



# Church's Stage Stop Well landmarked in 2015

The Colorado Territory existed from Feb. 28, 1861, through August 1, 1876. In an effort to establish the Territory, Congress opened up the Territory of Colorado to new settlement. In 1861, the first land survey of Jefferson County identified a wagon freight route between Denver and Boulder that included a stop in the vicinity of Wadsworth Boulevard and 103rd Avenue. This location was also noted as a stop on the Cherokee Trail between Denver and Fort Collins. On the survey, the site was shown as Childs Station.

Frank and Sarah Church purchased the 160-acre site, plus 100 cords of wood, from the Childs in 1864 for \$1,000. Several small wooden structures were also purchased from a neighboring farm and moved to the Church property. The Church's built a two-story frame house and the stop became known as Church's Stage Stop. The two-story house became the bunkhouse for the station when the Church's built a new and nicer two-story house in front of the bunkhouse.

Water for the Church's Stage Stop was provided by a rock lined well that was dug by hand in the 1860s by an earlier settler on the site. A plaque on the well states the well was dug in 1864, but there is no documentation of who actually dug the well. The Church's operated the stage stop until 1869 when Wells Fargo discontinued the stage route. The Church's continued to run the stop for bull whackers (oxen teams) who hauled hay from the Saint Vrain and the Platte river valleys to the mining districts.

The Church's Stage Stop Well is historically significant because it exemplifies the economic and social heritage of the city. The well is the only remaining element of the Church's Crossing Stage Stop. The stop provided meals, lodging for travelers and a livery for the exchange of horses. The stage stop buildings became the headquarters of the agricultural and business operations of George and Sarah Church. Most of the stage stop buildings were destroyed by fire or moved offsite by the 1920s, but the well continued to be used for the Church agricultural operations.



The well represents an association with notable persons in the history of the City of Westminster and Jefferson County. Homesteaders George and Sarah Church were pioneers in securing water rights, constructing irrigation ditches and reservoirs and experimenting with dry-land crops to promote agriculture and ranching in Colorado's dry climate.

The Church Stage Stop Well was designated a Jefferson County Landmark on Sept. 14, 2015. 📍

The Church's Crossing Stage Stop, dated 1866, shows the well as a typical well design with a small gable roof supported by wooden posts at each corner of the roof. At some point the wooden structure was removed.

*Broomfield Star*

A plaque on the well states the well was dug in 1864, but there is no documentation of who actually dug the well. The brick wall is approximately 3 feet high and is rimmed with a pebbled concrete. The diameter of the well is approximately 5 feet. The interior of the well now contains an electric pump and the necessary supports and wiring to function effectively.

*Patrick Caldwell*

