

The natural result was another public meeting held at the Knox Hardware Store on April 4, 1928, at which it was decided to incorporate the LaGrange Cemetery Association and thus form a permanent organization. The first members of this board, and the ones who served for many years were as follows: O. N. Lovercheck, president; E. L. Chamberlain, secretary; K. G. Tremain, treasurer; and C. B. Kessler, Fred Smith, K. Knox, Frank E. Jones, and W. A. Craton were elected as the first Board of Directors. Later E. L. Chamberlain was authorized to approach the Wyoming Land Department on the proposition of buying ten acres of State Select Land where the present cemetery is now located. This land is described as the S E<sup>4</sup> S W<sup>4</sup>, of S W<sup>4</sup> of Section 1-Tp. 19, Range 61 W. Due to the provisions of the State Constitution no state land can be sold for less than \$10 per acre, and the land must be duly advertised and sold to the highest bidder. Of course there was only one bidder.

As money was another essential of a transaction of this kind, involving the advertising, purchase and plotting of the ground, as well as fencing and later removing the twelve bodies from the church acreage to their final resting place, a joint note for \$500 was secured with the signatures of the following persons: The LaGrange Cemetery Assn. by O. N. Lovercheck, president; K. G. Tremain, secretary; endorsers, E. L. Chamberlain, John E. Craton, F. N. Smith, W. S. Miskimins, and F. E. Jones, and the long chain of events leading up to the first actual burial there was set in motion. For the initial expense

of the State Land Board, O. N. Lovercheck advanced \$30 later repaid from the loan.

On April 30, 1928, the secretary applied to the State Health Board, through the Bureau of Vital Statistics, for permits to remove the twelve bodies from their present resting place to a new cemetery, and W. B. Longwith, a funeral director of Torrington was employed to do this work.

During this eventful month, the U.P.R.R. established surveying camps at LaGrange and began the construction of the Egbert cutoff. The addition to the town of LaGrange had been plotted and lots were selling fast. The land from which this addition was taken was owned by D. T. Griffin of LaGrange, then 81 years old, and he entered into the spirit of the pioneer project with a will, but the excitement proved too much for his advanced age and he suffered a stroke, dying a few hours later.

The problem now arose when to bury "Uncle Dave" and since we had already chosen the spot for the new cemetery, we proceeded, with characteristic certainty, to place him, as the first to be interred in the place where he now lies although we did not acquire title to the land for some months later. The leader of a U.P. surveying crew, Alex Crawford, volunteered to run off the lines of the ten acres, and to select, by survey and intention, a spot that would conform to the plotting of the ground, at a future date and he was 100% correct.

Mention should be made here of the great personal interest O. N. Lovercheck took in this spot. It was a result of his personal efforts that the evergreen trees now growing so beautifully were planted there, and during their infancy he saw to it that they were watered regularly during the dry months. If there was not sufficient funds in the treasury to pay for the watering he would pay for it out of his own pocket, which he often did. The strip for the chinese elms, and the first trees themselves were placed there through his efforts. His tragic death by fire, resulting from a gasoline explosion, was mourned by every member of the community, and by friends for miles around. When a threatening storm cloud, accompanied by much lightening and thunder rolled up in the north just as the body was being lowered into the grave, it seemed a fitting finale to the man whose life had been so full of good and of tumult. The present watering system complete, is a public tribute to the man who never forgot a friend or refused an argument. A little verse, as follows, headed his obituary:

"Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath;  
And stars to set, but all--  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, Oh Death!"

There have been victims of other tragic deaths buried here, too. W. S. Miskimins, who was burned to death. Dempsey Thomas, who climbed of his saddle horse and lay down beside it just as the morning sun was breaking over the eastern hills. Harry Lovercheck who died instantly by being kicked, or jerked by a horse. George Phillips, an old Indian fighter who died practically with his boots on. John McComsey, whose last words

were, "Raise the window, Mother," and Beulah Arnold, whose last words to her husband were, "This is it," and Clinton Troyer who was drowned in Horse Creek, and Jack Cooper, a lad of seventeen, who also was drowned just a few days ago. <sup>1940</sup> Another tragedy that saddened the community was the death of one of the Schindlecker twins by being knocked down and run over by a school bus driven by her father. Mrs. Nichols, known as "Mother Nichols" who nursed half the community during her life. Milton Gildersleeve found dead in his pasture, and Claude Grim who was dead in his own home six weeks before being found.

And so the story goes. Both the young and the old; the infant who had hardly breathed the breath of life, and the aged who had far outlived the Biblical age of three score years and ten. Youth in their teens and young matrons just beginning to enjoy the fruits of happy married life. The tiny Mexican baby whose parents could not understand a word of the brief, graveside services, conducted by this writer, but broke down when the little homemade casket was lowered into the earth.

This story will never be complete. Each year will add to its unwritten history; Many of us in the twilight of life will answer the grim call very soon. Others in the bloom of youth will be intermingled, and side by side we will lie there in eternal quietness, awaiting the resurrection morn.

It has been said that the civilization of a nation is shown by the way it takes care of its old, and its dead. On this basis, we rate very high. We may fight and fude like school girls, but when an emergency, or a disaster arises

affecting one of our number we arise to the occasion as no other people do. We have faith in the new generation. We believe it will take up where we leave off and carry forward to even better goals.

I should not close this article without mentioning the present Association officers who are doing a grand job. They are: Arthur McGill, president; Cliff Noyes, secretary; and Gail Tremain, treasurer.

Also, a brief tribute should be paid to that grand old lady who for many years was about the town's only citizen; who had lived here since God put grass on the hillside and water in the creeks; who knew more local history than will ever be written; who served as our postmistress for so many long years, and who would slap the face of an impertinent young post office inspector with the same enjoyment and enthusiasm as she would befriend a crying babe, but who lacked only a few weeks of living long enough to see the first locomotive come to LaGrange--Mrs. Martha Miskimins, fondly called "Mrs. Winnie" by all.

I am indebted to many records and many people for the facts contained herein. The dates are approximately correct. There is a variance, if any, of not more than a day or two. I, too, am one among autumns seared and yellow leaves, that soon will be shaken by the winter's chilly blast, and, like all mortal men "fold my tent like the Arab, and as silently steal away." For me, there is no sadness--no regrets. The twilight is beautiful and there are no clouds in my evening sky.

For more than fifty years I have enjoyed summers heats  
and winters cold and snow. When the clock on the mantel  
strikes twelve, I shall be glad to go.

The cemetery plan and plotting was done by L. C. Huntley,  
a licensed engineer.

-----Earl Chamberlain