

# Jefferson County Hall of Fame

## George and Sarah Church

*Jefferson County Residents from 1857 to 1921*

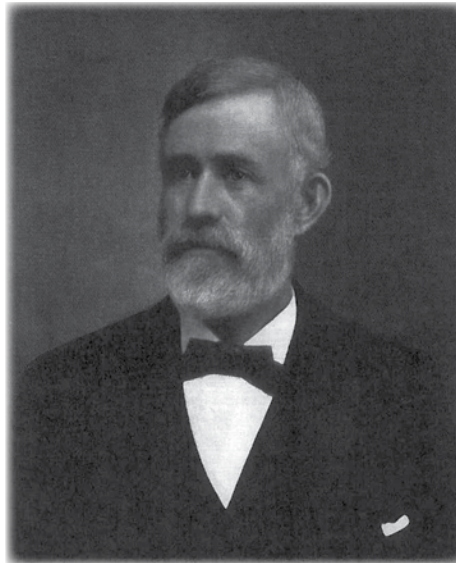
**G**eorge Henry Church was born on December 1, 1830 in Rochester, New York. He passed away in 1918. Sarah Henderson Miller Church was born on October 30, 1838 in Toulon, Illinois. She passed away in 1921. They are both interred at Crown Hill Cemetery.

In 1857 George Henry and Sarah Henderson Miller Church and family came to this area in an ox drawn wagon. The Gold Rush was their reason for coming and they purchased land near Mount Vernon.

After their house burnt down in 1863 the Churches built a 12-room house on 160 acres along Walnut Creek, in present day Westminster. It subsequently became an overnight stop on the Overland Stagecoach Route that ran from Denver stopping at Church's Crossing Stage Stop and then continuing to Boulder. The most notable guests were Ulysses S. Grant and his daughter who stayed there in 1868.

The barn and silos are still standing at the Church Ranch Farm south of Church Ranch Boulevard and east of Olde Wadsworth in Westminster. The Churches became the first to bring irrigation water from across the mountains to the Eastern Slope and Hereford cattle into the State of Colorado in 1869. George Henry brought the first ring-neck pheasants to Colorado, and one of the first to introduce dry land wheat farming techniques.

The Churches started the practice of taking cattle over Rollins Pass into Middle Park each summer. Grand County has a Church Park west of Fraser, named for this pioneer family.



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The Church Ditch under Berthoud Pass brought First and Second Creek water to be used in Jefferson County. Church Upper Lake, located on the Rocky Mountain Airport property, stored that water, and became the first irrigation storage lake in Colorado. The Lower Church Lake located at 110th and Olde Wadsworth was another part of their irrigation system.

The Churches knew the importance of water in this arid land, they endured many hardships. The fifth generations of their descendants still live and work on the basis of the enterprise they developed.

The Church Ranch is listed on the Colorado Historical Centennial Farm program which recognizes farms and ranches owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more. In 2005 the Buckman Place now owned by Charles McKay, 9600 Indiana Street, was listed on the County's Register of Landmark Properties by the Jefferson County Historical Commission.

George and Sarah Church were elected to the Jefferson County Historical Commission Hall of Fame in November 2011. 🍷