



St. Peter State Hospital.  
Subject Files and Miscellaneous Records.

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# COMPASS

St. Peter Regional Treatment Center

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## State to Identify Graves in Cemetery

Ron Riley

The Minnesota Legislature recently allocated some funds to address the issue of identifying the developmentally disabled individuals who were buried in state facilities' cemeteries. The purpose of the effort is to match names to the *numbered* graves of each patient in the cemeteries. These people were laid to rest in virtually unmarked graves! The Legislature made these funds available in response to mental health advocates' pleas to bring dignity to the dead buried in our cemeteries.

According to a June 1997 *Free Press* article, the numbering of grave stones in State Hospital cemeteries probably originated as a response to families' wishes to maintain privacy - in light of society's negative attitudes toward those who needed services at State Hospitals for the Insane. It was this attitude that may have prompted

family members to resist retrieving the bodies of relatives after death in the hospitals. The numbers on each stone are *not* patient identification numbers. Each number is only a sequential record of when a person was buried.

Work was begun in August of 1997 to locate and identify the graves of all of the SPRTC and old State Hospital patients whose record indicates that their remains were placed in one of the two cemeteries here. An easy-enough *sounding* task, yes; but, it is proving to be complicated by a number of factors. All of the written burial records for the Old Swedish Cemetery on Hwy. 99, west of St. Peter, were destroyed in a building fire. To further complicate the historian's quest, a prairie fire destroyed the entire cemetery, the southeast corner, consuming all of the wooden numbered grave markers that were used then. No record of those seven hundred plus burials

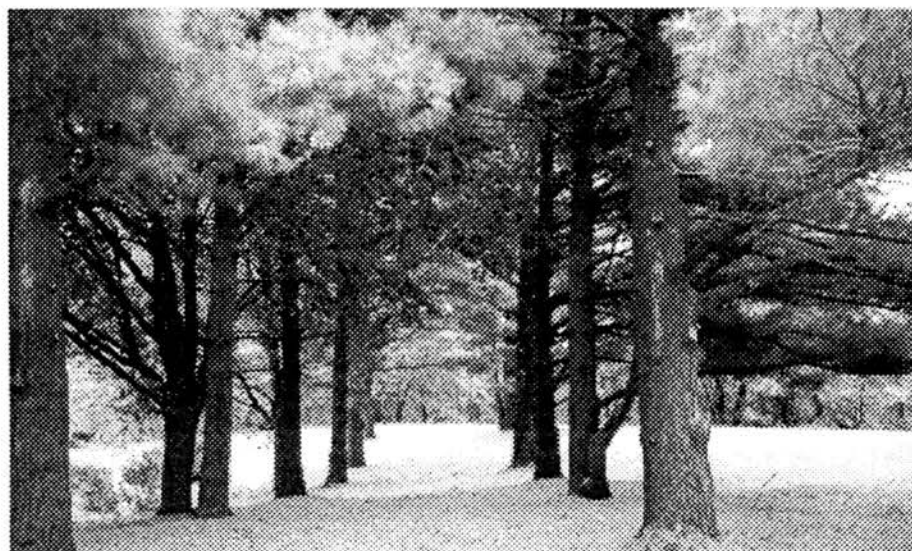
exists. Sometime after 1907, the numbering system was begun again at #1 and a new set of markers established at the newer graves!

So, who are the people interred in the two SPRTC cemeteries? Today, we know that we don't know who all of the souls are in the Swedish Cemetery; and up on the bluff we have about 1600 numbered grave markers. A few of those numbered stones were replaced with "proper" grave stones by family or friends of the dead. The remaining numbers are currently being matched to "hand-written" hospital burial records, and this information is now being computerized to a more organized format.

Some of the facts sifted and compiled from SPRTC's and the Nicollet County Historical Society archives reveal that sometime in 1899, the Minnesota Legislature declared that all *old soldiers* who were patients at State Hospitals should be buried in city cemeteries; Woodlawn was St. Peter's. There were at least two patients from the old hospital who were Civil War Vets, and these graves have been located, as well as some of the first twenty burials from the first St. Peter State Hospital in downtown St. Peter (prior to the fires). When the project resumes this Spring, more graves will be identified and maps of the cemeteries will show real names instead of undignified numbers.

Thanks to the administrators of the Woodlawn and Swedish (Resurrection) Cemeteries, the Nicollet County Historical Society, and SPRTC's own history museum, we are resurrecting the identities of our cemeteries' inhabitants.

Due to lack of traditional grave stones, this photo of the cemetery on SPRTC grounds could be taken for a northern wooded area rather than a cemetery.



## Medical Clinic Holds Open House

The SPRTC Medical Clinic staff hosted 150 people at an Open House on the afternoon of February 12, 1998. Six drug representatives provided educational information for campus-wide staff. Fruit, punch, bars and cookies were prepared by the SPRTC Kitchen, and appetizer trays provided by clinic staff. The winner of the massage drawing was Sue Wolfe of the Reimbursement Department.

The clinic opened on November 12, 1997. Staff plan to host more educational events in the future.

The drawing (opposite) of clinic staff used on invitation posters, was done by Mary Kay Latzka, a friend of Jane Johnson. Staff shown are left to right, **first row:** Jan Kemp, Dr. Tess Floro; **Center:** Mary Ann Miller, **third row:** MaLinda Henderson, Jane Johnson, Bobbie Emanuel, Kathy Dauk; **Last row:** Dr. Bob Bauer & Dr. Randy Hurd



## Personnel Notes

**NEW:** Karen Baker, Food Serv. Wkr., Nutr. Serv.; Sarah Bergervoet, Food Serv. Wkr., Nutr. Serv.; Merri Howe, Food Serv. Wkr., Nutr. Serv.; Monica Manzey, Food Serv. Wkr., Nutr. Serv.; Jan Platt, Food Serv. Wkr., Nutr. Serv.; Scott Davies, Security Couns., FD/Nites

**PROMOTIONS:** Sarah Gardner, Rec. Therapist to Rec. Therapist Sr., FD/No.; Paul Meixl, Rec. Therapist to Rec. Therapist Sr., FD/

900; Teri Pederson, Rec. Therapist to Rec. Therapist Sr., FD/600; Dara Johanson, Sec. Couns. to Sec. Couns. Lead, FD/No; Nancy Roozen, Work Ther. Asst. to States Program Admin., FD/Voc.

**NO LONGER WORKING AT SPRTC:** Bruce Beltt, Inst. Psych. Svcs. Dir., FD/100 (retired); Janet Cahill, Sec. Couns, FD/100; Thomas Pepper, Carpenter, Bldg. Maint./Proj. Labor (temp)



## No More Worry

It's important to differentiate between a 'concern' and a 'worry.'

A concern is something you can do something about. If you have a concern, do something about it - even if it's just a first step.

A worry is something you can't do anything about. If you can't do anything, ask yourself why you should allow the situation to make your life miserable.

Seldom do we worry about the present. The present moment is usually alright.

When we worry, we either agonize about the past - which we should have forgotten long ago - or we agonize about the future - which hasn't even come yet.

When we live in the present moment, we tend not to worry.

*Peace Pilgrim*

## Smoking Cessation Group at Nicollet

Fresh Start II, the American Cancer Society series of smoking cessation groups, will be held at the Nicollet Village Hall on March 10, 17, 24, & 31 at 6:30 p.m. The sessions each last one and one half hours to two hours and instruct in the awareness of the effects of smoking, tips on stopping and remaining off cigarettes without weight gain. The facilitator will be Lois Escherich. Call 931-2909 to register, or show up at the first session.

## STATE HOSPITAL CEMETERIES

by Ron Riley - 2/18/98

The MN Legislature recently allocated some funds to address the issue of identifying the developmentally disabled individuals who were buried in State facility's cemeteries. The purpose of the effort is to match names to the *numbered* graves of each patient in the cemeteries. These people were laid to rest in virtually unmarked graves! The Legislature made these funds available in response to mental health advocates' pleas to bring dignity to the dead buried in our cemeteries. According to a June 1997 *Free Press* article, the numbering of grave-stones in State Hospital cemeteries probably originated as a response to families wishes to maintain privacy - in light of society's negative attitudes toward those who needed services at State Hospitals for the Insane. It was this attitude that may have prompted family members to resist retrieving the bodies of relatives after death in the hospitals. The numbers on each stone are *not* patient identification numbers. Each number is only a sequential record of when a person was buried.

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PAGE 2

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# CEMETARY RECORDS

## WHAT IS DESIRED ?

1. The original records are not lost, damaged, or harmed in any way.
2. We know the location of the first 400 (+ or -) and the second 1700 (+ or -) graves.
3. We know the names for each grave.
4. Any limitations of #2 + #3 are clearly explained.
5. The end result is on the computer (disk ?)

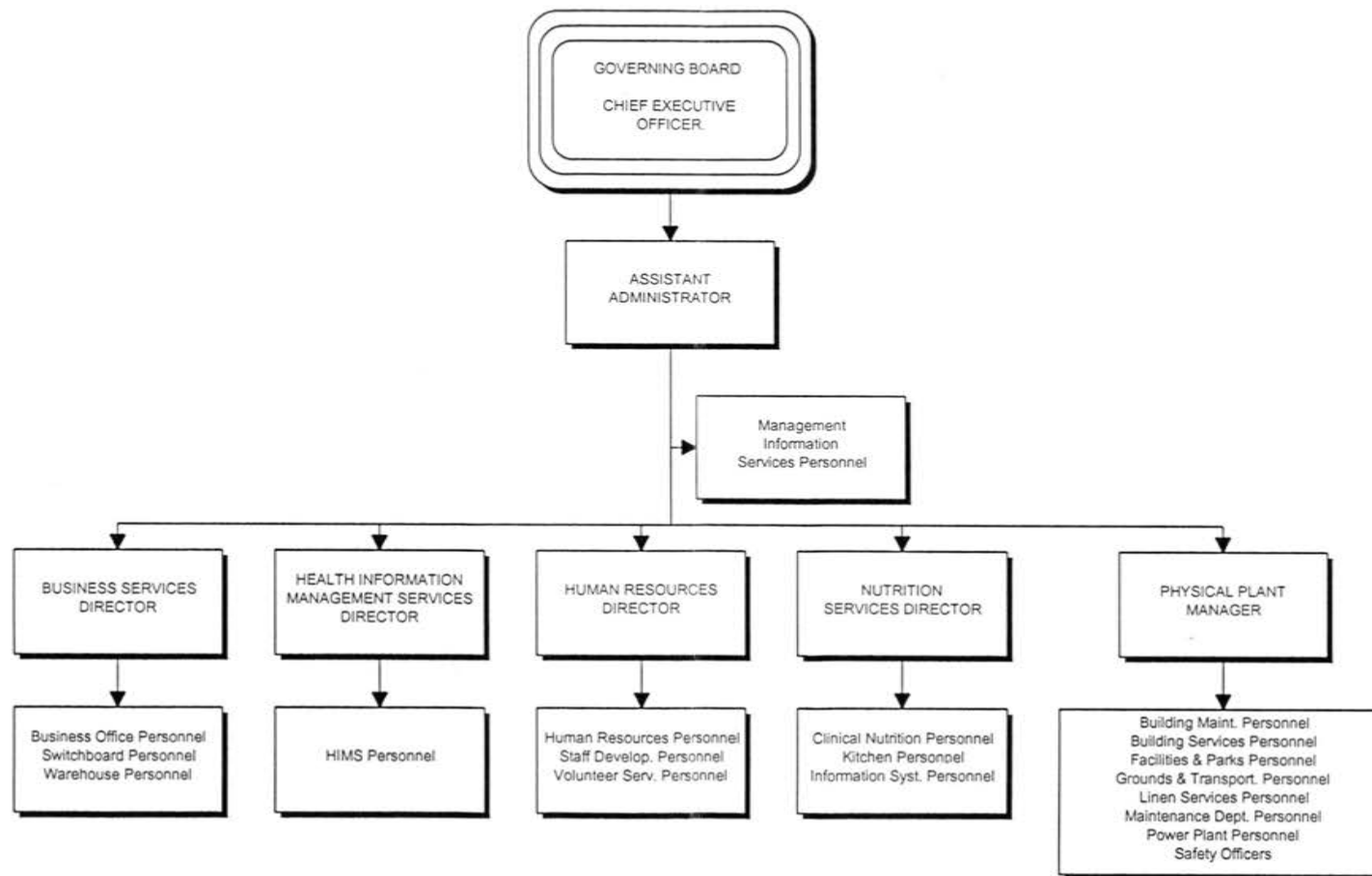
1-521 Deaths - in Resurrection, but special  
location lost due to ~~fire~~ prairie  
fire consuming wooden crosses.

Graves 1-433 - in Resurrection, stones  
identify each grave site

Graves 434 - 2038 - in Campus cemetery

Plus others at Calvary & Woodlawn  
Cemeteries

# ST. PETER REGIONAL TREATMENT CENTER FACILITY SUPPORT SERVICES





# Accent

Saturday, June 21, 1997

To contact us by phone: (507) 625-4451  
By e-mail: Editor@mankato-freepress.com

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Brett Groehler

Wallace Johnson, assistant administrator of the St. Peter Regional Treatment Center, says each year only a handful of people visit the hospital cemetery where thousands of nameless graves mark the final resting place of former mental patients.

## Reminders of lives nearly forgotten

► At the former State Hospital for the Insane, relatives' embarrassment led to unmarked gravestones

By Mark Fischenich  
Free Press Staff Writer

**ST. PETER** — Hadda Fogerquist Peterson, misplaced but not forgotten, probably rests on the unmarked knoll east of the Resurrection

Their graves are nameless, numberless and not described in any cemetery record.

### A remembrance

"My grandmother came from Sweden at about age 18 with her family, and she married my grandfather when she just turned 19," said Butler of Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Hadda Peterson's new husband was a widower who already had three sons, one just





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