

# LYONSVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

## 2022 NEWSLETTER

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### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*Bruce Cady, President*

*Mark Richel, Vice President*

*Judy Birmingham, Secretary*

*Michael Belletete, Treasurer*

*Sharon Comstock, Trustee*

*Charles Gerth, Trustee*

*Laurie Tsukuno, Trustee*

*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:  
[info@lyonsvillecemetery.org](mailto:info@lyonsvillecemetery.org)

Website:  
[lyonsvillecemetery.org](http://lyonsvillecemetery.org)

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

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Historic Lyonsville Cemetery, at the corner of Wolf and Joliet Roads in Indian Head Park, has been the final resting place for many of the area's founding families, friends, neighbors, and others since 1833. We are proud to have veterans from every conflict from the War of 1812 through Vietnam, including two unknown soldiers from the Civil War. We are a nondenominational cemetery and all are welcome. While Lyonsville Cemetery is located in the midst of suburbia, the volunteer Cemetery Board works to maintain the look and nostalgic feel of a rural cemetery.

The Cemetery is organized under the Illinois Cemetery Act to exist in perpetuity and in trust for the benefit of the grave owners and is administered by a volunteer board of trustees. The Illinois Comptroller's Office oversees Lyonsville Cemetery and performs an annual audit of our financial records. We are pleased to note we have always been found to be in compliance with State regulations.

We encourage you to join us for an upcoming board meeting. Whether you have a loved one interred at Lyonsville, would like to know more about becoming involved in our 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.

### **2023 Board Meeting Schedule**

**Meetings begin at 7:00 pm**

Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

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.

### **CHURCH PROPERTY CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP**

In May, 2022 Lyonsville Congregational United Church of Christ sold their land and building to Ebenezer Pentecostal Church of God. As we have reported in prior newsletters, there is no impact to access to the Lyonsville Cemetery regardless of ownership of the property to the north of the Cemetery entrances. The Cemetery is owned by the Lyonsville Cemetery Association and access to the Cemetery is protected by Illinois real estate law and overseen by the Illinois Comptroller's Office.

Before the sale closed and since that time, the Cemetery Board of Trustees have had numerous amicable meetings and conversations with Ebenezer Pentecostal regarding various administrative items such as water usage and electricity for the lighting of the Cemetery's American flag. We are pleased to report at this time there have been no issues identified where we do not believe a good solution will be worked out. The Cemetery and the Church will, as always, use the 6871 Joliet Road mailing address.

## **MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION ROBERT E. COULTER, JR. POST 1941**

Once again our 2022 ceremony created a very nice remembrance that the veterans of our military services have put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms that we enjoy. To honor the veterans buried in Lyonsville Cemetery, in the days before Memorial Day local Boy Scouts placed a flag on each of the over 100 graves of veterans we have in our cemetery records. On Memorial Day, American Legion veterans from multiple eras arrived at our cemetery by bus accompanied by a police escort and motorcycles. The American Legion conducted a brief ceremony near our flagpole which included words of remembrance, a prayer, the laying of a memorial wreath, a rifle salute and mournful taps. We extend our thanks to the American Legion, the Boy Scouts, and also to the board members and friends who donated the refreshments and baked goods for the enjoyment of the attendees. For the American Legion, our cemetery is one of several cemeteries that they visit on Memorial Day. This year we were their last stop so they were able to stay a little longer than usual to socialize with us which was truly delightful. We are pleased that the attendance at this annual event continues to grow each year. The 2023 ceremony will take place on Monday, May 29 and begins at approximately 10:00 a.m., although arriving by 9:45 a.m. is encouraged as the American Legion sometimes arrive early. If you live in the area or are visiting that weekend, we look forward to welcoming you to the ceremony!



### **HISTORIC DESIGNATION STATUS**

We have consulted with the Illinois State Historical Society (ISHS) and have been encouraged to apply for official historic designations.

According to the archives in Springfield, The Cemetery already has a “Centennial” designation (for those incorporations over 100 years old in the State of Illinois; applied for by R.C. Vial and granted by State). The Cemetery will be submitting a heritage marker application drawing on the original documentation for the Centennial designation.

It was recommended we begin the formal application process to be considered as a possible part of the National Park Service’s National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. After consulting with the Executive Director of ISHS and Underground Railroad scholar Dr. Larry McClellan, there appears to be enough evidence to begin the process. They stated that Lyonsville history has national significance. While the church “basement”(as old stories suggested) could not have been used as a location to hide enslaved people (given that the 1858 building didn’t have a basement, but was constructed on beams above the



ground), there are emerging documented links that suggest members who are now buried in the Cemetery may well have been active abolitionists. Professional research will be undertaken to help support the rigorous process of review.

## **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. As always, we are extremely grateful to our donors. Since November 2021 until the printing of this newsletter, we have received donations from the Belletete, Bodine-Walker, Both, Bottiger, Gerken, Joynt, Knollmann, Kuehn, McHale, Meile, Owen, Pacanowski, Persche and Richel families. Many of these families are regular contributors and it is wonderful to see their names again. 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 work to maintain and enhance the beauty of our grounds.

Our Care Fund principal is restricted by the State and audited by them annually. 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 issues such as removal of trees that have died, the planting of new trees, and any needed special project work. We have included photos that show examples of some before and after shots from this year's monument repair project, our special project to replace the Cemetery's fence, and the supply shed that we installed this fall.

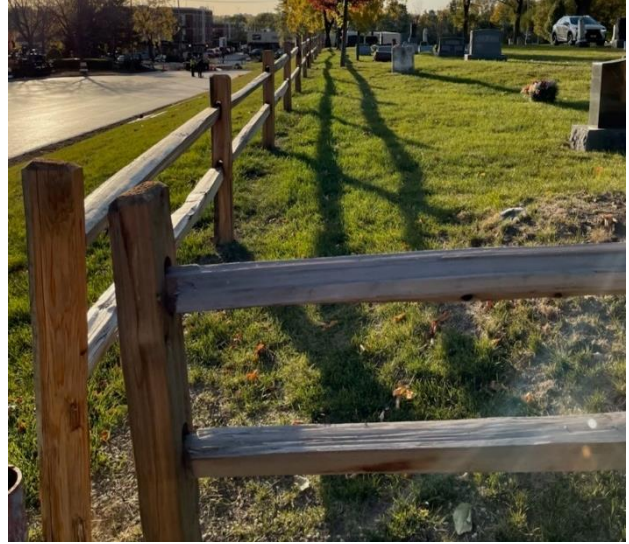
Our volunteer Board works very hard at keeping Lyonsville Cemetery looking beautiful. Our meetings are open and our meeting calendar is listed on page one of this newsletter. You are always welcome to attend to learn more about our activities. Again, we hope you consider the Lyonsville Cemetery Association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

## **BEFORE/AFTER PICTURES OF HEADSTONE REPAIRS**

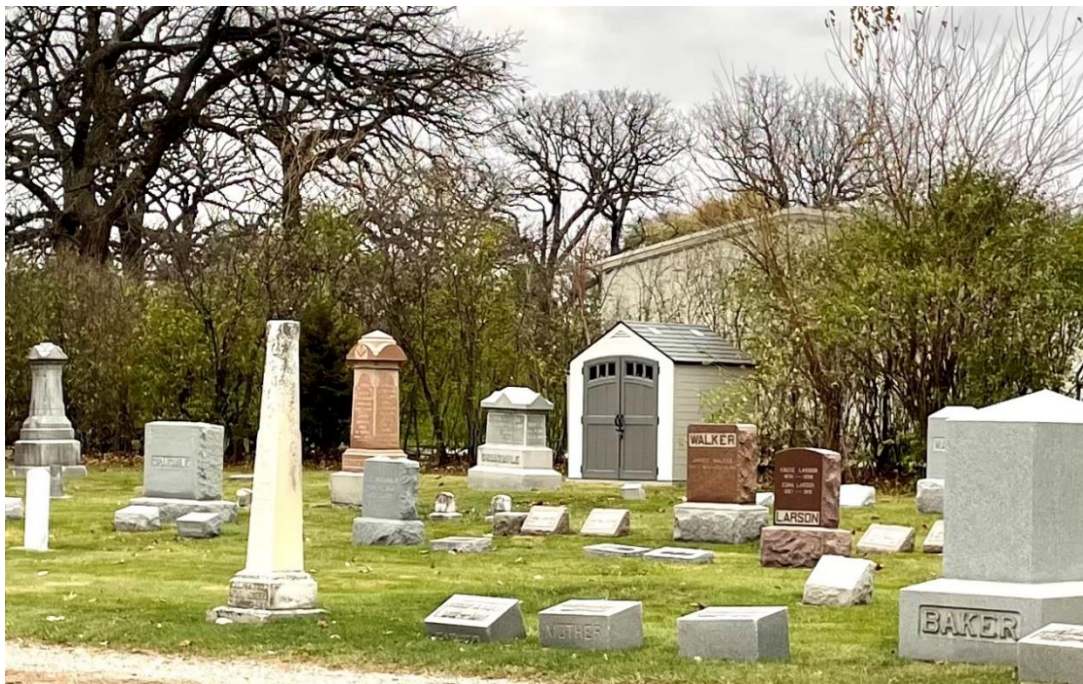




## NEW FENCE



## NEW STORAGE SHED



## CEMETERY BOARD MEMBER UPDATE

This past year has seen the resignation of Linda Hankus from our Board. Our sincere thanks to Linda for her service on the Board. We acknowledge and appreciate her five years as a Board Member and all her hard work that went along with the upkeep of the Cemetery.

Recently Linda shared the following note with the Board: "I want to say how much I have enjoyed being a trustee of the Lyonsville Cemetery Board over the past several years. I am spending much more time at my Michigan home now and I'm finding it hard to make the commitment for board meetings and maintenance support. It has been such a pleasure working with a very solid Board of Trustees that are doing great things. I will always have a special place in my heart for the Cemetery and will continue to help with Cemetery clean-up as my schedule permits when I am in town."

We will miss Linda and are grateful for her continued dedication to helping out. If you are visiting the Cemetery and see Linda picking things up around the grounds please say hello. As mentioned on page one, our Board Meetings are open and we extend an invitation to all to attend any of the meetings. You never can tell - you just might discover that you have a calling to join our happy group of volunteers!

### **“BIG HISTORY” IS LYONSVILLE HISTORY**

When we think of history—if we think of it at all—it’s often bound by living memory; stories we’ve heard or been told from family, neighbors, friends. These personal stories (or “little histories”) may be punctuated when intersecting with more generalized events that we commonly might think of as “U.S. and World History” from our high school days: from wars to pandemics. Scope is yet limited by imperfect memory, incomplete or inaccurate written record, deliberate exclusions, errors of omission or—perhaps most fearfully—apathy.

In times of change, when rifts between past and present seem to shift the very ground beneath our feet, it may help to look down at the earth on which we stand. We at the Cemetery naturally take stewarding “the ground(s)” quite literally. The lanes we walk and graves we tend put us in mind of the land on which we were founded (or “grounded”). From putting in a fence post, to restoring original lime headstones, we are made acutely aware of the hilled soil on which we are perched. There is a reason the location for this cemetery was selected that we may forget, and the reminder is right in front (or under) us.

On Oct. 23, 1833 Andrew Ostrander—father of 13 children—died, being put to rest at the age of 50 in Lyonsville Cemetery. Only three years prior he had been in his home with his family in Dryden, New York and member of the Dutch Reform Church. The last record in the U.S. census was 1830 in that Eastern hamlet near Ithaca. His grave is one of the oldest in the Cemetery, and no other named family appear in local census records. How did he come to be here? Chicago had not yet incorporated, excavation of the Illinois and Michigan Canal had yet to begin, and the Black Hawk war and subsequent removals had only recently occurred (1832). Early families were only just moving into the area. The Cemetery itself had not yet been formally established. Yet, here he is. Did he live with a family? Had work taken him to the “frontier” and he grew ill far from home? We can only conjecture why he came or with whom, but we can make a guess why he was placed on this plot of land: our geology.



Choosing a restful location had and has practical considerations: ground needs to be away from any high water table and away from erosion such as you might see near Flag Creek. Choosing a slightly higher elevation was frequently selected, and often in a secluded—but accessible—location. Family cemeteries--as some oral histories have suggested our Cemetery might have had its beginnings--were also often placed in these elevated and viewable locations. But it’s the “Big History” to which we owe our geology—with our location being along parts of the Flag Creek Valley with glacial fill left behind and mild moraines (or ridges where we are) gave us our natural slope. Indeed in the “Description of the Chicago District” written by William C. Alden (1909) our humble corner of Wolf and Joliet is named as an example of these ridges.



Glacial drift with rocky clay made it unsuitable for robust farming in the 1800s. And in the 1900s it was deemed not suitable for cost-efficient quarrying in a region rich with easy limestone access along the McCook corridor to Lemont. Yet again, geology came to our rescue in the 1950s, when the Cemetery was “saved” when surveys determined the deep limestone would prove too expensive to excavate to allow the Illinois 294 Tollway to be built; hence, locating it to the south.

From 1858 and later renovations of the church building, we can see the Cemetery change over time as noted in these photos from the Lyonsville Church Archives (scanned in 2014), showing the hills as they are still now. Here is where Big History of geologic time meets “little histories”: memories as memorials.



As written in a letter dated May 15, 1918 to Miss Alice Vial from a Lyonsville Congregational Church pastor, he warmly muses and reminisces, “...I still have and use that door-handled knife Mrs. V.E. had for me on the Christmas tree in 1866... Many memories continue to come, seeming to bring each individual before us. I wish that I could be there so as to talk over the people and events of those far-off years... Everywhere the growth of cities and incidental changes in conditions make churches go as well as come... I hope that the proposed changes in the region will not put the church out for it has long shed light in that community...”

While little histories reflect the shifts in our area, we at the Cemetery embrace our “Big History” view, and will seek and speak to the “little history” stories of the many memories to come.

### 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 grave is currently \$850. A single grave 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 \$450 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 the purchase of space for two ash inurnments. The charge for opening and closing a grave in this lot is \$450 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 newsletter is the main communication with you, we would like to remind you of the following:

**Please drive cautiously on the Cemetery roadways:** 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.

**Plantings that reduce our maintenance efforts are greatly appreciated:** Limit plantings to annuals or perennials that are not invasive or spread. Plants such as some types of hostas spread outside the immediate gravesite where they were planted and create groundskeeping issues. The Cemetery Board has the right to remove plants and bushes that are overgrown or aggressive to the headstone and/or grave.

**Check to make sure that you have turned off hoses:** The cemetery provides hoses and watering cans at the watering stations. Please make certain to turn off the water after using it and remove any jugs or containers you might have brought with you.

**Vases with water are not permitted:** We ask that you do not bring flowers in vases containing water to avoid mosquito infestation.

**Canine visitors:** If you visit with a canine companion, please pick up after them.

**Requests for Benches:** At this time, the Cemetery Board has decided that we are not adding additional benches to the cemetery.

**Flowers/Decorations removal deadline:** Artificial flowers and other decorations are removed from the cemetery by December 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Christmas wreaths and decorations are removed February 1<sup>st</sup>. If you wish to reuse your Christmas decorations but cannot remove them by that date, please email [info@lyonsvillecemetery.org](mailto:info@lyonsvillecemetery.org) to make other arrangements.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, PLEASE REPORT ANYTHING THAT NEEDS ATTENTION  
TO THE CEMETERY BOARD. WE NEED AND WANT TO KNOW!**

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:

[info@lyonsvillecemetery.org](mailto:info@lyonsvillecemetery.org)

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

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Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please update my address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ If there are any individuals who you would like added to our mailing list, please provide us with their contact information. Should you desire to be removed from our mailing list, please just let us know. Thanks!