

2/15/15

Mike Messar former Funeral Director of Messar Funeral Home:

The original cemetery called Evergreen, which is still here and being used, was only formed around the late depression era, about the late 20's. There was a cemetery here before that which was monitored by the multiple funeral homes in our area but I know nothing about it.

That these funeral directors many times sold the same lot to different people and when some one died, the fight was on as to who buried someone in a lot. Mike also said in the winter people would go to the cemetery and bury their dead right in the road area because they didn't have good access to the grave site areas under the snow that had accumulated.

Families were supposed to cut the grass for their family plots and many never bothered because they were too busy with daily life. There was a guy named Potter who was the original sextant and was responsible for cutting the area and was paid \$10 per month.

Mike said during the logging days, people would come up here as transient loggers and when they got paid, they would occasionally get robbed and killed and their bodies were covered with logs in the saw mill areas. During the winter nobody would notice these people missing because they weren't well known and didn't really have connections to the area so people would assume they moved on. Come Spring they would start up the mills and the rotting bodies would start to smell and they would find 5 to 10 dead people under the logs. Many times they would not know their names and have to bury them at the cemetery using a nickname or nothing at all..

Jane Huempfner, Member of the Evergreen Cemetery Board:

There was an 85 year old woman who for years always came to a grave and planted a single rose at the headstone and then knelt down to pay her respects to her former boyfriend who had passed away. Little did she know that at the time of his burial, the casket is set with the foot of the person located where the headstone was placed. She was told eventually and she smiled and said after all these years, if he had known I was doing this at his feet, he would have laughed.

Jane Huempfner also passed on a story of her going to the cemetery to check out some grave markers when she stepped onto a grave and sunk down to her thighs from the collapse of the grave site. They did not put vaults in the early years that would have prevented the cave from collapsing thru decomposition and she accidentally stepped on a grave that was ready to collapse due to the decomposition that had occurred. She was pretty mortified, unhurt and stayed on the board anyway.

Jane also indicated that families purchased multiple lots with the intention of only burying one person within the space as a tribute. Then there were families that purchased several lots and buried a group of people without marking who they were, only that they were family members. Several plots are set up like this where it is unknown how many family members are buried or who they are. They have a grid layout of all the sites but because of the lack of older records, they cannot always confirm the exact location of someone who was buried before the records burned in the fire.

There is a story of a paupers section but it is not documented in today's current records. They use a person named Gerald Walters who can divine out grave sites similar to how they find water using a

divining rod. He uses one metal pole and it turns when he finds a site. He has been very accurate in locating graves in unmarked areas of the cemetery.

There is an expansion to the Evergreen cemetery on the west which was donated by Marinette County. There is some speculation that there are already unmarked graves on this property but it is yet to be determined. The current open space they are developing is on the North and has extensive room for growth yet.

Tami Schlies, Evergreen Cemetery Record Keeper. Informed me about the fire of the oldest records and the location of the articles of incorporation that were taken out in the 70's and are now held at the bank.