

"E. P. McGovern"

From 1858 to 1890 the land we know as Cheesman Park was the city's cemetery. It was falling into disrepair and the surrounding neighborhoods were becoming more affluent. People began to lobby for a park in place of the cemetery. In 1890 Congress authorized the city to vacate the graves.

In 1893 The City of Denver awarded a contract to undertaker E.P. McGovern to remove the remains. McGovern was to provide a new coffin for each body and transfer it to Riverside Cemetery at a cost of \$1.90 each. The undertaker soon found a way to make a little extra profit. Instead of using full-size coffins for adults, he used child-sized caskets. Hacking the bodies up, McGovern sometimes used as many as three caskets for just one body. Body parts and the torn clothing of the dead were strewn about. The scene became so gruesome the city canceled their contract with McGovern. The land was eventually turned into a park; however the remaining graves were never removed. Today, an estimated 3,000 - 5,000 graves remain under the park.

E.P. McGovern lived in Denver and continued his work as an undertaker until his death in 1925.