

REPORT OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION  
1976-1977

In organizing this report for the Town Cemetery it was felt that a review of history is in order.

With the above in mind, the following is a list of the Town Burial plots of which only one is in use now and the records for this one are somewhat scattered prior to 1920.

(1) A small plot (possibly 1/4 acre) on the Old Windsor road, at the time of usage was mostly the Cady family who lived in the area. No records are available.

(2) A small plot (possibly 3/4 acre ) on the Fassell road, going South past the old Moon farm. No records are available for this plot.

(3) A small plot (possibly 1 acre) along Route 8, South of (Sometimes referred to as the South Cemetery) the old Cormier farm. No records are available for this plot.

(4) The main Town Cemetery now in use is of course the one known as the "Maple Street Cemetery" and it consists of three parts as follows:-

(a) The oldest part, which consists of approximately one acre facing along the old Dalton Road. Records are not available for this area, it was in use previous to 1860.

(b) The newer part which consists of about 18 acres of land and which abuts to part "a" above, was purchased by the Town in 1860 from Mr. Lyman Payne. This transaction is recorded in the registry of deeds book 217, page 117.

(c) The newest part which consists of about 1-1/4 acres which abuts to part "b" above was the result of a grant to the Town of Hinsdale from the C.W.Curtiss estate about 1910. This grant was accepted by a vote of the Town

Meeting of 1910 and the transaction is recorded in the registry of deeds book 353, page 509.

The records of activities are scattered and difficult to follow from 1860 thru about 1920, they then became better organized thru 1945 at which time a new system was organized and from then on are up to date.

The original Town Board of Directors for the Cemetery, consisted of seven (7) men appointed by the Selectmen. This seven (7) man Board of Directors was established by the Town meeting of 1860, in that vote was a clause to empower the Board to be self sustaining in case of resignation, death, etc. of its members. This Commission organized the usable part of the 18 acres, developed the area and supervised the activities of the Cemetery.

For several years many owners of lots in the Maple Street Cemetery had been desirous of organizing a fund for the purpose of beautifying and to care for the Cemetery. In 1901 a group assembled and established a Trustee group consisting of five(5) men. Previous to this many lot owners were caring for their own lots. This group of five men formed the "Trusteeship", with the responsibility of collecting contributions ~~for~~ from who ever wished to ~~xxxxx~~ contribute, to deposit this money in Savings banks and use only the interest therefrom. This group worked with the Town Commission at all times. The Town Commission at all times being the authority as to what was to be done. Monies from the sale of lots and that available from the Trustee Fund

was used to develop the drives and lot layouts. A caretaker was appointed to open graves, cut trees, mow lawns and in general care for the cemetery, his work time was controlled by what money was available. The opening of graves and foundation work was paid from a Town Appropriation. The funds of the Trustee Account have increased over the years from contributions and grants from estates, details of which are to be found elsewhere in this report. The available money from the Trustee Account covers a very small part of the operating costs in today's economy and the Town Appropriation must be relied on to maintain reasonable standards.

The Trustee group is now being dissolved and the monies are to be set up in a "Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund", the responsibility of the Town Cemetery Commission, this is a revolving account. A report on investments, receipts and disbursements is included in the Annual Town Report. The "Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund" set up by the Cemetery Commission is fully controlled by the Commission. The one restriction to the fund is that all returns from invested monies must be used in the Maple Street Cemetery only, since it was funded and added to by lot owners of this cemetery.

The cemetery is operated with monies from the "Perpetual Care Fund" and the Town Appropriation. All monies received from sale of lots, grave openings, foundation work and what ever else is deposited with the Town Treasurer, and is part of the Treasurer's report in the Annual Town Report. This money is used as part of the appropriation the following year. All monies received as contributions or grants from estates are deposited in Savings Banks and recorded in the "Perpetual Care Fund."

The Tomb located at the North end of the Cemetery was built under the direction of the Town Cemetery Commission with an appropriation from the Town in the year 1872.

The Stone Arch entrance at the front of the cemetery (facing Maple Street) was built under the direction of the Town Cemetery Commission with money from a grant of the C.W.Curtiss estate in the year 1911.

To days operation of the Town Cemetery is carried on with a seven member Cemetery Commission which by authority of the original vote in the Town meeting of March 12, 1860 constituting the commission is self sustaining of its members.

Quoting from the minutes of that Town meeting of March 12, 1860 which minutes are in the Town Clerks record book #3, is that part confirming the above:

"That the Board be empowered to fill vacancies made by the resignation, death, or removal of any of its members and that ~~XXX~~ four members be necessary to constitute a quorum for transaction of business."

In addition to the above it has been the practice to advise the Selectmen of any new members for their records.

The Commission directs all activities of the Cemetery, hiring people as necessary at current rates to care for the grounds and prepare for burials.

The layout of burial plots, sale of lots and arranging for burials is handled directly by a member of the Cemetery Commission.

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All records of activities, updating the prints of the cemetery layout, and preparing the payroll is handled by a member of the Cemetery Commission.

At the present time the Cemetery Commission is caring for approximately nine (9) acres, this does not include about two and one half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) acres in the North end which in due time must be prepared for use. At present the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres gets one mowing a year to keep the brush down. The drives thru the cemetery have suffered greatly the past several years, their deterioration is such that they should be regraded and surfaced. Estimates have been provided for a regrading and oil sealed surface, however new thinking has pointed to retaining the country look and stay with a graveled surface, with this thinking smaller areas can be worked on each year.

During the fiscal year 1976-1977 there were seven (7) burials in the grounds and seven (7) burial plots were sold, this is a little below our ten year average of ten (10) burials and twelve (12) grave sites sold.

The developed area of the grounds is practically all committed and as a last resort before developing the North end for use, the Cemetery Commission has layed out a section in the very front end to the left of the entrance for use. This new area will be sold as single graves only and all grave markers must be flush to the ground, no monuments above ground will be allowed.

There is a need in order to prepare for the future, to develop the two and one half acres in the North end of the cemetery. With this development it might be wise to include, or at least consider a new entrance gate some place along the Old Dalton Road, possibly up thru the ravine which goes down from in back of the green tool house to the Old Dalton Road. Previous to building the Stone Arch on Maple Street, this was the entrance

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Traffic condition the way it is on Maple Street and the proximity of the cemetery entrance gate to the junction of Maple Street and Old Dalton Road, a serious traffic hazard exists.

With existing available developed land there can be no large burial plots sold, as mentioned above all that is available is the front end of which only single burial plots are available.

In developing the North end, (a plan has been prepared) it is necessary to do a complete regrading of the land, particularly, this step is necessary to remove the many large stones which may be seen out-cropping over the surface, also to grade the drives, after this operation the work of applying top soil, seeding and lot layouts can be done in smaller stages as time demands.

The immediate needs in the maintenance of the grounds involves the drives, the removal of several large dead trees and the continued heavy trimming of many of the other large trees, along with much brush which continually grows in. The Tomb must be repaired and painted and many areas of the lawns must be regraded and seeded. Also there are many older grave stones which have fallen over or become loose which should be reset, not all of these can be repaired, particularly the older marble which have fallen over and broken up. as far as is possible, for those which have broken up, the sod is cut out and the slabs put together flush in the ground.

Vandalism has been at a minimum, however some activity appears to have occurred during the Summer late evenings and night, to reduce this as much as possible, the Commission agreed to close the entrance gate about 8:00P.M. and open it again each day at 8:00A.M. Before closing the gate required a trip thru the cemetery to be sure no one would get locked in. Mr. William Munn volunteered to do this duty at no cost to the Town and this was done the later part of July, thru August to about the middle of September, it proved to be very successful and the Commission wishes to extend

Its thanks to Mr. Munn for this service.

While all efforts are made to keep the costs of maintenance and operating to a minimum and keep within funds available from the Town Appropriation and available monies from the Perpetual Care Fund, the commission is faced with cost increases as are all other departments in Town. The Perpetual Care Fund does not increase enough each year to offset increase costs and therefor the Town appropriation must be relied on more and more each year, also each year as the cemetery grows more area must be cared for. The increase in the appropriation request this year allows some money to start a program for resurfacing the drives which as mentioned before have been neglected for some time. The costs of services and sale of lots have been increased this past year to be more realistic in to days economy.

The deed issued for burial privilege includes some of the rules and regulations to be observed in the Town Cemetery (Maple Street), Experience has dictated that others were needed and they are included here with this report.

In concluding this report the Cemetery Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the Selectmen, Finance Committee and other Officials of other Departments for their understanding and cooperation in the operation of the cemetery also to Mr. William Munn and family for the many hours of work they have put in to the grounds to maintain its beauty, many hours of which were put in at no charge to the Town.

The Town Cemetery Commission

By W.E.Morgan

# PUBLIC BEQUESTS IN CURTISS WILL

## Former Hinsdale Man Leaves \$11,000 To Town

### GIFTS TO PITTSFIELD

The will of Clinton W. Curtiss, late of this city, was filed for probate court today by Lawyer Charles H. Wright. It is understood he left an estate of \$40,000. He makes these bequests.

To cousin, Alice Pierce of New Haven, \$1,000.

To cousin, Wilson Pierce of Connecticut, \$200 and his "high boy" bureau and tip table.

To cousin, Elbridge Pierce, \$200 and antique cherry bureau, two old-fashioned gilt framed mirrors, warming pan and foot stove.

To three cousins, Alice, Wilson and Elbridge Pierce, all watches and jewelry to be divided among them.

To the Hinsdale public library entire collection of mineral and Indian relics provided they shall be installed and maintained in the Hinsdale library building. The executors are authorized to expend not more than \$150 in providing a case for the collection for exhibition in the library; to properly label the case and collection.

To each of the children of a cousin, Mrs. S. E. Pierce of Dayton, Wash., \$300.

To Mrs. Daniel Leffingwell of Norwich, Conn., \$500, furniture, books, household goods and all other contents of the house at No. 39 Pomeroy avenue, except such articles as have been otherwise disposed of.

To the cemetery corporation of Indianola, Warren Co. Iowa, where his wife, Louisa E. Curtiss is buried, \$500 for perpetual care of the lot.

TO PITTSFIELD CHURCHES, \$2,500  
To the Second Congregational church of Pittsfield, \$500.

To James Hosmer, W. Ambrose Taylor, E. Hubbard Goodrich, Lewis B. Brague and James B. Kittredge, trustees of the Hinsdale cemetery, \$1,000 to be invested and the income to be used for the care of the Hinsdale cemetery on Maple street.

To the South Congregational church of Pittsfield, \$2,000.

To the First Congregational church of Hinsdale, \$5,000.

To executors of the will, \$5,000 to be expended upon the erection of a strong gate or entrance at the entrance of the Hinsdale cemetery, where his brothers and sister are buried, the gate to be of such size and material and

style of architecture as the executors shall deem appropriate. He requests that they consult with the cemetery trustees about the gate, it being my desire to provide the cemetery with a handsome and enduring entrance. It is my desire that the foregoing legacy of a gate shall be considered as the joint gift of my deceased brother and my sister, Arthur F. Curtiss and Sarah S. Curtiss and myself."

All the residue of the estate is given to the House of Mercy hospital.

As the executors of the will Mr. Curtiss names James Hosmer of Hinsdale and Charles H. Wright of this city. The will was made on June 11th, 1904 and witnessed by the late Thomas A. Oman, Jonathan Haight and William Turtle.

The relatives mentioned in the petition for allowance of the will are cousins:

Alice R. Pierce of New Haven, Wilson Pierce of Waterbury, Elbridge Pierce of Waterbury, heirs of Francis Pierce, state of Oregon, deceased cousin; Will Ross Pierce of Chicago, Helen A. Pierce of Newton, N. J.; Mary Pierce of Newton; Anna Leffingwell of Norwich and Alfred E. Curtiss of Norwich.

Instead of James Hosmer, Edson Bonney of this city petitions with Charles H. Wright to be appointed an executor of the will.

#### CODICIL OF AUGUST 13th

In a codicil dated August 13th, 1904, Mr. Curtiss confirms his will in all respects with these exceptions:

To Alfred Curtiss of Norwich, Conn., \$500 and in common with Anna Leffingwell one undivided half of all books, furniture, household goods and contents of his house on Pomeroy avenue. A legacy of \$500 in addition is also given to Anna Leffingwell. James Hosmer informed Mr. Curtiss that he would prefer not to act as executor and the testator named Mr. Bonney.

#### WHO MR. CURTISS WAS

Mr. Curtiss died at his Pomeroy avenue home on Sunday night. He was a native of Hinsdale, where for years his father, Fred Curtiss was a station agent on the Western and later the Boston & Albany railroad. Later his son, Arthur Curtiss was station agent there succeeding his father.

The Curtiss family lived in the brick house opposite the mills of the Hinsdale Woolen Co., where Supt. P. A. Clogher resides now. Clinton W. Curtiss was the last of his family, cousins being the nearest relatives. He survived three brothers and one sister.

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