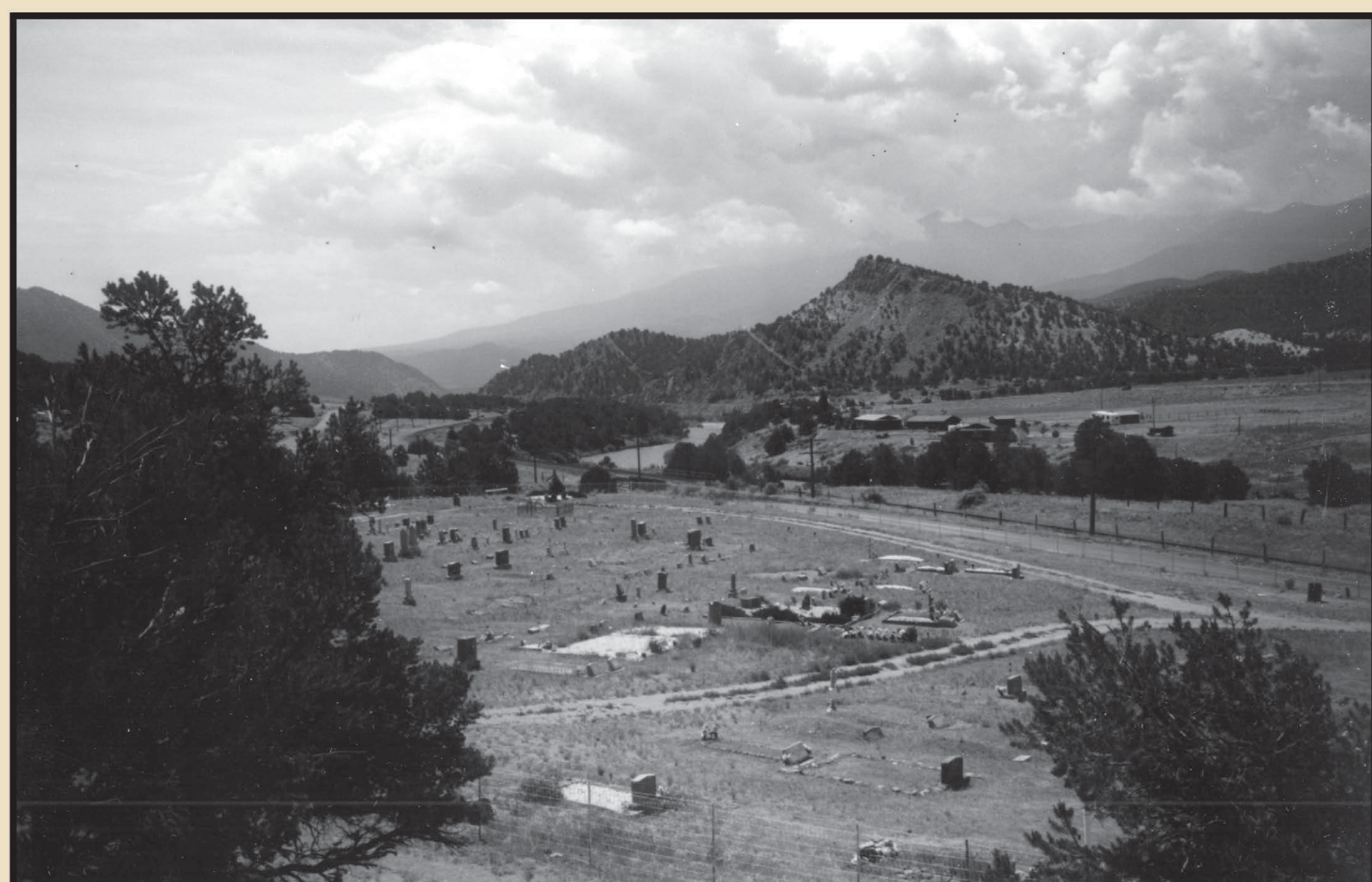


Pathway into History

Cemetery Honors Lives



Man of Vision

Leander Mains (1855 – 1946) contributed to the Pleasant Valley community by founding the Howard Cemetery Association and serving as its President of the Board of Directors for thirty years. Mr. Mains settled on a Howard Creek homestead in 1881. His leadership, vision, and perseverance resulted in the permanent establishing of Howard Cemetery.

Western Fremont Historical Society photo, circa 1880

**Pleasant Valley! Happy name!
Monarchs envy thee thy fame.
Fortressed in by peaks sublime.
Happy people, genial clime.**

**River flowing swift and grand,
Gem of hoary mountain land,
Fruitful fields and mineral hills
Wet by thousand sparkling rills.**

**Pleasant Valley! Happy name!
Flocks that feed on hill and plain,
Compassed in secure, serene –
A world itself, this valley green.**

By James Freeman, Jr. (circa 1890)

A Community Record

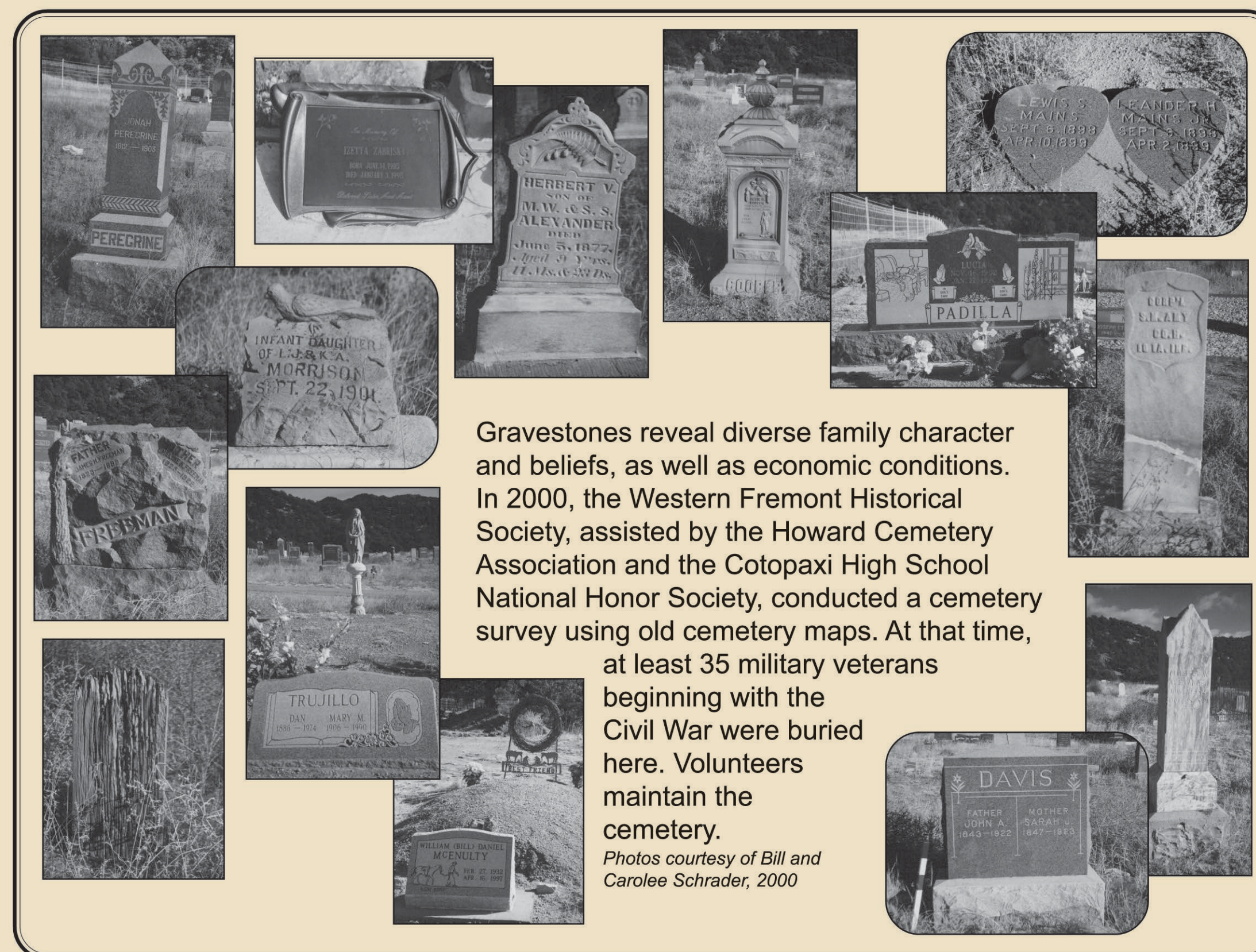
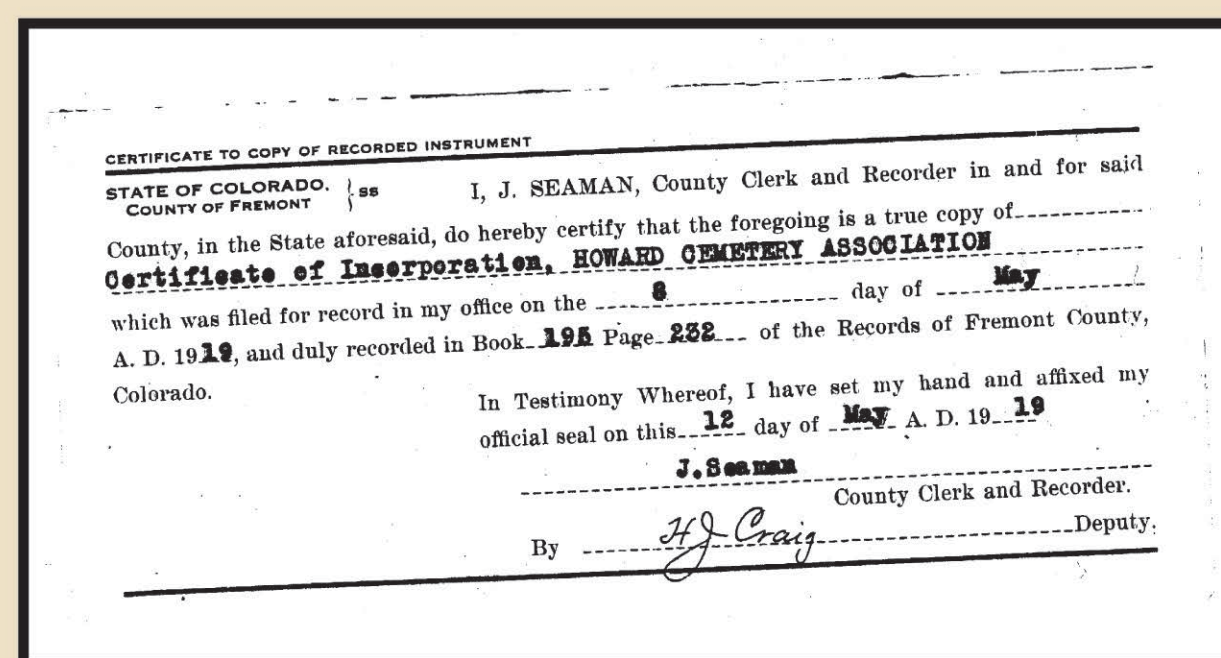
The oldest inscribed headstone in Howard Cemetery lists the death of Elijah Stout in December, 1874. Reading other headstones reveals a high number of deaths of babies and children, evidence of the time's hard life and disease. Locally prominent historic individuals buried here alongside recent residents include the first settler in Howard, Jonah Peregrine; the man for whom West Creek was named, Aaron West; as well as the man for whom the town of Howard was named, John Howard. As of 2000, 455 gravesites were located here.

Western Fremont Historical Society photo, 2000

Land Purchased

The Howard Cemetery Association applied to purchase land for the cemetery from the General Land Office. After several years of appeals, President Warren G. Harding signed an order on March 20, 1922, allowing the purchase of 20 acres for \$25.00. Colorado law requires any landowner entity to be acceptably registered with the Colorado Secretary of State. This Certificate confirmed the Howard Cemetery Association's status.

National Archives document courtesy of Western Fremont Historical Society



Gravestones reveal diverse family character and beliefs, as well as economic conditions. In 2000, the Western Fremont Historical Society, assisted by the Howard Cemetery Association and the Cotopaxi High School National Honor Society, conducted a cemetery survey using old cemetery maps. At that time, at least 35 military veterans beginning with the Civil War were buried here. Volunteers maintain the cemetery.

Photos courtesy of Bill and Carolee Schrader, 2000

A Pioneer Cemetery

A majestic view of Twin Peaks highlights the view to the west; wildflowers and grasses carpet the ground; barrel cactus and piñon pine punctuate the landscape. What a fitting place for quiet thought and reflection. Residents of the valley began using this location for their cemetery around 1870. Two stories prevail regarding the first grave. One story names a gunfighter who was killed and now rests in an unmarked grave. The other indicates that the death of a child in 1874 forced the settlers to pick a cemetery. Whichever story is true, the peaceful setting continues to appeal to residents and to serve the community.