

Peaceful Valley Cemetery (aka Sheyenne River Academy Cemetery)

There is a Sheyenne River Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery and a Sheyenne River Academy Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery. The Sheyenne River Academy Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery is also known as the Peaceful Valley Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery.

2018 marked the one-hundred year anniversary of the influenza epidemic that necessitated the Peaceful Valley Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery. Shortly after the opening of the 1918 - 1919 school year, Sheyenne River Academy was forced to close when about fifty of the seventy students enrolled contracted influenza. Two of those students, Martha Peetz and John Miller, died. An infant is also buried there.

Dr. R. C. Reimche of Harvey succumbed to the disease following a visit to the academy to treat its ailing students. He is buried in the town of Harvey, North Dakota.

This pandemic was the deadliest in modern history, infecting approximately 500 million people worldwide, which was about one-third of the planet's population. An estimated 20 to 50 million died. One-fourth of the population of the United States was affected and about 675,000 died.

Taken from the book Nothing to Fear by Bob Dupuy, Pg. 90

Disease, however, was one of the most frequently encountered hazards of the closely-knit school "home", with each new illness making its way through a substantial segment of both faculty and students. An outbreak of measles in June of 1913 caused an early end of the school year and apparently contributed to such an extended delay in the start of the following school year that Christmas vacation was cancelled and nine months of continuous school work was scheduled to help catch up.

Health problems at the academy also provide a sad footnote to a world-wide health crises, the influenza epidemic of 1918 - 1919 that claimed the lives of 500,000 Americans and twenty million people world wide. Shortly after opening fifty of the seventy students enrolled contracted influenza. Two of those students, Martha Peetz and John Miller, died from the disease and its complications. A lonely undesignated grave in a small cemetery on the abandoned Sheyenne River Academy campus probably marks the resting place of, at least, Martha Peetz, an orphan who was working her own way through the academy.

Another victim of the epidemic was Dr. R. C. Reimche of Harvey. Reimche, an Adventist physician, had gained control of the Harvey Hospital in early 1916 and had transformed it into a "Sanitarium and Hospital" run on the basis of Adventist health principles and operated as a missionary outreach endeavor. The institution was enjoying increasing success and a growing reputation when Reimche succumbed to the disease following a visit to the academy to treat its ailing students.

Personal Interview with Thomas Thompson 10/03/16

"There were two students buried at the Sheyenne River Academy Cemetery on the road that went straight west, one-half mile from the school."

"When we were there we couldn't find anything to indicate the (exact) burial location. The two students died during the flu plague, 1918- 1919. The parents didn't have money to bring them home so they were buried there; two different families."

“The school owned several lots on the north side of the road beyond the personal properties. The school owned property on the west and north ends. It was a strange set up. We rented a couple acres on the west end. It had a home on it but was empty by the time we rented it. It also had a little red barn on the property. We kept our cows there. The graves were 200 yards east of there.”

Months of recent research disclosed the actual location of the Peaceful Valley Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery and the sad realization that the site has been farmed for years. The farmer’s wife was surprised to learn of the location of the quarter-acre cemetery plot and was amiable to a visit but since the farmer was in poor health dealing with heart issues the matter was not pursued.