the Turf Exchange Saloon on Rowe St. Annie died in 1901 from burns she suffered in an over fire in their home. James died from heart trouble 17 years later.



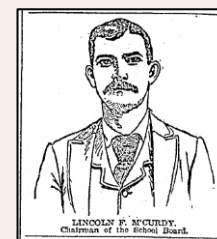
**#5. ITALIAN MINERS** In 1893, 29 coal miners were killed in the King Coal Mine #5, located several miles east of Como. The company was later absolved of all wrong-doing. Many Italian miners lived in the area and 6 are buried here. Note the cursive lettering on the beautifully carved inscription.

**#6. WEBSTER BALLINGER, JR.,** was an engineer for the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad. He was killed in 1901 when his train rolled over on Kenosha Pass, plunging down a 300' cliff. Note the shape of his monument is that of a train headlight.

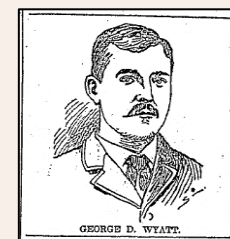


**#7. WILLIAM and LOUISE HOLTHUSEN** William Holthusen, an industrious German immigrant, established a fine ranch at the base of Boreas Pass that was a way stop for travelers. He and his wife had had six children but Louise died in childbirth in 1892, leaving William as the family's sole support. For unknown reasons, he committed suicide in 1894 in Buena Vista, CO. His children were raised by neighbors, the Volz family, who are also buried in this cemetery.

**#8. McCURDY and WYATT** (headstones across from each other) were victims of a killing rampage by Park County ranchman Benjamin Ratcliff. Angry at the school board (which the men belonged to) after hearing a rumor that some members were spreading lies about one of his children, he went to a board meeting and shot all 4 members in attendance after a confrontation. Ratcliff was later executed in prison for murder.



McCurdy



Wyatt


*Rocky Mountain News, May 11, 1895*

**#9. PAUL HEIL JR.** - A "headstone" in the truest sense, Paul Heil Jr. or "Little Paul's" marker is a carved granite likeness of him, located along the cemetery's western border. Paul lived in Como and was an affable, well-liked fellow. He died at age 48.



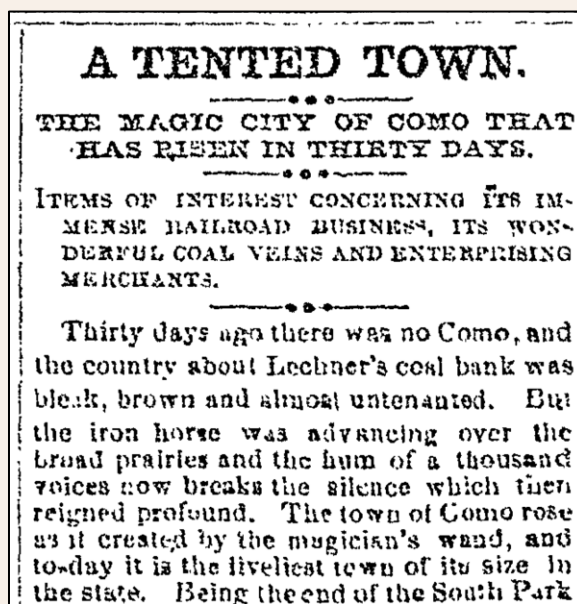
## BASIC CEMETERY ETIQUETTE




1. DO enjoy wandering, the cemetery is beautiful in all seasons.
2. DO take lots of photos!
3. Don't lean against or sit on any headstones or fences. There is a bench just beyond the front gate for your use.
4. Please don't knowingly walk on top of graves.
5. Look up! Numerous whimsical mementos hang above some of the graves, personalizing those who lie beneath.
6. There are metal trash drums in several locations for trash.
7. Don't carve the trees even though many already have been cut (arborglyphs).
8. Don't remove any items for souvenirs.
9. Please don't make any tombstone rubbings.
10. Private property surrounds the cemetery beyond its fence; please don't wander past the boundaries. 

## COMO - EARLY BEGINNINGS

"The town of Como rose as if created by the magician's wand and today it is the liveliest town of its size in the state." *Fairplay Flume, July 17, 1879*



When the Denver, South Park & Pacific narrow gauge railroad reached South Park in 1879, Como sprang up as a major supply center for the railroad. Initially the many stores and supply businesses were housed in tents; wooden stores soon followed that made the community permanent. Many of the workers were Italian, naming the locale after the scenic village of Como in Italy. Como remains a ranching center and hosted coal mining in the 1800s.

A spunky town, Como today is still a tight-knit community with a full appreciation for its railroad, ranching and mining history. 

## CEMETERY SYMBOLISM

The type of carvings on each headstone has a special meaning. You may see many of these in this cemetery.

Book - faith, scholar

Clasped hands - farewell

Columns - a noble life

Daisy - innocence, youth, hope

Dove - the Holy Spirit (for Christians)

Gate - passage into the afterlife

Hand pointed up - path to Heaven

Heart - love, mortality, courage

Ivy - eternal life, friendship

Lamb - purity and innocence

Rose - love, wisdom, beauty

Scroll - symbol of life and time



The above is courtesy of Joyce B. Lohse, Author and Colorado historian.





Gate  entrance

