

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNT MORIAH CEMETERY

TIME LINE SUMMARY

1877 - 1938

Early Municipal Period

- 1877 Lawrence County government decides to establish a cemetery that will replace the town of Deadwood's cemetery in Whitewood Gulch; B.P. Smith is appointed County Undertaker
- 1878 Site for cemetery is selected and named Mt. Moriah; L.F. Fetterman appointed cemetery sexton; first body buried at Mt. Moriah Cemetery; first public burial of a Chinese person
- 1879 Position of Superintendent of Cemetery is created by the Board of County Commissioners and specific duties are assigned; B. P. Smith is appointed as first Superintendent in February; in April, L.F. Fetterman is fired from his position and replaced by A.J. Austin; the remains of James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok are removed from Whitewood Gulch and reinterred at Mt. Moriah. On September 25th the town of Deadwood is destroyed by a fire, three hundred buildings burned and two thousand persons are homeless
- 1883 Bodies of Rev. Henry Weston Smith and Charles Mason are removed from burial ground in Whitewood Gulch and reinterred at Mount Moriah; in March, eleven men, who worked at a local saw mill, died in a fire at their boarding house and were interred at Mt. Moriah. On May 18 much of the town of Deadwood is destroyed by a flood
- 1886 Condition of the cemetery is viewed as "neglected and in ruins" -- the only road is badly washed, graves are so crowded together that they have to be driven over; vandals are destroying the head-board at the grave of Wild Bill Hickok
- 1887 Masons (Deadwood Lodge No. 7) purchase 1.5 acres for a cemetery "between Mount Moriah and the cliff" for a burying ground
- 1889 First white bronze marker placed in Mount Moriah cemetery (for children, Thomas and Ella Carter)
- 1891 Body of Rev. Smith is moved to a new site within Mt. Moriah; a life-sized statue of Smith is placed at his grave site; a bust of Wild Bill Hickok sculpted by J.H. Riordan, is placed at his grave

Cemetery Association Period

- 1892 The Deadwood Cemetery Association formed on 10 December -- Articles of Incorporation and by-laws are drawn up
- 1893 Board of Education issues deed for the established Mount Moriah cemetery, and land "adjacent to the west and extending to the bluffs," to the Deadwood Cemetery Association; the Hebrew Society purchases, a parcel of land for a cemetery at Mt. Moriah; the price of lots is 12.5 cents per square foot; the gate and fence are in poor condition, Association orders a new gate, costing \$15, and purchases materials for a fence; grave of Wild Bill Hickok is enclosed by a stone wall with an iron fence on the top; B.P. Smith is released from his position as Cemetery Superintendent
- 1894 Cemetery Association commissions maps of the cemetery, including the planning of "such streets and roads as may be decent and necessary"; also determines that no monument or headstone can be set in the cemetery without a foundation that reaches "below frost line"
- 1895 Lawrence County Commissioners agree to pay Cemetery Association for burial of paupers in a designated Potter's Field, and to pay a share of maintenance expenses; Henry Robinson appointed Cemetery Superintendent; P. L. Rogers completes the "official" map of Mt. Moriah; blue grass and clover are planted to stabilize the steep slopes
- 1896 Land is purchased in cemetery by the Grand Army of the Republic; Deadwood Cemetery Association assigns new duties to Superintendent, including the digging and maintenance of graves
- 1897 Twenty-six 5'x10' lots adjoining the existing Masonic burying ground are reserved for use by the Masons; volunteers raise funds (\$792) to establish a water system at the cemetery, with the tank placed "upon a high point above the Jewish ground"
- 1898 Remains in purchased grave lots that came to be located within the Potter's Field, are moved to another section of Mt. Moriah; Cemetery Association informs lot owners that fences around their burial plots are to be kept in good condition or they will "be moved off and destroyed"; Association reminds undertakers are responsible for placing a "simple neat painted head board at the head of each grave" when they are in charge of the interment; Superintendent Robinson goes to the gold rush in the Klondike and his son, Charles H. Robinson, takes over the cemetery duties
- 1899 Board of Trustees of Cemetery Association consider the purchase of a triangular-shaped piece of ground (about 1/5 acre) on the northeast side of the cemetery
- 1900 Board of Trustees of Cemetery Association offers \$50 for the triangular-shaped piece of ground bordering on Mt. Moriah; Undertaker R.W. Lewis is advised that he must place "a simple white headboard to new made graves on which should be name and date of death"; in late April vandals upset a number of monuments and headboards

- 1901 A ten foot strip of ground, located at Jabez and Jerusalem streets is platted into 5'x8' lots; vandals or souvenir seekers break the head from the bust of Wild Bill Hickok that is situated at his grave site
- 1902 Cemetery Superintendent, Henry Robinson, is authorized to "prepare a Record Book in which should be shown the occupied and unoccupied lots of the Cemetery in order by sections and lot numbers"; statue of Wild Bill Hickok (sculpted by Alvin Smith) is erected at his grave site; fifty trees are to be procured for setting out in the cemetery
- 1903 Trustees of Cemetery Association settle on paying \$100 for the triangular-shaped piece of land situated on the northeast boundary of the Cemetery; Section A is developed; the price of grave lots is raised to 15 cents per square foot
- 1904 Fire Department petitions the Cemetery Association for a deed to Lot No. 3, Section #10 for burial of members of the fire department; headboards in the Potter's Field are "repainted and renumbered to restore [their] legibility"; three dozen maple and box elder trees are to be purchased for setting out in the cemetery; Mt. Moriah's pine trees are attacked by a pine bark beetle and blue vitrol is used in an effort to save them
- 1905 Expenditures for Mt. Moriah totaled \$437.88, which includes "labor, pumping water, planting trees, and making repairs"; four dozen shade trees are purchased for the cemetery
- 1906 At annual meeting of the Cemetery Association it is resolved that "no undertaker shall receive a deed for a lot in his own name which was bought by him for his patron"
- 1908 The Chinese community petitions to be allowed to "build a small bee hive-shaped oven" near their burial section for use during funeral ceremonies. The request is granted; a new water pump for the cemetery is needed because the original has been broken "by freezing"
- 1909 "Decayed headboards" in the potter's field are to be "renewed as it is needed from time to time--especially every spring, that names or numbers becoming dim and illegible by age be repainted or new boards placed in position"; work done to improve the appearance of the grave lot of Rev. Mr. Smith; the statues of Wild Bill Hickok and Rev. Smith are enclosed in wire "cages" to protect them from vandals and souvenir seekers; first autos are in cemetery, at Brown Rocks, because their owners desire to show-off the abilities of the vehicles; twenty-five box elder trees and 25 Carolina poplar trees are purchased for planting in the spring
- 1910 Cemetery Association trustees plan for the layout of new avenues in the Cemetery, and to improve conditions of the existing roads; they determine that the present road, though very steep, is the only possible approach to the burying ground; consideration is given to constructing a receiving vault at the cemetery to shelter mourners during inclement weather

- 1911 Lots 66, 67, 68 and 69 (sixteen grave spaces) are sold to the Black Hills Pioneer Society for \$40; the Firemen's lot is graded and seeded with grass in the spring; an arched iron gate is ordered for the wagon road entrance; the fence around Bill Hickok's grave is repaired, and improvements are also planned for Rev. Smith's grave; a pumping plant is installed to provide water to the plots; a survey of the cemetery is done to determine "if any lots 20 years old by purchase," are vacant or nearly vacant and might be utilized; a new gate for the wagon road entrance is ordered from E. T. Barnum Company in Detroit
- 1912 Owners who purchased lots prior to 1892 (when the Cemetery Association was formed) are required to show proof of purchase and to acquire deed to same; electric sign advertising the Kool Coal company is erected at Brown Rocks
- 1913 Association is offered eight acres of land (the Mabbs estate) to increase the size of Mt. Moriah Cemetery; inscribed headstones are placed for firemen whose graves do not have markers
- 1914 The Cemetery Association purchases 9.5 acres of ground from the Austin Mabbs estate to expand Mt. Moriah; this new section is surveyed by Frank Peck; Masons (Deadwood Lodge No. 7) are granted an acre of ground in the new section of the Cemetery, adjacent to the ground already designated for them, to create 54 individual lots and a 3-foot wide walk, the Masons also plan to beautify their burying ground; the Association announces that no further placement of wood or iron fences will be allowed at Mt. Moriah; the Business Men's Club is asked to assist with a tourist brochure about the Cemetery; The Association determines that 50 native trees should be planted at Mt. Moriah; the Masons determined that a granite monument listing the names of members buried at the site (location of graves unknown in most instances) will be erected at their burying ground
- 1915 The "white rocks" area adjacent to Mt. Moriah is offered to the Cemetery Association, but the offer is declined; representative of the Deadwood Fire Department announce intentions to place monuments to "the memory of deceased firemen" at Mt. Moriah and St. Ambrose cemeteries
- 1916 Roads, ditches, culverts etc. are repaired as necessary; the 50 trees planted the prior year are growing well, as are another 60 that were planted at the Cemetery; Masonic Lodge members have accomplished the beautification project they proposed
- 1917 Cemetery Association trustees propose to the County Commissioners an exchange of land in the potter's field; meeting is held with the City Council regarding improvement of the road to Mt. Moriah; wages of the cemetery superintendent are increased; a pole is erected at the "black rocks" area so that an American flag can be flown 24 hours a day
- 1918 Cemetery Association continues to negotiate an exchange of land in the potter's field with the County Commission; Association trustees discuss that present cost of lots (sold at twenty cents per square foot or 5'x8' single lots for \$6), is not enough to cover the general maintenance required at Mt. Moriah

- 1919 Cemetery Association continues discussions with the City Council regarding the need for a "better and less difficult road" to Mt. Moriah . . . the Executive Committee was authorized to work in conjunction with the city to secure right of way . . . across certain lots on the route desired
- 1921 Surveying of new ground obtained for the cemetery is delayed because the Association does not have enough money available; livestock has been running through the cemetery for several months, breaking "fences and injuring many graves beyond repair;" Association determines that "a heavy fine will be imposed on the owner of any cattle or horses found on the grounds;" Association accepts a trust that specifies money for care of the graves of John Gray and his wife
- 1922 New addition to Mt. Moriah is purchased
- 1924 The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan burn a cross at Brown Rocks
- 1936 White Rocks area is given to the City of Deadwood for expansion of Mt. Moriah sometime in the future
- 1938 Deadwood Cemetery Association ceases operating because of a lack of funds; City Council accepts responsibility for Mount Moriah

Second Municipal Period

- 1941 The City plants a large number of Chinese elm trees in the cemetery
- 1943 The cast iron entrance gate at Mt. Moriah is taken for a scrap metal drive in support of World War II efforts
- 1946 The statue of Wild Bill Hickok is badly damaged by souvenir seekers