

The Totoket Historical Society

The Bare Plain Cemetery

By

Carrie Doody

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Bare Plain Cemetery

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Bare Plain Cemetery, in the Totoket section of North had an unusual beginning. Rising conspicuously near the eastern entrance is a white marble shaft near the top of which is a broken wreath of flowers circling the one word, Amoret. Lowering our eyes we read, "Amore the only child of Jerome and Lydia B. Harrison April 23, 1860. Aged 17"

At the base of the shaft is the family name, Harri\$on. As was the custom at that time, we find a verse inscribed on the base.

Thou wast a flower of most superior worth
Too fair alas to bloom on this cold earth
And thou art called from earth's frail joys away
To blossom in the smiles of endless day.

Amoret was not a common name. Thinking of root words, could it have been that she was given a name signifying to her parents, "Little love?" When she died, they could not bear to have her body taken far from home. She was buried in the eastern corner of their home lot.

Almost two years later, on the 24th day of Januarv 1862, a land grant was signed, and it is recorded by the town clerk, Benjamin Page, on March 17, 1862. It includes the names of several neighbors who lived in North Branford when the town was established. Jerome Harrison, for the consideration of \$1.00 to the full satisfaction of Rufus Rogers, Abiiiah H. Rogers, George Baldwin, Edward Linsley, John Linsley, Henry L. Allen, Benjamin Page, Judson Page, Darwin Page, Charles Page, David Page, Amos A Hemingway, John M. Gates, Samuel F. Russell, David A. Russell, and Uriah

Granted one certain piece of land, situated in said North Branford, near the dwelling house of John Linsley, and contains in quantity, half an acre more or less, and is bounded South on the Fair Haven Turnpike Road, West and North on land of Jerome Harrison, and East on land of John Linsley. Said piece of land is enclosed by a Picket fence, and is to be used for a Cemetery reserving however to myself three lots near the Southwest corner of said Cemetery, and also reserving to myself an equal share with each one of the Grantees in what remains untaken after all the Grantees shall have selected their lots---for each one's particular lot or lots reference may be had to the map of said Cemetery as drawn by Henry Rogers.

While Jerome Harrison gave to his neighbors a burying ground, he protected the final resting place of his daughter by retaining the lot beside her grave and the two behind them. The highway and the cemetery driveway were on the other two sides. Also, by retaining an equal share in the lots not selected by his neighbors, he had control of who should obtain lots there.

During the fifteen years which followed, the "untaken lots" were gradually taken by townspeople, and Jerome Harrison deeded one more acre to the Bare Plain Cemetery Association for \$200.00 on April 23, 1877. New names appearing on the monuments in this section of the cemetery are often those of the next generation of the original group.

On April 13, 1915, John P. Merrick who then owned the house and land of Jerome Harrison adjacent to the cemetery, deeded another acre to the Bare Plain Cemetery Association for \$200.00, making the area the same as it is at the present time.

The two avenues have been extended, and the picket fence has been replaced by a metal one. The entrance and exit have been broadened to accommodate modern limousines rather than the horse drawn hearse and hacks. Attractive gate posts were erected in memory of Dr. Irwin Granniss by his son.

While new names are appearing on the grave stones in the new part of the cemetery, some members of the Bare Plain Cemetery Association now serving are descendants of the original families.

Carrie G. Doody