

Arizona State Hospital
History of Cemetery Records
March 21, 1960
Paul W. Strickland, Chaplain

The Procedures Committee of the Arizona State Hospital recently delegated the responsibility of keeping the cemetery records of the Chaplain in a statement of the job description of the position of Chaplain.

After a study of verbal and written records, the following facts are now recorded:

1. A fire in the Administration Building in 1935 destroyed many of the previous records, though the books containing the names of patients buried in this cemetery starts with 1929. The oldest grave with any accurate information is that of Nicholas H. Pruett, buried on September 6, 1888. It is also generally understood that three or more attendants who were employees at the hospital are buried here, including M. R. Shives, 1922.
2. After a request in 1946 from the city of Phoenix to move some bodies for a right-of-way, eighty-four (84) bodies were moved in 1952.
3. An additional 148 bodies obstruct a proposed right-of-way outlined on a map prepared by Yost & Gardner Engineers in September 1952.
4. The number of graves occupying the cemetery in September 1952 was 2084, with records concerning name and approximate position of grave available on 967. The cemetery plot was leveled and systematic care was instituted under the supervision of Mr. R. A. Clelland in 1952 also. Except for an occasional grave stone (numbering 5), the information available on those markers still in the cemetery at this time was considered unreliable. The writing on these markers was often illegible. Many of the markers were known to have been replaced improperly after being moved by weather or otherwise. Therefore, these wooden and small metal markers were removed and flat headstones with a grave numbering system were installed. These stones indicate the position of graves, but do not provide other information for 1112 graves. (The name and date of 9 other persons is available, though there is no record as to the position of these graves). The cemetery is watered by irrigation, which causes graves to cave in periodically. The numbered markers occasionally must be replaced because they may be lost by a cave-in. An additional 177 persons have been buried since this date in 1952.

5. The rest of the cemetery plot was landscaped in 1952. Stones with a numbering system were placed at each grave site, though not properly as headstones since it has been discovered they are at the East end of the graves rather than at the West end as is traditional.

6. The present system of recording burials contains the following information: position of grave according to row and number, grave stone number, date of death, date of burial, patient's name, patient's age, and officiating minister, priest or rabbi. Information concerning the presence of relatives is recorded in the patient's individual records along with the burial certificate with information about the grave stone number, etc.

7. Tombstones are on the following 5 graves:
Nicholas H. Pruett 9/6/88
Joseph Goodwin 8/19/02
August Kegol, 1914
M. R. Shives 1922, (attendant)
Alfred W. Black (no date)

8. The following is a summary of those buried per year in the record books now available (1144):

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1929 - 20 | 1945 - 43 |
| 1930 - 52 | 1946 - 29 |
| 1931 - 58 | 1947 - 34 |
| 1932 - 47 | 1948 - 45 |
| 1933 - 54 | 1949 - 24 |
| 1934 - 45 | 1950 - 20 |
| 1935 - 60 | 1951 - 22 |
| 1936 - 44 | 1952 - 37 |
| 1937 - 56 | 1953 - 41 |
| 1938 - 40 | 1954 - 31 |
| 1939 - 45 | 1955 - 24 |
| 1940 - 20 | 1956 - 29 |
| 1941 - 48 | 1957 - 29 |
| 1942 - 23 | 1958 - 26 |
| 1943 - 22 | 1959 - 41 |
| 1944 - 25 | 1960 - 10 |

9. The total number of graves provided for in this cemetery plot as it is laid off at present seems to be 3700. This means that 1439 graves are unoccupied as yet, or for about 50 years at the present rate of about 30 burials per year.