

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
AND OTHER TIDBITS
ABOUT THE**

**TWENTYNINE
PALMS
PUBLIC CEMETERY**

**TWENTYNINE PALMS PUBLIC CEMETERY
5350 ENCELIA AVENUE
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA 92277
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Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

NOTES

The *Out Post* was a mimeographed newspaper (newsletter). It was published semi-monthly by the Legion Corporation of Twentynine Palms (American Legion Desert Out Post #334). Volume 1, No. 1 was dated 14 July 1932. Right now I don't know how long it was published. The last issue in the files of the Twentynine Palms Historical Society is Volume 3, No. 1, 12 June 1934.

The Desert Trail was first published in April 1935.

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Background

In 1933 William J. "Bill" Lage , one of the ailing WW1 veterans who came to Twentynine Palms in hopes of improving their health, foresaw a very practical, personal need, as well as a community need for a cemetery in Twentynine Palms. So, he initiated discussions with some of his American Legion "buddies," including Tom Martin, Bill Underhill, and Constable Jack Cones. As a result of those initial talks, District Attorney Stanley Mussell, his Chief Deputy, James. L. King, and Coroner Williams met with the local Chamber of Commerce officials and other citizens at the Legion Cafe on Tuesday evening, 28 November 1933, in an informal discussion of plans for providing a cemetery to this community. Those attending the meeting agreed that of the several locations that had been offered for a cemetery, the tract offered by Bill Lage was the most suitable. It was also agreed that Mr. King would draw up the necessary papers, and a petition requesting that the County Board of Supervisors authorize the creation of the Twentynine Palms Cemetery District would begin circulation within the next few days.

The petition was circulated and 52 signatures were obtained and, on 22 January 1934 it was filed with the county. The cemetery became a Public Cemetery District by resolution of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on 19 February 1934.

The first board of trustees had three members -- Ed Bixby, president; John Meyer; and Norman Bremer, secretary.

On 1 March 1934, the American Legion Corporation of Twentynine Palms deeded the 20 acres of land previously donated by Bill Lage to the Cemetery District. That land was accepted by the cemetery's Board of Trustees at a meeting held on 14 April 1934.

The District originally included the entire Twentynine Palms Judicial Township. However, on 16 March 1936 the County Board of Supervisors authorized the release of the west ten townships from the District.

Twentynine Palms Cemetery District is a self-governed special district of San Bernardino County. A five-member board of trustees, appointed by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, on recommendation of the local board, governs the Cemetery District and thus, establishes policy for the cemetery. Members of the Cemetery District Board of Trustees serve four-year terms.

The cemetery is supported by tax money received from property within the established cemetery district boundaries. As a Public Cemetery District it provides burial for all qualifying district residents and their families.

The cemetery facilities now cover 30 acres, 20 of which are currently developed, and handles approximately 50 burials each year.

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Early Burials In Twentynine Palms Cemetery

Burial Date	Last	First - Middle	Section	Lot	Grave
1 Feb 1934	Donnell	Hassell	6	3	4
28 May 1934	Kleindinst	Harry	6	10	4
1 Jan 1936	Lithgow	Robert	8	1	1
11 Jan 1936	Donnell	Norman Prince	6	4	1
7 Mar 1936	Bixby	Edmund Nelson	6	9	1
21 Dec 1936	Shelton	Pauline	6	1	1
26 Dec 1936	Duquette	Edward	6	10	3
8 Jan 1937	McHaney	Wm. "Bill" M.	8	1	4
28 Sep 1940	Falderman	Anna H. Pellas	6	11	2
est 26 Dec 1940	Johnson	Ira E.	6	9	3
26 Apr 1941	Hauser	Alexander William	6	8	1
7 May 1941	Sanders	Florence May	6	3	1
13 Nov 1941	Bertton	Ray C.	6	2	1
7 Jul 1942	Mahrt	Pete	6	10	2
19 Jul 1942	Lage	William Julius	6	7	4
1 Jun 1943	Veroneaux	Jay A	9	7	4
24 Oct 1943	Hunstook	Parham I.	6	3	2
24 Oct 1944	Van Kirk	Frank Denton	6	6	1

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The *Out Post*, Twentynine Palms, CA, Saturday, 2 Dec 1933, page 2

CEMETERY MASS MEETING

District Attorney Stanley Mussell, his Chief Deputy, James. L. King, and Coroner Williams met with the local Chamber of Commerce officials and other citizens at the Legion Cafe on Tuesday evening in an informal discussion of plans for providing a cemetery in this community. With a suitable location chosen, this can be done either by organizing a holding corporation which would have the responsibility of upkeep and maintenance by means of privately raised funds or sale of lots, or by organizing a cemetery district, control of which vests in a Board of Trustees appointed by the County Supervisors, and maintained by taxation at a very low maximum rate.

While it was brought out that several locations had been offered for the purpose, those present at this meeting were of the opinion that the tract offered by Bill Lage is the most suitable.

The necessary papers are to be drawn by Mr. King, and it is expected that, the required petition to be presented to the Supervisors will begin circulation within the next few days.

Signatures on this petition should be only of property owners whose names appear on the tax roll and who are also registered voters in this district, which will include all of the judicial township of Twenty Nine Palms.

The following undated list was copied from cemetery records.

List of Signers of Petition

E. N. Bixby	Edward E. Clarke	Leon Guy Applegate
O. J. Cones	W. J. Underhill	William Q. Smith
Frank H. Bagley	E. H. Abernethy	Walter G. Maloney
Lawrence L. Jacobs	E. E. Kerby	Mrs. Pearl L. Kleindinst
W. E. Ketcham	W. H. Pennell	Ida E. Martin
W. A. Barnett	Geo. N. Best	C. A. Benito
Lida Donnell	T. L. Martin	P. T. Sullivan
Elise Dumas	Geo. N. Cooke	Norman P. Donnell
Helen G. Bagley	John P. Strafford	Ira E. Johnson
Ivar T. Fahlberg	A. C. Strickler	James B. Hill
Arthur Krushat	W. S. Greene	J. S. Overbay
Hilda H. Graham	William H. Campbell	H. W. Stacy
Edmund Duquette	Chas. A. Peterson	I. E. Murphy
Harry Boling	Arthur Fjell	David W. Heaton
W. H. Hockett	Samuel T. Bailey	George L. Ker
Fred S. Furniss	Edward F. Malone	Wm. Erickson
Frank DeMent	Guy F. Mattox	
Anna H. Falderman	Clayton W. Lunham	

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 24 May 1935, page 1, column 3

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES

Memorial Day services will be held next Thursday at the Twenty-Nine Palms cemetery. Everybody please meet at the Legion clubhouse at 10:30 and services will be held at the cemetery at 11 o'clock.

A joint ceremony will be held by the American Legion post and auxiliary, Mr. Ted Holderman will blow "Taps."

The committee on arrangements includes Irvine Enger, Bill Barnett, Joe Brady and Miss Imogene Aaron.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 31 May 1935, page 1, column 4

Memorial Services at Cemetery

Yesterday, May 30, marked the second Memorial Day services to be given by Desert Outpost No. 334 of the American Legion, and the auxiliary.

Services were held over the graves of Harry Kleindinst and Hassell Donnell both veterans and members of Desert Outpost.

The new flag pole donated by Mr. and Mrs. John Strafford and dedicated to Mr. Kleindinst and Mr. Donnell, flew its flag at half-mast honoring the departed heroes.

Everyone met at the Legion clubhouse and there formed a caravan to the cemetery. At the cemetery a line of march was formed, headed by the new colors of the post.

The services were brief but very impressive. Commander Marshall gave a short talk followed by the unit president, Nelle Godwin, who spoke a few words honoring the departed.

Mrs. Burl Stonecipher, unit chaplain, recited "In Flanders Field." The graves were decorated with poppy wreaths. "Taps" were blown by Ted Holderman.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 17 January 1936, page 5, column 5

SURVEYOR COMPLETES CEMETERY LINES

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Ross were hosts over the recent week-end to Mr. and Mrs. Dwight B. Cooper of Yucaipa.

Mr. Cooper, licensed surveyor, who has had charge of much of the work of establishing lines in the vicinity, was here at the request of the local cemetery committee to survey and establish exact lines for the tract, and division of lots.

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 20 March 1936, page 5, column 3

Supervisors Release West Townships From Cemetery

The San Bernardino county board of supervisors at their meeting of last Monday, March 16, authorized the release of the west 10 townships of the Twenty-Nine Palms Public Cemetery district.

The dissolution was brought about when taxpayers of the above mentioned townships, comprising mostly Yucca and Morongo Valleys, protested against the special tax as levied by the county when the cemetery at Twenty Nine Palms was created.

The cemetery district when first formed took in the whole of the judicial township, which included these sections and on cast past Twenty-Nine Palms to the mining districts.

A group of citizens from the seceding district was at the meeting of the board to counteract any argument that might arise, but none however, was presented, either oral or written.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 5 June 1936, page 1, column 1 & 2

Impressive Services at Local Cemetery Memorial Day; Hanson Eulogizes Dead

Very impressive were the services held at the local cemetery last Memorial Day, when a large crowd gathered to pay tribute to the dead and decorate their graves.

Under chairmanship of Americanism Chairman Bill Barnett of the local American Legion post, the program was arranged for the day, and both Legion and Auxiliary colors were presented with Scouts and school children following.

Feature of the day's services was an inspirational talk by Ole Hanson, when he eulogized the heroic dead. Mr. Hanson said in part: ". . . One day in each year we sin aside, as the day, when all men and women throughout our country should garland the graves of the heroic dead and recall the services of those who, doing their duty, defended and upheld the freedom and liberty which we all enjoy.

"When in 1868 John A. Logan, commander of the G. A. R. made public announcement of the fact that on the 30th day of May each year we should gather together to call back in memory the deeds of men who fought the fight for us all for our country, it was certainly fitting that in a free country, free men should thank and praise those who preserved their—and it is also fitting and proper, that each one of us should not only thank the dead for their services to us, but that we, as the living, should so live and act, that their heroic sacrifice should not be in vain!"

Mr. Hanson said the heroes of the Revolution and the War of 1812 are now all gone: only sweet memories of great deeds are left. He said that of the two and one-half million who fought in the Civil war, only a scant 5000 survive. The Spanish-American veterans grow fewer each year and the frosts of winter are fast whitening their scanty locks. He said that the men of the World war still, however, survive in great numbers, and it was up to each and every lover of his country to

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stand shoulder to shoulder with them for the preservation in times of peace, of that which they fought for in time of war.

The white-haired speaker reverently told of the time, one night after the World war. he stood at their resting place across the sea and saw 60,000 snow-white crosses shining in the moonlight.

"It is not so bad to die fighting for a just cause—fighting for your country—but unless we, the men women and children they fought for, uphold the traditions for which they suffered and died, then we cheated every man who went to the front, and robbed the dead of their lives." he continued.

Mr. Hanson also recited the war poem, "In Flanders Fields."

Chaplain Wallace Trigg of the American Legion assisted Chairman Barnett in conducting the services.

The graves were decorated with beautiful wreaths and flowers donated by the Legion, Night Owls, Nightingales and individuals.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 4 June 1937, page 1, column 1

Impressive Services at Cemetery Last Memorial Day

Sunday forenoon's Memorial Day services at the Twenty Nine Palms cemetery as conducted by the local post of the American Legion were very impressive and attended by a sizeable crowd of reverent citizens who gathered to honor the dead.

Following the presentation of the National and Legion colors, Commander Bill Barnett opened the services and the officers of the local Auxiliary unit No. 334 placed wreaths and poppies on all graves in the cemetery.

Mrs. H. G. Watson favored with a beautiful solo, "Nearer My God Thee."

Rev, Howard Van Loon of the local Community church then spoke. He said in part:

"Memorial Day is a point of reckoning where we pause and look in two directions. We look backward to the stirring tragic scenes of war and we honor those who gave their lives for us there. We look forward to a new, a brighter, a more peaceful day with the hope that they have not died in vain.

"The Scriptures record these words. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' The smiling doughboys who left us some 20 years ago did not lay down their lives because of hatred of the enemy, they did not lay down their lives because it was the patriotic thing to do; they laid down their lives for their friends! . . . that we who remained at home might be safe and protected. Our Lord said, 'Greater love hath no man.'

I remember them as they left. The children in our neighborhood would gather flowers from our own gardens, roses, poppies, bougan-

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Impressive Services

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villea, and sweet peas. Then we would go down to the railroad station and as the trains would stop and the boys would climb in and wave to us out of the windows we would throw them the roses, the poppies, the bouganvillea, and the sweet peas.

"They came back, most of them. They were grown up, worldly wise, and disillusioned. Some had been robbed of their moral ideals, some of them stripped of their physical strength and stamina. But they made a comeback and fitted themselves into the work-a-day world.

"As the years passed they saw a new generation rise which did not know the lessons they had learned on the battlefield, and today they see this new generation marching toward a similar precipice over which they plunged 20 years before. And some are even growing bitter and are asking 'Why should a God who boasts of love have permitted such a slaughter of innocent blood? How can He allow it to happen again?' The answer to these questions come in thunder from the Word of God itself . . . 'The wages of sin is death!' And the wages of sin have never been reduced.

"The wages of personal sin is sickness, jealousy, heart-break, murder. The wages of social sin is poverty, riot, civil strife, revolution. The wages of national sin is war! Which comes first, national sin or personal sin? In the answer to that question lies the answer to this question, 'Why war?' There can be no world peace until the Prince of Peace reigns in the hearts of every one of us. The responsibility of peace rests on us as individuals.

"I'm not chastising you, I'm pleading with you, that we so consecrate ourselves, not merely to an ideal—ideals vanish—but to God himself so that when the final reckoning day comes no finger of guilt will be pointed at us saying. 'In your selfish, greedy life, in your sin-warped life, in your Godless life was found the roots of war.'

" 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. 'Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death; therefore, choose life'."

The Desert Trail, Friday, 4 November 1938, page 1, column 5

\$15,000 WPA Grant Allotted

29 Palms Receives First Large Project Approval in Allocation of Funds for Building of Cemetery

Word reached Twentynine Palms last night that President Roosevelt has approved the \$15,000 cemetery project for this community, which culminates a long period of planning and conferences by the board of trustees of the Twentynine Palms public cemetery. Word reached the hoard of the project's final approval, and that actual work at the cemetery will be under way in a short time.

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The local board of trustees, consisting of Lincoln Stonecipher, president; Gerald Charlton, and Wallace Trigg, secretary, first approached the officials of the San Bernardino WPA area about April 20 and found that with a small additional tax levy there would be sufficient funds for the setting up of a WPA project at the cemetery. Plans for a chapel building, for landscaping and for the construction of an enclosure or wall around property were immediately started.

These plans conceived and designed by Mr. Charlton, include an adobe chapel building 20x62 feet, of artistic proportion and harmonizing with the desert surroundings. The chapel when completed will have ample accommodations for the various uses of such a structure and should stand as a thing of beauty and utility for many years to come.

The enclosure planned will be a

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\$15,000 GRANT

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low adobe wall entirely surrounding the cemetery property with attractive entrance and other features to relieve the monotony of its long flat lines. This wall will set the grounds apart from the surrounding desert and give a feeling of privacy and consecration hitherto lacking.

Landscaping and Roads

Landscaping plans include the working out of roads approaching the chapel, the setting apart of various areas for planting, and the building of rock walls and gardens of native planting materials.

The financial setup for the program outlined will total about \$15,000 of which the local board must supply some \$1900. This sum is now available and is held in the county treasury. The remaining sum will be supplied as the work progresses from federal WPA funds allotted to the payment of labor and materials.

It is understood that actual work will be under way within a month or less, and all local workers who are qualified and who have not as yet registered, are urged to do so at once. The project will continue for some six months under the WPA plan and will provide employment for all eligible workers who desire work.

The local board is in San Bernardino today where administrative items of the project will be reviewed with Ralph B. Smith, manager WPA, and his engineers.

The board will then contact Mr. H. E. Varney of the Riverside WPA office. It is understood that the project will be cleared through the latter office and it is hoped that arrangements for the start of the project can be made today.

The board takes this opportunity to express its thanks to Frank Bagley, Contractor Walt Berg and others who cooperated and assisted in various ways, to make this project a reality.

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 31 March 1939, page 1, column 1

AN EDITORIAL

This is the first of three articles dealing with the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery. The property was generously donated in 1934 by Ex-Service Man Bill Lage, who homesteaded. Early in 1934 the people of Twentynine Palms, largely through the efforts of the American Legion post No. 334, were presented without charge, a parcel of 40 acres of beautiful desert land admirably located as to its surroundings and accessibility for the purpose of establishing a cemetery for our community for the use of all, regardless of religious creed or political belief.

In due time the community accepted the gift, established a cemetery district and appointed through the San Bernardino county "Board of supervisors a board of trustees composed of three members from the district to take charge of all matters pertaining to this cemetery.

This first board of trustees was composed of Mr. Ed Bixby, president; John Meyer and Norman Bremer, secretary. Due to the death of Mr. Bixby and the change of res-

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idence of Mr. Bremer their unexpired terms were filled by Wallace L. Trigg and Burl Stonecipher. However, the original board accomplished the heavy task always encountered when the birth of a new project is under way: much work and correspondence gave proper legal status to the cemetery district and its property, land surveys were made and subsequent roads and burial plots within the cemetery were laid out. The purchase of necessary tools for the proper care of burial and the setting up of a set of books for records was the work of this first board. Its members working without any recompense other than the knowledge of a work well done should receive the gratitude and thanks of the people of Twentynine Palms.

Upon the expiration of the term of four years this first board retired under the law and was replaced by the present board consisting of Lincoln Stonecipher, president; Gerald Charlton, and Wallace L. Trigg, secretary.

This new board, chosen presumably for its fitness to carry on the work of the previous board as well as for its intention and determination to meet all responsibilities and discharge all its duties to the best of its ability started at once to determine in what lines of action its efforts might best be expended in furthering the interests of the cemetery, but with proper regard to the interests of the whole community. After due consideration the board pledged itself to work especially for two items deemed worthy of first consideration: (1) the establishing of proper burial regulations to insure reasonable uniformity and beauty of the cemetery grounds; (2) the erection of a structure to house the cemetery equipment, but more especially to provide at least a minimum of shelter for those called to the cemetery for burial or other services during inclement weather. It is this second item the board is most concerned at the present time.

While this locality is as a rule favored with splendid weather conditions it is true that during the winter there are periods of lower temperatures which make the holding of outdoor services a matter of risk to the comfort and health of those forced to attend the burial of their loved ones. Summer heat and glare make a seasonal risk equally great as was shown on two occasions when a fainting woman had to be stretched on the desert sand, canteens hastily brought from

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cars, and such aid rendered before the eyes of all present. Death chooses its own time to strike, regardless of weather forecasts and those who follow their dead to their last resting place are usually least able to withstand hardship due to their low mental, emotional and physical condition at such a time. To obtain some semblance of civilized facilities for these people your board has pledged its best efforts.

When fully understood as to its need and to the method of its attainment, this goal will be approved by all. Our people accepted a generous land gift, they created a cemetery district and imposed responsibilities upon its trustees. In so doing they assumed certain obligations which every civilized community must assume out of consideration for its living and reverence for its dead.

A second article will take up the work of your board in securing proper housing at your cemetery.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 7 April 1939, page 1, column 1

AN EDITORIAL

This is the second of three articles dealing with the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery. The property was generously donated in 1934 by Ex-Service Man Bill Lage, who homesteaded

Shortly after the installation of the present board of trustees it occurred to President Stonecipher that almost every city and town in the United States was receiving federal help for flood control, school buildings, and many other works; also that our community, whether in favor of such federal aid or not, was taxed to support it. A visit to the Works Progress Administration offices in San Bernardino confirmed the opinion that our community was en-

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titled to its share of such federal aid, provided that we had here public property on which it was proposed to erect a structure for public use, and provided that local sponsor funds were available to purchase materials, etc., for the project.

It was learned that the federal government, under WPA setup would pay for all labor and also for a fractional part of the materials. Such an arrangement would be most advantageous in Twentynine Palms in that adobe construction, which harmonizes so well with our desert landscape, calls for a high labor cost and a low materials cost. We could not only spread our local funds to secure a more pretentious structure, but also secure a much larger federal grant for local labor. Since we have a dozen or more local men who cannot find steady employment here and who are eager to work it was evident that a WPA project would help these men greatly and bring thousands of outside dollars into local pocket-books.

Several conferences with Mr. Ray C. Burton and Mr. C. E. Evangel, WPA officials, resulted in the approval of our plans and our financial condition. These officials gave definite assurance that our project would be approved and under construction by the first of July. Imagine the pleasure and eagerness with which your board members attacked the task of being ready by July 1!

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Conferences, planning, trips to San Bernardino, all preparations for the first of July.

Came the first of July, also the first of August, and September, but no WPA. Your board had a splendid plan, the results of many hours' work by Gerald Charlton. This plan was amplified and checked by a first-class architect for double assurance as to its safety as a public structure. Cement mixers were arranged for, bids were secured from local supply houses, all was in readiness except WPA.

No satisfactory explanation has been given as to why our plans remained forgotten in the San Bernardino WPA office until September 15. About this time two other officials, Mr. Varney of Riverside, and Mr. Lewis of Beaumont, appeared, bearing a sheaf of papers for signatures and assuring that the local project would most certainly be under way within 30 days. Much work and more waiting seemed about to harvest its reward. And such a reward, one surpassing the best hopes of your board. Here was the setup.

Our local sponsor funds of some \$1900 would secure more than \$12,000 of federal funds for the erection of a fine cemetery chapel, for the building of an enclosing wall around the cemetery, and for partial completion of landscape plans.

Your board had determined to work quietly and not publicize its hopes, fearing that some unforeseen disappointment might arise. But when notice came that the President of the United States had approved our project, when all uncertainty had disappeared, your board broke down and furnished the good news to the Desert Trail for your information through its columns. This action, so long withheld, was still too speedy to be geared to WPA action apparently, because the promised day of actual work again arrived without any recognition from the WPA office.

Finally, on November 16 the full board membership called at the San Bernardino WPA office. It was found that our plans had again been resting in that office, that final set-up plans had not been sent to Los Angeles. Nor could it be learned when they would be sent.

It seemed that the powers that be in Los Angeles were rejecting small projects in outlying communities, it seemed that federal funds were dwindling, it seemed that all the months of promises, months of waiting, all the work, the expense, all our hopes, were to go for nothing *
* *

A third article will conclude this series and should give everyone a better understanding of the problems confronting your cemetery board.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 14 April 1939, page 1, column 1

AN EDITORIAL

This is the last of three articles dealing with the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery. The property was generously donated in 1934 by Ex-Service Man Bill Lage, who homesteaded * * * with plans all set to go, with Presidential approval obtained.

After seven months of working, planning, arriving finally at Presidential approval of our cemetery project, it would be a sorry group of men who would meekly accept apparent

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frustration without inquiring as to its cause, without striving to overcome all obstacles as they arise and continue all efforts leading to a final accomplishment of the main objective—a suitable chapel at your cemetery grounds. This latter your board is determined to do.

It may be futile to ask why our plans lay in San Bernardino for so many months. It may be impudent and unwarranted to hold the thought that a small community with little voting strength has little chance to secure anything but promises for favors or rights which are dispensed through political channels. It may be utterly absurd to wonder if some small subversive local minority brought what pressure it could to defeat our project. It seems equally ridiculous to believe that conscientious objections were made in San Bernardino when none were made locally. With no further need of monies, with the promise of putting our unemployed to work on a needed structure, with the assurance that thousands of dollars of outside money would go into our community pay roll, with no sectionalism involved it is indeed difficult to find any objections dictated by financial or any other reasons.

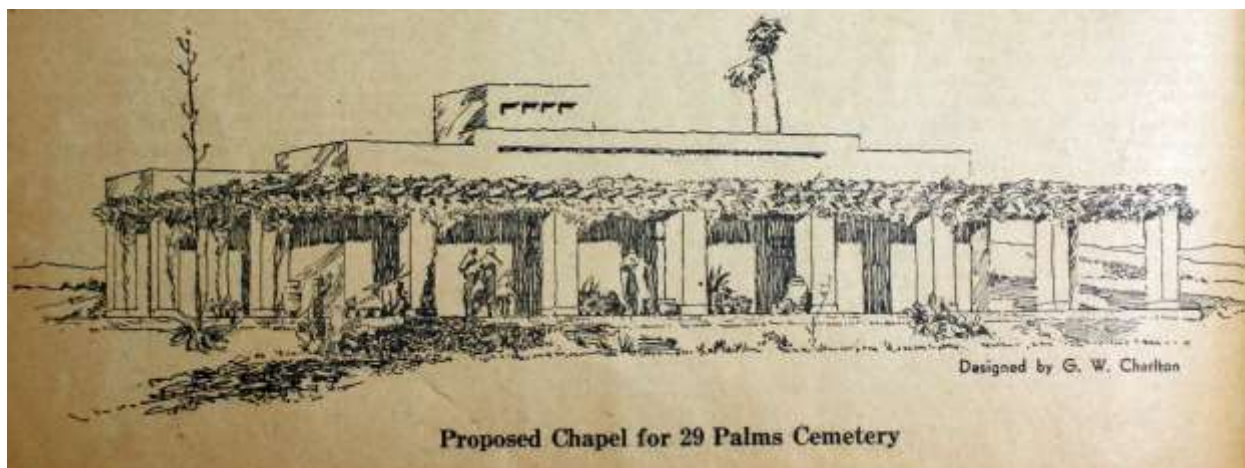
Yet our project took months to clear the San Bernar-

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dino WPA offices when its spokesman assured that it would take days. We got action only when it was possible to turn us down with the truthful excuse that WPA funds for the year were running low. The only answer available from official sources is that it takes a long time to set up a project in any community. If this is so then these officials are terribly overworked or lamentably inefficient and indifferent in their service to their fellow men. Your board certainly does not believe either to be true, and rate these men to be fine, courteous, conscientious, well trained in their fields of work. Are these men shackled with petty political dictation, hampered with considerations other than those properly involved in their work so that they are frustrated at any semblance of keeping their promises? Having met the men one is forced to lean to this answer. If this is the truth then there is a sorry dispensation of federal taxes, some of it yours, in these WPA work projects.

One other angle is involved. Late, very late, information was given that the Los Angeles authorities were rejecting small communities on the grounds of high costs of transportation and supervision in remote areas. One big truck and trailer could in two trips bring in all outside



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supplies for our project, and we have plenty of competent local men to do the supervising. It seems that such reasons are not enough to deprive our unemployed of their chance to work. WPA was instituted to cater to human want with efficiency a secondary consideration.

You have before you the artist's sketch of our proposed chapel. Our leanest months of employment are upon us. Our men should have the opportunity to work for their living. Twentynine Palms needs this chapel. The board should not ask this community for any considerable taxes but will be forced to, now or later, if this WPA project fails. But we, united are not going to fail. The San Bernardino county WPA administrator promises his best efforts on our behalf. Local items must be ready for his approval. All those who see no hope of steady employment for the next six or eight months should contact Mr. Lincoln Stonecipher at once.

You are now completely informed. Your enthusiasm should be enkindled by this worthwhile project. There is not the slightest decent grounds for any local objections to it. Get behind your board. Praise them a bit for all the free work you are getting out of them. Criticize them if your criticism is constructive but make such criticisms direct to them. Finally let's all be ready to help in any small way possible. You have a splendid, hard-working, self-effacing body of three men working without pay. All they ask is your full support and cooperation that success may crown their efforts and bring to you this splendid project.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 28 April 1939, page 1, column 5

INTEREST RENEWED IN LOCAL PROJECT

The recent series of editorials appearing in the *Desert Trail* has aroused local interest and hope in the proposed WPA project for the erection of a chapel building and other improvements on the local cemetery grounds.

Assurance has been given by Mr. Wynkoop, WPA administrator of San Bernardino, that the local project will receive proper consideration and that a survey of the local situation will be made in the near future.

Of first consideration will be the need of such a project to provide employment to those of our people who are unable to find steady employment through private channels. It can and must be shown that we have a considerable number of such residents who have no prospects for steady employment.

President Lincoln Stonecipher of the cemetery board advises he will gladly aid all those who wish to register, and furthermore, advises that in order to qualify for WPA work our citizens first should register with the S R A, so that no delay will occur in completing the WPA rolls when work actually starts.

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 12 May 1939, page 1, column 4

Cemetery Officials To Confer With WPA

Chairman Lincoln Stonecipher, Wallace Trigg and Gerald Charlton of the local cemetery board will journey to San Bernardino tomorrow where they will confer with WPA officials relative to the local cemetery project.

WPA Administrator Wyncoop has assured local board members the project will receive proper consideration, and a survey of the local situation will be made in the near future.

The local cemetery board is receiving the wholehearted cooperation of all organizations of the community.

It is hoped work will be started before long.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 19 May 1939, page 1, column 1

Cemetery Board Given Encouragement on WPA Project

Members of the board of trustees of the Twentynine Palms cemetery district, Lincoln Stonecipher, Wallace Trigg and Gerald Charlton journeyed to San Bernardino last Friday and secured a long audience with the San Bernardino area WPA officials relative to the local cemetery project. Present at the conference with the local board were Mr. Ernest Wyncoop, head of the San Bernardino WPA area; Mr. E. C. Evangel, planning engineer, and Mr. E. B. Heinicke, projects control engineer.

Administrator Wyncoop stated that until after the end of the fiscal year on June 30, his office would not be able to consider the opening of any projects, but with new appropriations available all approved projects would receive due consideration.

It was also brought out, local officials stated, that while WPA workers are certified on the basis
(Continued on Page 5)

Cemetery Project

(Continued From Page 1)

of human need, actual WPA work is allotted only where it can be shown that administrative costs and regulation inspections are not so heavy that the efficiency of the project is impaired. Projects in remote areas such as the local one require a sufficient number of workers to justify administrative expenses and a project here would require around 20 certified workers. It is believed that the case load increase here with the coming of summer will show a sufficient number of local certified workers if all those qualified register in the near future, local officials declare.

Preparatory work and plans of the local board were approved by the present officials, but revised WPA regulations will make necessary an increase in sponsor funds and a small additional tax levy will be necessary, it was advised.

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

Proposed WPA works projects at Blythe and Indio will, if opened, facilitate the opening of the local project, it was pointed out, because administrative costs can be spread over the three projects.

Since the Recreation district board will not be able to start any actual work until next year, the cemetery project is the only one available and it is the desire on the part of local citizens that the cemetery board will be successful in bringing this work to the community.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 2 June 1939, page 1, column 4

Impressive Memorial Services at Cemetery Tuesday

Impressive Memorial Day services under direction of the local Legion and Auxiliary organizations were held at the Twentynine Palms cemetery on Tuesday at 11 o'clock, with a goodly number of patriotic citizens in attendance.

Most inspiring was to see the Yucca Valley Boy Scout troop and their leader Legionnaire Jeff Overbay in full uniform, who journeyed here to take part in the ceremony.

Commander Wallace Trigg of the American Legion had charge of the service, with Rev. Dr. Williamson pronouncing the invocation.

Color bearers stood at the head of the graves with the American flags and organization colors from the Twentynine Palms American Legion post and Auxiliary unit 334, and the Yucca Valley American Legion post.

Wreaths of desert growth were made by the Auxiliary ladies for placement on the graves.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 4 August 1939, page 1, column 4

Cemetery Board Awaits Tax Levy

Recent meeting of the local cemetery board was held, with all members present, purpose of which was to secure a mutual understanding in regard to any action which should be taken while some of the members might be away from the community on vacation.

The board is waiting until the August 8 budget hearing of the county board of supervisors, at which time it is anticipated the proposed tax levy will be confirmed.

Lincoln Stonecipher, president of the board advised that if and when funds are available through the tax levy it is the intention of the board to seek a WPA or SRA project at once. The board members pointed out it is evident that there are workers here who want this work, and it is hoped that all those qualified will take care to properly register so the board will have complete information in making its plans, so that no one wanting this work will lose out through failure to register.

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 31 May 1940, page 1, column 3

Memorial Services Held at Cemetery

Memorial services were held at the Twentynine Palms cemetery yesterday forenoon with a small group turning out to pay respects to the dead.

Services were in charge of Commander Harry Grimm of the Legion and President Mrs. Alma Steeg of the Auxiliary unit 334. Dr. C. D. Williamson, pastor of the Little Church of the Desert, gave a short talk and pronounced the invocation.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 11 April 1941, page [last], column 4

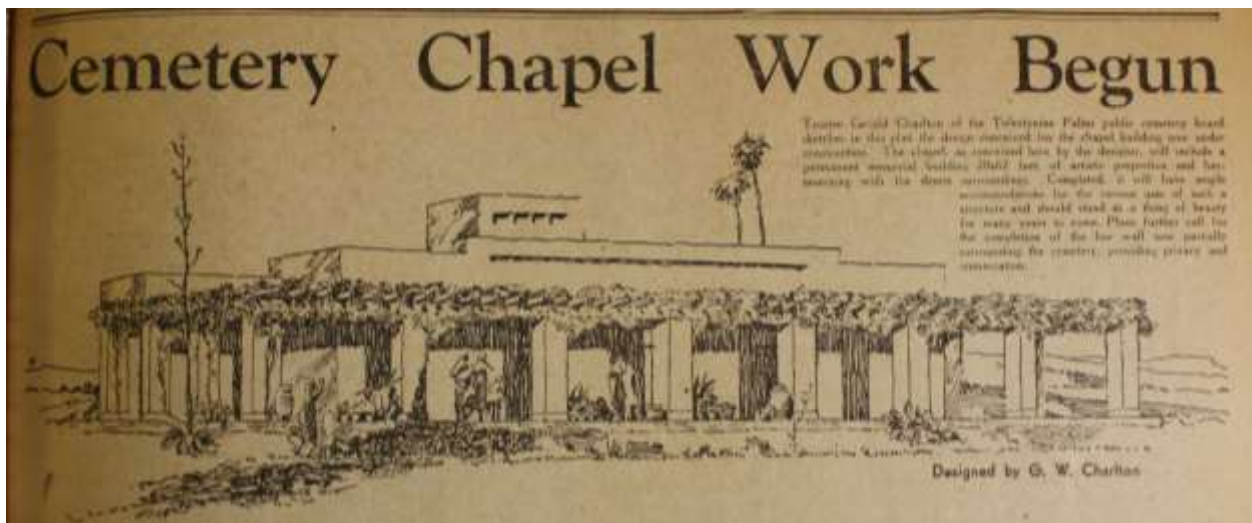
Cemetery Chapel Bids to Be Called Soon

Board of directors of the 29 Palms Public cemetery is about to solicit bids from local contractors for the construction of the south end of the chapel for which funds are available, it was learned this week.

This structure was pictured in an earlier issue of the *Desert Trail* and at that time called for adobe construction, but the present plans specify the use of reinforced concrete tile.

It was reported that plans and specifications are expected soon, and will be at hand for early distribution to local builders who expect to bid for the work.

Qualified contractors are requested to communicate at once, and in writing, to W. L. Trigg, secretary of the board of trustees.



The Desert Trail, Friday, 31 October 1941, page 1, columns 1-5

Cemetery Chapel Work Begun

Trustee Gerald Charlton of the Twentynine Palms public cemetery board sketches in this plan the design conceived for the chapel building now under construction. The chapel, as conceived

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here by the designer, will include a permanent memorial building 20x62 feet, of artistic proportion and harmonizing with the desert surroundings. Completed, it will have ample accommodations for the various uses of such a structure and should stand as a thing of beauty for many years to come. Plans further call for the completion of the low wall now partially surrounding the cemetery, providing privacy and consecration.

Norman Bremer, local builder, is in charge of the construction, and is carrying out the architectural details as submitted by Gerald Charlton, in the above conception.

The monies for the development of the local cemetery is raised by special taxation of all property owners in the judicial township, and for a period of several years this has been accumulating. Part of the money from this fund was expended last year on the erection of an adobe-block wall partially around the large plot of land.

The land for the local cemetery was originally donated by William ("Bill") Lage, early-day ex-service man homesteader now residing in Venice.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 24 July 1942, page 1

Bill Lage Laid to Rest in Cemetery He Gave

Resting in the Twentynine Palms cemetery, his own donation to the community, is William J. ("Bill") Lage, who passed away Friday, July 17, in the Veteran's hospital at Sawtelle. Graveside services under auspices of the Twentynine Palms Legion post were held Sunday at 11 a. m., following funeral in Los Angeles the day before.

Bill, called at the early age of 43, was an early-day homesteader in this desert. A veteran of World War 1, he has been suffering disabilities incurred in that big scrap and from which he succumbed. Bill served his country in an artillery outfit. He is survived by his widow Frances; a son Bob, and his parents Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Lage, all residing in Venice, the coastal city the Lages have made their home since moving from Twentynine Palms.

The war vet was born in Gladbrook, Iowa. During his residence as a pioneer of this community he served the Legion post as commander as well as entering into other community activities. It was while his residence here he foresaw the need for a cemetery project for the community, and willingly donated a tract of land from his large homestead.

Rev. Wm Carle ministered the rites at the cemetery; Jack Cones and Harry Grimm served as color bearers on behalf of the Legion post, and the group of singers comprised Mr. and Mrs. Tom Stonecipher, Mr. and Mrs. Burl Stonecipher and daughters Marjorie and Vivian, Mrs. Thomas Martin, Mrs. Carle, Mrs. Harry Day and Miss Maud Russell.

The Desert Trail joins the host of friends of the bereaved family in extending sympathies.

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The Desert Trail, Friday, 21 July 1944, page __, column 5

SEVERE PENALTY FACES VANDALS DAMAGING CEMETERY PROPERTY

VANDALS, who have gone to the local cemetery chapel and damaged some of the property are warned that a severe penalty awaits them if apprehended, as the law calls for prosecution of those marring such properties, according to W. D. Trigg, chairman of the cemetery board. He reported that vandals with guns had "shot up" a \$20 lock on the chapel door.

Finishing touches have been put on the tile floor of the chapel and as soon as there is a need for a local project to absorb any unemployment, the cemetery chapel will be completed, he said.

The Desert Trail, Friday, 30 May 1947, page 1, column 1

Memory Service Impressive

Impressive services marked today's observance of Memorial Day at Twentynine Palms cemetery. A large attendance participated in the ceremony.

From across the road the various groups marched to their places about the graves and the huge staff with the Flag at half-mast.

Ralph Dunn and Wad Watkins for the Legion and Florence Curry and Norene Ferguson for the Auxiliary were the color bearers. Sev-

(Continued on Page 13)

Memory Service

(Continued from Page 1)

en Auxiliary members, eight Girl Scouts, 14 Boy Scouts, nine Cub Scouts, and 15 Legionnaires took part.

Scoutmaster Ted Bickmore led the pledge of allegiance to the Flag and Rev. Joseph D. Easter offered the invocation.

Following the group singing of "Star-Spangled Banner" there was one minute of silence in honor of the dead which was concluded by "Taps" on the organ, played by Mrs. Easter. Gayle Geise sang "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

Quoting a portion of Lincoln's Gettysburg address Rev. Easter stated in his Memorial Day speech that only a few vaguely remember the association of it today. Today the memory of what the boys did in the last two wars is vivid but in 30 or 40 years it too will be forgotten, he stated.

"But Sgt. Jones of the Civil war, nor Sgt. Jones of World War II, as they look down on us will not be too concerned about our forgetting what they did but their concern is that we must keep America as they made it and the way we found it. We can keep faith with them by keeping our country strong, great and just," the speaker avowed. Rev. Easter then pronounced benediction.

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Thirteen wreaths were placed on the graves of the 11 service men and two women who served their country by Billie Bolster, Norma McCown, Eva Enger, Nelle Godwin, Doris Sherman and Clo Showalter, Auxiliary members. A floral cross was placed at the Flag pole, in honor of the Unknown Soldier, by Arthur MacArthur, who served with the navy in hospital corps.

Stanley ("Ace") Jones was the chairman in charge of the services.

Rev. P. J. O'Dowd was unable to be present due to a previous engagement.

The Desert Trail, Thursday, 28 May 1953, page 1, column 1

Memorial Services Will Be Held At Twentynine Palms Cemetery

Memorial Day, Saturday, May 30, will be made the occasion for colorful and solemn service at the Twentynine Palms cemetery by war veteran, auxiliary and Boy Scout organizations. The ceremony in remembrance of armed forces dead will begin promptly at 10:40 a.m. at the flagpole and the public is urged to be on hand in ample time for the opening program.

R. L. "Bob" McCown, veteran of World War I and member of the American Legion and Disabled Veterans, will be the speaker at the service. John O. Wildman, recently elected commander of the DAV will be in charge of the memorial program. Legionnaires of Troy L. Martin Post 334, American Legion, headed by Commander Ross Whytock; DAV, Auxiliary units and Boy Scouts under Scoutmaster Ron Miller will assemble at the cemetery entrance. Word has come from Yucca Valley that the Legion Post will attend. The ceremony will open with the trooping of the National colors and unit banners for placement in standards near the flagpole.

Participation in the ceremony by the Boy Scouts has been arranged by Mrs. Vi Carson. Her son, Thurman, will recite a poem and Scout John Wasserburger will read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Following the talk by Legionnaire McCown a cross at the flag-pole symbolic of all veteran graves will be decorated. Following the memorial service all veteran graves will be decorated.

Through the courtesy of Lt. Colonel Frederick Scantling a firing squad composed of Marines from the Base will fire a salute to the veteran sleepers. This will be followed by the sounding of taps. After a period of silence the National flags and unit banners will be retired, marking the conclusion of the ceremony.

On Sunday morning at 11 o'clock Dr. Roy Hiram Wollam will hold Memorial Day services at the Little Church of the Desert. The legionnaires of Troy L. Martin Post 334, American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary and other veterans will attend the service with their colors.

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The Desert Trail, Thursday, 21 May 1959, page 4, column 2

CEMETERY BOARD ISSUES WARNING

A warning has been issued this week to the public by the Twentynine Palms Cemetery Board that any person or persons caught destroying property at the local cemetery will be prosecuted to the greatest extent of the law.

Over the past few years on several occasions vandals have maliciously damaged the chapel by breaking and entering. Sunday afternoon five girls, ages 7 to 12 years, were apprehended and turned over to their parents. The girls deliberately broke down a door in an effort to enter the chapel.

The Board said the grounds will be patrolled in the future and further vandalism will not be tolerated.

The Desert Trail, Thursday, 28 May 1959, page 1, column 1

[The paper in the area of his clipping is damaged.]

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES MAY 30 AT CEMETERY

Memorial Day Services, sponsored by Troy L. Martin Post 334 American Legion will be held at Twentynine Palms Cemetery at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 30. Post Chaplain, Irvine Enger, is in charge of arrangements. Commander Harvey Mixon will preside.

All patriotic organizations are urged to attend and have their colors at the gate at 10:30 a.m. The public is invited to attend the impressive services honoring the dead of all wars.

_____ the services members place Flags and Poppy _____ on the graves of veterans.

_____ent Eva Enger, will _____ in the Memorial Grove in honor of all war dead.

Immediately following Memorial services everyone is invited by the Cemetery Board of Directors to attend the dedication of the Cemetery Chapel.

The Desert Trail, Wednesday, 12 July 1961, page 8, column 2

Cemetery District Given Flag July 4 By DAR Chapter

Twentynine Palms Cemetery District has been given a 50-star flag by Oasis de Mara chapter, DAR. It was presented during a ceremony at the cemetery the morning of July 4, and is the second such presentation by the DAR.

Previously the chapter had given a new flag to Twentynine Palms Recreation District. Both were flown over the capitol building in Washington, and are accompanied by an affidavit to that effect.

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Presentation was made by Mrs. Daisy S. Nokes, chapter regent, to Brig. Gen. Francis H. Brink (Ret.), chairman of the Cemetery District, who accepted the gift. He also gave a eulogy to George Washington, our first President, in whose memory the DAR gave the flag.

The color guard of the Marine Base Boy Scout Troop 78, assisted by Trumpeter Frank Fish, of the U. S. Marine: Band, added much to the impressiveness of the simple ceremony. Troop members of the color guard were Robert McCormick, Steve Heinz, Danny Berry and Steve Miller. Major McCormick is Scout Master and Corp. Craig C. Anderson, Assistant Scout Master.

Besides the Boy Scouts, other young people taking part were Beryl Horton, who recited the American Creed and told of its meaning and background, and Brian Noonan, who gave a splendid talk on Washington's contribution to his country. He posed the question, What are Americans doing today as their contribution to their country?

DAR Chaplin, Mrs. Ruth Markell, led in prayer and singing, with the regent giving the closing prayer.

Ada Huffman and Elsie Nokes had charge of the public address system, lent by Radio Doc.

The Desert Trail, Wednesday, 21 May 1969, page 1, column 1

CEMETERY CHAPEL TO BE READY FOR USE

Improvements at the Twentynine Palms Cemetery chapel will be evident to visitors and residents who attend Memorial Day services there. It is being redecorated and furnished so services can be conducted there by next year.

Nylon carpeting has just been installed, covering the entire floor. The mingled warm brown tones contrast with the off-white wall color. Drapes being made now will blend with wall tone. These are expected to be installed in a week or two.

An addition which the cemetery trustees have long planned for is an organ. Mrs. Myrtle Coleman, district secretary, expects to be able to purchase one in two or three weeks.

On order are 20 chairs for the private family room. The main chapel is equipped with 36 upholstered chairs as well as benches.

Other work will include repair or re-sealing of streets as needed, in the cemetery, which covers a gross area of 20 acres.

Purchase of a bier with its carriage, and chapel flower stands, is expected to come out of next year's budget.

The main project last year, in a continuing development program, was construction of a garage, workshop and storage building.

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The Desert Trail, Wednesday, 13 October 1971, page 2, column 5

Cemetery Planned Near Joshua Tree

State approval for plans to construct a 53 acre cemetery on the south side of Twentynine Palms Hwy. west of Joshua Tree has been received, according to a report by a Yucca Valley real estate man.

According to the published report, "signatures of over 30,000 desert residents and property owners were obtained, all stating their desires for a cemetery. He said they proved to the (State Cemetery) board that this area has an assessed valuation of over \$64 million, that local banks have \$42-1/2 million in their coffers and the population of the area is over 30,000 at this time."

The report states further that the plans call for immediate planting of 4-1/2 acres of grass and trees and construction of an office building which could be expanded to include a mortuary and funeral chapel.

In 1969 a group requested and obtained Board of Supervisors approval for the site plan. The approval came on March 24, 1969. The location at that time was given as a mile east of Yucca Mesa Road, on the south side of the highway.

The only, existing cemetery is that of Twentynine Palms Cemetery District, this district embracing the eastern portion of Morongo High Desert, being, almost the same as Twentynine Palms Hospital and Recreation districts. The district cemetery has a gross acreage of 20 acres, most of which are developed. The cemetery also has a chapel.

The Desert Trail, 5 April 1984, page 1

Anniversary celebration April 14 - Cemetery ends half century of service

In many parts of the United States, the old-style "pine box" casket was a thing of the past by the late 1930s. But not in Twentynine Palms.

In the year 1938, a resident could get a local carpenter to whip him up a rough wooden casket for about \$15. Grave sites were \$12.50 each, and getting the grave opened and closed was \$15.

Perhaps prices had to be low then since the services of a cemetery were not in big demand — between January 1934 and September 1938, there had been a total of eight burials in the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery.

Today, there are a lot more than eight graves in the cemetery, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on April 14.

On that day, the district will celebrate its birthday with a special ceremony beginning at 10 a.m. at the cemetery. The theme for the ceremony of recognition and appreciation will be "Lest We Forget," and it will feature the Combat Center's Drum and Bugle Corps.

On April 14, 1934, the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery came into being at Frank Bagley's store in Twentynine Palms. The grant deed for the land that was to become that cemetery was

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donated by ex-serviceman William J. Lage and his wife Francis. It was accepted by the original board of trustees, which included Ed Bixby, John Meyer and Norman Bremmer.

For the record, the first burial in the cemetery was that

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...Cemetery anniversary

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of Hassell Donnell, who died Jan. 29, 1934. His burial preceded the official presentation of the grant deed by about two and a half months.

Another first was on May 31, 1937, when the local post of the American Legion held the cemetery's first Memorial Day service, a tradition which has continued to this day.

But before much else could occur, it was necessary that a few details be cleared up, namely construct roads, purchase digging equipment and grade and dig the road leading from the highway. Authorization for these items were among the first recorded actions to be taken by the board; the date was Sept. 20, 1938.

The next improvement on the agenda was a chapel for the cemetery, "because the 29 Palms Public Cemetery is in a windswept, sun baked desert providing no shelter for those who use it for burial and other services." This comment was contained in a formal request to the county for a tax levy with which to fund the chapel construction.

Also applied to for funds was the Federal Works Agency, Works Project Administration (WPA), but when it appeared unlikely that federal funds would be made available, it was determined to use local sources — benefits and taxes. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in October of 1941, and the chapel was completed sometime in 1946.

Part of the reason for the long construction period for the chapel might lie in the financial records for the period of the cemetery's opening through May 29, 1946. During those 12 years, the total receipts from taxes, grave sales and other revenue sources were \$11,868.64. However, expenditures were even lower, \$8,162.87.

Growth of another kind was demonstrated when a fourth member was added to the board of trustees in 1954 and a fifth in 1962.

The long-delayed dedication of the chapel occurred on May 30, 1959.

Then, in 1981, the board of trustees established an "Endowment Care Fund," with the aim of insuring perpetual care of the burial lots in the cemetery through the investment of endowment funds. Beginning in October of that year, a percent of each cemetery fee assessed has been placed in this fund.

As a result of this fund, the cemetery may now receive property by grant, gift or any other method of donation for the endowment care of the burial lots.

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

As the fund grows, the board hopes the cemetery's operation will be completely sustained from the interest generated by the fund, thus eliminating the need for a tax assessment to pay for the care of the cemetery.

The latest improvement for the cemetery district was the recent approval for funds to drill the cemetery's own water well. A firm has already been selected, and it is hoped to have the water system functioning by early this summer.

The April 14 anniversary celebration was decided upon in order to dedicate a day in remembrance "for all former Board of Trustee members, both living and dead, who have unselfishly donated their time, talent and services to their community," according to a news release from the district.

Also to be recognized, according to the release, are "all of those in our community, both living and dead, who were responsible for bringing our cemetery into being and whose invaluable assistance through these past 50 eventful years has brought that cemetery to be what it is today, the beautiful final resting place for those we knew and loved."

The Desert Trail would like to thank Doris M. Robinson, Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery District trustee, for researching and organizing virtually all of the information for this article.

The Desert Trail, Thursday, 12 April 1984, page 1, column 1

Cemetery Celebrates 50th Birthday

A special day of remembrance to honor board trustees and community members who have worked for the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery will be, held Saturday, April 14, the 50th anniversary of the cemetery.

The ceremony, which has the theme "Lest We Forget," will begin at 10 a.m. at the cemetery site, and the public is invited.

The Invocation will be led by brother Lance Baldwin, and National Anthem will be played by the Combat Center's Drum and Bugle Corps.

Following these preliminaries, Henry M. Sarchet, chairman of the cemetery board of trustees, will introduce the attending dignitaries. Expected to be present are Dick Shook, representative for Assemblyman William Leonard, and Col. Michael Downs, representing the Combat Center.

Also to be introduced will be the current board, which includes Doris M. Robinson, secretary; Tex Bailey, Vivian Griset-Sherry and John A. Murdock, trustees. Manager Janet J. Simmons and

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...50 years

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caretaker Douglas R. Corlis will also be introduced.

An award of appreciation will be presented to the family of Robert K. Lage, former cemetery trustee, for their land donation.

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The families of other former trustees will also be acknowledged, and local troops of the Girl Scouts of America will be recognized.

Sarchet will then give a talk on the ceremony's theme, "Lest We Forget."

At the service's end, the Drum and Bugle Corps will play "Eternal Father," and "Taps."

Refreshments will be served in the cemetery chapel following the ceremony.

The Desert Trail, Thursday, 29 November 1984, page 1, columns 3-4

Cemetery plagued by vandalism

By D.C. Schons Desert Trail Staff Writer

There have been some strange problems with vandalism at the Twentynine Palms Cemetery, including an attack last week on the flagpole which left it bent and bowed but still standing.

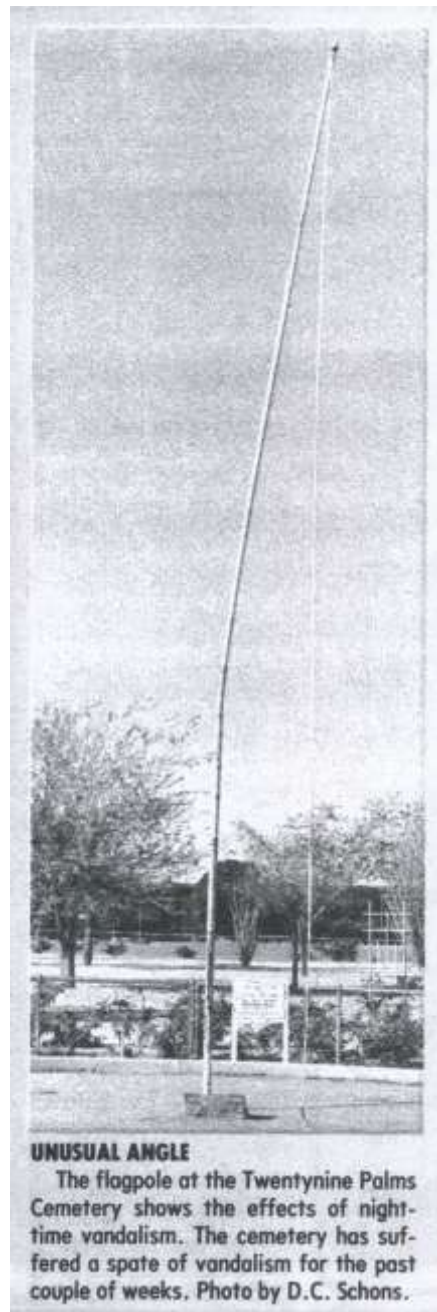
Vandalism is not a new problem at the cemetery, or anywhere else for that matter, but it seems that this time someone went to a great deal of time and trouble to damage the flagpole.

There has been a continuous problem with vandals at the cemetery, but it usually happens in short spurts. This time it is lasting over a number of weekends, and even during the week in some cases, said Janet Simmons, the manager at the cemetery.

The flagpole is the latest and worst vandalism that Simmons has dealt with lately, although she said that about a year ago, someone broke into the chapel and stole two stereo speakers that were installed there.

The usual damage is bending, defacing and stealing signs, riding motorcycles across the porch and shooting out the lightbulbs. Things have gotten so bad the last few weeks that Simmons has decided to leave the lightbulbs out of the fixtures unless there is a specific reason to have them on.

The odd thing about the vandalism this time is that someone decided to destroy some things that had not been touched before. Someone had to go to a lot of trouble to bend that flagpole; maybe they got a couple people to swing on the rope or they hooked it to a car and tried to pull it down, said Simmons. They also cut down a small tree. They didn't break it, but got down on their hands and knees and took the time



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to cut it off close to the ground.

Simmons said "it might help if the people that live in the area would keep their eyes open and pay a little closer attention to what goes

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...Cemetery

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on around the cemetery at night." She continued to say "this cemetery is paid for by all the people in Twentynine Palms, so it only makes sense for them to try and help stop this senseless waste of their own money."

The bent flagpole, the stolen signs, the broken lightbulbs and the stolen little tree, all cost the people of Twentynine Palms tax money. Simmons said she feels that the people that are paying for it should know where their money is going.

~~~~photo caption~~~~>

UNUSUAL ANGLE

The flagpole at the Twentynine Palms Cemetery shows the effects of nighttime vandalism, the cemetery has suffered a spate of vandalism for the past couple of weeks. Photo by D.C. Schons.

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*The Desert Trail*, 24 July 1986, page A2

### **Cemetery part of local history**

Although established more than 50 years ago, the Twentynine Palms Cemetery remains only a sign on Highway 62 to many community residents.

Located on Encelia Avenue, north of Two Mile Avenue, the cemetery has a history of community spirit and involvement stretching back to the pioneering days of the 1930's.

In 1933, William Lage, a early resident of the fledgling town of Twentynine Palms, initiated discussions regarding the need for a cemetery with some of his American Legion "buddies," including Tom Martin, Bill Underhill, and Constable Jack Cones.

According to his son, Robert Lage, "Discussions with my mother and with some of his close friends, including his sister, Lenore Brown, had convinced him that there was both a very practical, personal need, as well as a community need for a cemetery in Twentynine Palms."

In 1934, following the meetings with fellow Legion members, the William Lage family donated the original 20 acres of land, through the American Legion of Twentynine Palms, to the Twentynine Palms Cemetery District.

The document recording the transaction bears the signature of Frank Bagley, president, and Edward F. Malone, secretary of the American Legion, and the meeting during which the Grant

## Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

Deed for the land was accepted by the first Cemetery Board of Trustees, the late Norman J. Bremer, E.N. Bixby and John C. Meyers, was held in Bagley's Store.

Robert Lage, speaking in 1984 at the cemetery's 50th anniversary ceremony, said that the plan his father initiated "could not have come about without the full acceptance of responsibility for developing this cemetery by a Board of Trustees."

According to cemetery manager-secretary, Janet Simmons, approximately 32 individuals have served as board members during the past half-century.

"To name only a few," she reminisced, "my records show the following trustees: the late Harris Sherman, Brig. Gen. F.H. Brink, Guy Moorhead, Victor Curran, Margaret Lutz, who served for 14 years, and Carl Theis, who served for 16 years. Also, in the 1970's, the late Ralph Dunn and Mayo Crutcher did their share for the cemetery."

The most recent San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors' appointee to the Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery District Board of Trustees is Robert Coghill.

Coghill has lived in Twentynine Palms for 17 years, graduated from Twentynine Palms High School and holds a certificate in fire science from the College of the Desert. A fire captain with the Twentynine Palms Fire District, Coghill and his wife have three sons.

Simmons said that, since the passage of Proposition 13, which resulted in a loss of tax revenue to the district, the trustees have explored every avenue to ensure the continued support of the community cemetery in the manner established by the former trustees and community contributors.

Clubs and individuals, she said, have given not only of their time and labor, but also have donated chairs, a podium and music system for the chapel, a flag pole, and many shrubs and trees.

An Endowment Care Fund was established in October, 1981, several years prior to state legislation mandating that all public cemeteries establish an endowment trust fund.

The accrued interest may be used for maintenance of the cemetery.

Also, she added, a contract plan has been adopted for residents to purchase graves prior to need and make monthly payments for them.

"This gives the peace of mind of knowing that, not only is the grave owned before it is needed," she explained. "Also, family plots can be purchased at an affordable monthly amount."

A recently provided grant from the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and the Office of Community Development will serve to purchase pipe and supplies needed to replace the deteriorated main water lines and to update the irrigation system.

The work, said Simmons, will be done by the cemetery caretaker, Dale Tandy, and his assistant, Glenn Best.

"The new system will be a savings in both water and repair costs," she said.

## Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

Sidewalks and curbs have been installed on 5 acres, as the first step in developing a new burial area, but the cemetery district still has many needs, and community help is always appreciated.

"Arborvitae trees will be placed 20 feet apart throughout each section, in keeping with the overall plan adopted many years ago," said Simmons.

A tree donated in memory of a friend or loved one could be a way to honor someone special in a worthwhile and lasting manner. And rose bushes are needed to replace those in the rose circle which have bloomed so beautifully for so many years."

A list of memorial gifts is kept as a part of the permanent record of the cemetery district, she said.

The Secretary of the Board of Trustees, Doris Robinson, has compiled the cemetery archives in hopes that historical articles can be written, and is searching for more input from area "pioneers." Robinson plans to contribute the records to the historical society upon the completion of her work.

Simmons, an employee of the cemetery office for almost ten years, reminded the community that the cemetery chapel is available, at no charge, for use in memorial services, and that board representatives are available to speak to area clubs and organizations.

She invited residents to call her at her office with their questions about this often-ignored public facility.

The Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery is not the sort of place that invites attention. Yet, it is serene and beautiful, with rows of neatly kept graves and a lovely view of the surrounding mountains. The cemetery has earned its own dignified place in the history of Twentynine Palms.

~~~~photo caption~~~~>

HISTORIC SITE

Landscaping is a continuing project at the historic Twentynine Palms Cemetery, founded more than 50 years ago by local pioneers.

<~~~~photo caption~~~~



HISTORIC SITE

Landscaping is a continuing project at the historic Twentynine Palms Cemetery, founded more than 50 years ago by local pioneers.

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

Trustees

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Ed Bixby | 1934 | William L. Schutz | 1954 |
| John Meyer | 1934 | Ben F. Coleman | 1955 |
| Norman Bremer | 1934 | Leroy Lashmett | 1966 |
| Lincoln Stonecipher | 1941 | Bill McSparrin | 1971 |
| Gerald Charlton | 1940s | Glenn Hardy | 1971 |
| Wallace L. Trigg | 1943 | Louis Dugas | 1973 |
| Burl Stonecipher | 1938 | Joseph Flanagan | 1973 |
| Henry M. Sarchet | 1975 | John Ammar | 1977 |
| Doris M. Robinson | 1979 | John Van Alstyne | 1978 |
| Tex Bailey | 1984 (circa) | Harold Merrill | 1979 |
| Vivian Griset-Sherry | 1982 | O.L. Bailey | 1980 |
| Harris Sherman | 1954 | John A. "Jack" Murdock | 1984 |
| Brig. Gen. F.H. Brink | 1957 | Orwin Zuiderweg | 1985 |
| Guy Moorhead | 1957 | Shirley M. Simmons | 1990 |
| Victor Curran | 1957 | Joel Klink | 1990 |
| Margaret Lutz (served for 14 years) | 1957 | Virginia Bridge | 1993 |
| Carl Theis (served for 16 years) | 1962 | Corrine Johnson-Dobler | 2002-2011 |
| Ralph Dunn | 1964 | Sandra J. Gray | 2008- |
| Mayo Crutcher | 1967 | Elizabeth "Betty" Laferriere | 2008- |
| Robert W. Coghill | 1986 | April L. Gibson | 2005- |
| William Grindrod | 1954 | Joseph H. Crites | 2008-2008 |
| M.B. O'Barr | 1954 | Omer L. "Les" Snodgrass | 2011 - |

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

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Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

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17 January 1936 4

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery

Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery