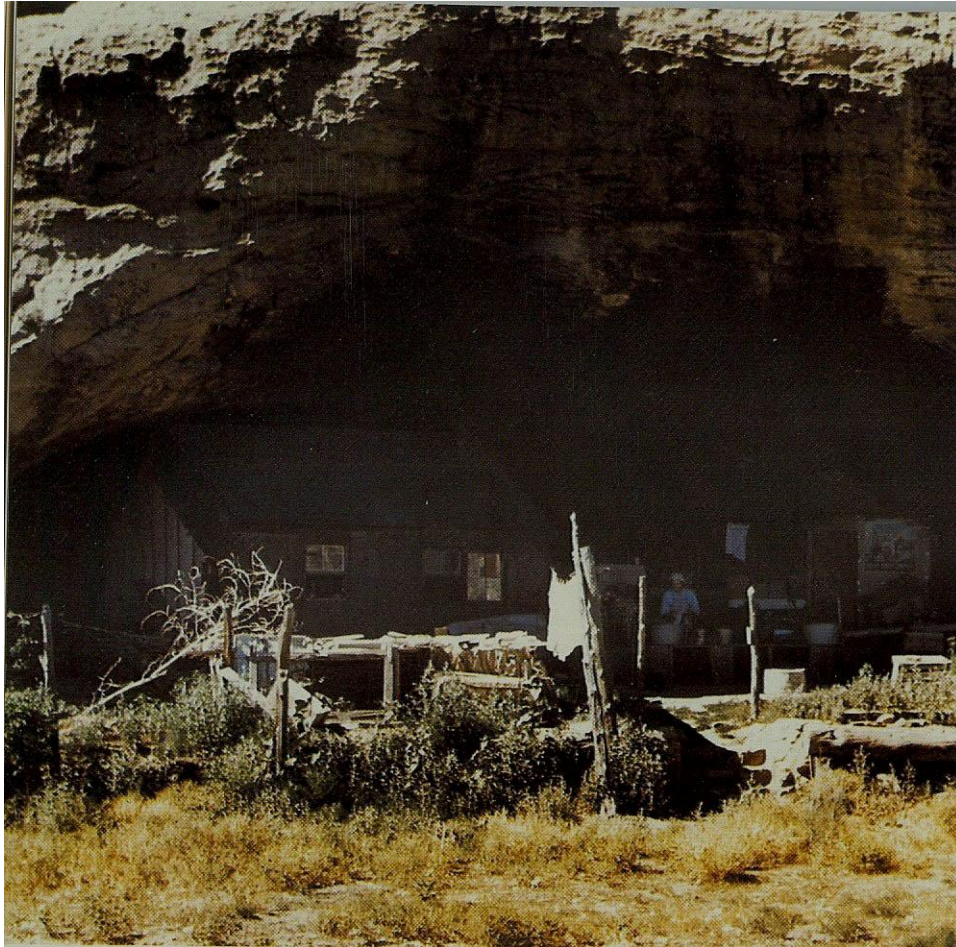


Pioneer Fashioned Home from Glade Park Cave



Laura Hazel Miller, standing between gate posts, in her cave on Glade Park. The one-room house was entirely within the cave, and smaller storehouses extended back of the house. The blackening on the roof was the result of soot. Circa 1950.
United States Geological Survey photo

By Kathy Jordan

High on Glade Park, about three miles west of the store, the cave that once housed Laura Hazel Miller is located. What little I have been able to uncover about her makes her story both heartbreaking and fascinating.

I spoke with several people who knew Mrs. Miller. One of those was Elsie King Granere. Elsie said that she and her deceased husband, Roy King, moved onto the Park in 1944. One day when they were driving to Glade Park store from their ranch several miles to the west they stopped and offered Mrs. Miller a ride. Elsie said

that Mrs. Miller, dressed in a black bonnet and skirt, was happy to get a ride as she appeared tired and out of breath.

Elsie told me that sometime after 1944 the Denver Post ran a full-page story about Mrs. Miller. Since the Kings subscribed only to the Sunday Post, she knew that the story had appeared on a Sunday.

I contacted the Denver Public Library with the limited information I had. In about three weeks I had an Email from a library volunteer with a copy of the page that ran in December 1948. It contained three pictures and information telling some of Mrs. Miller's story.

According to the Post, Mrs. Miller was born July 23, 1866, near Boone, Iowa. In 1905 she moved to Glade Park, where she homesteaded with her two sons after their father had been killed in a train wreck. She did re-marry, but her second husband and her sons were killed in an automobile accident. She moved into the cave after a flood washed away her original log-cabin ranch house.

Mrs. Miller's property was later described in an article in a United States Geological Survey report as having a middle cave that contained a small one-room structure. Another cave was used for storage, and a third large one had been fenced to shelter domestic animals. The unnamed author of the article wrote that he visited with her in the early 1950s and that they had a pleasant conversation. He noted: "She was a very intelligent woman, and I could hardly believe she was 87 years old".

Doralyn Genova, whose grandparents, Henry and Dora Lane had firmed up a homestead of the property just west of Mrs. Miller's, recalls visiting Mrs. Miller with her mother, Anna Lane Brodak, and Olive Lane Blackburn on a somewhat regular basis. Doralyn said they always took fresh vegetables and fruit when in season. Mrs. Miller had several Ute Indian baskets, and she would go back in one of the caves and bring out one or two to show her guests. She said that Mrs. Miller was intelligent and always had a lesson of some sort to teach Doralyn and her sister, Shirley.

Zita Hammer Roseborough said that her mother would give Mrs. Miller a ride to the store. She said that Mrs. Miller kept her money in a glass jar in the midst of other glass jars filled with fruit and vegetables she had canned.

Terry Hammer remembered that when his parents were giving him and his siblings a ride to the store to catch the school bus they would sometimes pick up Mrs.

Miller and give her a ride. She would do her shopping, pay for the groceries and then walk home. When his parents picked him and the others up after school, they would also pick up the items that she had purchased and take them to her.

Vi Holloway, another long-time Glade Park resident, told me that Mrs. Miller was a pioneer farmer and a midwife on Glade Park. She seldom went to town, but was friendly if you were friendly to her. Her life was simple although, surprisingly, she had an organ in one of her caves.

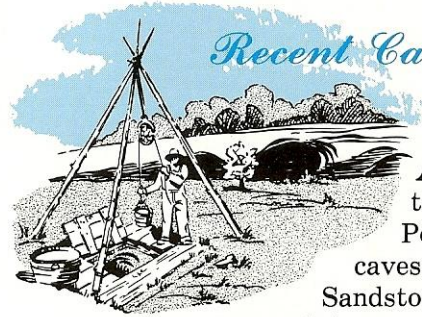
Patty Brouse Shear told me that Mrs. Miller was a midwife and delivered the five youngest children out of seven in the Brouse family. One of those younger children was her father, Howard.

Patty said that there were no doctors on Glade Park and it was difficult to find a doctor who would make the trip. Mrs. Miller was a registered nurse and practiced homeopathic medicine. One of her cures was for intestinal worms caused by improperly cooked wild game, a common food then. The cure was to take turpentine for a few days to kill the worms, then eat egg shells to scour them out.

In 1958, when Mrs. Miller was 92 years old, she moved to Grand Junction to live with her daughter. She died Jan. 26, 1962.

All that remains today to indicate the existence of Mrs. Miller--or as the children of the Glade Park called her, "the lady who lived in the big rock candy mountain,"-- is the soot blackening the cave ceiling.





Recent Cave Dweller

ABOUT 3 miles west of the Glade Park Store and Post Office are three large caves in a cliff of the Wingate Sandstone on the north wall of a canyon containing a tributary of Clark's Wash.

The middle cave, which formerly contained a small one-room framehouse and other improvements, was occupied for about 40 years prior to 1958 by Mrs. Laura Hazel Miller (fig. 5). A large cave just to the west (left) was used for storage, and another large cave just to the east formerly was fenced to shelter domestic animals. Mrs. Miller lived alone most of this time but had a dog for companionship the last few years she lived in the cave. When my wife and I visited her in the mid-fifties we had a very pleasant conversation with this very intelligent woman and could hardly believe she was 87 years old. She could not understand why anyone could live in crowded cities as she much preferred the peace and quiet of her cave. Once a week she walked the 6 miles round trip to and from the Glade Park Store and Post Office, bought what few necessities she needed, and telephoned her daughter in Grand Junction. Maybe she had something the rest of us have missed! She became sick in her nineties and moved to Grand Junction to live with her daughter. After she died, the property was sold, and I have since observed that vandals had burned her one room house and had destroyed most of the other improvements.