

Get To Know Your (Quiet) Neighbors: The Wheatland Township Cemetery Story



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CHAPTER ONE

Why Write A Book About A Cemetery?

All across the United States, cemeteries are commonplace. There are literally thousands of them, located in cities, towns, and rural areas ...

Cemeteries come in all shapes and sizes, from large and expansive to small and compact. Many are active, while many are largely forgotten. Sometimes, cemeteries are abandoned - left to the mercy of time and the elements.

All cemeteries have something in common, though - a story to tell. It may or may not be of interest to everyone, but it's a story nonetheless. And no good story should go untold ...

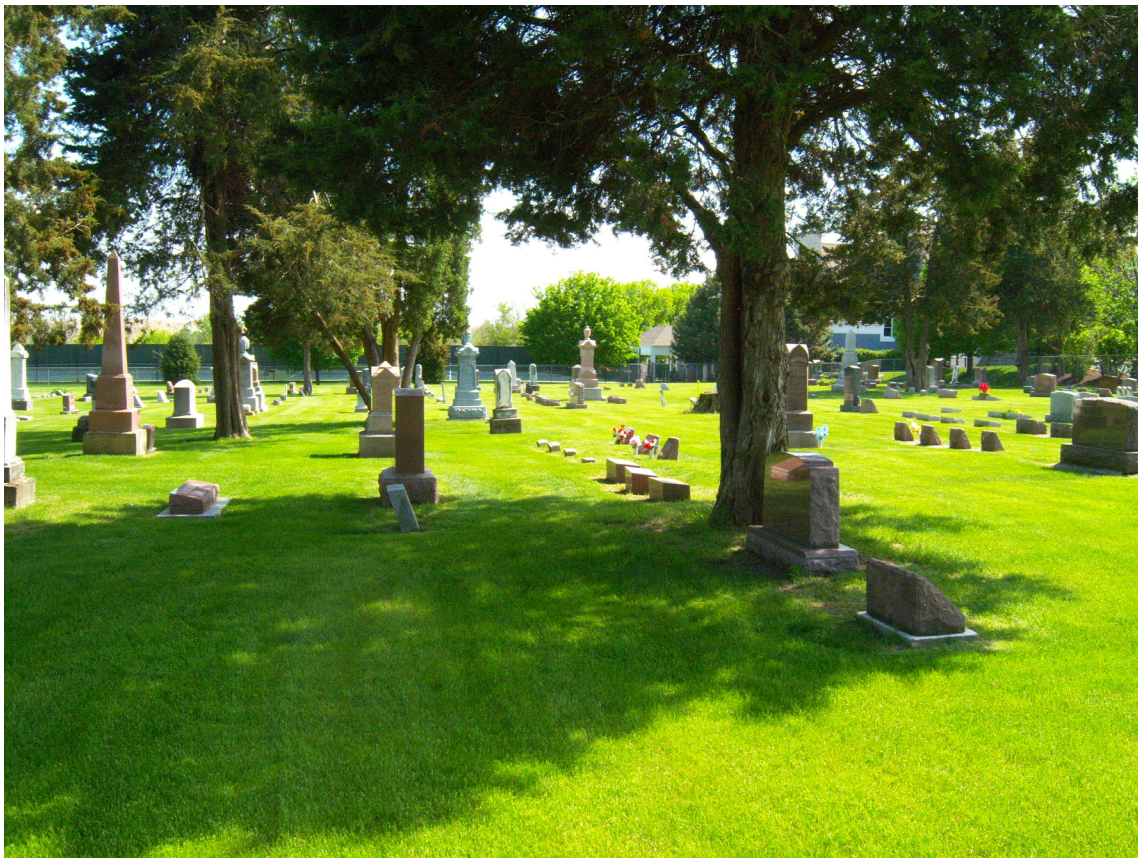
Stroll around the grounds of any cemetery and the first thing you'll see are monuments. Some are ornate - others stark and plain. Stop and think for a moment what each monument represents – a person, a life, a unique story.



Cemeteries are so much more than stone monuments, though. They're a place where families gather, where loved ones are remembered, where veterans are honored. They're peaceful places which allow us to pause and reflect.

A cemetery's story broadens and grows with each new addition to its ranks. The story weaves a common thread of lives lived, memories held dear, and love shared. Cemeteries serve their purpose by honoring and respecting those who came before us – those who profoundly impacted our own lives.

And so it is with the Wheatland Township Cemetery, located in south Naperville, Illinois on 104th Street between Plainfield-Naperville and Book Roads. This historic cemetery dates back to 1836 and is the final resting place for over 700 area residents.



Many of those are rest here were quite well known in the community. Others, perhaps less so. Undoubtedly though, they all offered their own unique life story.

It stands to reason then – the Wheatland Township Cemetery, like all cemeteries, is a collection of stories.

While the intention of this book is not to tell 700+ stories, we are proud to chronicle one larger, aggregate story. It's a compelling combination of history, service to the community, dedication, memories, respect, and a forward focus. Simply put, it's a story that deserves to be told ...

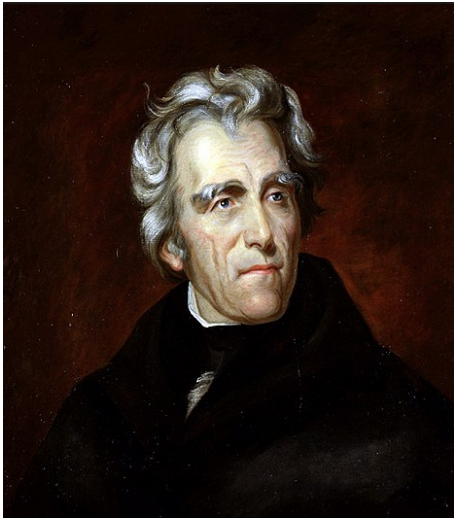
Welcome to the story of the Wheatland Township Cemetery!



CHAPTER TWO

Back To 1836

The United States was a mere 60 years old in 1836. Arkansas joined the Union in June of that year, becoming the 25th state. Andrew Jackson, our 7th President, occupied The White House ...



Andrew Jackson, 7th U.S.
President

Illinois, for the most part, was sparsely populated. Statehood had arrived a scant eighteen years prior, in 1818. Chicago officially became a city earlier in the decade and began its long, storied history as a trade, commerce, and population center.

In outlying areas of Chicago, new settlements and small communities began to take shape, namely west of the city. Those arriving from eastern locales found wide tracts of land and rich soil, ideal for farming and raising families ...

Walking or driving around Naperville today, it's hard to imagine the landscape of an earlier time. Today's subdivisions and shopping plazas stand on the former sites of homesteads, farms, and open land where Native Americans once roamed.



Native American Arrowheads Found Near the
Cemetery

The year 1836 marked the birth of many prominent individuals whose influence is felt to this day. Among them were renowned American painter Winslow Homer, German-American brewing magnate Frederick Pabst, and noted American businessman / inventor Milton Bradley ...

That year also saw the deaths of Betsy Ross, designer of the first American flag, and famed American frontiersman Davy Crockett. The Battle of the Alamo raged in far away Texas territory ...



Brown Family Monument

Back in Illinois, in a locale now known as Wheatland Township, the Brown family also mourns the passing of their two year old son Henry. Henry is buried in a small plot of farmland a few hundred yards north of the present day DuPage River.

Today, Henry Brown is best remembered as the very first burial in what has come to be known as the historic Wheatland Township Cemetery ...

CHAPTER THREE

Growing To 6.1

With the burial of young Henry Brown in 1836, the fledgling roots of a community cemetery were planted.

Over the immediate ensuing years, the little plot of farmland became known as an appropriate and accessible location to bury departed area residents and honor their memories ...

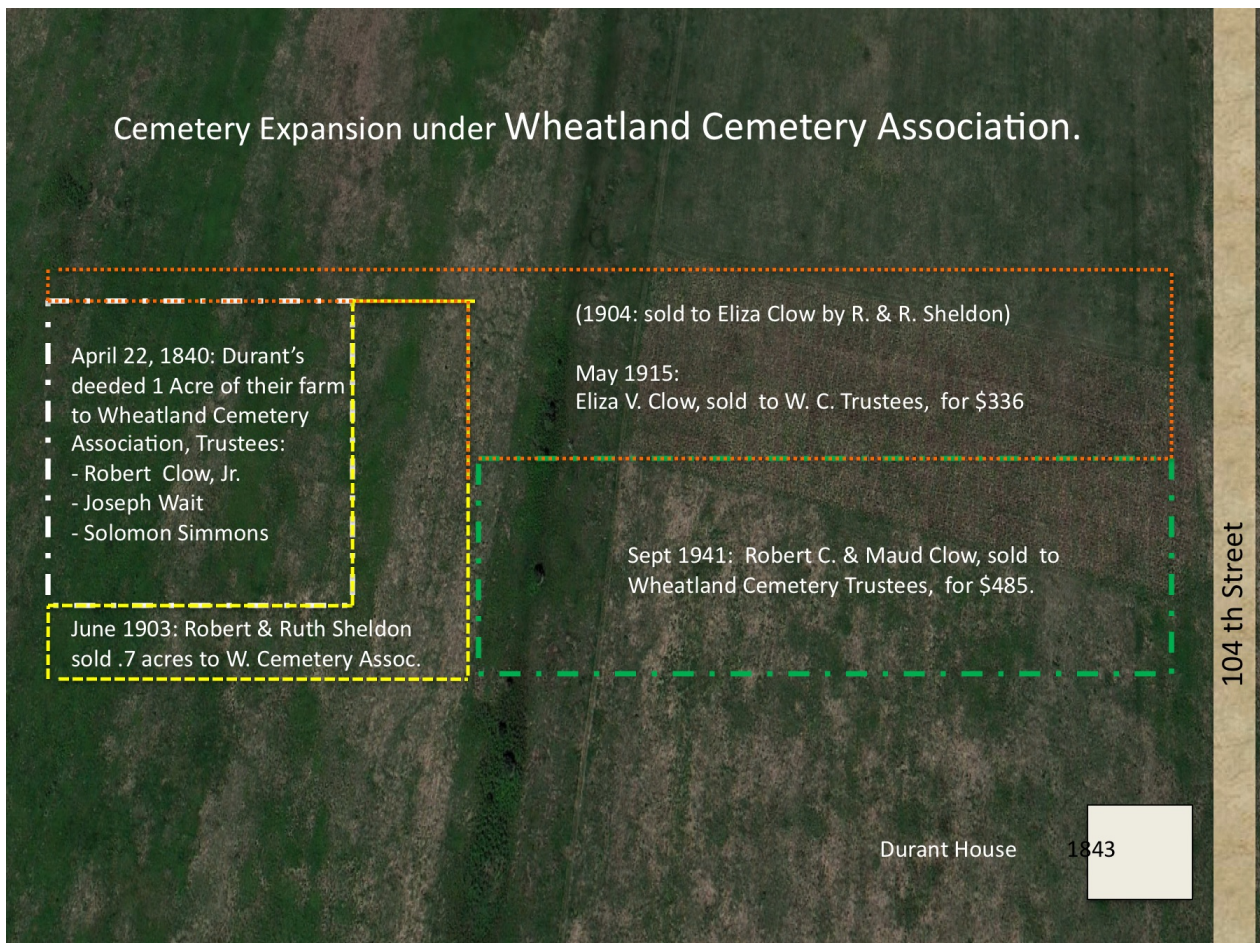
As more and more burials occurred, it became clear to like minded area settlers to designate the locale as an “official” cemetery. Thus, in 1840, the wheels were set in motion ...



On April 22nd, area residents Edward T. and Sally Ann Durant deeded a small piece of land to the newly appointed trustees of the Wheatland Cemetery Association. The three initial trustees were Robert Clow Jr., Joseph B. Wait, and Solomon Simmons.

Regular meetings of the Cemetery Association were held throughout these early years, with rotating trustee responsibilities divided among interested area residents. Back then, the cemetery was typically referred to as the “graveyard”, a common term in the 19th Century. At some point in ensuing years, it became known as the cemetery, which continues to this day ...

Over time as needs stipulated, the cemetery’s footprint grew. As you’ll see on the below image, land was either acquired or donated in appropriate parcels from adjacent land owners. The most recent acquisition occurred in 1941, with the sale of land from the Clow family to the Cemetery Association ...



From a tiny piece of land to the present 6.1 acre footprint, the cemetery has been a continual presence in the community for well over 180 years.



Let's explore the long, rich history of the Wheatland Township Cemetery ...

CHAPTER FOUR

Then To Now: The Cemetery's History

The Wheatland Township Cemetery has always been community focused, from its humble beginnings before the Civil War up to the present day.

Going through the cemetery's old records (which have been meticulously maintained over the years), you'll find ample evidence of cooperation, community spirit, and service above self ...

Before outlining the cemetery's full story, let's examine one such instance of a community "pulling together" ...

The year was 1915. The cemetery, now well established, was in need of care and maintenance. In search of much needed funds, the cemetery trustees needed to look no further than their neighbors.

WHEATLAND CEMETERY			
CONTRIBUTORS			
In consideration of the benefits to be derived we promise to pay on or before April 1, 1915, to the Wheatland Cemetery Association, the sum set opposite our respective names, for the purpose of improving and maintaining the cemetery situated in the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 14, Twp. 37 N. Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian, Will County, Illinois:			
George Boardman	\$200.00	James Patterson	\$100.00
Mrs. E. and M.J. Patterson	200.00	Gordon Brothers	100.00
Thomas Clow	200.00	George P. Mather	100.00
James Clow	200.00	David Sillar	100.00
John B. Clow	200.00	Laraina J. Irwin	100.00
Eliza V. Clow	200.00	Est. Joshua E. Mather	100.00
F. W. Stewart	200.00	Edward Levee	100.00
W. D. Boughton	200.00	Florence R. Ducker	100.00
Charles Firestein	200.00	William D. Patterson	100.00
H. B. Grommon	200.00	R. J. Patterson	100.00
John W. Patterson	200.00	John Patterson	100.00
William Day family	200.00	Adam S. Patterson	100.00
Charles Farquhar	200.00	Charles Nye Thompson	100.00
Irving Goodrich	125.00	Margaret W. Schmidt	100.00
Mrs. D. Patterson	100.00	Daniel Birkett	100.00

The image here details a record of contributors to cemetery leadership's outreach efforts to improve and maintain the cemetery. Many of the family names will be instantly familiar to you, even today ... names like Patterson, Clow, Boughton, Grommon, and more.

The tangible commitment to the cemetery marked a proud moment for those families, as well as our historical story. Note the amounts contributed ... \$200 was a princely sum in 1915!

Stroll the cemetery's grounds today and you'll notice two distinct "sections". The southern (back) end is commonly referred to as the "old" section. This is the original part of the cemetery and here you'll find the resting place of little Henry Brown and many of the original settlers and contributors mentioned above ...

The north section, closer to the front gates and 104th Street, is known as the "new" section. This section is really not new per se, but it became necessary when the original section began to fill ...



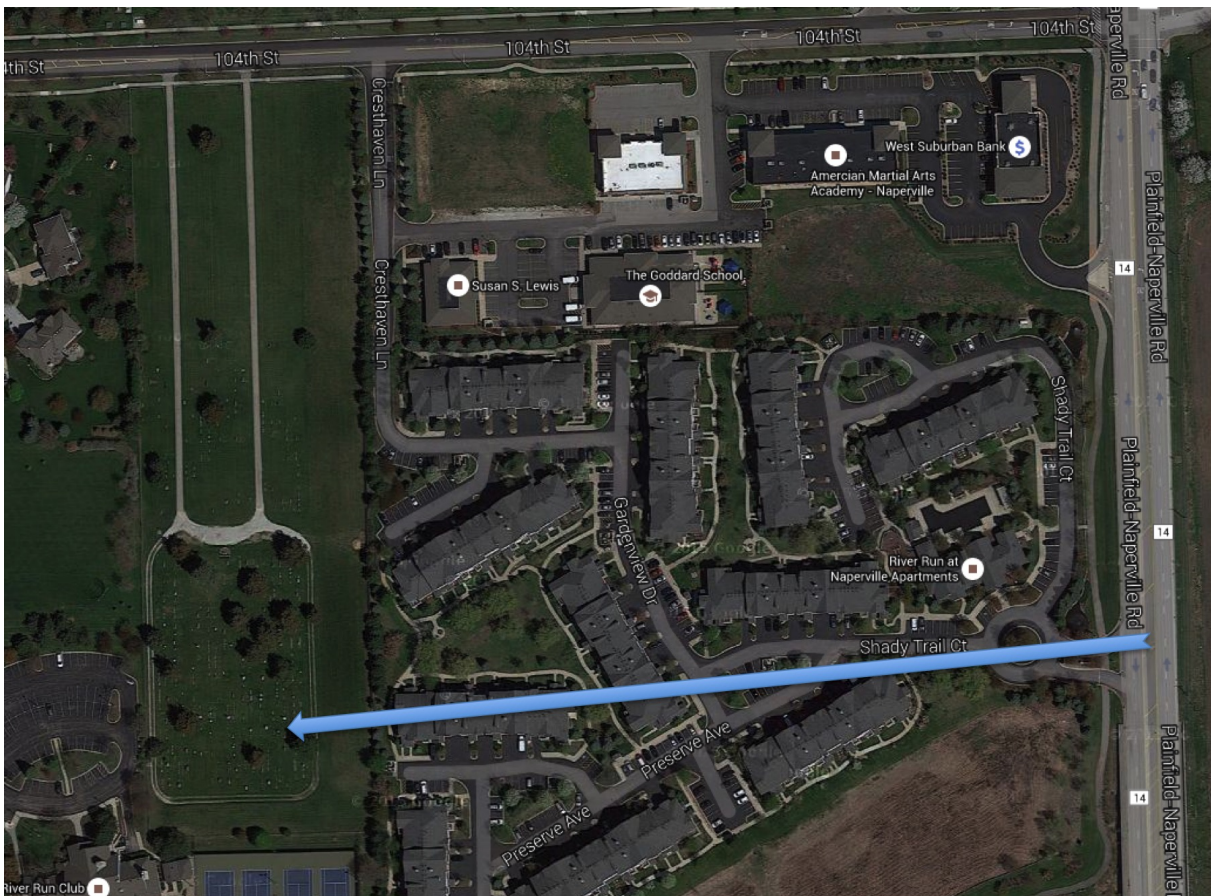
Looking NE Toward the Cemetery's Newer Section

The new, or north section's first burials took place in the late 1930's, so even our "new" section is approaching 100 years of service to the community ...

You'll also notice three access roads as you traverse the grounds. First is a gravel road encircling the old section. The second is the paved road which circles around the newer north section, and the third is an unpaved road along the eastern edge of the cemetery's grounds.

Let's explore a bit of history of all three roads ...

The original (south) road dates back well over 100 years – back to when the automobile was new. At one time, access to the cemetery was via a road connecting with Plainfield-Naperville Road to the east. That road, long since gone, cut directly through the current site of the adjacent River Run Apartments.



Path of Original Cemetery Access Road

You'll also note the original road has never been paved ... it is still crushed gravel. Ground conditions in this part of the cemetery don't allow for paving, and truth be told, there's a certain amount of historical ambiance at stake ...



The Gravel Road in the Original Old Section

The paved road circling the newer north section has been present for decades. To meet today's current needs, a new east spur road was installed by the Wheatland Township Highway Department, who also provide maintenance to the grounds.



New Spur Road on Cemetery's East End

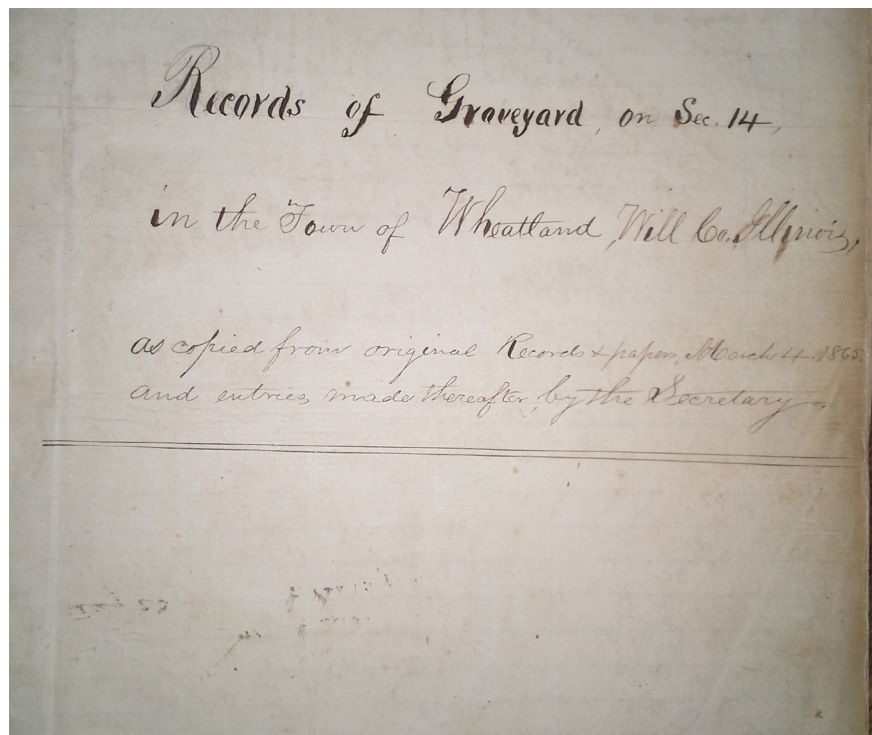
This new road will ultimately be paved to provide easier access to grave sites on the cemetery's east side. For more information about the road's installation, visit our You Tube video channel – go to YouTube.com and search for “Wheatland Township Cemetery”. You'll see a comprehensive list of videos about current cemetery projects along with historical spotlights ...

Back to history ...

For over 160 years, the cemetery was owned, managed and administered by the cemetery association originally established in 1840. Volunteer trustees, mostly local land owners, served rotating terms of duty on the cemetery's board.

Through the years, these generous community leaders volunteered their time to ensure the cemetery's well being. Duties included opening and closing of graves (typically dug by hand), grave sales, record keeping, maintenance of grounds, mowing the cemetery (via traditional push mowers), snow removal, and more.

The original cemetery records are preserved to this day, kept in a secure vault at the Wheatland Township administration building. The photo below is of a page from an early record book ...



In the late 1990's, it became evident our growing cemetery required permanent stewardship. Farms and farm families were slowly but surely being replaced by subdivisions and new more transient residents ...

Therefore, in 2001, the cemetery's ownership was officially transferred to Wheatland Township, with the associated documented promise to manage and maintain the cemetery in perpetuity.

In 2011, spearheaded by current cemetery president Ben Peterson, our historic cemetery was designated as a Will County Historic Landmark ...



Today, the Wheatland Township Cemetery is managed by a three person board of trustees, each of whom offer distinct skills and interest toward the cemetery's well being. As noted above, the grounds are carefully maintained by the Wheatland Township Highway Department, which provides mowing, snow removal, brush pickup, and special projects as required.

Let's now explore in more detail how the cemetery gets things done ...

Chapter Five

How The Cemetery Works

Like any other entity in a community, cemeteries have a functioning process. The Wheatland Township Cemetery is no different ... those entrusted with its care and operation follow a specific process. Following these steps allows the cemetery to help families in their time of need, and beyond.

Generally, most people only think of cemeteries when a loved one passes away. In many instances, our process starts long before a death occurs ...

Pre Planning: It's often said two inevitable factors in life are death and taxes. While pre planning the inevitability of death isn't required, Wheatland Township Cemetery stands at the ready for those wishing to do so.

From the cemetery's standpoint, pre planning involves selecting and purchasing a grave site. The death of a loved one is a difficult and often confusing process; selecting and purchasing a grave in advance removes some of the uncertainty.

As mentioned, our cemetery has a three person board of trustees consisting of a president and two volunteer trustees. Each is trained and capable of handling all aspects of cemetery operation, including grave selection and sales ...



L-R: Rich Grommon, Ben Peterson, Jim Hofman

We have ample grave sites available, both in our new (north) section as well as the original (south) section. Graves are available to you singularly, in pairs or multiples, or as a lot of eight (8) graves.

The process of choosing a grave site is easy and straightforward. Simply express interest via WheatlandTownship.com's Cemetery Committee page, and you'll be put in touch with one of our trustees ...

The trustee will meet with you on site at the cemetery and review our inventory of available graves. After your choice is finalized, you purchase the grave(s) for the applicable fee. Specifically, what you're purchasing is the "right to inter" in that grave. Understandably, there's often confusion on this point. To put it simply, the cemetery still owns the land containing the actual grave – the purchaser owns the right to inter within the grave.

Each year, we help area families and individuals with the cemetery portion of the end of life pre planning process. Please reach out to us if we can assist you.

BOARD CHAIR



Ben Peterson

Contact Info:

benhp@wheatlandtownship.com
630-717-0092 ext #2

WHEATLAND TOWNSHIP CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Cemetery Overview

The first occupant of the Wheatland Township Cemetery was Henry Brown, a 2 year old boy, laid to rest in July of 1836. Over time, the size of the cemetery has grown to 6.1 acres through donation or purchase of adjacent land. Today over 750 former residents of this area surround little Henry Brown and other members of his family.

Grave sites are still available in both the Old (South) and Newer (North) sections.

For 160 years, the management of the cemetery passed from farmer to farmer and area residents until 2000 when the volunteers of the "Wheatland Cemetery Association" petitioned the Township to assume management and care. At the 2001 Annual Township Meeting, residents unanimously approved transfer of ownership to the Township with the promise to never sell and always maintain the cemetery. The Road District maintains the Cemetery grounds.

In 2011, the Cemetery was designated a Will County Historic Landmark by the Will County Historical Preservation Commission and County Board.

The Cemetery Trustees are Rich Grommon, Ben Peterson and Jim Hofman. Each can assist with cemetery inquiries, grave sales and funerals.

Last Fall the Trustees began conducting tours for the local scout troops. The tours include references to the 13 pre-WWII veterans and the prominent early settlers whose lives and contributions were the foundations of our neighborhoods and from whom many names came to adorn our buildings and roads: Clow, Patterson, Fry, Brossman, Day, Grommon, Boughton and many others.

If you would like to contribute materials or information to our archives, please contact a Trustee: Ben Peterson, Rich Grommon, Jim Hofman

Useful Links:

- [Funeral Etiquette](#)
- [Cemetery Pricing Sheet](#)
- [List and picture of Grave Stones thru 2010:](#)
- [Cemetery Ordinance:](#) Ordinance #15-01-O Wheatland Township Cemetery Rules & Regulations, effective January 8, 2015
- [Click Here To View Our Wheatland Township Cemetery Videos](#)
- [Wheatland Township Cemetery Honors Civil War Veterans](#)
- [2017 Annual Newsletter](#)
- [Cemetery Reclamation Notice](#)

****The Cemetery Spring Clean Up, consisting of the removal of ALL decorations and necessary trimming of grounds foliage, is scheduled for Saturday, April 28th (weather permitting). Please review the Cemetery Ordinance for clarification.****

To receive either an email or paper copy of the Cemetery's Annual Letter (issued in December), please contact a Cemetery Board Trustee or email your request to BenHP@WheatlandTownship.com. The Annual Letter is a synopsis of this year's Cemetery activities and a overview of future Plans.

Want to know more?

Contact the Township to:

- Schedule a Tour or know more about the Township Cemetery
- Discuss availability of a Grave or Plot (8 graves)
- Obtain pricing for a grave or interment (casket or cremation)
- Make donation or establish a Trust Fund

When Death Occurs: When a death occurs, the cemetery is typically contacted by surviving family or a local funeral home.

We are informed whether the deceased already purchased a grave or not. If it's the latter, we follow the procedure above for grave selection and purchase.

If a grave has been purchased, we begin the process of preparing the grave ...

Preparing the grave entails a few important steps. First, we inquire as to the manner of burial – traditional or cremation.

If the manner is a traditional (casket) burial, two cemetery trustees “measure and mark” the grave for excavation. In years past, graves were dug by hand, but now we contract with a cemetery vendor who can excavate a full grave in a matter of minutes ...

Conversely, if the burial is a cremation, two cemetery trustees physically excavate an appropriate sized opening in the grave after obtaining specific dimensions of the cremation urn ...

The Funeral: On the day of the funeral (and often before), a cemetery trustee collects appropriate payment for burial and a burial permit, which is required by law. The current fee for burial in our cemetery is always available at WheatlandTownship.com ...



On the day of the funeral, cemetery trustees coordinate arrival time with the funeral home. Typically, at least two trustees are present to assist with parking, traffic control, and other miscellaneous duties ...

After the family and visitors depart, the grave is filled in and closed, either by our cemetery vendor or by the trustees themselves.

Headstone Installation: Sometime after the funeral (or even well before), it's customary to purchase and install a headstone marking the grave.

Purchasing a headstone is a family's responsibility. Our cemetery works closely with trusted local monument vendors and we are happy to share details with you at your convenience ...

To keep the cemetery looking orderly, we have easy to understand guidelines about grave markers in our Rules and Regulations, which are accessible on the Cemetery Committee page at WheatlandTownship.com .



When a headstone is purchased, engraved, and ready for installation, the monument vendor contacts us. Two cemetery trustees “measure and mark” the location, using dimensions supplied by the vendor. Wheatland Township Cemetery charges a nominal fee for this work, which is typically paid directly to the monument vendor, who then forwards the payment to us ...

When all these details are finalized, a separate cemetery vendor comes on site to the grounds and installs a concrete footing, or “wash” as it is sometimes called, and the headstone / marker itself.

Lastly, the monument vendor comes to the cemetery to inscribe date of death on the headstone if this detail hasn't been already handled ...

Cemetery Maintenance: Given its 6.1 acre size, regular cemetery maintenance is required. This includes grounds keeping, mowing, brush removal, general cemetery clean up, and more ...



The Wheatland Township Highway Department is proudly dedicated to keeping the cemetery looking its best. Road Crew personnel mow grass, trim around headstones, remove stray brush, and maintain the cemetery's roads.

Twice a year in late April and October, cemetery trustees conduct official cemetery clean up days. These clean up days are intended to remove worn, outdated decorations and plantings. Notices of clean up days are posted at the cemetery entrance as well as on WheatlandTownship.com ...



To limit weed overgrowth and harmful lawn pests, we contract with a landscaping service to apply weed control at specific time periods during the years. We take great pride in the cemetery's appearance and are pleased with the gradual reduction of invasive weeds on our grounds in recent years ...

Let's now explore the "behind the scenes" efforts critical to our cemetery's operation – record keeping.

Chapter 6

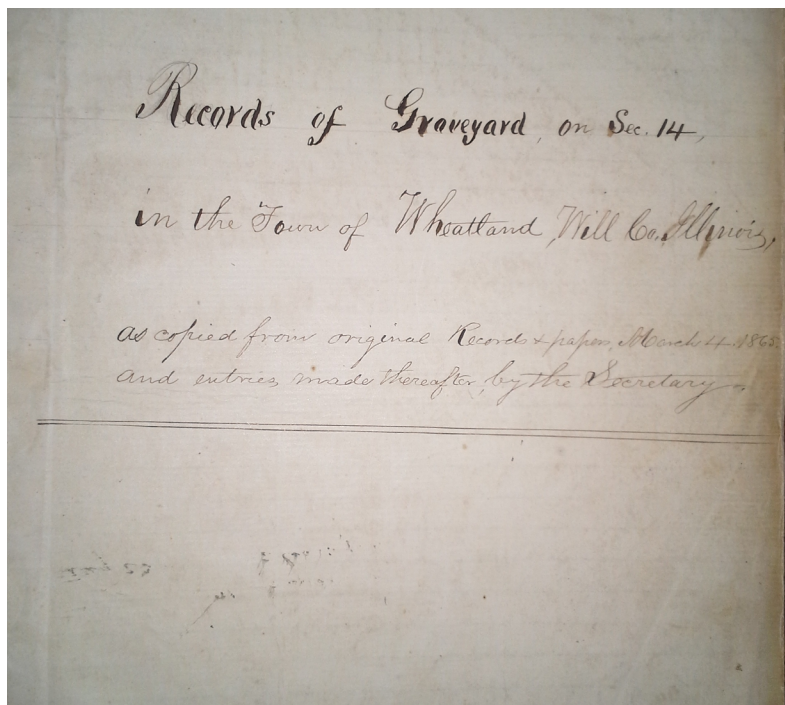
Keeping Track: How Our Cemetery Keeps Records

Record keeping is one of our cemetery's most important tasks. Our current trustees are indeed fortunate as those who preceded us were very detailed and diligent maintaining our records for over 180 years ...

To an outsider, a cemetery's most obvious records entail who is buried where. And while these records are critically important, there's a lot more to it as we'll see as we progress through this chapter.

In the United States, cemeteries are held to a strict standard of record keeping. These standards are less stringent for very small or family cemeteries. But even when Wheatland Township Cemetery was just starting, our first trustees had the foresight to keep and maintain thorough, detailed records. For their diligence, we are very grateful!

We still have one of the cemetery's earliest log books. The picture below is of a page within. In this log book, records date back well into the 1800's. These records provided a detailed list of who is buried in each specific grave, their date of death or burial, and additional demographic information if available ...



Wheatland Township Cemetery still keeps a physical log book (actually, two separate copies) showing burials, grave and lot ownership, and other pertinent details. We can trace back the ownership of graves and lots essentially to the cemetery's inception, which is very helpful when family descendants step forward to claim a grave site ...

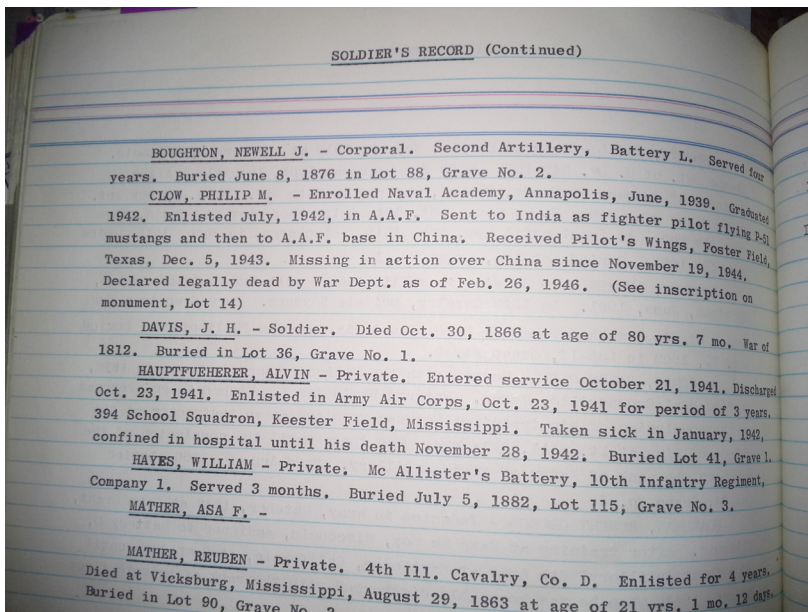
In addition, Illinois law stipulates a form of computerized records, which are accessible to select state officials as well as our current trustees. With every burial, our database and physical log books are updated immediately.

We document to the finest detail, including notes on cremation burials within a grave. In most instances, our cemetery allows up to three cremation burials in one grave, so it's important to fully document the specific placement within the grave footprint.

The job of maintaining our cemetery's records isn't particularly onerous, but it's extremely important. We receive frequent inquiries from surviving family members

asking about graves owned by their ancestors. Because of our diligent record keeping, past and present, we can answer these questions quickly and efficiently

...



Under the stewardship of current cemetery board president Ben Peterson, we've initiated a procedure to collect obituary information on each new addition to our cemetery. This

has proven helpful for genealogical information requests and as an added "check and balance" for our official records ...



Current trustees, led by the efforts of Ben Peterson, began a grave reclamation effort in hopes of locating ownership heirs or returning graves to our available inventory. The parameters of such a project are strictly outlined by Illinois state statute. There are numerous steps in the process, with an ultimate completion timeline of two to three years ...

In short, our first step was to identify small sections of the cemetery, defined as lots, where no burials or activity had occurred in 50+ years. We then searched our comprehensive records to hopefully locate contact information for owners of these lots and graves, or those of their documented descendants ...

Absent discovery of correct contact information, the cemetery published public notices in area newspapers, on our onsite cemetery information stand, and on the WheatlandTownship.com website. This effort, stipulated by statute, proved successful – numerous documented heirs stepped forward to “claim” graves ...



The grave reclamation project ultimately proceeds through the courts, and a lengthy time period is allotted for heirs to step forward. At the conclusion of the defined period, a full year after the court filing, unclaimed and unused graves can be returned to the cemetery's available inventory ...

The purpose of this project is forward looking. The current cemetery board is striving to tie up any loose ends and leave a crystal clear status of available grave inventory for those who follow us. We feel a deep sense of responsibility to follow in the footsteps of trustees past, who kept detailed records for the better part of two centuries ...

If you'd like to learn more about our grave reclamation project, please visit the Cemetery Committee page at WheatlandTownship.com ...

Chapter 7

Yes, It Really Happened! Stories & Interesting Facts

There are numerous individuals with a connection to south Naperville and Wheatland Township who know a bit about the Wheatland Township Cemetery. Arguably, no one knows more, or has dedicated more time to the cemetery than our current senior trustee Richard Grommon ...

A farmer by trade, Rich is a practical, plain spoken man who lets his actions do most of his talking.

And his actions speak volumes – he has been involved in caring for and overseeing the cemetery since the early 1970's. There's more for you to read about Mr. Grommon on our Dedication page, but suffice it to say he's more invested in our cemetery than just about anyone ...

Digging Graves By Hand: Currently, the cemetery outsources the opening and closing of graves to a long time trusted vendor, but it wasn't always that way ...

Richard Grommon used to dig graves manually in the 1970's and 1980's. Ask him about it and he'll tell you, "It took about eight hours."

On one occasion, a grave needed to be opened the night before a funeral, meaning Rich needed to excavate and dig in the dark ...

He pulled his truck into the cemetery and positioned the vehicle just so, aiming his headlights directly at the grave to shed a bit of light on the digging project.

A passing police patrol car, sensing mischief in the cemetery, slowly pulled in. The officer parked, tentatively approached the grave site, and encountered Rich hard at work removing dirt ...

"What are you doing?" the inquisitive policeman asked.

Rich, somewhat baffled, replied "What does it look like I'm doing??"

Apparently satisfied no foul play was afoot, the officer further inquired "So who is that grave for?"

Rich's dry reply: "The next person who interrupts me!!"

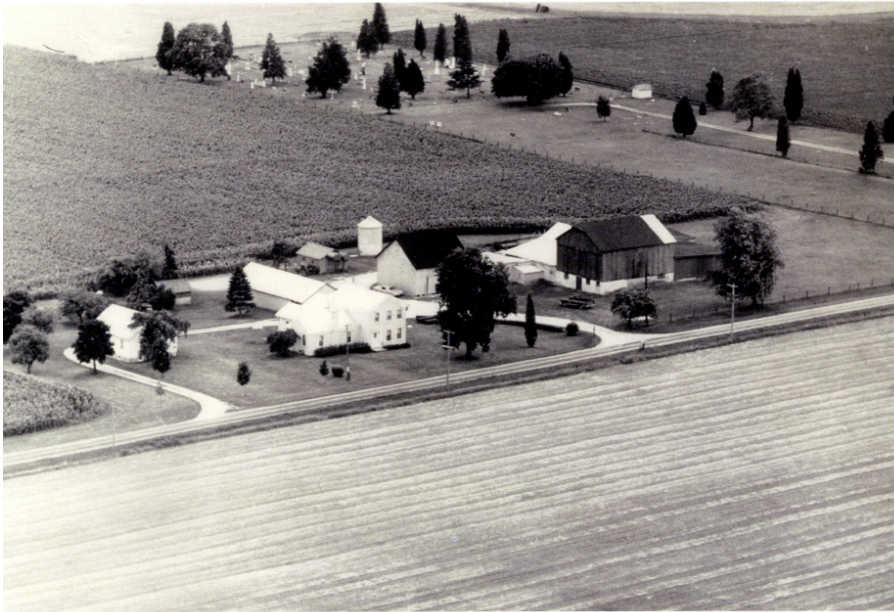
When Nature Calls: Visit the cemetery today and you'll notice a flag pole along the western edge of our center drive. Near the new information stand you'll see a square concrete pad. This was the former site of a well, which was capped and covered over for safety reasons in 1993 ...



Just steps away, look closely and you'll see remnants of an old rectangular foundation nearly obscured by grass. An old fashioned wooden outhouse once stood here ...



Water from the well was used to clean and maintain the outhouse, which was taken down decades ago. In the picture below, you can see the cemetery, and the outhouse, in the background. The photo is an overhead view of the Clow family farm house which once stood along the south side of 104th Street just west of Plainfield-Naperville Road. The photo is believed to have been taken sometime in the 1970's ...



The Flagpole: The cemetery's flagpole was installed in 2016 to coincide with our 180th year in operation. Located on the western edge of our grounds, the flagpole provides a proud visual presence between our original and new sections. Whenever a military veteran's funeral takes place on the grounds, the American flag is flown in recognition of their service to our country ...



Chapter 8

Spotlighting Those Among Us

As we noted in Chapter 1, Wheatland Township Cemetery is a collection of stories. Every headstone and marker on our grounds represents an individual story ... that of a life lived, remembered, and immortalized.

Over the past 180+ years, almost 800 area residents have come to their eternal rest here in our cemetery. Each had their own personal story ...

In this chapter, we'd like to honor and remember a few influential community contributors. Of course, this is not to say anyone's omission renders their story less significant. If enough information were available, we'd be pleased to share everyone's story.

With that said, let's spotlight a few notable community contributors now at rest in Wheatland Township Cemetery ...

Mungo Patterson: If you stroll around Wheatland Township Cemetery's grounds, one of the more numerous names you'll notice is Patterson ...



Mungo Patterson

Mungo Patterson was born in Scotland in 1814. He emigrated to America, arriving in New York in 1841. He married Agnes Clow the following year, and two years later settled in Wheatland Township to begin raising their family...

An industrious man, Mungo devoted many years of persistent labor to developing his homestead and creating a successful agricultural presence. His farm occupied land near the current intersection of 104th Street and Book Road.

Well known as a good citizen and kind neighbor, Mungo was a school leader and instrumental in early Wheatland Township educational endeavors.

Mungo lived a long life, passing away in 1906 shortly before his 92nd birthday. Appropriately, the Patterson school just west of the cemetery off 104th Street and Lawrence Drive honors the family name ...

Harry Clow: The Clow family name is synonymous with south Naperville and Wheatland Township. Subdivisions, schools, creeks, roads, and even an airport honor the legacy of this prominent family ...



From the standpoint of the Wheatland Township Cemetery, Clow family members have been as influential, or more so, than any other family. One of the cemetery's first trustees way back in 1840 was Robert Clow, Jr. Key contributors to the cemetery's upkeep drive in the early 20th century were Thomas Clow, James Clow, and John B. Clow.



The Clow family's long standing role of helping out in our cemetery was carried on by Harry Clow and his brother Robert Clow . Shown here with his family in a photo from the 1970's (*Harry top row blue shirt*), Harry served many years on the Wheatland Cemetery Association board, as did Robert.

Harry, who passed away at age 86 in 2001, has one of the most unique headstones in the cemetery. Rich Grommon relates the story: "Harry came across this big boulder and said he was going to use it as his headstone. Sure

enough, he did. He had the bottom of the boulder carved to flatten it out so it sits flush to the ground."

Harry also had a long connection with Rich Grommon. It was Harry, along with Warren Patterson, who helped train Rich on cemetery procedures. That influence is still felt today.

Harry's wife Jane passed away in 2018, just after her 100th birthday, and is buried beside him ...

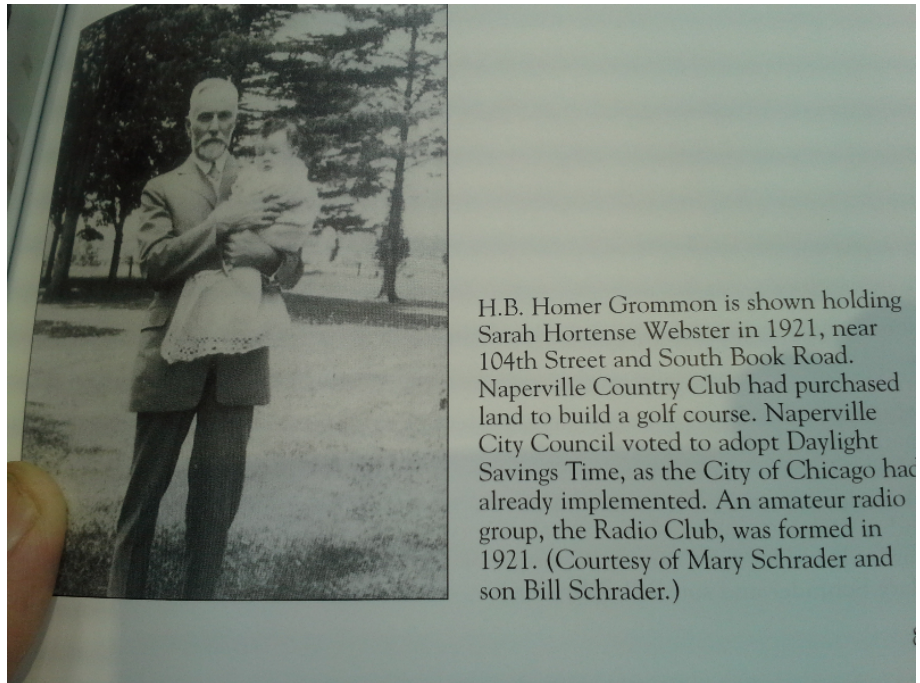
H.B. Grommon: Homer Burton "H.B." Grommon was very well known and respected not only in the immediate local area, but in the State of Illinois and nationally as well.

He lived on the Grommon family farm at Book Road and 104th Street, just down the road from the cemetery where he is now at rest.

H.B. was president of the Farmers National Grain Dealers Association and the Illinois Grain Dealers Association. He also held a prominent role in the Chicago Board of Trade...

His influence extended statewide and beyond on matters pertaining to the economic and political standing of farmers and farming .

H.B.'s son Frank Grommon, grandson George Grommon, and great grandson Rich Grommon continued to operate the Grommon family farm until it was sold to make way for the current Ashbury subdivision ...



Homer Burton "H.B." Grommon



H.B. Grommon Grave Marker

John Davis: John Davis holds a special place in the lore of our cemetery. He is the sole War of 1812 veteran to be buried here ...

Born in central New York state in 1786, John served in the War of 1812 in his home state, further north near the Canadian border. He remained in New York after his service, eventually moving to Wheatland Township decades later ...

Cemetery trustees pursued a project to replace John's headstone recently. He passed away at age 80 in 1866, and his original headstone had fractured and deteriorated beyond repair ...



We worked closely with the Veterans Administration and were able to acquire a new, dignified marker for Mr. Davis as shown below. The headstone's style is consistent with the original design of official War of 1812 markers ...

At our You Tube channel, we've posted a video detailing Mr. Davis' background and the

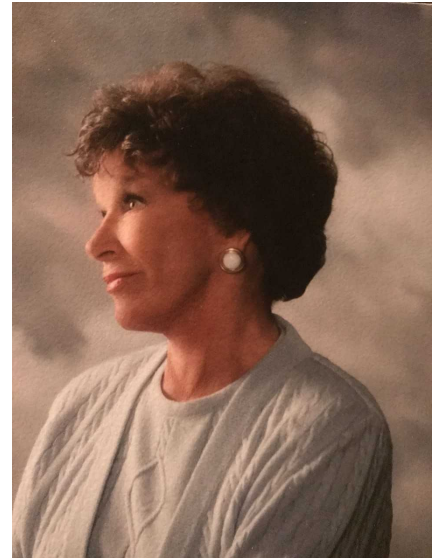
process of replacing and installing his new headstone ...



Kay Leonard Stephens: Kay was born in LaPorte, IN and grew up in Elgin, IL. The eldest of three girls, she graduated from DePauw University and received her Master's in Music from Northern Illinois University. Kay was a devoted wife to her husband, John, and devoted mother to her children, Susan, John, Ginger and Jane.

Active public servants, Kay and John were part of a small group of citizens who banded together to form the Naperville Heritage Society, preserving Naperville's history by moving and restoring buildings to what is now Naper Settlement. Kay was the Society's first Publicity Chairman, and as a Weed Lady, she originated the Weed Garden, which is now named in her honor.

A consummate musician and ardent supporter of the arts, Kay's greatest musical accomplishment was originating and developing the music education program at Little Friends, Inc. in Naperville.



Kay Stephens



Her goal was to teach communication and concepts through music, which resulted in the publication of three songbooks for children with special needs. A frequent lecturer and workshop clinician throughout the Chicago area, Kay taught her teaching methods to music educators and special education teachers.

In 2002, in memory of her husband, John, Kay funded the Animal Assisted

Therapy program at Edward Hospital by creating the John L. Stephens Pet Education and Training Scholarship Fund.

She and her dog, Tuxie, completed the rigorous training and enjoyed visiting the patients in the hospital for many years.

Bruce Stephen Terlep:

Bruce was born and raised in Elkhart, IN. The youngest of seven children, he graduated from both DePauw University and Notre Dame Law School.

A partner for Swanson, Martin and Bell, Bruce was a founding member who litigated all over the country for his clients, which included Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Kia, Hyundai and Winnebago, among others. An extremely successful trial lawyer, Bruce's clients adored him and relied heavily on his expertise.



Bruce Terlep

By many, Bruce was considered an Abraham Lincoln expert and had an intense knowledge of and love for this great man.

A devoted husband to his wife, Ginger, and devoted father to his three sons, Peter, Tom and Mick, Bruce was very active in their lives. For numerous years he coached basketball and baseball through the Naperville YMCA and Wheatland Athletic Association.

Active in Boy Scouts, Bruce led many scouts on camping trips while volunteering as an Assistant Scout Leader. One of his favorite things to do was to help the scouts build their Pinewood Derby cars for the annual competition. Many of his charges won their races.

An avid golfer, Bruce loved to customize golf clubs for his family and friends, especially for young golfers, whom he encouraged to take up the sport. Always ready to lend a helping hand, Bruce was known to fix, make, refinish or repair furniture, cars, garages, basements, or whatever anyone needed to have done. He adored finding ways to make something old into something new, whether re-wiring a lamp or re-plumbing a bathroom, and most especially if it helped out someone else.



Bruce was passionate about being there for his friends and family. He is missed every day.

Chapter 9

Proud Veterans

As of late 2018, Wheatland Township Cemetery serves as the final resting place for close to 50 U.S. military veterans. We are honored to share a brief overview of those who bravely served our country in times of peace and conflict ...

Over the long history of the cemetery, trustees have taken special care to note a veteran's service. Our past record ledgers contain notes about an individual's military service, and we continue the same practice today.

Visit the cemetery over the Memorial Day weekend and you'll be greeted by a display of small American flags at each veteran's grave, courtesy of the local VFW chapter. It's a stirring sight, and most appropriate given the sacrifice rendered by our veterans ...



Should you ever attend the funeral of a veteran in the cemetery, you'll notice the flag raised on our flagpole.

Current cemetery trustees take great pride in recognizing those who served our country by offering this small but important gesture.

In the past few years, the cemetery board embarked on a project to further honor a few of our earliest veterans. Over the decades, headstones of two Civil War veterans (Reuben Mather and William Hayes) and our sole War of 1812 veteran (John Davis) had become deteriorated and illegible.



We worked closely with the Veterans Administration to procure replacement headstones for each of the three. These dignified granite headstones were delivered and installed in 2016, and now clearly mark the graves to ensure their service will never be forgotten ...

All told, Wheatland Township Cemetery is the final resting place for veterans from every major American conflict beginning with the War of 1812.

One marker stands in stark tribute to a veteran who never returned home. Shown is the marker of Philip Clow, who served in the Air Force in World War II. Lost over China in 1944, his remains were never recovered. The headstone honoring Mr. Clow's life and service stands just a few feet from our flagpole on the cemetery's western edge ...



To see a video about Wheatland Township Cemetery's veterans, visit our You Tube channel via a link on the Cemetery Committee page at WheatlandTownship.com ...

Chapter 10

Thank You & Acknowledgments

Telling the story of the Wheatland Township Cemetery was a true group effort. The process of gathering information, collating stories, and chronicling history was a challenge, but a challenge made easier due to the gracious assistance and interest from a great many people.

I'd like to thank the people involved with helping compile this book, and acknowledge their contributions ...

First, the Wheatland Township Board of Trustees, for their support of the cemetery's well being and their encouragement and enthusiasm for this project.

Thank you also to the Wheatland Township Highway Department for their ongoing hard work and dedicated efforts in maintaining the cemetery ...

Wheatland Township staff, whose administrative efforts and people skills help keep the cemetery running smoothly behind the scenes. Many thanks!

Current cemetery board president Ben Peterson, who green lighted the project. Ben's continual encouragement and enthusiasm for marketing and community outreach efforts are deeply appreciated ...

Senior cemetery trustee Richard Grommon, who willingly and patiently shared details of the cemetery's history and personal stories ...

Laura Hofman, for her technical and photography skills, gardening expertise, and positive support ...

Ginger Terlep, a friend of the cemetery within the community who graciously contributed important content for this book ...

Ann Peterson and Peggy Grommon, whose behind the scenes support allows us the necessary time to devote to managing the cemetery ...

Thank You!

Jim Hofman, Cemetery Trustee

Chapter 11

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Richard Grommon, who has volunteered for the Wheatland Township Cemetery his entire adult life.



Born and raised in Naperville, Rich has been a resident of Wheatland Township since the early 1970's. The Grommon family farm once occupied the current site of the Ashbury subdivision, just north of the cemetery ...

Rich began his official involvement with the cemetery in 1971, a year after his military service ended. Encouraged by his father George Grommon to get involved, he learned the intricacies of measuring and marking grave sites, excavating graves, and assisting area families in their time of need ...

Rich has often remarked he is somehow related to the majority of those at rest in the cemetery. Strolling around the grounds, you'll see proof – family names like Patterson, Clow, and of course Grommon are all blood family connections in Rich's lineage ...

A farmer by trade, Rich brings an element of practical know how and historical perspective to his role on our board of trustees. He has been a cemetery board trustee since 1981, and is instrumental in training new trustees in cemetery procedures.

From digging graves by hand to clearing snow to aligning out of place headstones, Rich has contributed at every level. His most recent cemetery project was taking the lead role in the installation of our new east access road ...

Most notably, Rich doesn't seek or want credit for his many contributions. He views the cemetery with pride and a sense of respect, and his actions have always spoken louder than his words ...

The Wheatland Township Cemetery has a deep level of gratitude for the ongoing service and continuing efforts of Mr. Richard Grommon ...

Thank You!



Early Wheatland Township Map

Chapter 12

Further Information

Thank you for reading about the Wheatland Township Cemetery. This book was published in an electronic format to allow for future updates as necessary. As with any book spotlighting an ongoing entity, the information here is current and accurate to the best of our knowledge as of the publishing date (Dec. 2018).

If you have an interest in our cemetery, or questions about anything in this book, please reach out to us at this email address: cemetery@wheatlandtownship.com or access the Cemetery Committee page at WheatlandTownship.com . One of our cemetery board trustees will be happy to help you!

Wheatland Township Cemetery is an active cemetery and we are always available to help families in their time of need. We average 12+ interments annually and all are welcome. It is not necessary to reside in Wheatland Township to use the cemetery's services. Graves are available for purchase for both traditional and cremation burials ...

We offer a respectful, convenient, and serene location for families facing end of life decisions. We are small enough to offer a valued personal touch, yet large enough to accommodate needs well into the future ...

Be sure to visit our You Tube channel to view all our videos about the cemetery's ongoing history and current projects. You can access the channel and the videos via a link at the bottom of the Cemetery Committee page at WheatlandTownship.com. Or, simply go to YouTube.com and type "Wheatland Township Cemetery" in the search bar ...

Thank you again for your interest in our cemetery!

The Wheatland Township Cemetery Board of Trustees