

LYONSVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

2023 NEWSLETTER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bruce Cady, President

Mark Richel, Vice President

Judy Birmingham, Secretary

Michael Belletete, Treasurer

Sharon Comstock, Trustee

Matthew George, Trustee

Charles Gerth, Trustee

Beth Pacanowski, 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

Website:
lyonsvillecemetery.org

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

A Brief History: Lyonsville Cemetery's history begins back in the early 1800's when residents of the area first started to be buried on the land. An article on the Cemetery's earliest days by Board Member Sharon Comstock can be found on page 5. An important date in our history is November 28, 1889 when the trustees of the Lyonsville Congregational Church signed a document selling the approximate three acres that is now the Lyonsville Cemetery to the trustees of the Lyonsville Graveyard creating two entirely separate entities. In the 134 years since the formal establishment of what is now the Lyonsville Cemetery Association many things have changed. The name was changed to the Lyonsville Cemetery. Lyonsville Congregational Church has dissolved and their land and building has been sold to the Ebenezer Pentecostal Church of God. However, the Lyonsville Cemetery remains an independent and continuing organization open to all regardless of religious affiliation.

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 report we have always been 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.

2024 Board Meeting Schedule
Meetings begin at 7:00 pm

Tuesday, February 13

Tuesday, May 14

Tuesday, August 13

Tuesday, November 12

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.

Cemetery Board Member Update: In 2023 we were fortunate to have two new members join the Cemetery Board of Trustees - Beth Pacanowski and Matt George. Beth is a descendant of the Keller family with many relatives whose final resting place is Lyonsville Cemetery. Matt is a member and Treasurer of the Ebenezer Pentecostal Church of God who are the new owners of the former Lyonsville Congregational Church land and building. We look forward to the perspectives they will bring to the Board.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION

ROBERT E. COULTER, JR. POST 1941

An ongoing tradition at the Lyonsville Cemetery is the observance of Memorial Day with a ceremony conducted by the American Legion Robert E. Coulter, Jr. Post 1941. In the days before the ceremony Boy Scouts from the area place small flags beside the graves of the over 100 veterans buried at Lyonsville. On Memorial Day itself, a bus with American Legion members arrive for the event escorted by police cars and motorcycles. A brief ceremony then takes place near our flagpole which includes words of remembrance, a prayer, the laying of a memorial wreath, a rifle salute, and is closed with the playing of taps.

As has also become a tradition, the Cemetery Board has refreshments and baked goods for the American Legion and attending public. The event continues to grow each year and we encourage you and your family and friends to join us! The tentative timing is 10:00 a.m. on Memorial Day, however, the American Legion visits several cemeteries that day and their arrival timing can vary so we encourage your being at Lyonsville Cemetery by 9:45 a.m.

We would like to thank the Boy Scouts, American Legion, and Village of Indian Head Park for their participation and support of the event.





Photos courtesy of JR Sharp.

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 October 2022 until the printing of this newsletter, we have received donations from the families of: Belletete, Birke, Bodine-Walker, Both, Bradley, Cheney, Comstock, Engert, Gerken, Joynt, Kirby, Knollmann, Korber, Kruc, Martin, McHale, Meile, Owen, Pavlus, Persche, Richel, Robb, Sharp, Stallard, and Todd. This year significant gifts were also received from the Estate of Hazel Sharp and the Lyonsville Congregational Church. Many of our donor families are regular contributors and it is wonderful to see their names again this year. Every gift matters and helps to support our efforts to be good stewards of the Cemetery.

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 the removal of trees that have died, planting new trees and any needed special projects.

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.

MONUMENT REPAIRS

Beginning in 2020 we embarked on a multi-year effort to repair various headstones that had deteriorated over time. Some needed to be straightened while others required significant repair. In the four years since we began the project over **125** monuments have been extensively improved. Following are several before and after photos illustrating the impact that this noteworthy repair project has had on the restoration of our historic monuments.

Before Pictures



After Pictures



AVAILABILITY OF GRAVES AND PRICING

Grave plots are still available at Lyonsville Cemetery. 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. 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 cost to open and close a grave is dependent on multiple factors such as if it is either for a full body burial or ash burial, the time of the year, weather conditions, etc. Please work with your funeral home or the Cemetery Board to obtain pricing at the time of need.

Lyonsville Cemetery **does not** permit “green” burials.

**HIDDEN HISTORIES: “JOURNAL AND CASH BOOK FOR THE GRAVE YARD AT
FLAG CREEK COOK COUNTY ILLS”**

History can be obscured in plain sight.

Such may be the case regarding an unassuming slim brown notebook formerly displayed in a glass case in a church hall within Lyonsville Congregational, UCC. Clearly it was treasured, carefully labelled some years ago as “Lyonsville Cemetery Notebook”, but nothing else. Upon careful perusal, its fragile yellowed pages inspire questions about long-told origin stories and suggests new timelines.

On the first page of written notes, it reads:

“Flag Creek Nov. 4, 1847”. Oddly, the date in the margin note is “Oct. 23” not Nov. 4: an inconsistency—of several—that inspire curiosity.

The transcription of the scans on page 6 is as follows and verbatim, including spellings; parenthesis note illegible or presumed wording:

“School meeting held according to noted. Object of the meeting (stated) by Ira McClintock, Esq. and a motion Joseph Vial was chosen chairman and E(llijah) Wentworth for Secretary. ... (illegible) ... Jos. Vial was chosen Trustee ... (illegible) of school at Flag Creek (sic) in connection with Wilson McClintock and H. Carrington. It was motioned and seconded that those who take scholars who do not reside in said school district shall be (held responsible) for ... (illegible) ... scholar or scholars school bill. It is further motioned and seconded that a book be bought and kept as a book of record for school meetings. Meeting Closed. Duly elected: H. Carrington, (illegible) Vial. W. McClintock, School Directors”.

This single-page entry is followed by two blank pages and then an un-dated entry.

“Copy of the proceedings of the first meeting. At a meeting of the inhabitants of Flag Creek neighborhood Cook Co. Ills. At the house of E(llijah) Wentworth on the 24th Day of June 1848 for the purpose of purchasing and locating a burying ground for said neighborhood James McClintock was appointed Ch(air) and (J.) B. Witt Sec(retery). For the motion it was unanimously resolved that a lot of one acre of land be purchased of E. Wentworth lying immediately south of the Chicago and Joliet Road and East of the West line of Section 20, (illegible) 38 M. R. 126 at \$40. On motion it was further resolved that three trustees be appointed to carry into effect the object of said meeting whereupon John Yarwood, James McClintock and J.B. Witt was (sic) appointed said trustees. It was resolved that said trustees be empowered to have said lot of land surveyed, platted, (illegible), and prepared for as soon as convenient and to do all acts and deeds to locate a burying ground at Flag Creek Cook Co., Ill.”

On the following page the entry continues:

“...it was also resolved that a committee of those appointed to raise money by subscription to carry into effect the object of this meeting. Whereupon W. R. Downs, Elijah Wentworth and J.B. Witt were appointed said committee. Resolved that this meeting adjourned. Signed J.B. Witt Secy. James McClintock Chair.”

Two blank pages indicate time has passed, with the next entry following:

“Proceedings of 2nd meeting on grave yard. At a meeting of the inhabitants on the 8th day of July 1848 for the purpose of adopting a plan of laying out a burying ground and other purposes, John B. Witt was appointed Chairman and W. McClintock Secretary. Seasonal plans for laying out said burying ground being submitted the following plan was adopted making ninety-two lots, ten feet by twenty five feet. And one lot for (ineligible) twenty by eighty eight feet leaving (ineligible) five feet each and as plan on next page. On motion it was resolved that the said burying ground be enclosed with a common board fence (planed) and painted with a cap on it and the posts to be made of cedar. John Yarwood and Joseph Vial agree to furnish. Each six pounds of white lead

and a gallon of oil for painting said fence. On motion it was resolved that the donation of said Yarwood and Vial be accepted. On motion this meeting adjourned. James McClintock J.B. Witt, Chr”

One found artefact and three entries challenge assumed local history timelines, not the least of which include a point of development of the first school in the area and the Cemetery's very beginnings.

For the Lyonsville Cemetery, it gives us a clearer picture of our origin story. We now have a confirmed, contemporaneously documented birth date: June 24, 1848 when the first acre of our current three acres was sold to the Church. We can now picture its earliest fencing: planed boards, cedar posts, painted white with lead and oil (and even who gave the timber and labor). There is clarity and specificity on how it was measured and platted into plots, and on whose land it was founded: one acre of Elijah Wentworth's. We can see why the lanes are where they are and their sizes: just enough for a wheeled carriage. We have a picture into time where "Wolf Rd." wasn't named and Route 66 was the "Joliet & Chicago Road."

We now know who was “in the room when it happened” (to quote the *Hamilton* musical), when core decisions were being made and documented about the “Flag Creek Neighborhood” and its basic needs: educating the young and burying the dead.

Play Creek Board of 1834
Oct 28 School meeting held according to motion
Object of the meeting stated by Mr. McClinton
McClinton Esq and motion
Joseph Vial was chosen chairman
W. G. McClinton for Secretary
On motion Mr. Vial was chosen
Master or director of school at
Play Creek in connection with
Wilson McClinton & H. Carrington
It was motioned & seconded that
those who take scholars who do
not reside in said school
shall be held responsible for
scholar or scholars school fees
It is further motioned & seconded
that a book to be kept at & kept in
a book of record for school meeting
meeting School

W. Carrington
Lat. Vial
W. McClinton
School directors

Do by
8 o'clock

Copy of the Proceedings of the first Meeting
At a meeting of the inhabitants
of Flagstaff Neighborhood & Cook Co.
U.S. at the house of C. Wentworth on the
24th day of June 1818 for the purpose of
purchasing & locating a running ground
for said Neighborhood Charles M. Clinton
was appointed Ch. & L. B. Witt Secy.
On Motion it was unanimously Resolved
that a lot of one acre of land be
purchased by C. Wentworth lying immediately
South of the Chicago & St. L. Rail Road
and East of the West line of Section 20
T. 35 N. R. 12 E. at \$40.
On Motion it was further Resolved that
three Sisters be appointed to come into
effect the object of said Meeting namely
Sarah Carroll & Anna M. Clinton & L. B.
Witt was appointed said Sisters it was
also Resolved that said Sisters be empowered to
have said lot of land surveyed, platted
and recorded upon for use as soon as
convenient and to do all acts and dress

Proceedings of 2nd Meeting on Grove Grounds -

At a meeting of the inhabitants of Clay
Bank at the house of E. W. Morris on the 8th day
of July 1858 for the purpose of adopting a Plan
of laying out a burying ground and other purposes
John B. Will was appointed Chairman & H. M. Gentry
Secretary - Several persons for laying out said
burying ground being deominated - the following
Plan was adopted - Making Ninety two Lots, ten
feet by twenty five feet, and one lot for
Burying Masters forty by eighty eight feet, having
either five feet rock of about as plain or rough
as possible -

On Motion it was Resolved that the said
burying ground be enclosed with a common board
fence of plain & pointed with a cap on top and
the posts to be of red cedar. Charcoal & Graph
Viel agree to furnish, each six frames of white
lead and a gallon of oil for painting said fence -

On Motion it was Resolved that the location of said
Grove and Viel be accepted -

On Motion this agent of Adjourned
Some McEntire, Dr. J. B. Will Chas

to locate a burying ground at Hopkinton Cokelotches
Resolving to carry into effect the objects and
titles of said neighborhood with reference to the
aforementioned object, to call meetings of the
inhabitants for the purpose of holding election
to fill vacancies or vacancies that may
occur in the body of Trustees for other
purposes, to be held, subject to form a
Quorum to do business, but any one or
said Board may call meetings of the
inhabitants for any purpose. On motion
it was Resolved that James McConochie
be appointed C. Treasurer & Secretary of
said Board. That duty it shall be to
collect all money due or to become due
for any purpose, and to keep an
account of the same & to pay all money
out upon the orders of the body of trustees
and to keep a journal of the proceedings
of the Board of Trustees, and of the
meetings of the inhabitants, from time
to time and to do all other acts and
things necessary. It was also

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please feel free to contact us at info@lyonsvillecemetary.org with any questions or concerns you have regarding Lyonsville Cemetery. We look forward to hearing from you! Listed below are some questions we have received and our answers that you might find informative:

Q. Can I plant flowers or small shrubs on a grave?

A. We kindly request that your plantings be limited to species that will not spread beyond the immediate gravesite and do not create groundskeeping issues. The Cemetery Board reserves the right to remove overgrown vegetation.

Q. Can I use the watering stations at the Cemetery?

A. Our water stations are there for your use and are available from approximately June to October. Please make sure you turn the water off when you are done and remove any jugs or containers you may have brought with you.

Q. Can I place flowers in vases on a grave?

A. Vases with water are **not** permitted. In order to avoid mosquito infestation and groundskeeping issues receptacles that hold water are not allowed.

Q. Are artificial flowers and other decorations allowed to be placed on graves?

A. Yes. We do request that, if possible, you please remove them in a timely manner. Note that all non-holiday decorations are to be removed from the cemetery by December 1st. Christmas wreaths and decorations are to be removed by February 1st.

Q. Can I place a bench on the grave?

A. Although there are several benches located throughout the cemetery, the Board has made a decision not to allow any additional benches due to associated groundskeeping issues.

Q. How do I make a donation to the Cemetery?

A. First, **THANK YOU** for remembering the cemetery when making charitable gifts and in your estate planning. 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. Any level of support makes a difference and is greatly appreciated! Please make your check out to: **Lyonsville Cemetery Association**. Mail to: Lyonsville Cemetery Association, 6871 Joliet Road, Indian Head Park, IL 60525

Q. I own a grave in the Cemetery but neither I nor any of my family intend to use it. Would the Cemetery buy it back? Can I sell the grave on my own?

A. The Cemetery Board does not buy back graves. If you have proof of ownership (a deed in your name, or a Will or Trust indicating that you inherited the deed) for an unoccupied grave or graves at Lyonsville Cemetery and you want to sell them on your own, you can sell to any interested buyer. However, be aware there usually is no ready market for such sales. Also be cautious as sale ads in the paper and online ads often attract scam artists these days. We recommend finding a buyer through personal contacts, religious organizations, and possibly funeral homes. In the event you are able to find a buyer, there is needed documentation for the sale. You will have to notify the Lyonsville Cemetery Board of the sale and provide us with the existing deed and additionally the name, address, email address, and phone number of the buyer so that we can cancel your current deed and re-issue a new deed to the new owner.

Q. Can I donate my grave(s) back to the Cemetery Association?

A. Yes, if you have proof of ownership (a deed in your name or a Will or Trust indicating that you inherited the deed) you can donate a grave back to the Cemetery Association. And we are always appreciative of your donation! As we are a not-for-profit organization, the donation may be tax deductible to you. Contact your tax advisor for guidance based on your specific situation.

Q. I believe my family has an unused grave(s) at Lyonsville but I cannot find the deed. Can I use it?

A. A deed is needed to bury someone at the Cemetery. The person in possession of the deed has the right to direct the Cemetery Board to bury someone in an unoccupied grave of the deed. If your family deed cannot be located, contact the Cemetery Board to determine who is the recorded owner(s) of the grave(s) per the Cemetery records. Unless specifically devised by a Will or Trust (including reference to the specific lot number, grave number(s) and Cemetery name), a cemetery grave(s) is inherited by the descendent(s) of the named deed owner(s). You will need to work with other members of your family (the legal living descendants of the owner/owners) to reach an agreement on who should be the new named owner(s) of the re-issued deed.

The Cemetery Board then needs to be informed of the agreement by your family. The Cemetery Board will then complete our Missing Deed Document Form which contains background information regarding who originally purchased the deed, date, lot number and grave number(s), current unoccupied grave(s) of the deed, information regarding who are the legal descendent(s) of the owner(s), and your family's agreed upon name of the new owner(s) for the re-issued deed. This completed form will then need to be signed and dated by all the legal living descendants and returned to the Cemetery Board. The Cemetery Board then sends to the agreed upon new owner(s) a copy of that completed form along with the re-issued deed. (Note: even though a deed may be issued in more than one owner's name there is only one deed and it will be sent to only one address. As mentioned previously, it is the person in possession of a deed who has the right to direct the Cemetery Board to bury someone in an unoccupied grave of the deed.)

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

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

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

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!