

LYONSVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

2020 NEWSLETTER

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To reach a member of the Board, please call our Secretary, Judy Birmingham at 630-325-3208 or for financial questions, our Treasurer, Michael Belletete at 630-455-6170 and leave a message. Thank you.

Lyonsville Cemetery

6871 Joliet Road

**Indian Head Park, IL
60525**

Email:
Lyonsville.cemetery@gmail.com

**(To access the cemetery,
enter off Joliet Road through
the church parking lot.)**

Historic Lyonsville Cemetery is located in the midst of suburbia and continues to maintain the look and nostalgic feel of a rural cemetery. The cemetery is rich in local history with the first burial taking place in 1833. Many of the areas founding families are buried here and we are proud to be the final resting place of veterans of every conflict from the War of 1812 through Vietnam.

We are a nondenominational cemetery, and all are welcome! We are a not-for-profit organization, run by a volunteer board. We encourage you to join us at an upcoming board meeting. Whether you have a loved one interred at Lyonsville, would like to know more about or become involved with preservation efforts, or are simply interested in the history of the cemetery, we extend an invitation to all to attend any of our board meetings.

2021 Board Meeting Schedule (all meetings begin at 7:00 pm)

Tuesday, February 9th
Tuesday, May 11th
Tuesday, August 10th
Tuesday, November 9th

As meeting dates and location sometime change, please send us an email regarding your interest in attending so we can provide you with the location of the meeting and keep you aware of any changes. Due to the coronavirus, face masks are required.

ACCESS UPDATE: As mentioned in last year's newsletter, the Lyonsville Congregational Church has been considering options for the direction of the church and potentially their property. Current options include transfer of the property to the Village of Indian Head Park.

Regardless of what entity may ultimately own the church property, as discussed in the 2019 newsletter, both real estate law and the Illinois Comptroller's Office insure that visitors will always have the right to cross the property and access the Cemetery.

MEMORIAL DAY

Due to the coronavirus, Memorial Day 2020 was not observed with the American Legion Robert E. Coulter, Jr. Post 1941. In prior years, the American Legion would conduct a short ceremony including a rifle salute. In the days before the ceremony, local Boy Scouts placed a flag on each of the 118 graves of veterans we have in our cemetery records. Before and after the ceremony, the attendees and the American Legion enjoyed refreshments and baked goods provided by board members and friends. It is a very nice remembrance and we are delighted that attendance at the annual event continues to grow each year. If we are able, the 2021 ceremony will take place on Monday, May 31st. It usually begins at approximately 10:00 a.m., although arriving by 9:45 is encouraged as they sometimes arrive early. If you live in the area or are visiting that weekend, we look forward to welcoming you to the ceremony. Below are pictures from the 2019 celebration.



FINANCES

The Lyonsville Cemetery Association is a recognized tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(13) of the Internal Revenue Code. As such, contributions to the Cemetery are tax deductible. We receive no local, state, or federal financial support and rely on the income from our Perpetual Care Fund (Care Fund) and gifts from individuals and estates to support our work.

We are very thankful for our donors. As we go to press in November, in the past twelve months we have received gifts from the Belletete, Bodine-Walker, Both, Godar, Gohdes, Joynt, Lutze, McHale, Newell, Ortega, Owen, Persche, and Richel families. Many of these families are regular contributors and it is gratifying to see them appear each year. We sincerely appreciate the generosity of everyone who remembers the Cemetery when making charitable gifts and in their estate planning. Each gift matters and helps support our purpose of maintaining the beauty of our grounds.

Care Fund principal is restricted by the State and audited by them annually. We are pleased to note we have always been in compliance with State regulations. Care Fund income is used to care for and maintain the Cemetery. Our primary expense is mowing and trimming of the grounds. Annually, we also address various projects such as care of trees, repair of our fence, etc. During 2020 and continuing into 2021 we have undertaken a project to repair

and restore of some of our historic monuments. That project is discussed in greater detail below.

Our volunteer Board works very hard at keeping Lyonsville Cemetery looking beautiful. Our meetings are open and our meeting calendar is listed in this newsletter. You are always welcome to attend to learn more about our activities. Again, we also hope you consider the Lyonsville Cemetery Association when making charitable gifts and in your estate planning.

HEADSTONE REPAIR PROJECT

In the Fall of 2019, Christine Hillmann, owner of Chris's Cemetery Preservation, Inc., made a presentation to the Board on the repair and restoration of headstones. This is a project the Board has been discussing for several years. Ms. Hillmann explained what it takes to repair headstones, especially the very old stones and she brought before and after pictures of some work she had done in other cemeteries. She also submitted an initial proposal of headstones in Lyonsville Cemetery that were in need of repair. After much discussion the Board contracted with her to repair 40 headstones. During 2020, Ms. Hillmann and her team cleaned, straightened and in some cases, literally pieced together stones that had broken. Based on the success of the 2020 project, we have contracted to repair an additional 32 headstones, which will take place in the Spring/Summer of 2021. We encourage you to take a drive through the Cemetery to view the work. A few before and after examples are below.



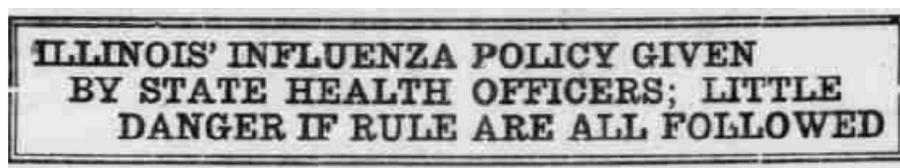


LYONSVILLE'S PANDEMIC PAST: STORIES SOUGHT OF 1918-1919

By now we are all aware of the word “pandemic.” We may see in media the oft-comparisons to the “last great pandemic” that struck in 1918-1919. We nod from the vantage point 100 years gives us, perhaps baffling over photographs during the peak of the influenza: packed soldiers on ships or in white tents pitched side-by-side with masked nurses tending; or crowded celebrations after the Great War came to its conclusion and, naturally, the countless family gatherings. Homilies and memorials, sermons and prayers were shared: of grief, gratitude, and—more than less—for the graced bravery to move forward and get on. Forgetting was a daily act of courage. Memorials don’t always serve as memories; and don’t necessary reflect lived experiences of the time.

According to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), over 25 percent of the U.S. population were afflicted by the influenza. Startlingly, during the period of 1918-1919, “the average life expectancy in the United States dropped by 12 years.”

In a community already staggering from the weight of the Great War, news of an influenza strain was not often a front-page story. Headlines sought to calm the public, such as this one from its page-12 placement in a Rockford, Illinois newspaper dated January 21, 1919.



According to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, “Despite the staggering loss of life--far more than in World War I itself--it has been coined as the ‘forgotten illness.’ In the United States, news from the battlefield covered newspaper plates each day, and often overshadowed reports of flu deaths. The limited coverage of the flu, meant the disease was mostly viewed in a local lens.” In fact, there has yet to be a vetted national or state-wide archive of those who died in the pandemic. As often the case, it comes to local oral histories and research to preserve our communities’ memories.

Lyonsville Cemetery holds some of those influenza stories lost in the rush to put the past behind.



Back row L-R Mrs. Peice, Mrs. Draven, Marrie Schroeder, Edith Ganger,
 Helen Vial, Frank Bilby, Alice Vial, Lizzie Henry, Grandma Becker
 Seated L-R Hattie Vial, Janice Bilby, Mrs. Cox, Lottie Wood, Ruth Hoyt,
 Grandma Hoyt (Sybil)
 in front - Gertrude Vial, Ruth Vial Martin
 Children ? ? ?

Families and friends gathered before the scope or scale of the public health risk was understood here in the Chicago area. Pictured above are women and children, young and old, who gathered that Summer of 1918. Many of the surnames that grow familiar to us in the cemetery are included in the photo above: Henry, Gauger, Hoyt, Vial, Martin, Ward, Bielby, and Schroeder, among others. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Chicago's Commissioner of Health John D. Roberts, the influenza pandemic was first reported at the Great Lakes Naval Station just north of Chicago September 16, 1918. By the end of November of that year, 8,510 had died in Chicago alone. By December 1918, more than 500,000 people in the U.S. had died. Overall, 23,500 Illinois deaths were attributed to the Influenza by the IDPH between 1918 and 1919. In an initial review of Lyonsville records, there are approximately 20 or more deaths in that period when Cook Co. was trying to control the alarming spread of what was called "The Spanish Flu."

While churches were allowed to remain open (Lyonsville Congregational being no different), and schools held classes unless there was an outbreak, public health official Roberts recommended in October 1918 that “theaters, skating rinks, moving picture shows, night schools and lodge halls” should be closed and “...all public gatherings not essential to the war, such as banquets, conventions, lectures, social affairs, athletic contests..., cabarets and other entertainments (be) stopped in restaurants and cafes.” Of course, “crowding (is) prohibited in poolrooms, saloons, etc.,” and dancing in dance halls was forbidden.

None-the-less, deaths occurred.

One of those deaths in spring of 1919 was Mary Gauger (1850-1919, aged 69), homemaker and mother to seven children and who rests with her husband (Godfried) in our cemetery. While she is not pictured here, her daughter in-law, Edith (Bielby) Gauger and daughter Mamie (Mary E. Gauger) Schroeder are, and we cannot help but note with some poignancy they did not know they would lose a mother and mother in-law within the year.

Also pictured, is Ruth (Craigmile) Hoyt seated next to her aged mother in-law Sybil (Durland) Hoyt. They, too, would suffer losses that had implications for the remainder of their lives and their children. Ruth would lose her father David (1828-1919, aged 91) in October 1919. Sybil would join Ruth in grief when they would lose Howard (1874-1920, aged 46)--Sybil's son and Ruth's husband--to one of the manifestations attributed to the flu: meningitis. Oral histories indicate he “died of the flu”, although the death certificate states “meningitis”. Researchers in a 1919 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Assoc. (JAMA) wrote, “In reports of the pandemic of influenza and its complications, reference has been made to toxemia and to the symptoms of shock and meningitis...Evidence of this systemic infection is also present in statements in the 500 studied clinically...at first suggestive of meningitis...” It should be noted, too, that David Craigmile was grandfather, uncle, and great uncle to several of the Vials in the photo. Few pictured would not have known loss in some form.

Only in hindsight do some photos raise questions and implore us to learn more about those pictured: their lived experience of a shared tragedy that was curiously muted.

As we, together, live through another pandemic, we here at Lyonsville Cemetery are making time to remember and honor deaths in the 1918-1919 period; identifying those who may have succumbed to the Influenza according to public historical record. We may not be able to know for certain, but we want to bring memory and fact to bear upon their stories. If you have your own family oral histories of the Influenza of 1918-1919 of any of our members, we do invite you to share them with us. History of our current public health crisis has yet to be written, of course. Let us honor the histories we can in order to rectify past gaps.

You may reach us at (Lyonsville.cemetery@gmail.com) and thank you.

AVAILABILITY OF GRAVES AND PRICING

Grave plots are still available at Lyonsville. They can be purchased individually or in adjacent multiples.

The cost to purchase a single plot is currently \$850. A single plot may contain one full body burial, a combination of a full body burial and an ash inurnment, or two ash inurnments. Full body burials are arranged in conjunction with funeral homes. The Cemetery charges \$1,100 to open and close a grave for a full body burial and \$400 to open and close a grave for an ash burial.

There is also a specially-designated section for Ash Burials (Lot 307). In this section an \$800 fee includes space for two ash inurnments and the charge for opening and closing a grave in this lot is \$400 per burial. Please note that all burial pricing is subject to change dependent upon weather conditions.

Lyonsville Cemetery **does not** permit "green burials".

GENTLE REMINDERS FROM THE CEMETERY BOARD

Since this is our only opportunity to communicate with the majority of you, we'd like to remind you of the following:

- Do not drive off the designated roadways within the cemetery. We recognize the possibility that another vehicle could potentially block your path. Please ask the other driver to move their vehicle rather than driving around it. There are very old unmarked graves near the roadways and they can easily collapse under the weight of even the smallest car.
- Limit plantings to annuals or perennials that are not invasive or spread. Plants such as hostas spread outside the immediate gravesite where they were planted and create grounds keeping issues. The Cemetery Board has the right to remove plants and bushes that are overgrown or aggressive to the headstone and/or grave.
- The cemetery provides hoses and watering cans at the watering stations. Please make certain to turn off the water after using it and take any jugs or containers you might have brought with you as you leave.
- We ask that you do not bring flowers in vases containing water to avoid mosquito infestation.
- If you visit with a canine companion, please pick up after them.
- Benches - At this time, the Cemetery Board has decided that we are not adding additional benches to the cemetery.
- **REMEMBER:** Artificial flowers and other decorations are removed from the cemetery by December 1st of each year. Christmas wreaths and decorations are removed February 1st. If you wish to reuse your Christmas decorations but cannot remove them by that date, please email Lyonsville.cemetery@gmail.com to make other arrangements.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, PLEASE REPORT ANYTHING THAT NEEDS ATTENTION
TO THE CEMETERY BOARD!**

Thanks for visiting the cemetery and we appreciate your cooperation and help in keeping the cemetery beautiful.

HAS YOUR CONTACT INFO CHANGED? ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO OUR MAILING LIST?

Please complete the form below and return it to the address below or email the information to:

lyonsville.cemetery@gmail.com

**Lyonsville Cemetery Association
6871 Joliet Road
Indian Head Park, IL 60525**

Name: _____

Please check your selected category and print information. Thank you!

Please update my address: _____

Please remove me from the mailing list.

Please add the following individual(s) to the mailing list.

