

# Ramey Homestead History

## Current Ownership of the Ramey Homestead

In 2001, Boulder County purchased the 22-acre Ramey Homestead property located in north central Boulder County, west of the Town of Hygiene. The property is under an agricultural lease for livestock grazing and therefore closed to the public.

## Property History

**1861–1865:** George Washington Webster arrived on the property in April 1861 after a short stay in Central City and the Quartz Valley, just north of Central City. He purchased the 160-acre property in partnership with his friend Charles C. True, whom he met in Iowa, and the men began farming and raising livestock on the property. In 1865, True and Webster dissolved their partnership and divided the property. Webster established his eighty-acre farm on the southeast part of the property and True established his farm at the Ramey Homestead's location.

**1867–1913:** In 1867, Charles C. True married Lydia Davis and together they raised two sons and one daughter on the property. After Charles died in 1894, his son, Edwin, took over the farm. Edwin married Lizzie M. Wellman and they also raised their family on the property.

**1913–1992:** In 1913, the True family sold the property to Charles and Ellen Dawe. Charles and Ellen moved to Colorado from Michigan in 1902 with their daughters, Dorothy and Violet. Charles Dawe died in 1919, just six years after purchasing the property. Their daughter, Dorothy, married Edwin Ramey in 1923, and they moved to Texas until 1930-1931. Born in Trinity County Texas in 1885, Edwin came to Colorado as a young man to recover from tuberculosis. After they returned from Texas, Edwin and Dorothy raised their children, Ellen and Charles, on the property. The Ramey family milked cows, raised livestock, grew alfalfa and other grain crops, and sold vegetables to local canners Kuner and Libby. They also supplied vegetables and flowers to the Stanley Hotel, the Estes Park Chalet, and the Fall River Lodge in Estes Park. Edwin Ramey died in 1947 at the age of 62. His widow, Dorothy Ramey (nee Dawe), continued to live on the property until her death in 1992.

**1992–2001:** After his parents' death, Charles farmed and ranched the property until he died in 1998. He left the remaining 22 acres to his nephew, David Sevier, who sold the property to Boulder County in 2001.

## Historic Buildings and Structures

The property contains six historic buildings and structures constructed from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. The exact construction dates are not known for each of the resources, but estimates are used based upon the property's history, building materials and construction techniques. The buildings included a house with attached stone-cold storage building, barn, carriage barn, granary, chicken house, and privy. In 2015, dendrochronology tests (tree-ring analysis) revealed the log walls under the wood siding of the house were cut sometime between the late summer of 1860 and late spring of 1861.

## **Management Actions**

Over the years since its acquisition, the Parks & Open Space Department repaired and preserved all the buildings, except the privy, with the intent to provide the public with a self-guided tour of the site as part of the future St. Vrain Trail. The St. Vrain Trail is a planned regional multi-use trail connection between the towns of Lyons and Longmont.

The September 2013 flood severely damaged the property and the buildings. The flood waters inundated the property, causing a series of significant cut banks resulting in substantial erosion. The cut banks undermined a portion of the barn causing it to partially collapse. The granary completely dislodged, floated approximately 130 feet east of its original location, and was missing the entire east wall. The house, stone cold storage building, carriage barn, privy and chicken house also were flooded, but suffered less damage.

In 2016, the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department restored the granary and barn to its pre-flood condition.

## **Designation**

In a testament to the property's historic significance, even after the flood damage, the Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation determined the Ramey Homestead officially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on December 11, 2013. The Board of County Commissioners approved the local historic landmark designation on December 10, 2019.

## **The Black Walnut Tree**

One of the first nurserymen in the area, George Washington Webster made many journeys to and from California to visit relatives. He brought many trees and plants back from California, possibly including the black walnut tree that grew near the house. The tree is estimated to have been around 140 years old. In 2018, the department cut down the black walnut tree after its death which was caused by the Thousand Canker disease.

## **Bibliography**

Boulder County Parks & Open Space, George Washington Webster Homestead (Ramey Farm) local historic landmark nomination, 2019. On file at Boulder County Parks & Open Space.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space, Ramey Homestead property site summary, 2019. On file at Boulder County Parks & Open Space.