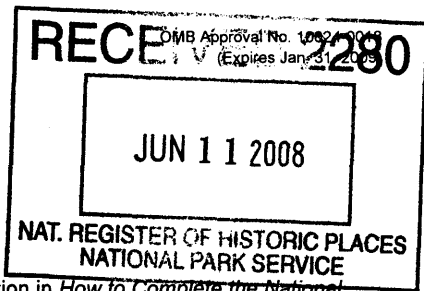


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# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Crown Hill Burial Park

other names/site number Olinger Crown Hill Cemetery Blocks 14-16 and 25-26; 5JF.4502

## 2. Location

street & number 7777 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Wheat Ridge [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Jefferson code 059 zip code 80033

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark Wolfe Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date 5/20/08  
Signature of certifying official/Title

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
  - See continuation sheet.

Edgar M. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 7-24-08

Crown Hill Burial Park  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
12	0	objects
13	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: cemetery

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other Marble

Granite

Concrete

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Landscape Architecture

Periods of Significance

1908-1949

Significant Dates

1908

1911

1914

1931

1933

1949

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown architect

Crown Hill Burial Park  
Name of Property

Jefferson County, Colorado  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1.	13	492690	4401045	(NAD27)
	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2.	13	492866	4401046	
	Zone	Easting	Northing	
3.	13	492821	4400951	
	Zone	Easting	Northing	
4.	13	492817	4400760	
	Zone	Easting	Northing	

The UTM's were derived by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation from heads-up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeanine Spellman (prepared for the owner)  
organization uli Creative, LLC date December 7, 2007  
street & number 2801 Youngfield St., Suite 141 telephone 303-971-0134  
city or town Golden state CO zip code 80401

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Service Corporation International (SCI)  
street & number 1929 Allen Parkway telephone 713-522-5141  
city or town Houston state Texas zip code 77019

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The five-block, 15-acre area for the proposed historic district encompasses some of the oldest areas within the Crown Hill Burial Park (now Crown Hill Cemetery and referred to hereafter as Crown Hill). The historic area is located in the northeast quadrant of the cemetery. Access is through the main entrance at Wadsworth Boulevard and 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Wheat Ridge. The cemetery lies in unincorporated Jefferson County. Asphalt roads surround the grassy blocks that feature flat and upright grave markers, monuments and other features. Originally a road divided blocks 25 and 26 and blocks 15 and 16. This was removed at an undisclosed point in the cemetery's history, leaving contiguous areas today. To the west and outside the nomination boundary stands the Tower of Memories, listed in the National Register on September 25, 1987.

Giant specimens of Colorado blue spruce dominate these blocks, which are also home to species such as Engelmann spruce, Norway maple, silver maple, ponderosa pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, Douglas fir, a magnificent plains cottonwood and a striking avenue planting of English elms. The horticultural diversity provides a horticultural history of the area, which was originally farmland. The many magnificent long-term specimens of trees in these blocks contribute to the sanctuary's urban forest, which was declared an arboretum in 2007. According to Panayoti Kelaidis, outreach director of Denver Botanic Gardens, Crown Hill has one of the richest displays of unique and dense horticulture specimens in Denver.

The prominent cultural features include:

- Grave marker of the first person interred at Crown Hill in 1908 (Block 25 [B25]; Photo 2)
- Spanish-American War Monument (B26; Photos 4, 5 and 6)
- Spanish-American War flagpole (B26; Photos 7 and 8)
- Spanish-American and Grand Army of the Republic military grave markers (B26)
- Knights of Pythias Monument (B26; Photo 9)
- Woodmen of the World distinctive grave markers (B25; Photos 10 and 11)
- Gold Star Mother granite ledger with insignia of a (B16; Photo 13).

Other historic burial sections include three "baby lands" (B14, 15 and 26) and the Fitzsimons Army Medical Plot (B15). The five-block area includes seven of the many faux bois trash receptacles designed and fabricated by artist Dionicio Rodriguez (Photo 3).

**Spanish-American War and Grand Army of the Republic Section**

This section in Block 26 contains standard marble military headstones for 86 Union Civil War veterans and 111 Spanish-American War veterans. Additional depressions suggest the presence of several unmemorialized burials. Included among the Spanish-American War veterans is the 1912 grave of Ernest Bjorkman, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Just south of the burial section stands a 75-foot flagpole dedicated in 1911 by members of the General Henry W. Lawton Camp No. 1 Spanish-American War Veterans. The pole is formed of riveted curved steel panels.

At the north end of the section is a tall granite pedestal supporting a bronze statue created by Ernest W. Hutting. Dedicated in 1931, the young male figure wears a typical Spanish-American War era army uniform.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 2**“Baby Lands”**

Three sections of infant burials are found in blocks 14, 15 and 26. The section in Block 26 is the oldest. Occupying land immediately west of the Spanish-American War and Grand Army of the Republic section, this baby land contains 65 memorialized graves and indications of additional burials without headstones. Most of the headstones are small and of granite or marble. The earliest marked burials occurred in 1909 and the last occurred in 1932.

A second small section of infant burials lays just southwest of the Fitzsimons Army Medical Plot at the north end of Block 15.

The largest section of infant burials fills four rows along the north end of Block 14. Headstones indicate a few interments from the 1920s with the remainder dating primarily from the 1930s. Several hundred headstones are present as well as evidence in the form of depressions of numerous unmemorialized graves.

**Fitzsimons Army Medical Plot**

Located at the north end of Block 15, this section contains 62 standard marble military markers arranged in four rows. The death dates range from 1920 to 1931. While the stone inscriptions and the early history of Fitzsimons as a World War I hospital suggests that the majority of those buried are veterans of the First World War, two makers are for Spanish-American War veterans and one appears to be a Civil War veteran.

**Resource Count**

Sites		
	Blocks 14-16 and 25-26	1
Objects		
	Headstone of first burial (1908)	1
	Spanish-American War Flagpole (1911)	1
	Knights of Pythias Monument (1914)	1
	Spanish-American War Monument (1931)	1
	Pioneers of Colorado Monument (1933)	1
	<u>Rodriguez trash receptacles (ca. 1935)</u>	<u>7</u>
Total		13

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

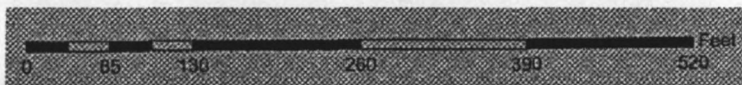
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 3


## Site Plan



**Legend**

- Area Boundary
- Area Vertices
- Memorials
- Rodriguez Collection

Projection: UTM-13  
 Datum: NAD-83  
 Data: TreeWorks  
 Imagery: USGS 2004  
 Author: Rick App  
 Updated: December 2007



**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 4**SIGNIFICANCE**

The five-block historic portion of Crown Hill Burial Park is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of *social history*. This portion contains burials representing early twentieth century burial practices that often grouped and memorialized local individuals with shared associations in major life-altering or life-ending events. For some internees, earlier participation in a major military action, such as the Civil War or the Spanish-American War, ultimately brought them to this common place. For others, the act of establishing and nourishing new communities at the base of the Colorado Rockies gave them a shared identity and sense of accomplishment, which is recognized here. For a few, a common event marked the end of life, as in the 1918 influenza pandemic as well as the early twentieth century's white plague - tuberculosis. For some, the shared life experiences came from membership in fraternal organizations, whose benefits included adjacent burial plots. Taken together, the oldest portion of Crown Hill physically conveys the story of the participants in major events in local and national importance. It also represents contemporary memorial practices involving the use of common burial plots for internees with shared life associations.

The five-block area is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of *landscape architecture*. While blocks 14-16 and 25-26 are only a portion of the urban forest that is Crown Hill Cemetery, they constitute one of its key features - the entry. The trees within these blocks serve as an architectural backdrop for the historically significant graves that occupy these blocks. They and the blocks lying further to the west also set the tone for the cemetery as a whole. The choice and placement of trees within these five blocks immediately invoked a sense of maturity and historical significance for modern visitors, reflecting the "landscape lawn plan" tradition of cemetery design originated by the work of Adolph Strauch at the historic Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>1</sup> This landscape form is historically significant as a natural extension of the open park design for large public open spaces favored by Fredrick Law Olmstead and his successors. For more than a century, it has been the standard design for burial grounds throughout the eastern United States and Crown Hill deserves recognition as an early example of this landscape style being adapted to the climate of the arid west.

The period of significance begins in 1908 with the first burial and extends to 1949. At that point the new National Cemetery at Fort Logan opened and most military families selected it for interment. Few burials occurred in the five-block area of Crown Hill after 1949.

**Origins**

Denver, the "Queen City of the Rockies," was born when thousands came west seeking their fortunes during the 1859 Colorado Gold Rush. The city quickly grew, spurred by the arrival of merchants to support the area mining camps, the expansion of the agricultural community and the arrival of the railroads. Denver experienced another population surge in the 1880s, when many afflicted with the 'white plague' - tuberculosis - flocked to Denver because it was thought the area's warm, dry, sunny climate and clean air were ideal for treatment. It is estimated that by 1900 as many as one-third of Colorado's population lived in the state due to tuberculosis. Serving the consumptive population gave rise to many of Denver's health care institutions, including the Swedish National Sanatorium for Consumptives (Swedish Medical Center), the Tent Colony of Brotherly Love/Craig Colony (Craig Hospital), National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives (National Jewish Medical and Research Center),

<sup>1</sup> William H. Tisherler. *Midwest Landscape Architecture*. University of Illinois. Champaign, IL, 2004.



**National Register of Historic Places  
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National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 5

the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society (AMC Cancer Research), and Crown Hill's neighbor, the Evangelical Lutheran Sanitarium (Lutheran Medical Center), established in 1905.

John Olinger and his wife Emma entered this dynamic environment when they moved their funeral parlor business from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Denver in 1890. Their son, George Washington Olinger, so named because he shared a birth date with President Washington, began working in the family business at age 15 and became his mother's business partner upon the death of his father in 1901. By 1908 the family had built an impressive mortuary on Denver's 16<sup>th</sup> Street, the first building in Denver constructed for this purpose. This would become the hub for the organization, which over time included mausoleums, a crematory, cemeteries, insurance and pre-need services.

George W. Olinger was a successful businessman, philanthropist, civic leader, Mason and churchman. Known for his generosity, he lived by his creed – "no one has ever been denied an Olinger service because of lack of funding." He demonstrated that commitment by offering liberal financing at Olinger locations. He took it a step further when he founded and served as the first president of the National Selected Morticians, an association of leading mortuary firms dedicated to elevating standards of funeral service and ensuring fair and reasonable pricing.

Between 1890 and 1907 the population of Denver nearly doubled, reaching almost 213,000. The population boom led to an increased need for services, including end-of-life interment, and George W. Olinger, along with Delos A. Chapell, J.A. Gosney, Hugh Alexander, Vernon J. Davis and Julius C. Gunter, formed the Crown Hill Cemetery Association with the vision of "converting land just west of Wadsworth Avenue...into one of the finest cemeteries in the vicinity of Denver."

The vision set forth by the members of the Crown Hill Cemetery Association quickly became a reality with the purchase of 180 acres of land from part of a farm owned by Colorado legislator Henry Lee. In December 1907 Crown Hill Cemetery opened.

In 1908 Olinger Crown Hill Associates purchased additional land to the west of the cemetery from the Union Pacific Railroad, planning for further expansion. This expansion never took place and ultimately became Crown Hill Park. The first interment occurred on May 12, 1908, when Augusta Garson was moved from Fairmount Cemetery.

The blocks articulated in this nomination encompass the oldest areas of Crown Hill Cemetery, and are the final resting place of war veterans, Colorado pioneers, members of fraternal organizations, those young and old who lost their lives to devastating pandemics and prevalent illnesses of the times such as tuberculosis and rheumatic fever.

**History Revealed****A Resting Place for Those Who Served**

Crown Hill has several areas dedicated to military veterans within the proposed historic district. These areas are easily identified by the traditional rounded, white marble military-issued headstones, which reflect the military design standards adopted in 1873. The standards called for a marble marker, 4 inches thick, 10 inches wide and 12 inches high above ground that included the name, rank or unit, and state of the soldier. On many stones, this information appears within a recessed shield, particular to the Spanish-American War. Following World War I, religious emblems were allowed for the first time and the Christian cross and Jewish Star of David can be seen on many markers.

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Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 6

Block 26 is an area where Union Civil War veterans who joined the postwar Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the veterans of the Spanish-American War rest adjacent to each other. This Spanish-American War section is home to a 75-foot flagpole dedicated in 1911 by members of the General Henry W. Lawton Camp No. 1 Spanish-American War Veterans as a "token of remembrance to the soldiers, sailors and marines of the Civil and Spanish-American Wars, who await the last reveille." No records have been found regarding the origin of the pole; however, oral history accounts suggest the pole's origin as the mast of a naval ship. It is also known that in the nineteenth century all flagpoles on the parade grounds of the western military posts resembled ship's mast. Today, the pole's origin remains an unsolved mystery.

Like the flagpole, the Spanish-American War monument in Block 26 pays tribute to those who served in Cuba and the Philippines in the late 1890s and early 1900s and anchors the cemetery's Spanish-American War section. Dedicated on May 30, 1931, the model for the bronze statue created by Ernest W. Hutting was Charles Blunt, whose father and uncle served in the Philippines. Blunt is depicted wearing his father's uniform and campaign hat, reflective of a typical soldier of that era. Blunt's father, Fred C. Blunt, is buried directly next to the monument.

In the 1927-28 memoirs published by the Henry W. Lawton Camp No. 1 Spanish-American War Veterans, it is noted that "The Spanish-American War, through its bloodshed, mingled Northern and Southern blood in one common bond of sacrifice for the Flag ... sons of Union soldiers fought side by side with sons of Confederates, extinguishing with their blood the fires of bygone hate." This statement is a poignant reminder of the lingering impact of the Civil War and how, ironically, another war provided an aspect of healing.

Among the 111 headstones of Spanish-American War veterans is the 1912 grave of Ernest Bjorkman, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. Born on April 25, 1881, in Malmo, Sweden, Bjorkman received his citation for actions while serving in the U.S. Navy as an ordinary seaman on the U.S.S. Leyden. He was cited for his display of heroism at the time of the wreck of the ship on January 21, 1903.

Headstones for 86 members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) mark their final resting places in Block 26 adjacent to Spanish-American War veterans. Membership in the GAR was limited to Civil War veterans of the Union Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Revenue Cutter Service. The patriotic organization established as one of its purposes the "defense of the late soldiery of the United States, morally, socially, and politically." Founded in Springfield, Illinois, early in 1866, it reached its peak membership of over 400,000 in 1890. The GAR held an annual "National Encampment" every year from 1866 to 1949. For a time it was a powerful political influence, aligning nearly always with Republican policy. The GAR organization consisted of "Departments" at the state level and "Posts" at the community level, and military-style uniforms were worn by its members. Posts existed in every state in the U.S. and several posts overseas. The organization set up a fund for the relief of needy veterans, widows and orphans. This fund paid for medical, burial and housing expenses, and for purchases of food and household goods. Loans were arranged, and sometimes the veterans found work for the needy. The GAR actively promoted soldiers' and orphans' homes. Through its efforts soldiers' homes were established in sixteen states and orphanages in seven states by 1890. The soldiers' homes later transferred to the federal government and evolved into the current United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The GAR created the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in 1881 to ensure the preservation of their own mission after Union war veterans had all died. In 1956, after the death of the last member, Albert Woolson, the GAR formally dissolved.

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 7

In Block 15 military markers also stand on plots purchased by "Fitzsimmons [sic] Hospital," according to handwritten, archived block cards located at Crown Hill. Founded by the United States Army during World War I, Fitzsimons treated service members suffering from exposure to chemical weapons as well as tuberculosis. The 62 headstones indicate burial dates between 1920 and 1931.

Denver's reputation as a prime location for the treatment of tuberculosis led local citizens to lobby the Army on behalf of Denver as the site for the new hospital. Army Hospital 21, as it was first called, was formally dedicated in the autumn of 1918 in Aurora, which at the time had a population of less than 1,000. In July 1920, the facility was formally renamed the Fitzsimons Army Hospital after Lt. William T. Fitzsimons, the first U.S. casualty in World War I. During World War II the facility treated returning soldiers and became one of the Army's premier medical training centers. The opening of the Fort Logan National Cemetery in 1949 brought to an end the hospital's use of Crown Hill as a burial site.

While symbols marking those who served in the military or made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom are prevalent, another symbol illustrates the impact of war on families. A granite ledger in Block 16 features the emblem of a "Gold Star Mother." Originally the term came into general use with the creation of the service flags used to show that a family had a son serving in the military or a son who had died in military service. General usage came to signify any mother who has lost a child in war.

A group led by Grace Darling Siebold who lost her son in France during World War I reached out to other mothers who lost sons in military service and on June 4, 1928, twenty-five mothers met in Washington D.C. to establish a national organization. American Gold Star Mothers was incorporated on January 5, 1929, and was initially composed of women who lost a son or daughter in World War I. The organization later opened membership to mothers who lost a son or daughter in World War II. Membership expanded again to embrace losses related to the Korean Conflict and today encompasses "natural mothers" whose sons and daughters served and died in line of duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or its allies. Interestingly, membership is also open to "adoptive mothers" and "stepmothers" who reared the child from the age of five whose natural mother is deceased.

**Fraternal Organization and Societies**

Fraternal organizations such as the Masons and the Knights of Pythias formed a meaningful part of the social fabric of the community, particularly from 1900 to 1950, as demonstrated by the number of markers found throughout the cemetery bearing the symbols of membership. The Knights of Pythias monument dedicated in 1914 stands sentry over plots in a section owned by the organization and is indicative of the social and charitable roles fraternal organizations such as this played in the twentieth century. Grave markers carry symbols of the societies reflecting pride in membership. Grave markers from other organizations such as Woodmen of the World are also present in Block 26. Members of the Woodmen of the World are oftentimes easily identified by grave markers that mimic a tree stump, said to symbolize equality and commonwealth. According to Douglas Keister's book *Stories in Stone*: "Woodmen are often one of the organizations best represented in cemetery's [sic], ... because until the 1920s, membership in the Woodmen of the World provided each member with a tombstone."

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 8**Colorado Pioneers**

A section marked by the Pioneers of Colorado monument, dedicated on October 12, 1933, anchors 72 gravesites in an area purchased by the Society of Colorado Pioneers and Pioneers Ladies Aid Society. William N. Byers, founder and editor of Denver's pioneer newspaper, the *Rocky Mountain News*, and five associates sowed the first seeds of what would become the Society of Colorado Pioneers when they met at a Denver hotel in August 1859 and associated as a pioneer society. These men recognized the historic nature of their community building efforts.

The pioneers met again June 23, 1866, at the Pacific House and with 29 present, elected organizational officers as well as officers for each of the existing counties in territorial Colorado. On January 16, 1872, the group decided to pattern their organization after the 1849 California Pioneer Society. At this meeting the first Society constitution and by-laws were adopted, officially naming the organization the Society of Colorado Pioneers and limiting membership to all males who had arrived in what would become Colorado prior to December 31, 1859, in what was then the Territory of Kansas. On March 10, 1876, the Society amended its constitution to admit to membership all those who arrived in Colorado during the year 1860.

The Society continued to meet as an association until July 14, 1884, when they incorporated under Colorado law. Upon admission to the Society, members signed the constitution and by-laws and paid dues of \$2.50. All female pioneers who arrived in Colorado prior to January 1, 1861, were eligible as honorary members exempt from dues, but not from responsibilities. One of the Society's constitutional obligations was to provide financial assistance for those pioneers who happened upon bad times, died without funds or friends, or needed assistance with medical bills. The responsibility for these obligations fell to the women of the Society. As the number of pioneers needing aid grew, the pioneers' wives organized as a women's auxiliary. On March 29, 1894, composed of more than 150 members, the Pioneer Ladies Aid Society incorporated with the mission to extend aid and relief to the families of pioneers, to provide proper burial for member of the families of pioneers, and to encourage the cultivation of social and fraternal relations between its members. That part of its mission most probably played a role in the creation of the Pioneers of Colorado section at Crown Hill.

In 1906 the sons of pioneers were eligible to join the Society to perpetuate membership, as by 1920 all of the 1872 charter members were deceased. Another organization formed—the Sons of Colorado—with membership restricted to all white males of good moral character who were residents of the Territory of Colorado prior to August 1876 and all white males of good moral character if born in Colorado, when they reached the age of 21.

By 1930 numbers were declining and the Sons of Colorado consolidated into the Society of Colorado Pioneers on November 14, 1930. On January 9, 1933, qualifications for membership were amended to include all white males born or residing in Colorado prior to August 1, 1876, or any of their male descendants.

The last regular meeting of the Society of Pioneers of Colorado occurred in 1943. Society president Joseph H. Block wrote, "On account of the membership being depleted by the death of practically all of those pioneer men and the failure of the sons to carry on, it was decided on February 27, 1943, to affiliate with the Pioneer Women of Colorado, an active and growing concern." On November 22, 1943, the two groups reorganized and incorporated under the laws of Colorado as The Pioneer Men and

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Crown Hill Burial Park

Jefferson County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 9

Women of Colorado. The State of Colorado officially declared the Society of Colorado Pioneers defunct on December 29, 1972.

### An Age of Deadly Disease and Pandemics

Illness took the lives of many during the early twentieth century. This was a time before vaccinations and antibiotics were widely available. Although many survived tuberculosis and other diseases of the times, such as rheumatic fever, diphtheria, pneumonia, scarlet fever, cholera, and the virulent flu of 1918, many did not. This is particularly evident in a central area of Block 14 where many who died of contagious diseases rest in gravesites. Handwritten ledgers at Crown Hill recorded the name, year of interment and cause of death of many in this section, revealing high infant mortality, particularly from the mid- to late-1930s. Sadly, this area gave rise to Crown Hill's largest "baby land," eventually containing several hundred burials. Lambs on the markers, symbolic of innocence, often appear on the gravesites of babies and children in this area. The oldest section of infant burials occurs in Block 26. Here 65 headstones and numerous unmemorialized landscape depressions remind us of the high rate of infant mortality in the not so distant past. The two earliest markers date from 1909 and the vast majority (55) range from 1909 to 1918.

### Landscaping a Vision – Recording a Horticultural Treasure

According to Panayoti Kelaidis, outreach director at Denver Botanic Gardens, Crown Hill is thought to be one of the largest, most dense collections of trees in metropolitan Denver. Crown Hill was designated an arboretum in 2007 following an extensive mapping project, which documented an inventory of 1,768 trees composed of 69 species. The magnificent and well-maintained grounds are the result of a vision created nearly a century ago. Although no records of the original landscape plan or the landscape architect can be found, a 1912 brochure published by the Crown Hill Cemetery Association provides a window for viewing the intent of its founders:

The esplanade which runs from the main entrance through the center of the grounds for three-quarters of a mile is three hundred feet in width and is a masterpiece in landscape gardening. The grouping of trees is strictly modern and shows rare skill. Instead of the old style straight rows of trees lining driveways and walks, creating dark, damp, gloomy effects, the trees in Crown hill are grouped – here will be a cluster of a dozen or fifteen trees, every one of selected type, and then an open space where lawn and flowers are given the full benefit of sunshine and there another group of trees. This artistic planting gives a landscape effect quite new to Denver's parks.

Because of the overall maturity of its urban forest, and because of several unique large specimen trees within its boundaries, Crown Hill Cemetery as a whole has been historically significant to the horticulture of the Denver Metropolitan area for many decades. Among the horticulturists known to have visited the cemetery specifically because of its trees include:

- George Kelly, Author of *Rocky Mountain Horticulture* and many other titles on regional horticulture;
- Harry Swift, close associate of George Kelly, an early proponent of locally grown plants, and owner of Western Evergreens Nursery in Golden, Colorado (now closed);
- Dr. James Feucht, Colorado State University and coauthor of *Trail of Trees a Guide to Historic Trees at Fairmount*;
- Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanic Gardens;

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- Ray Daugherty, Front Range Community College; and
- E. Allen Rollenger, landscape architect and coauthor of *Trail of Trees a Guide to Historic Trees at Fairmount*.

Additionally, catalogs from the W. W. Wilmore Nursery Company (on file at Denver Botanic Gardens) help corroborate the thought that many of the plantings in the cemetery may well have been influenced by or were the direct result of the early cemetery staff working with the W.W. Wilmore Nursery Company, one of Denver's oldest continuing businesses.

While blocks 14-16 and 25-26 form only a portion of the historically significant urban forest that is Crown Hill Cemetery, they are part of the entry and set the tone for later cemetery design and development. This landscape form is historically significant because it is a natural extension of the open park design for large public open spaces favored by Fredrick Law Olmstead and his successors. This five-block area forms an early example of this landscape style adapted to the climate of the arid West.

The nominated area is also part of the larger Denver "City Beautiful" legacy. While some may argue that it is not as densely forested or biotically diverse as similar eastern cemeteries, the 14 percent coverage of the area by tree canopies is substantial both horticulturally and in terms of demonstrating the maturity of this site. This coverage is consistent with the open parkland feel that is the goal of a landscape lawn design and is similar to the density found at other historically significant sites that include City and Washington parks and Fairmount Cemetery in Denver; Green Mountain Cemetery in Boulder; and Grand View Cemetery in Fort Collins. The diversity of mature trees within these blocks is also on par with the aforementioned sites and the plantings initiated 20 years earlier at Fairmount Cemetery in Denver.

Horticulturally, the plant palette of these blocks demonstrates both the experimental nature and evolution of Colorado's urban forests and horticultural practice. While not immediately obvious to most visitors, the extensive use of Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) in these blocks and the cemetery as a whole reflects the limited availability of plant materials in the Rocky Mountain Region in 1908. Use of the Colorado blue spruce also demonstrates that the planners were excellent horticulturists interested not only in successfully establishing a cemetery at the site, but also conscious of the fact that an urban forest on the great plains would make the cemetery a community asset in the decades to come. For those knowledgeable enough to see it, the spruce plantings hint at the fact that most of the original plantings at the cemetery were probably of local, wild collected evergreens and cottonwoods. This fact is evidenced by the Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) scattered amongst the many Colorado blue spruce within these blocks. Had the spruce been grown in eastern nurseries and shipped to Denver (as is the current practice), it is very unlikely that Engelmann spruce would be present in the cemetery. Though widespread in Colorado's forests, Engelmann spruce has never enjoyed the popularity and wide planting of Colorado blue spruce since being introduced to cultivation in the mid 1860s.

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Other examples of wild-collected origins within these blocks include mature specimens of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and the only mature plains cottonwood (*Populus sargentii*) within the cemetery. Plantings within these blocks also indicate that the cemetery was an early proving-ground for new plants. For example, two mature Schwedler maples (*Acer platanoides* 'schwedleri'), one is 53 feet tall and the other 70 feet tall, stand in blocks 16 and 24. Given the ca. 1869 introduction of the Schwedler maple to the United States (about 30 years before the founding of the cemetery), and the fact that these plants grow less than one foot per year, these and other large Schwedler maples further west within the cemetery may represent some of the earliest plantings of this Norway maple cultivar in the Rocky Mountain region and perhaps the entire arid west.<sup>2</sup> Given their size they are certainly some amongst the longest-lived plantings of this cultivar in Colorado.

Also significant is an allée or avenue planting of English elm (*Ulmus procera*) along the north border of Block 14. This particular planting arrangement is a hallmark of early City Beautiful plantings in Denver and is a reflection of the Anglo settlers' desires to recreate the tree lined avenues of New England and Victorian era Europe. The choice of this species, obviously a highly researched but experimental plant for this use, speaks to the failures horticulturists have struggled to overcome for well over a century. In fairness, it should be noted that the health of these elms is in decline; they did not prove as hardy as probably hoped for, and they will need to be replaced in the coming years. It is also important to mention that their existence has been documented in a first-ever inventory of the trees at Crown Hill Cemetery. Front Range Community College students completed this inventory and copies are held at Crown Hill and at the Denver Botanic Gardens library. The overall health of trees within these blocks is quite good and the cemetery, having recognized the importance of its urban forest, is taking appropriate measures to maintain and replace trees as they succumb to old age or the ravages of Colorado's climate. In fact, the new trees that would be replacing these elms could well be planting the seeds of tomorrow's history and will be key to maintaining the mature look and feel of the cemetery in the century to come.

**The Faux Bois Art of Dionicio Rodriguez**

Benches, trash receptacles and water fountains resembling tree stumps are found throughout the cemetery. These complement the vegetative landscaping. All are illusions created by self-described Aztec artist Dionicio Rodriguez. Created in the 1930s or early 1940s, these items are actually carved and tinted concrete created to look like wood. The art form known as "faux bois," French for false wood, came out of the school of Arts and Crafts. Although no official documentation now exists, articles found in publications by the City of Lakewood and Jefferson County reference the sculptor by name. Carlos Cortes, Rodriguez' relative, continues the faux bois family legacy today. According to Cortes, Crown Hill probably learned about his great uncle's work through the owners of Memorial Park in Memphis, Tennessee. A convention of cemetery owners held in Memphis in the 1930s included Rodriguez's work to generate more commissions. The sculptures at Crown Hill are his only known work in Colorado. Rodriguez's works in Arkansas and Tennessee are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are popular tourist attractions in San Antonio, Texas, where he is buried. Seven of his tree-stump trash receptacles mark corners throughout the proposed district.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Dirr. *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Stipes Publishing. Champaign, IL, 1998.

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The confluence of the history of those who rest within this five-block area, its grave markers and symbols, and the associated horticulture provides a perspective of events and social history that played a part in shaping metropolitan Denver. This area of the sanctuary also provides an ongoing gift - lessons for the living who take the time to learn the language. The five-block area of Crown Hill provides an important glimpse of the lifestyles, challenges, and events - the history - experienced by those who helped to shape the Denver community and the burial practices that memorialized their lives.

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Dianna Sessoms, Preston Leavitt, Rick Miller, Pete Duran, Bob Pletcher, Bill Logan and Nancy Holley. (Multiple interviews during past year by Jeanine Spellman; not tape recorded.)

Interview with Carlos Cortes, by Jeanine Spellman at Studio Cortes, San Antonio, Texas, April 23, 2007.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nomination consists of Blocks 14-16 and Blocks 25-26 of the Olinger Crown Hill Cemetery.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The five-block area most closely associated the early social history and architectural landscape development of the cemetery.

**UTM REFERENCES (cont.)**

	Zone	Easting	Northing	(NAD27)
5.	13	492791	4400747	
6.	13	492582	4400748	
7.	13	492581	4400945	
8.	13	492693	4400944	

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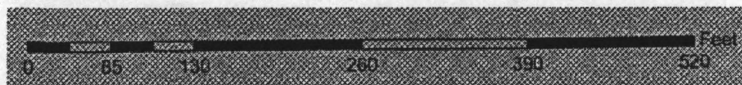
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## SITE PLAN with NOMINATION BOUNDARIES



**Legend**

- Area Boundary
- Area Vertices
- Memorials
- Rodriguez Collection

Projection: UTM-13  
 Datum: NAD-83  
 Data: TreeWorks  
 Imagery: USGS 2004  
 Author: Rick App  
 Updated: December 2007

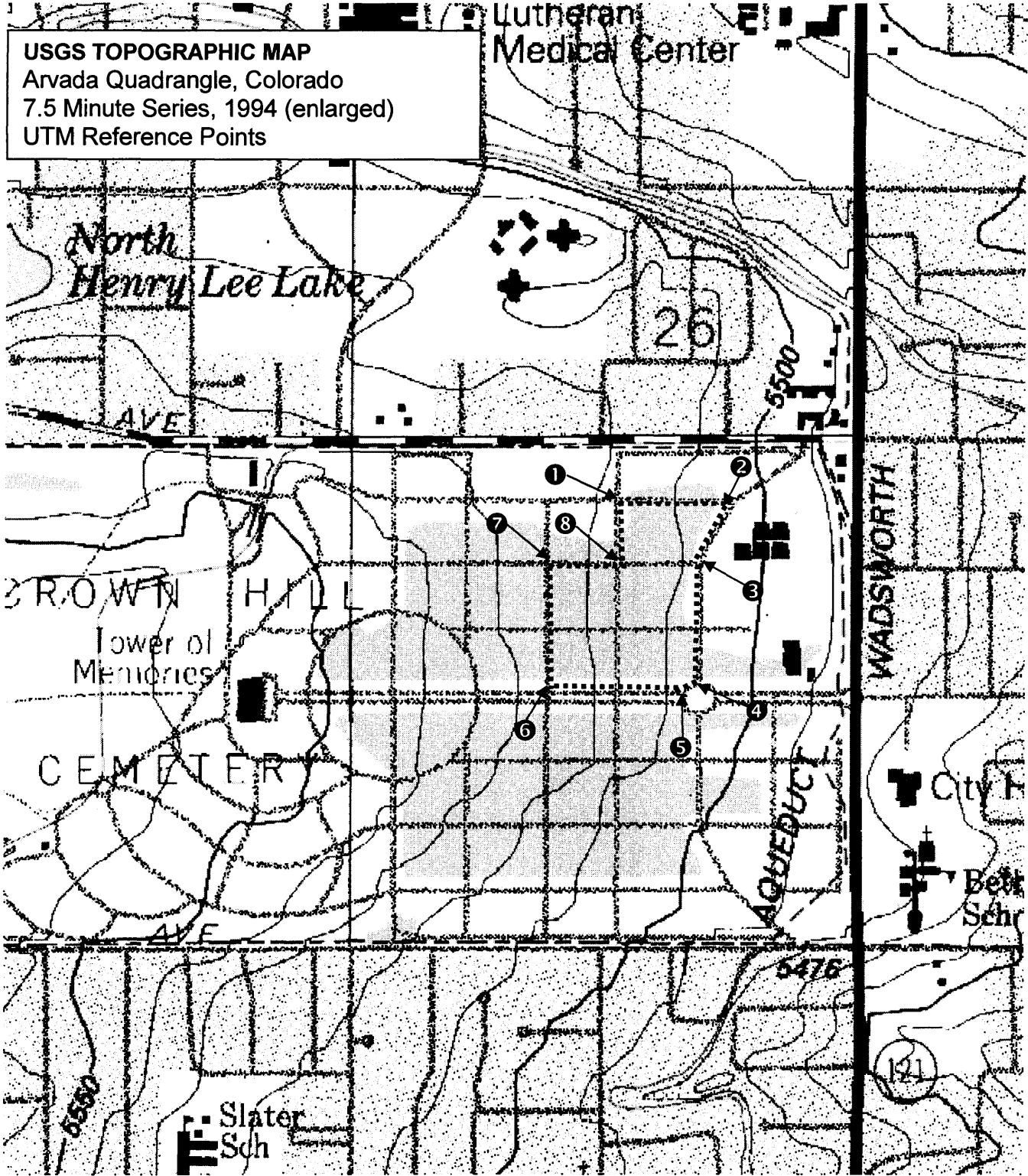
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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
 Arvada Quadrangle, Colorado  
 7.5 Minute Series, 1994 (enlarged)  
 UTM Reference Points

topozone  
 Copyright 1999-2003 Maps & a la carte, Inc.

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 km  
 0 0.09 0.18 0.27 0.36 0.45 mi

USGS Arvada (CO) Quadrangle  
 Projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD83 Datum



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Page 16**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-21, except as noted:

Photographer: Randy Malone

Date of Photographs: November 26, 2007

Negatives or digital files: Digital files at Olinger Crown Hill Mortuary and Cemetery, 7777 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Ave.,  
Wheat Ridge, CO, and National Register in Washington, DC

Photo No.	Photographic Information	Digital Files
1	Entry context to entire cemetery, view to the northwest	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill01.tif
2	Augusta Garson grave marker, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill02.tif
3	Dionicio Rodriguez receptacle, view to the west	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill03.tif
4	Spanish-American War monument, view to the north; photographer Larry Laszlo; 2006.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill04.tif
5	Spanish-American War monument, view to the south	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill05.tif
6	Spanish-American War plaque, view to the south	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill06.tif
7	Spanish-Am. War flagpole plaque, view to the north; photographer Larry Laszlo; 2006.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill07.tif
8	Spanish-American flagpole, view to the east	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill08.tif
9	Knights of Pythias monument, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill09.tif
10	Woodmen of the World marker, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill10.tif
11	Woodmen of the World marker 2, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill11.tif
12	Pioneers of Colorado Monument, view to the northeast; photographer Larry Laszlo; 2006.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill12.tif
13	Granite ledger, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill13.tif
14	Gold Star Mother grave marker, view to the north	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill14.tif
15	Baby land in Block 14, view to the southwest	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill15.tif
16	English elm avenue planting, view to the west	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill16.tif
17	Plains cottonwood, view to the north (Block 26)	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill17.tif
18	Colorado blue spruce, view to the north (Block 16)	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill18.tif
19	Fitzsimons plots, view to the east.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill19.tif
20	Colorado spruce; photographer Larry Laszlo; 2006.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill20.tif
21	Aerial view to the west; photographer Larry Laszlo; 2006.	CO_JeffersonCounty_CrownHill21.tif