

LYONSVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

2024 NEWSLETTER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bruce Cady, President

Mark Richel, Vice President

Judy Birmingham, Secretary

Michael Belletete, Treasurer

Sharon Comstock, Trustee

Karen Furlong, Trustee

Matthew George, Trustee

Charles Gerth, Trustee

Beth Pacanowski, 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.)

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.

From when the first acre of our three acre country cemetery was sold from Elijah Wentworth to Lyonsville Church in 1848 to create the Lyonsville Cemetery until the present day, the Lyonsville Cemetery has been the final resting place for generations of area residents. The Lyonsville Cemetery Association purchased the Cemetery from the Church in 1889 and through a volunteer Board of Trustees has, for 135 years, endeavored to be good stewards of the property. We are an independent organization and proud the Cemetery is open to all, regardless of religious affiliation.

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.

2025 Board Meeting Schedule

Meetings begin at 7:00 pm

Tuesday, February 11

Tuesday, May 13

Tuesday, August 12

Tuesday, November 11

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 Updates: In May Laurie Tsukuno resigned from our Board due to increased family obligations. Our sincere thanks to Laurie for serving on the Board from 2016 to 2024. We acknowledge and appreciate Laurie's years of service. Her dedication and energizing spirit will be missed!

In August we were fortunate to welcome a new Board member, Karen Furlong. Karen provided the following remarks for us to share with you regarding her interest in joining the Board. "My extended family, including my parents, are buried at Lyonsville Cemetery. The cemetery was a presence in my life even as a child. My family attended large potluck gatherings in the church basement and to keep us entertained, my father would send us out to the cemetery with a list of names to find to keep us busy during the serious portions of the gathering. Over the years, I've been very impressed by the Board's stewardship of the cemetery and I'm very pleased to be joining 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 the presentation of the American Flag and the flag of each branch of the military, 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! We always look forward to welcoming new attendees to the event (the only exception to that may be the very prevalent and overwhelming cicadas attending in 2024!) 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.

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.

OUR SINCERE THANK YOU

We are extremely grateful for our donors. Since October of 2023 until the printing of this newsletter, we have received donations from the families of: Belletete, Brown, Burke, Both, Hollingsworth, Horan, Joynt, Knollmann, Kruc, Martin, McHale, Meille, Persche, Richel, Robb, Ruting, Schweigert, Sharp, and Warden. Many of our donor families are regular contributors and it is wonderful to see their names again this year. Please know that consideration of Lyonsville Cemetery when making charitable gifts and in your estate planning is **greatly** appreciated!

HONORING OUR PAST

Lyonsville Cemetery has a very long and interesting history which we try to regularly highlight in our newsletter stories. In this edition we are featuring the story of Robert Henry a Cemetery volunteer trustee from the 1900's. In our Cemetery's files there is a copy of an article from the La Grange Citizen of January 28, 1948 which featured his long standing ties to the community and his obituary.

Following are just a few highlights from that article: Robert Patterson Henry was born in Chicago in 1873. He moved with his parents to Lyons Township in 1874 to a homestead on Joliet Road, east of Wolf Road. In the following years Mr. Henry farmed the 400-acre estate. Mr. Henry was a township school trustee. He also served as district school director for District 107. However, his longest tenure of office was that of **trustee of Lyonsville Cemetery from 1905 until his death in 1948**. During that time Mr. Henry had constant detailed knowledge of all operations of the cemetery. It was said that given the name of any lot in the cemetery he could walk right to it without the aid of any plat or map. And per his obituary in the La Grange Citizen, "The pioneer resident has sold more lots for the Cemetery Association than any other person. For many years under his direction, his men have opened graves when necessary for burial purposes. In this capacity and as counselor and friend he has stood at more open graves in Lyonsville cemetery than any other person, minister or layman. He was also instrumental in originating the endowment fund of the cemetery." That endowment fund continues today as our current Care Fund.

From the beginning of the Lyonsville Cemetery Association in 1889 to the present day, the volunteer members of the Board have tried to always be good stewards of the property. Many dedicated men and women have served as trustees. Mr. Henry is an exceptional example of our valued trustees.

MONUMENT REPAIRS

We continue our on-going project to repair various headstones that have deteriorated over time. In 2024 an additional 13 monuments were straightened and two other monuments had pillar sections that were reset. The past years of our restoration project have resulted in over 140 monuments undergoing dramatic improvements. Our continuing preservation effort is important in keeping our historic cemetery well maintained.

PERHAPS YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED.....

Perhaps you might have noticed that there are new signs posted to each of the Cemetery's roadway poles that read *"Caution please stay on the roadways – There are very old unmarked graves near the roadways and they can collapse under the weight of even the smallest car. Thank you!"*

This is to address the issue of visitors either parking a car or driving off the roadways of the Cemetery. We recognize the possibility that when visiting the Cemetery another vehicle could potentially block your path. Please ask the other driver to move their vehicle rather than driving around it. Also, when making plans for a burial in the Cemetery, inform the Funeral Home that they need to announce that anyone accompanying the funeral procession to the Cemetery is requested to please insure they park their car on the Cemetery's roadway and not pull off on the side of the Cemetery roadway. Should they need to leave early, or not want to wait for cars to clear out the roadway after the graveside service, then when the possession arrives at the Cemetery, they need to park their car in the parking lot attached to the Cemetery and walk to the gravesite. The Cemetery is a small rural cemetery and it is a very short walk.



Thanks very much for your cooperation in helping the Board to address this issue. Also, thanks to Board member Michael Belletete for sourcing and donating the signs, and members Mark Richel and Bruce Cady for installing them.

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 contact your funeral home or the Cemetery Board to obtain pricing at the time of need.

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

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please feel free to contact us at info@lyonsvillecemetery.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 add a picture (or DAR sticker) to the headstone?

A. Yes a picture or DAR sticker can be added to the headstone but we ask that it be affixed to the headstone and not a stick in the ground that could potentially be stolen or damaged by the lawnmower.

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? DO YOU DESIRE TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST? ANY COMMENTS/INPUT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR BOARD?

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. Thanks!

Name (please print) _____

Name (please print) _____

Any comments/input for our Board?

☐ Please check this box should you desire to be removed from our mailing list.