Born in 1868, Emily Griffith grew up poor in Cincinnati, Ohio. By the tender age of 14, she left her education behind and became a teacher in a sod school house in Nebraska, in order to help support her family back home.

While teaching, she stayed with the families of her students to afford living expenses. She soon discovered that the families of her students were themselves poorly educated and even lacking basic skills in reading, writing, and math. It was her time here that allowed her to see the importance of public education for everyone, not just our children.

Emily moved to Denver in 1894 and became a substitute teacher. She quickly became a full time instructor and eventually in 1904, became the Deputy State Superintendent of Schools in Colorado.

Soon after, she began educating adults by night and eventually in 1916, opened the Opportunity School, educating students of all ages, gender, race, or background. She was so dedicated to her students’ success that she helped them in all areas of their lives from ensuring they were well fed to providing funds for the transportation to and from school.

By her retirement in 1933, 100,000 students had graduated from the opportunity school. Today the Opportunity School still stands, has been renamed in her honor to the Emily Griffith Opportunity School, and plays a crucial role in today’s Denver Public Schools system.

Eventually, she moved to Pinecliff, Colorado with her sister to live out her life. Sadly, it ended abruptly when both sisters were found murdered on June 18th, 1947, a crime left unsolved.

Located in NW corner of Lot 27, Block 61.