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GREECE HOSPITAL SITE

War of 1812 Veteran's Kin Objects to Moving Graves

The great, great granddaughter of Asa Hurd, a War of 1812 veteran, yesterday in Supreme Court opposed the removal of the graves from the old Wagner Graveyard in Greece to another cemetery.

She is Miss Dorothy Vincent, 208 University Park, who objected through her attorney, Edward T. Malone.

Hurd was buried in the old cemetery in 1877, Malone said. Hurd's wife and two children also were interned there, he added.

The old cemetery is a half-acre plot which is part of the proposed site of a new Park Avenue Hospital at the northwest corner of Ridgeway Avenue and Long Pond Road.

Application for removal of the graves was made by the Town of Greece, which wishes to turn the land over to the hospital.

Justice Charles B. Brasser, who heard the case in Special Term, reserved decision.

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WALTER C. EVES, representing the town, described the burial grounds as "abandoned and neglected." He said there is no fencing, there are groundhog holes and "vandals have been very active."

As far as can be determined, Eves related, there are 50 to 70 graves with only about 15 stones, most of them broken. The first burial apparently was in 1823 and the last in 1877. There appears to be graves of four military veterans, including three from the Revolutionary War.

Malone claimed that the cemetery was not abandoned nor neglected. He said that the town has the responsibility for caring for the grounds.

Malone pointed out that the hospital would have sufficient land to erect its buildings and that the cemetery could be preserved with a marker as a memorial park on the hospital grounds.

"That, I believe, would satisfy my client and the public," he said.

Under the law only descendants of those buried may oppose removal of graves, Justice Brasser pointed out. However, he allowed Mrs. Sanford Slocum, a regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to submit a statement in support of Miss Vincent's opposition.

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 forget about Artemissia Perkins and her neighbors.

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

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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).