

## *The History of Gable Cemetery*

**In the year 1893, the Gable Cemetery was laid out; not because of its location, not because of the huge oak trees that give it shade, not because of the stories it might tell, but because of necessity. There were no other cemeteries near.**

**The first person to be laid to rest in Gable Cemetery was Danny Garrett, son of Thomas and Cordelia Garrett and grandson of William H. Gable. He was born in 1891 and died in the winter of 1893. Two acres of land were donated by William H. Gable from his farm for the cemetery. Later, more land was obtained by the community, enlarging it to 3.3 acres.**

**The Gable Cemetery is located 7 miles west of Prague or 5 miles east of Meeker on Highway 62 and two miles south. The narrow road proceeds up a hill and down with blackjack trees on either side. There, at the top of the hill, stands the chapel and cemetery in quiet serenity. The native rock chapel stands in the northwest corner. Behind and to the east are seen the markers of 200 or more graves. The huge oaks now shade the well mowed open area to the south of the chapel. There the large one room school once stood. There is where church was held on Sunday, literaries on Friday night and where the singing schools were held. A sturdy chain link fence now encloses the sacred grounds. Above the door on the front of the chapel is engraved "McConnell Chapel". It was built by Jim McConnell family in memory of their daughter who died at an early age. It was built by men in the community in 1938 and has served its purpose well. In the past it has been used for church, funerals, as a meeting place, and for the Memorial Day service each year.**

**The story of faithfulness could be told of this cemetery. It has been a family duty to maintain and keep the cemetery from being covered with tall weeds and grass and to keep cattle and pigs from roaming over it.**

**The years have come and gone since the laying out of the cemetery; no story told is greater than that the beloved country doctor lies among those he had doctored so many years. The monument of Dr. R. A. Brown of Bellemont reads, "Born 1871 and died 1953," but his life tells much more. From his office in Bellemont, he traveled many miles around, no doubt saving the lives of many. As a reward for being good patients when children were taken to the office, they were privileged to view the skeleton that stood in the closet neatly draped with a black cloth. His wife, Maud {Burns} Brown, was always on hand for the unveiling.**

**During the winter of 1922, the black smallpox struck the Davis and McHan families of the Gable community, taking the lives of four members. Those who were vaccinated had the sad task of burying their family members one by one. We are told how they remembered the rattle of the wagon as they drove to the cemetery from their home over the two miles of hills to bury J. D. Davis, January 17; Minnie Davis, his wife, on January 19; Solomon McHan, Minnie's father, on January 21; and Rosa McHan, Minnie's sister, on January 23, 1922.**

**Just recently, five members of the same family were buried here in the Gable Cemetery. They were victims of a boating accident on a farm pond at their home. Carl Joe Good,**

three of his children, Christina, Olen and Rebecca, and his brother, Daniel, were buried March 21, 1986.

Thelma {Gouker} Pritchett tells us the story of Mary Mitchell, sister of F. M. Stockwell, the grandfather of Thelma, who rolled a large, flat stone end over end over the hills for about a mile to the cemetery to place at the grave of her son, Alvie Mitchell. Here she tenderly placed it and engraved it. The family was moving to another state never to return. The grave is in the far northeast part of the cemetery near the other relatives of Thelma. A few years ago, cement crosses were made by Roger Pritchett, Thelma's son, to mark the graves of their relatives buried there long ago without suitable markers. There are about twelve crosses marking the graves of this family who felt they might otherwise be lost.

No longer will people be afraid of losing a grave, thanks to a group of interested people who organized the Gable Cemetery Association on June 14, 1959. Thanks to the first slate of officers who laid the wonderful foundation for the perpetual care of the cemetery where every mother's son's grave would be cared for; Willis Spitler, President; E. L. Wadsack, Vice President; Mrs. Roy McHan, Secretary; and Leota Spitler, Treasurer. A fund raising committee was appointed consisting of Mrs. Frank Spitler, chairman; Frank Spitler, Roy McHan, Dora Stiffler, Forbe Rattan and Jim McCanless. William Leister, Sr., was appointed chairman of the building committee to improve the chapel, with Odis Spitler, Will Moore and Mib Gouker as members.

Care of the cemetery and chapel is supported by contributions from members of the community and those who have family and loved ones there. The officers have been replaced one at a time. Mrs. Spitler, the fund raising chairman, in her ninetieth year, as she gave her annual financial report on Memorial Day stated, "We have reached one goal. The cemetery is beautiful and well kept. It has taken us twenty five years to get to this place. After all, that is a short time. It has been worth it."

Already we have seen two young men take the office that their fathers once held in the Gable Cemetery Association. They were William Leister, Jr. and Ewing Wadsack, Jr.

\*Further, two women have followed in the footsteps of their parents as officers, Ruth Ann Winter (daughter of Opal & William Leister, Sr.) and husband, Wayne Winter, as President, and their daughter, Cheryl Watts (Winter), serves as secretary/treasurer.

No, Gable Cemetery has never been forgotten. It will never be forgotten.

*Note: This history was provided by Eloita Sutterfield.*

*\*This is new information added to make it current.*