

History Valley View Cemetery

The cemetery was established July 22, 1908 as a privately owned corporation by William G. Curtis, President & Trustee; William H. Coy, Secretary & Treasurer; G. H. Sawyer, Treasurer & Trustee, A. H. Mason, Trustee; and M. B. Paddock, Trustee; The corporation purchased the land from William B. Kelley for \$5,000 and sold shares for \$1.00 each.

In 1920 the Cemetery Association decided to buy seven additional acres north of the original cemetery at \$300 per acre. This is the East half of the cemetery. The following were elected directors: D. M. Kellam, W. B. Kelley, W. B. Coy, G. H. Sawyer, and James Jackson. This board elected the following officers: James Jackson, President; W. B. Coy, Secretary; G. H. Sawyer, Treasurer.

At a Board of Directors meeting in November of 1949, it was decided to turn the land and property of the Valley View Cemetery Association over to the Town of Torrington. This was accomplished on June 19, 1953. They felt the Town could better look after and care for the cemetery at less expense and in a better manner than the association.

On July 22, 1953, the Town purchased the second addition to the cemetery from Kenneth Kluherz. This is the West half of the cemetery. On March 1, 1954, the Town started selling lots at the rate of \$50.00 per quarter.

Notable Grave Sites

The very first person to be buried in Valley View Cemetery was fourteen-year-old **Frank Sawyer**. The son of George & Elizabeth Sawyer, born January 21, 1892 and died May 13, 1906. He was buried before the official opening of the cemetery in **Block 1, Section 12**.

Elizabeth Sawyer Mother of Frank was the first physician and surgeon in Goshen County. She was born August 11, 1849 and died July 28, 1941 and is buried next to Frank in **Block 1, Section 12**.

Fred Putney is the largest person to be buried in the cemetery. His weight was said to be between 600 and 700 pounds. He was six feet two inches tall, his waist measurement was 72 inches and his neck was 26 inches. He was born April 29, 1863 and died June 3, 1919 and is buried in **Block 21, Section 13**.

A cowboy, **Theodore Luce** of Lockhart, Texas drowned on the North Platte River while driving a herd of Texas Longhorn cattle near Fort Laramie sometime about 1899. He was buried near the river along with a sandstone marker. A group of children playing by the river found the stone and grave in the

1930's. In 1958, Louis Colyer, a funeral home director, moved the grave and marker to Valley View Cemetery. In 1993, after raising money from selling pencils, the 5th grade class of Trail Elementary erected a new marker in memory of him. He is buried in **Block 22, Section 12**.

Lt. Harley L. Mark had about the largest funeral procession of any person buried in Valley View Cemetery. The Torrington police lieutenant's body was escorted to the grave side by 52 patrol cars, fire department vehicles and Torrington ambulances. Harley died in a car collision as he searched for an escaped rapist September 7, 1993. At the grave side, a traditional last call was given for a fallen police officer. He is buried in **Block 175, Section 4**.

Frontiersman **Jimmy Couch** born April 23, 1844 and died September 17, 1928. He had some part in the Ute Indian War of 1879. He was a Teamster for the Quarter Master Corps stationed at Rawlins and Fort Steele in 1880. He also served as a Deputy Sheriff at Lander in 1889 and in 1890 as a Deputy U. S. Marshall. A ceremony was held in October of 1996, unveiling a marker commemorating his law enforcement service. He is buried in **Block 41, Section 13**.

The largest mass grave is that of the **Minort Family**. On November 14, 1926, Baptiste J. Minort murdered his Wife, Elizabeth; Sons, Carl, Clarence & David; Daughter, La Von and then committed suicide. They are buried in unmarked graves in **Block 41, Section 13**.

Elmer Lauck, was the first Goshen County Resident to lose his life in the Vietnam War following crash of his helicopter. He was born November 28, 1942 and died March 11, 1968. He is buried in **Block 127, Section 6**.

William G. Curtiss born September 17, 1857 and died January 6, 1913. He needed a name for his post office, so he named it after his hometown of Torrington, Connecticut. The City of Torrington became incorporated in 1908 and shortly afterwards he became its first mayor. He also was the first president of Valley View Cemetery when it was incorporated in 1908. He is buried in **Block 2, Section 12**.

Gilbert (Ed) Redifer was born January 11, 1896 and died, August 15, 1999 and was awarded by the country of France, the Chevalier National Order of the Legion of Honor. This is France's highest military/civilian decoration of honor. He received this on the 80th anniversary of Armistice Day (Nov. 11, 1918) in 1998 at the age of 102. He is buried in **Block 317, Section 11**.