

## Oldest gravesites

In determining the oldest gravesite several records were searched, as well as old plat books. However, at some point the originals were transcribed, and the second set of books showed different dates at a few sites making it difficult to determine the correct dates. Because of this discrepancy more than one site is being listed.

Section B Lot 20 Space 3, Jessie Jones, July 9, 1830, 3 months

(The plat books did not indicate if the baby was a boy or girl.)

When what appears to be the original plat book for Oak Grove Cemetery was found the date was listed as 1880; all of the surrounding spaces show dates around this time period. The space appears to be in an old "potter's field." The plat books are marked off as having 4 lots [19-22] as single gravesites; also there appears to be several lots in this area (along the back row of section B) that have never had markers. When this site was first found the Caldwell Monument Company donated a marker for the baby. It wasn't until later that we learned of the discrepancy in the dates. After careful consideration the decision was made to leave the marker in place with the date that was originally found. Caldwell Monument Company, and the staff of Mt. Hope Cemetery also, thought it really didn't matter if it was 172 years or 122, this baby now has a marker!

After several attempts to locate Jessie's birth or death records failed it was determined that the only way anyone would have known this baby had ever existed was in a 1 x 4 block in a cemetery plat book. Perhaps the baby was born at home and no records were kept or maybe the parents were just passing through this area, and after burying their precious child they continued on their way with only their memories to comfort them. The circumstances around the child's death remain a mystery.

After the marker was set a small group of people met to dedicate it. Those that attended shared a common bond; each one had lost a child to miscarriage. Baby Jessie's grave site has become a place of healing as visitors leave their precious keepsakes in memory of a child they too have lost. Every year on the anniversary

of Baby Jessie's burial a memorial service is held by family members who have lost a child through miscarriage as a reminder that all children are a gift from God.

After reviewing all the books again it now appears that the oldest gravesite on record is for Judge William N. Hood, Peru's founding father, section 13 lot 9 space 12. The original plat book for Mt. Hope Cemetery reads: Died July 9th 1838

#### Baby Jessie's Memorial Service

Baby Jessie has become a symbol at Mt. Hope Cemetery, a place of remembrance. Not just for his family, but for all of those here today that shares a common bond, the loss of a child through miscarriage. The Word of God tells us that, "A good name is better than precious ointment ... " Yet many of the children that are lost through miscarriage have not been given a name nor a final resting place that we can go to remember. Until a few years ago Baby Jessie had disappeared from the pages of time, only marked by a 1 x 4 block in a cemetery plat book. Jessie's name means, the Lord exists, and as long as God exists the name Jessie will be remembered, just as your child's name will be remembered, for the Word tells us that God has inscribed their names on the palm of His hands. You have the assurance that their frame was not hidden from Him. That He formed their inward parts and covered them while they were in their mother's womb. Psalms 139:16 says, "Your eyes say my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

When King David wrote this Psalm he was speaking of Gods perfect knowledge of man even as an embryo in their mothers womb they are known intimately by Him. "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand." What a comfort it is for us to know precious thoughts from God were directed toward our unborn children that if we were to count them they "would out number the sand."

Maybe you feel as if the world, even your family and friends, don't recognize your baby's life because he or she was lost through miscarriage. But be encouraged because God cares. He knows of the love we hold in our hearts for them. He has shared in our dreams; our grief and He know the emptiness their loss has left in our hearts.

In the book of Revelation it states that to those who overcome God will give a white stone, and on it a new name will be written which no one knows except the one who receives it. Surely our precious babies have overcome the greatest obstacle we face in life, for death has lost its sting and they are now with their Heavenly Father. One day when we are called home to be with the Lord we will see

the child we have carried in our hearts for so long. Each one of you has been given a white stone of remembrance of your precious treasure waiting on you when that day comes. Until then may Baby Jessie's gravesite be a place of healing.

Taken from:

Waltman, Dawn Siegrist. *In a Heartbeat, A journey of hope and healing for those who have lost a baby*, Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado Springs, CO., 2002.

### **Missing You**

*"For He is our God,  
And we are the people of His pasture,  
and the sheep of His hand.*

*Psalm 95:6 (NASB)*

Dear Little Baby, how often I sit quietly, alone with my thoughts of you. There is just so much I wonder about. How would our lives have been different if you had not died? I miss your smile. A smile that I have never seen and yet, how I miss it! I wish you could tell me, Sweet Baby, what color is your hair and your pretty little eyes? What about your personality? Are you a little ball of lightning or are you more quiet and shy?

Oh, how I long to have you with me! I look out at the evening sky and I see the magnificence of God's power as He paints a spectacular picture for all to see. As I watch the sky change, I feel closeness to you. Maybe because it draws me closer to the God who holds the answers to my wondering thoughts. And closer to the God who holds you.

Dear Friend,

I know you miss your baby terribly. So many questions about your child roll around in your head with no one to provide the answers in this lifetime. Though you may not know the answers to some of your questions until you meet your baby in heaven, God still wants to give you the precious gift of peace. Peace in knowing your little lamb is resting in the hand of God and being cared for by the Shepherd Himself.

Taken from:

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**A Visitor from Heaven**  
**by Twila Paris**

A visitor from heaven,  
If only for a while.  
A gift of love to be returned.  
We think of you and smile.

A visitor from heaven,  
Accompanied by grace.  
Reminding of a better love.  
And of a better place.

With aching hearts and empty arms,  
We send you with a name.  
It hurts so much to let you go,  
But we're so glad you came.  
We're so glad you came.

A visitor from heaven,  
If only for a day.  
We thank Him for the time He gave,  
And now it's time to say,  
We trust you to the Father's love,  
And to His tender care.  
Held in the everlasting arms,  
And we're so glad you're there.  
We're so glad you're there.

With breaking hearts and open hands,  
We send you with a name.  
It hurts so much to let you go,  
But we're so glad you came.  
We're so glad you came.