

### John Western Reports High Spots of Year at North Shore Cemetery

(By John Western)

At this time of year villages, cities, and business corporations take stock of the principal features in their experiences of the past year. As North Shore cemetery is a progressive community asset of the north shore in which 6,000 citizens are directly interested a few of the "high spots" must be of interest to the citizens of this section.

In the year 1929 there were 99 interments in this twelve year old City of the Dead. The Greek word for this phrase is "Necropolis," but that word seems to be applied only to the better class of places of human interment in this country. The funerals incident to these interments came from many localities: Waukegan, Waukegan township, North Chicago, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highwood, Highland Park, Hubbard Woods, Wilmette, Newport township, Wadsworth,

Grayslake, Deerfield, Northbrook, Berwyn, Chicago, Rockford, Bloomington, and Ishpeming, Mich. In making these graves thirty-six concrete vaults were used. When a concrete vault is used the grave never falls in as the concrete improves and hardens with age as it remains below frost level in the ground. Steel vaults have been excluded from North Shore cemetery for ten years, as it is well known to cemetery managers that the flimsy steel vaults now being used throughout the country in ordinary places of interment will not remain intact in the ground beyond a very few years. The remark has frequently been made by those who leave exhumed bodies placed in steel vaults that after seven or eight years a lead pencil can be used to penetrate the sides of these vaults. In practically all cases these vaults are sold to people who are confronted with the unpleasant task of putting away the mortal remains of a relative or dear friend. When the question is asked if the person who is arranging for the funeral wants a steel vault the

thought naturally comes to an inexperienced person that a steel vault will be permanent and that it is the last act that the living can perform for the dead. Those are the thoughts that flash into the confused and sorrowing mind; but neither assumption is correct. The steel vault is not permanent in the ground and the last thing that can be done by the living to show love and respect for the dead is to provide for a beautiful planting on the grave in summer and for the evergreen covering in the winter.

Only one monument was placed in the cemetery during the past calendar year. Only a small portion of North Shore cemetery is now open to monuments. Two sections which were plated in the very beginning are known as monument sections and are reserved for those who want the privilege of having monuments on their lots. However, a much larger area is being sold out with the understanding that there shall be no monuments—only grave markers level with the ground. It readily can be seen that

those portions of North Shore cemetery will be the most beautiful for all time to come.

During the year fifty-five granite markers were placed on concrete foundations at the heads of the graves, the majority of which were made during previous years.

Special summer care was provided for 165 graves and 189 graves have been blanketed with evergreen coverings thus far this winter. The management does all of this special care work and lays foundations for memorial work. Evergreens have been sold for graves in several other burial places in this section.

It is practically impossible to draw the management into a conversation concerning the peculiarities of lot owners by name, but those who work on the grounds, in common with the management, cannot fail to observe the gross inconsistencies of human nature as exhibited by some lot owners. They notice that some families seem to be nearly heart broken upon funeral occasions come to the new made grave frequently for a few weeks or months, and that then their visits become less frequent. They order special summer and winter care for a season or two and then utterly neglect and seem to forget the grave. If a grave remains without special care for two years it is sodded over by the management without any charge to the lot owners. If a wooden box is used at the funeral the grave will collapse in from three to six years. Although it requires attention frequently for two years after the interment before the ground is thoroughly settled, as it falls in, dirt must be hauled again a few times until it is well settled. All of this is done without rendering any bill to the lot owner. Occasionally, apparently well to do people buy a grave in the single grave section in which to place the remains of a mother of a family instead of buying a family lot in a regular section. Such people have been seen to come to a grave in a new automobile for a few times and then seem to forget it forever. The same peculiar spirit is exhibited by people who will place their dead in a repellant, neglected temporary burying ground, simply because it is cheap. Their acquaintances notice this conduct and make remarks about it. Of course, there are many patrons of such cemeteries as North Shore who are more constant in their devotion to the memory of their dead. There are graves which were made in North Shore cemetery by people of very ordinary worldly means ten years ago which have been kept under special care both summer and winter continuously to the present time.

The general perpetual care fund in the hands of a trustee at the close of the year was \$21,309.86. By virtue of the number of lot contracts which will probably be paid up during 1930 this fund will be doubled before the end of this year.

The sum of \$1,490 has been deposited by lot owners for the special perpetual care of graves. The management accepts various sums ranging from \$300 to \$600 to be held in trust, the income from which shall be used for the perpetual special care of a grave, both summer and winter. The amount required depends on whether the grave be that of a child or an adult, also the character of the planting desired.

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