

History of Graceland Cemetery, Sherman Township, Blencoe, IA

The earliest records that have been found in regards to the Graceland Cemetery were dated June 23, 1902, when the ladies of Blencoe and vicinity met at the home of Mrs. W. D. Bassett to talk over the idea of organizing a society for the purpose of improving the Cemetery of Sherman Township. It was decided that such society should be organized to cooperate with the Sherman Township Trustees and officers should be elected. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. W. D. Bassett, Vice President, Mrs. Mary E. Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer, Jennie Whiteman. A committee on by-laws and constitution was next elected consisting of Mrs. Reiley, Mrs. Danforth and Mrs. Carmody. Mrs. Wm McFarlane and Mrs. Will Comfort were appointed to confer with the township trustees and report at the next meeting. At the June 30, 1903 meeting a motion was made by Mrs. McFarlane and seconded by Mrs. Carmody that each lot owner be taxed for this year the sum of \$1.00 for whole lots and \$.50 for half lots. Carried. The secretary was to write each lot owner.

Excerpts April 1906 minutes: Motion made to have memorial services held in Blencoe this year. Lillian Danforth, Mayme Carmody, Jennie Whiteman and Mrs. Bassett were appointed to prepare program, etc. for Memorial Day. Motion was made to see the board of directors in regard to buying trees for the Cemetery.

Excerpts May 1908 meeting: It was decided that Decoration Day be observed and the following committees were appointed. Mrs. Van Scoy, Effa Comfort and Jennie Whiteman, Program Committee. Mrs. Hogue, Mrs. Reiley, Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. McFarlane, Decorating Committee. One new member Effa Comfort was admitted to the association at this meeting.

Excerpts April 1909 meeting: A business meeting of the Cemetery Association was held at the home of the President Mrs. E. A. Shea. Ten members were present and election of officers President Miss Jennie Whiteman, Vice President Mrs. M. C. Hogue and Sec and Treas, Mrs. E. A. Shea. 32 paid during the year of 1909.

Excerpts April 1911 meeting: The rest house question was brought up and Mrs. Bassett and Mrs. McFarlane were appointed to talk it up and report at the next meeting which will be called sometime in May. Lillian Shea, Sec and Treas.

Excerpts May 1911 meeting: The Rest House question was again brought up but nothing more definitive was done. Mrs. Bassett and Mrs. McFarlane were reappointed to further look up the situation and report at next meeting. A motion was made and seconded that the association have an ice cream social and President appointed Social Committee.

Excerpt April 1912 meeting: Motion made that we observe Decoration Day and committee were appointed. The Rest House Committee reported that they thought it advisable to go and build a Rest House in the cemetery. The amount on hand in the Bank was \$102.72 and a motion was made by Mrs. Van Scoy and seconded by Mrs. Chas. Lee that we take \$75 and apply on the Rest House fund. Carried.

Excerpt April 1913 meeting: Mrs. Bassett and Mrs. Wm McFarlane were appointed by President Mrs. W. I. Comfort to look up the matter of a lowering device for the cemetery. They took charge of an ice cream social and had a bread and cake sale at the I. T. Hathaway store and by other donations raised enough to purchase the device and also a canvass which is now in the

Rest House at the cemetery. Mr. John Slatlen having charge of same. \$68.00 was paid for the device and \$8.50 for the canvass. Much credit is due these ladies. Lillian Shea, Sec.

Excerpts 1925 meeting: Motion by Lettie Comfort and seconded by Mrs. Van Scoy that the lot dues be raised to \$2.00 for whole lot and one dollar for half lot, and not have any more bake sales. Carried. Motion by Mrs. Van Scoy and second by Mrs. Shannon that the Rest House be repaired and money to be taken from the time deposit. Carried. It was decided to observe Decoration Day in the usual way. President Mrs. W. D. Bassett appointed Mrs. Van Scoy to have charge of the program and Mrs. Richardson and Miss Jennie Whiteman Decoration Committee. They met in the E. A. Shea Hall.

Excerpt March 1944 & 1946 meetings: Met March 27, 1944, home of President Mrs. Harry Williams. President Williams asked for discussion as to whether Association would try to continue to keep up the care of cemetery as previously, or turn the care of same over to Trustees. Having discussed this matter with Mr. Clarence Nickolaison, a Trustee, he had offered to assume actual care, if the Association would care for dues, Decoration Day Programs, etc and the Ladies voted to accept his offer. Trustees are Clarence Nickolaison, Harry Nielsen and Mike Marley. Committees appointed were Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Hale on Decoration Day Program. Mrs. Williams was appointed to care for the crosses on soldier's graves. Mrs. Everett Johnson, Mary Kelley and Etta Comfort to see about flags. In 1946 it was voted to have the Legion take charge of Memorial Services. Also, voted to have Trustees have charge of caring for cemetery.

Excerpts 1949 meeting: A meeting was held at the home of President Mrs. Ed Shea. A discussion was held as to whether to continue organization or let township trustees take full

charge. A motion was made and carried to continue organization. The following officers were elected: President Mrs. John D. Comfort, Vice President Mrs. Harry Kelley and Secretary & Treasurer Mrs. Etta Comfort.

For several years much interest was shown in establishing an Avenue of Flags. Gertrude Jacobson approached the Trustees in Feb 1993 and Dennis Stanislav moved to allow 55+ club to erect flag poles at cemetery. Milo Stanislav seconded. Moved and carried to contact Gertrude Jacobson with go ahead. In June 2001 having a line of flags was discussed. Agreed to start with six and contact John Adams to make the poles. Discuss with Marv Keele the size and start along the east fence first. At December 2001 meeting discussed price flags & pole at \$80.00 each and bracket \$25.00 each. Decided to order 6 flags to start. Twenty-five foot pole with 5 x 9 ½ flag. John Adams to make poles in upcoming winter. Craig Perry will paint as they are finished. Brackets to be set in ground 3' with cap. Hooks on poles to hang flag. Motion by Craig to proceed with purchases, seconded by Milo. Approved. In 2002 clerk Mary Jo Dehn ordered flags with plans to set poles in the spring. John Adams to be contacted regarding attaching the plaques to the flag poles. Six poles were installed in 2003 with name plaques and flags and an additional 44 poles in the next two years for a total of 50 flags and poles. This was done with donations of \$100.00 per pole.

Excerpts March 1998 meeting: Prices for cemetery lots were discussed. No price increase had been made since 1986 where it has remained at \$400 for ten space lot and \$200.00 for five space lot. Individual lots are not commonly sold but are worth \$40.00 per place. It was moved by Milo Stanislav to increase individual space lots to \$60.00 and to make ten space lots \$600.00 effective July 1, 1998. Cremation policy also included in motion will be added to Rules

and Regulations of Graceland Cemetery. Seconded by Dennis Stanislav. Motion carried. The Rules and Regulations of Graceland Cemetery located in Sherman Township were discussed. Each trustee was given a copy to look over and approve at a later date. Policy statements and rules have never been in existence before this date so it was decided that the township needs one.