

*U. Am.
Greece*



Tipped tombstones, weedy growth mar old cemetery on planned hospital site.

Old Graves on Hospital's Site

By GORDON CHATHAM

A national organization has made a plea for the preservation of an historic cemetery on Greece land earmarked for use by Park Avenue Hospital.

The cemetery, now abandoned, includes among its graves those of veterans of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.

It is variously known as the pioneer Wagner Farm Cemetery, Big Ridge Cemetery, and Greece Wagner Graveyard.

Covering an acre or less, it lies near the southeastern corner of the 152-acre proposed hospital site off Long Pond Road between Straub Road and Ridgeway Avenue.

Town officials are checking the possibility of moving the graves to another cemetery because of vandalism at the site.

Concern over the cemetery's future was expressed in a letter to Ralph DeStephano, chairman of the Northwest Hospital Committee, from William J. Murtagh, director of programs for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

HIS ORGANIZATION, Murtagh said, "is a private, non-governmental, non-profit corporation chartered by Congress in 1949 to facilitate public participation in the preservation of sites."

National Trust members are concerned about the cemetery, he said.

"It is the understanding of the National Trust that efforts are being made to develop the cemetery plot for hospital purposes.

"May we ask very thoughtful reconsideration of this proposal which would obliterate a segment of our American heritage and further request that renewed efforts be made to locate the proposed hospital either around the cemetery lot, or in another location?"

DeStephano, whose committee is buying the land to donate to Park Avenue, said his group had anticipated arranging for the relocation of the graves to a cemetery "where they'll have perpetual care."

He indicated some surprise at the apparent opposition to the



proposed relocation in view of vandalism and conditions at the site, generally.

Town crews periodically cut the weeds and brush on the cemetery site, but most of the graves, at least, are otherwise untended.

It could not be immediately determined how many graves the cemetery contains. Only about 15 tombstones, some bearing early 19th century dates, remain. Many graves are unmarked.

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NO PUBLIC ROAD runs to the cemetery. A private dirt

road, barred by a gate, does run past it, however, and the cemetery is accessible by foot from Long Pond Road.

Its semi-isolated location has attracted groundhogs, groundhog-hunters, and vandals.

A number of "chuck" holes can be found among the graves. A sizeable hole distinguishes one of the marked graves, where hunters apparently attempted to dig out a groundhog.

Vandals have tipped over some of the tombstones and littered the cemetery at times.

Supervisor George W. Badgerow said he received a call from the Monroe County Veterans Service Agency about a year ago on the cemetery situation.

Town crews have been detailed to spruce up the area as best they can, he said, but the cemetery's location makes it difficult to curb the vandalism.

Under the law, the Town, through the courts, can announce its intention to move the cemetery. If no descendants of persons buried in the cemetery object, the land reverts to the town, which can then undertake the project.

In the event of an objection, however, "I don't know what happens," said Badgerow.

DeStephano said that until such time as the hospital "comple"

WAGNER CEMETERY - LONG POND RD.

Dem. Greece (Wagner)

The Times-Union
Wed., Jan. 25, 1967

10B

Greece to Remove Old Graves

More than 70 graves including some thought to contain the remains of veterans of three early American wars will be removed from the pioneer Wagner Farm Cemetery to make way for the new Park Ridge Hospital in Greece.

Transfer of the bodies was approved by a recent order of Supreme Court Justice Charles B. Brasser.

In approving an application by Town of Greece Supervisor George W. Badgerow to permit transfer of the remains, Justice Brasser also turned down a complaint by Miss Dorothy Vincent, 208 University Park.

Miss Vincent had objected to removal of the graves including that of her great-grandfather, Asa Hurd, a veteran of the War of 1812. She complained through her attorney that the cemetery was of historic value and

suggested that the half-acre plot be preserved with a marker as a memorial park on the new hospital grounds.

Mrs. Sanford Slocum, a regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, also submitted a statement in support of Brasser in October. The National Trust For Historic Preservation earlier registered a plea with the Town to maintain the cemetery at its current location.

Three veterans of the Revolutionary War are thought to be buried in the cemetery, and town officials say the remains of a Mexican War veteran also may rest there.

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ACCORDING to Badgerow's application, there apparently are at least 77 graves in the cemetery. There may be others, he said, but because of the poor

condition of the plot the exact number is unknown.

The first burial apparently was in 1823 and the latest was Mr. Hurd in 1877. His wife and two children were also interred there.

In his decision filed in December, Justice Brasser remarked that "It is apparent that the cemetery has been abandoned... (and there is) Miss Vincent's opposition during a court hearing before Justice no evidence that personal injury would result from removal of the remains." He noted the cemetery has been neglected.

The judge said he did not consider opposition statements — that there was no public necessity for removal, that it was impractical and impossible to effect a removal, that the cemetery has historical value, and that care and maintenance

is a "public trust — to be sufficient basis for denial of the Town's application.

Justice Brasser also said \$8,275 can be paid for removal of the 77 known remains to a new location, with \$165 for each additional grave found.

The graves probably will be moved to the Fall Cemetery at Ridge Road, West and Latona Road, Greece. Badgerow said he expected to meet with the board of directors of the Fall Cemetery soon and seek permission for re-interment there.

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THE WAGNER FARM CEMETERY also has been known as the Big Ridge Cemetery and the Greece Wagner Graveyard.

It is near the southeast corner of the 152-acre proposed site of the new hospital off Long Pond Road between Straub Road and Ridgeway Avenue. Town leaders are attempting to acquire the land to give title to Park

Avenue Hospital, which plans to move from its present location and build at the new site.

Ralph DeStephano, chairman of the Northwest Hospital Committee of the Greece Council, Rochester Chamber of Commerce, is heading the campaign, and said a 58½ acre tract has already been purchased from Edward J. Eratt are, 24 Summit Hill Drive, Greece, for \$163,000.

Two parcels are still to be acquired. DeStephano said the committee expects to close purchase on the properties in February. The cemetery is surrounded by one of the parcels, Badgerow stated, and title to the half-acre plot will revert to the town when the graves are transferred.

The last owner of the cemetery is not known. "It was probably some cemetery association," Badgerow said.

Greece Cemetery OK's Relocation of Graves

A transfer of graves from the old Wagner Cemetery off Long Pond Road to Falls Cemetery at Ridge Road West and Latona Road has been approved by the Ridge Road Cemetery association.

Town of Greece requested permission for the transfer.

The old cemetery, which contains the graves of at least three veterans of either the Revolutionary War or War of 1812, is on land optioned for Park Ridge Hospital.

Many of the graves are unmarked, but it has been estimated that there are 70 or more in the cemetery. Vandals have raided the site on occasion.

In a letter to the Town Board,

the cemetery association reported that the transfer had been approved by its board of directors subject to certain conditions.

Supervisor George W. Badgerow has been authorized to sign an agreement accepting these, but no date for the transfer has been set. The association requires that:

The graves "be contained in a regular shaped parcel not to exceed 40-by-40 feet to be marked on four corners and designated by a suitable plaque as the 'former Wagner Cemetery.'"

The association to be paid its regular charge of \$60 per grave which is to include perpetual care. Any grave digging is to be

under the direction of the superintendent at a fee to be agreed upon, but not to exceed the standard price of \$60 per grave."

The superintendent be notified of all activities on cemetery property and that "where possible all graves shall be designated in the names of individuals or unknown if such is the case."

The proposal transfer of the graves precipitated a court battle last fall.

Miss Dorothy Vincent, 208 University Park, opposed it in a suit filed in Supreme Court. She is the great-great-granddaughter of Asa Hurd, a War of 1812 veteran buried in the cemetery. The court subsequently ruled in favor of the town.

Records indicate the first burial in the Wagner Cemetery was in 1823 and the last in 1877. About a half-acre of the 150-acre hospital site is involved.

4/20/67 T.C.

Greece Cemetery Now Is History

By JUDY ADAMS

Artemissia Perkins would probably like the change, if she could talk about it.

For the past 135 years, Artemissia, age 22 when she died in 1832, has been buried in the old Wagner Cemetery at 1543 Long Pond Road near Ridgeway Avenue.

Once, probably, the grass was green and friends and relatives regularly visited the graveyard

with hand-picked flowers and silent prayers.

But in the last 100 years, friends and relatives died, or moved away. Weeds replaced the grass. And tombstones, if indeed there were any to begin with, somehow disappeared. And the world pretty much forgot about Artemissia Perkins and her neighbors.

About 130 years after Artemissia died, interest in the cemetery was revived. The new Park-Ridge Hospital was com-

ing. And the tiny, long-abandoned cemetery which stood in its path, would have to go.

The move, to the Falls Cemetery at the corner of Ridge Road West and Latona Road, was completed in November. It took about six weeks.

The new 40 by 40 foot plot rests about 75 yards east of the cemetery's tool shed. It is rimmed by small bushes that are bare now but in time will blossom into a trim, low hedge that will set these graves apart.

The plot is adjacent to the older part of the cemetery and is shaded by one of the oldest pine trees on the grounds.

FALLS CEMETERY superintendent, Claude Hare, talks about the moving job with affectionate pride.

"We did it very decently and with all true respect," he says, using stiff words to describe a gentle thought. "I was very well done, although I probably shouldn't say that. But I'm very satisfied."

Hare selected and did the layout himself, carefully marking and numbering each old grave site so that the new location would be in precisely the same, century-old arrangement.

There were 137 moved, but we know only 19 of the names. Twelve have marking stones, and there is a monument. Four of the known are veterans, two from the Revolutionary War and two from the War of 1812. Tiny American flags will fly over their graves.

Hare, who has been associated with the cemetery for nearly 25 years, says that the known, unmarked graves may later be given markers.

In the spring, a dedication stone will be added in formal ceremonies.

Based on burying dates of the known dead, the Falls is actually an older cemetery. Most of the Wagner dead were buried after 1823. The Falls has an 1801 and several of about 10 years later.



Toppled tombstones marked the old Wagner Cemetery in Greece (above). It's 137 graves now rest in a special section of Falls Cemetery on Ridge Road West (below).



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MOVE
GRAVES
TO
FALLS
CEMETERY

Wagner Cemetery

Lot 116 ^{Michael} M. Reynolds - 1872 Greece.
~~E. Speer~~

1858

~~C. Speer~~

Mrs. Logan -

1919 Will of Michael Reynolds 1055-170 ✓
1062-6
1055-182 ✓

1867 (1) Rose Logan by Exec to Michael Reynolds 216-83 ✓ Lot 116
Am. Haywood vol to Hugh Logan 36-168 A 116

1900 Michael Reynolds to N. Y. 628-205 appropriation

1911 Florence Reynolds to Emily C. Elemoungs 832-249 Greece

(1) "Reserving therefrom one half acre occupied as a burying ground be the same more or less. Being the land deeded by Henry Hat & wife to William Haywood & John Haywood by deed dated the 4th day of June 1833."

Nov. 19, 1867.

Grantor: Bernard Reynolds, etc of Rose Logan.

Grantee: Michael Reynolds, *3000

~~1055-182~~

Ex of M Reynolds to Paul and Libera Brescia, May 8, 1919
"Excepting ... lying north of the Erie Canal & heretofore conveyed to Jost J. and Catherine Wagner ... ~~at~~

1062-6 - Apr. 30, 1919.

Exec of Michael Reynolds to Jost J. and Catharine Wagner.

"Reserving therefrom one half acre occupied as a burying ground be the same more or less."

~~Ontario Co.~~

Wagner
Am

~~and Free~~

- (1) Henry ^{and Mary} West to Wm. & John Haywood. June 4, 1833, 27-21
- (2) Wm & Prudence, John & Almira to Hugh Logan 36-168 1836

^{Grand}
Jost & Catharine Wagner.

- (1) "Reserving thereout one half acre occupied as a burying ground"
- (2) "Reserving thereout one half acre occupied as a burying ground."

Wagner Cem.

Henry & Mary West - Grantee 1833 from Lea Stowell Feb. 116
Jost Wagner 1931 Grantee

(3) Henry & Mary West from Lea Stowell, 1833. 27-148

822 (1) Lea Stowell from Thos Mumford 1-530 Lot 116 Gates
(2) " " Fred. H. Hanford 1-591 " " "

(1). 50 A in Lot 114 vis No F in short range, east side of lot from north line to south lines of lot. Nov. 14, 1820
no mention of cem.

(2) Frederick & Mary Hanford to Lea Stowell, Jan 26, 1821
1/3 interest in eastern 50 A.
no mention of cem.

(3) May 22, 1832, Lea & Eunice Stowell to Henry West ~~2-116~~
ne corner of 116 reserving 1/2 acre occupied as a
burying ground.