

Dr. John Carpenter Hawver



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1854-1914

As a youth John Hawver was apprenticed out to a rancher to help his family after his father died, he received very little formal education. He credited his wife Lutie Backus for filling in the gaps and encouraging him to go to dentistry school.

He was an avid outdoorsman and amateur paleontologist. He “discovered” a cave near Cool in 1906. The cave contained human skeletons, bones of mastodon, mountain lion, bison, and other fossils, some determined to be 5.3 million years old. The cave had actually been explored by miners in the 1880’s and innumerable other outdoorspeople. The cave now bears his name.

His lack of early education led him to be very involved in promoting education for the youth of Auburn.

Findagrave.com, ancestry.com, Auburn Journal Oct. 16, 2012, Placer Herald June 13, 1914, hawvercave.org
Picture courtesy of Placer County Museums