

# Greenhorn Valley Guide



## Old Zan's Grave

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## A Guide to Old Zan's Grave




The story of Old Zan is one of the most colorful legends flowing from Greenhorn Mountain and through the vast ranches that span the valley below. It is told often around campfires on cool autumn nights and at round-ups on dusty summer days.

Alexander Hicklin or, "Old Zan", was one of the pioneering ranchers in Southern Colorado. His first stop moving west was in New Mexico where he met his future wife, Estefana Bent, daughter of the first Governor of the New Mexico Territory, Charles Bent. (Author's Note: Charles and his brother William were founders of the National Historic Site, Bent's Old Fort in La Junta Colorado). After spending a short time in California, Zan and Estefana moved to their ranch site in 1860 where he lived until his death in 1874.

According to the Daily Journal Newspaper of Telluride, CO (Jan 11, 1906), *Old Zan Hicklin was a quaint character, who lived on the Greenhorn, about twenty miles south of Pueblo. In the days before the Rio Grande railroad was built, his ranch was a stopping place for the few people who journeyed between Denver and points in Southern Colorado and New Mexico. General Sopris, on one of his early trips to Trinidad, rode up to Hicklin's on the evening of a bitter cold day, and sought shelter for the night. Old Zan told him that the house was full to overflowing, and it would be impossible to make him comfortable. There was no other refuge from the storm, and the General was compelled to remain. He was given a corner in one of the rooms, where he endeavored to secure some sleep, but he suffered so much from the cold that in the night he called up old Zan and asked him if it was not possible to scare up some sort of covering. Zan said he would do his best, and after a short time returned with a fish net, which he spread over Sopris with the remark that there was not much warmth in it, but that "it would tangle up the wind some."*

Old Zan died on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1874 at his ranch at the ripe old age of 55. Now fast forward to 1963 when a newly formed Colorado City deemed it necessary to move the graveyard named in his honor. The original graveyard was located under what is now Bent Brothers Boulevard in Colorado City. In order to make way for the new street grid, city planners of the Colorado City Development Company officially moved the graves to their current location. Apparently, however, not all the graves made it to the new site. Of the dozen or so Hicklin family graves, only two can be seen today. Oddly enough, along with Old Zan and his brother Talman, the new gravesite is also the final resting place of Clyde A. Barden, a US Army veteran who died in 1967 at the ripe old age of 69. No one seems to know who Technical Sergeant 5 Barden was or why he is buried there!



**Driving Directions:** From Interstate 25, take exit 74 West towards Colorado City and Rye. Approximately 2 miles later, turn right on Bent Brothers Blvd. Just past the Metro District Headquarters (about 300 feet), turn left on Valverde Circle. Head west until the road turns north and then follow Fremont Drive about 200 more feet. If you pass an old abandoned baseball field, you'll know you've gone a bit too far. At this point, you'll see a long row of trees that were intended to demark the edge of Hicklin Memorial Park. You'll have to walk south about 50 feet from that point until you see the white grave marker and large boulder that mark Old Zan's Grave.





Looking West along Fremont Drive



Line of Trees Demarking Hicklin Memorial Park



Old Zan Himself



Talman Hicklin's Grave Marker



Clyde A. Barden

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